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Paule de Saint-Aulaire Harcourt marquise d'

The duchess of Orléans (Helen of Mecklenburg-Schwerin) : a memoir : translated from the French by Mrs. Austin : with a preface by the translator

London: London: W. Jeffs: John Edward Taylor, 1859

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THE

DUCHESS OF ORLEANS.

A MEMOIR.

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THE

DUCHESS OF ORLEANS.

(HELEN OF MECKLENBURG-SCHWERIN.)

Harcourt, Paule Mise d': Madame la duchesse d'Orléans, Hélène de Mecklembourg-Schwerin [angl.]

A MEMOIR.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

MRS. AUSTIN.
[Sarah]

GROSSH. REGIERUNGSBIBLIOTHEK *SCHWERIN*

With a Preface by the Translator.

LONDON:
W. JEFFS, 15, BURLINGTON ARCADE,
AND 69, KING'S ROAD, BRIGHTON,
Foreign Bookseller to the Royal Family.
1859.

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PREFACE.

I HAVE been induced to translate this Book, solely by my devoted attachment to the illustrious Lady of whose life and character it is a faithful record. The speed required of me rendered it impossible to give to it the care and thought I would fain have bestowed upon anything of which She was the subject; and a work for which the very best I could do would never satisfy myself, I have been reluctantly compelled to hurry through, to meet the eagerness of public curiosity.

But though these conditions were in every way painful to me, I could not forgo my claim to

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render this humble and imperfect service to so beloved and revered a memory. I felt that, though hands more skilful might be found to undertake it, none who had not the inestimable privilege of knowing the Duchess of Orleans would be able to feel as I have done the fidelity and delicacy of the portrait here exhibited; to follow the writer through every page with such a full assent, or with such heartfelt sympathy. I was certain that to no one living could this work be more purely a labour of disinterested love.

I am sensible that it must seem presumptuous in me, who had but comparatively rare opportunities of contemplating the extraordinary qualities described in the following pages, to add my feeble testimony to that of one who knew them intimately, and who is so peculiarly fitted to appreciate them. But perhaps the very circumstances which placed me at a distance from the Duchess of Orleans enabled me to view her character from a point which those nearer to her

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might fail to see. Wholly unconnected either with the recollections of the past, or the hopes for the future in which all about her more or less participated,—widely separated from her by all the external conditions of life, I approached her with no other prepossession than that produced by her singular misfortunes and her noble bearing under them, and by the report of her great intellectual as well as moral superiority, which I had heard from good authority in Germany. There was nothing to dazzle in her position; nothing, except perhaps pity, to lead the judgment astray. A wandering and chequered life had given me opportunities of observing men and women of various countries and of all stations; and I could compare the Duchess of Orleans with some of the noblest, most accomplished, and most engaging of her sex. Above all, I was an Englishwoman, and my opinions and feelings on many points might be expected to differ from those of either the native, or the adopted country of the Duchess

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of Orleans. If, with so little to bias the judgment, my opinion of this incomparable Lady exactly corresponds with theirs,—if, far removed from me as she was, she inspired me with such love, admiration, and reverence as I have rarely felt for any human being, it may perhaps induce some to believe that the eulogy (if we are to call it so) contained in the following pages is the simple and unexaggerated truth.

I offer my humble testimony with the greater confidence, because I know it to be completely in accordance with a far calmer and more penetrating judgment than mine; one not under the influence of those unreasoning affections which are justly thought to invalidate the testimony of women as to personal qualities. To no person has the Princess's intellectual superiority appeared more striking than to one who is well entitled to be difficult on that point.

My earnest desire is, to convey to others some idea of the qualities which struck me as so pecu-

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liar in the Duchess of Orleans. I am fully conscious how little I can do justice to my own conception of them; but if I succeed in any degree, I shall not repent the boldness of my attempt.

During her life and since her death we have been repeatedly told that the Duchess of Orleans was ambitious. A sufficient answer to this charge is afforded by the following Memoir; but I advert to it, because I feel that it touches an intimate and peculiar part of her nature, which might escape the notice even of some who knew her best.

So thoroughly had she adopted the tastes and opinions of her adopted country; so entirely was her whole heart steeped in love and admiration for France and devoted to its interests, that persons not intimately acquainted with the German character might easily fail to recognize in her the peculiar traits which (though perhaps she

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herself was not conscious of them), belonged to her country and her race.

It seems paradoxical to say that the German element in her nature was one great source of the ardent interest she took in France. But it was to that element, joined to her peculiar education, that she owed her capacity for lofty enthusiasm. We, in England and France, have no measure for the character of a German girl, brought up in comparative solitude, nurtured on poetry and religion, knowing little of the actual world, but holding close converse with the ideal in its grandest forms. She is capable of an enthusiasm we know not of. In countries where everything is done with a view to a practical result, or to producing an effect on others, this enthusiasm, this passionate attachment to ideas (or, as we call them, dreams) is thought simply ridiculous. And it must be acknowledged that in Germany it often manifests itself in very ridiculous forms.

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But when, as in the Princess Helen of Mecklenburg, it is under the control of refined taste and high culture, of strong sense and inflexible principle, it forms a character the freshness, elevation and charm of which are nowhere else to be found. To say that such a combination is most rare in any country, is only to repeat what we all know; but in Germany it is, or was, possible.

Considering however what that country suffered during the tyranny of Napoleon, it might seem that admiration of France was the last form that enthusiasm was likely to take in the mind of a German. But observation has shown me that France has often a fascination for young Germans which it rarely exercises over ourselves. Perhaps the contrast between the splendour, magnitude, and world-wide influence of that country, and the narrow limits, obscure movements, and small interests of a little German State, dazzle the imagination, before observation

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and the discipline of life have shown the emptiness of these stately or gaudy shows, and their small advantage to human happiness.

I have ventured to enlarge on this subject, because I have several times heard the Princess's passionate devotion to France spoken of as affected, or at least exaggerated, from motives of personal ambition or desire for popularity.

It is evident that, from her earliest youth, the Princess Helen's benevolent heart and ardent character inclined her to what are called liberal opinions; and that to aid a people in the great and difficult work of securing to itself that union of freedom and order which we call good government, seemed to her the noblest task that could be appointed to man. At the time of her life when the mind is most susceptible to such impressions, France appeared to be the most glorious and hopeful field for such high and beneficent labours. To heal so many wounds,—to put an end to the impotent restlessness which

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threatened to become the chronic disease of France,—and to give a healthy direction to so much wasted and mischievous energy,—to foster all the germs of excellence which abound in that great country,—what prospect could be more seductive to a warm and heroic heart? What wonder that her generous imagination was fired by the thought of becoming the companion of him who was destined to render such services to a mighty nation? And when to this was added the personal character of the man,—his youth, beauty, bravery, and all the qualities he possessed fitted to win the heart of woman,—surely we need not resort to so sordid a motive as selfish ambition, for an explanation of her ready and resolute acceptance of the proposal made to her to become the wife of the Prince Royal.

It might be thought that the destruction of all these brilliant hopes and benevolent projects would have alienated her from the country

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which had so cruelly blighted them; but that would not have been consistent with the profound and steady enthusiasm of her nature. Every fibre of her heart had twined round the country of her adoption; her fondest recollections, her best hopes, were all there; and those who really knew her, never for a moment doubted that, to save or serve France, she would, with joy and exultation, have laid down her own life, or have even sacrificed the far more precious life of her beloved son.

The last conversation I had with her—a fortnight before her death—turned entirely on the means by which the Prince her son could become thoroughly acquainted with English institutions, and with the political habits (if I may use the word) which pervade English society. She was far too clear-sighted and judicious to imagine that institutions or habits can be copied, and too well-informed to think that a servile imitation of those of England would be de-

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sirable, even if it were possible. But she wished him to know what is the process by which young men are fitted to become the active citizens of a free country.*

It was most affecting to watch the working of her transparent mind, and its faithful index, her countenance, during this conversation; and one shrank, as from a sort of cruelty, from dwelling upon any of the things which Englishmen are wont to point out with pride to foreigners. It seemed as if her heart grudged to England those points of political superiority which she was too clear-sighted not to perceive. Where she admitted them, it was with a sigh, and a look of unutterable regret. Whatever was good, she coveted for France.

* This was a subject on which the Duchess of Orleans frequently spoke with great interest, and always with that elevation of sentiment which distinguished her. I remember her saying, that the Life of Sir T. F. Buxton had interested her greatly, as showing the wide field of activity open to the citizen of a free country.

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I never could feel that the sympathy of English people could be welcome to her, mingled, as it necessarily and most justly was, with disapprobation of the men who had caused or permitted the ruin of her family, and with it, of the prospects of France. Having witnessed the miserable catastrophe of 1848, I could never think of it without indignation against all who had contributed, actively or passively, to bring it about; but I never dared to express this feeling, nor indeed to touch upon the subject. She would never have forgiven me. She knew how much I had seen to admire in France, how sincerely I deplored its degradation and desired its welfare; and these sentiments were, I am conscious, my best title to her regard.

Such then were, as it appeared to me, the causes, and such the character and objects of her ambition. It was lofty, humane, disinterested. She had the highest and the grandest conception of the value of a position which enables its pos-

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sessor to be extensively useful,—to improve and to benefit a nation. But even this noble passion took the colour of her truly feminine temper. Did she desire it for herself? for any of the pomps or pleasures it would give her? for the exercise of unrestrained power, or the enjoyment of obsequious homage? The answer lies in her life. The position of which she had so lofty a conception she desired for the husband she so tenderly loved; for herself, that of his companion. Her ambition was, to cheer him on to all great aims; to console him under the disappointments which abound in such a station more than in any other; to surround him with an atmosphere of virtue and intelligence; to aid him by every faculty of a tender, devoted, and heroic woman, in the performance of the highest and most arduous task that can be imposed upon man.

And when the object of these feelings was changed, their nature remained the same. It was

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easy to see that, at the bottom of her heart, beneath the intense love and respectful interest with which she justly regarded her son, lay the thought—Perhaps he may one day be useful to France.

At the beginning of Chapter VII. there occurs one of those expressions which require to be interpreted by a knowledge of the Princess's character. The writer uses the expression "*une résignation animée*," which I have imperfectly rendered "a courageous resignation." I could find no better word, and I was guided to that by my recollection of an expression which one day fell from her lips. I said something—foolishly enough (for who was authorized to talk of resignation to *her*?)—about resignation; she paused a moment, and then said, "Resignation—yes; but that does not mean, to lie down and allow the waves to pass over one's head." How

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often have I thought of these words as entirely characteristic! To submit to the will of God like a dutiful and loving child, but to struggle against the waves of evil that threaten to overwhelm us from human sources,—such was the *résignation animée* which the writer so aptly ascribes to her.

Her courage was of the same nature. It was that of a great soul, a mind made up to all the consequences of duty, and a heart fixed upon God; not of a robust body or firm nerves. The writer of the little journal kept at Kitley,* mentions an incident which shows how little it depended on physical causes; and speaks of the contrast that instantly occurred to her, between the natural timidity of the delicate woman under ordinary circumstances, and the matchless intrepidity of the royal mother, standing for the rights of her son.

A similar incident suggested the very same

* Page 146.

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contrast to an English gentleman who visited the Princess at Ditton. On his rising to take leave, the Comte de Paris, who is fond of rowing, kindly proposed to take his guest across the Thames, and asked his mother to accompany him. As she stepped into the boat it swayed to one side. The Princess uttered a little cry, and said with her gentle laugh, "You'll think me a sad coward, Mr. ——; pray give me your hand." Like the writer of the Journal, he was struck by the entire simplicity and unconsciousness with which she uttered these words. It did not seem to occur to her that she had looked undismayed at dangers from which even brave men would have shrunk.

Several persons of my acquaintance (Frenchmen) were present in the Chamber during that fearful scene; and they told me that the image of her gentle serene face, as she looked steadily upon the murderous weapons pointed at her, and at the more horrible countenances of the furious

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men who were clamouring for her destruction, would never leave them. One excellent man and true patriot, now no more, said to me, "I covered my face with my hands—I could look no longer—and she moved not a muscle."

It is impossible to read the extracts from letters which contain the outpourings of the Princess's heart to her earliest and most intimate friend, without being deeply impressed by the large and expansive nature of her religious opinions, combined with the most ardent piety. Her mind was open to every ray of religious comfort. She understood and felt all that was good in systems differing from that in which she had been educated, and to which she adhered; and it is most consolatory and touching to see with what respect and sympathy her deep piety was viewed by those around her, who did not share her opinions. In this respect the example here placed

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before us is most edifying: it is one of which we have much need in this country, where points of difference are brought forward with an eagerness and pertinacity that would make one doubt whether the great and universal truths that lie beneath and beyond them are matters of any concern at all. As it illustrates her superiority to all such narrow and contentious views of religion, I venture to transcribe a short passage from one of her letters, dated March, 1851.

She had done me the honour to consult me about English books for her sons, and I had sent her a list of some that occurred to me. At the conclusion of her answer she says:—

"Le choix d'ouvrages sur l'histoire de l'Angleterre m'embarrasse toujours. Tout ce qui m'a été recommandé jusqu'à présent est trop bref lorsque c'est écrit pour l'enfance, trop étendu lorsque ce n'est point dans ce but. La partie religieuse, cette partie délicate qui devrait toujours être traitée avec élévation et impartialité, parce que la religion nous élève au-dessus des passions, est rarement maniée avec tact

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et avec équité. Peut-être votre expérience voudrait-elle me guider sur ce point." . . .

These few words suffice to show how conscientiously she discharged the obligation she was under, of respecting the faith of the country and the family which had adopted her. Some expressions of the same kind, showing her scrupulous good-faith and her love of truth, occur in a subsequent letter, relating to the History of Ireland:—

"Si vous avez pu découvrir un ouvrage utile et *vrai* à leur faire lire sur l'Irlande, je vous serai bien reconnaissante de me l'indiquer." *

I was present at the religious ceremony so touchingly described by herself;† and though I was then far from taking that deep and lively personal interest in all that concerned the Duchess of Orleans and her children, which a nearer view of her character afterwards inspired, I felt it to be one of the most affecting scenes

* Wherever I have used italics, the word is underlined in the letter.

† Page 128.

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I had ever witnessed. Every stage of life, every vicissitude of fortune was there represented. Interesting, above all, were the Royal Mother herself, with that indescribable look of sorrow and hope, of ardour and serenity, of passionate earthly affection and spiritual exaltation, which was seen but in her; and by her side, her son, such as she describes him, "pure, pious, grave, and simple."

The little Chapel was filled to overflowing, and on every side the eye lighted upon some well-known face, often seen in the great political arena or the social or literary assemblies of Paris. Immediately before me, I remember, sat Horace Vernet. Other representatives of art were there; above all, Ary Scheffer, the faithful and devoted friend of the House of Orleans, whom I saw again, and for the last time, at the funeral of the Duchess, when he pressed my hand, speechless with grief. In a few weeks he too had departed.

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Five years later, on occasion of another ceremony of the same kind, I received the letters from which I venture to extract the following passages. They show the depth and ardour of her religious feelings, and how intimately they were blended with her dearest earthly affections.

"Je me flatte que ces lignes vous trouveront dans la proximité de Londres, et qu'elles vous disposeront à venir me voir à Claremont, où je passerai quelques jours, à compter du 4 Juin, après avoir conduit mes chers enfants à Londres, où mon fils aîné recevra la Confirmation, et mon fils cadet sa première Communion. Ce sera le 2 Juin que sera célébrée cette touchante solennité, à laquelle vous assisterez sûrement de cœur et de pensée; car je le sais, vous vous intéressez *sincèrement* à eux. Je charge le Docteur de Mussy de vous faire recevoir des billets d'admission à la chapelle française, pour le cas où votre santé vous permettrait d'y assister en personne. Ce serait un grand plaisir pour moi que de vous y voir. Mais si vous ne pouvez pas vous y rendre, je ne doute pas que vos bonnes prières ne nous accompagnent." . . .

As I was too ill to go, I wrote to the Princess.

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I received the following answer :—

" Je vous remercie de tout mon cœur des prières que vous avez adressées à Dieu pour ces chers enfants, au moment où tant de grâces ont été répandues sur eux,—où l'aîné recevait les dons qui doivent nous fortifier dans la voie de la lutte, et où le second était admis aux mystères les plus sublimes par la Sainte Communion. Vous jugez facilement combien mon cœur a été ému et heureux en ce moment solennel, en voyant les deux êtres que j'adore réunis devant l'autel, et les sachant tous deux si bien préparés, si purs, si ardents dans leur piété. Dieu bénira les effets de cette belle journée, et fortifiera, j'ose le croire, toutes les grâces qu'il a déposées dans nos cœurs.

" Je suis retournée dans mon cher Devonshire, triste de laisser cette pauvre Marquise de V—— gravement atteinte, et presque sans espoir. C'est une nouvelle affliction au milieu de tant d'autres, que je dois sentir d'autant plus péniblement, que la vie s'appauvrit peu à peu, tandis que le cœur se rajeunit toujours.

" *Kitley*, 17 *Juin*, 1855."

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I reprint at the end of this volume a brief notice of the Duchess of Orleans, written on the day of her death. I do so, because some of the persons most attached to her have thought it worth preserving, rather as a relief to an over-charged heart, than with any thought of its effect on others. But thinking that it might at least fill the place of some notice from a less devoted and respectful hand, I sent it to a weekly journal. As some few slight alterations were made in it, I have reprinted it exactly as I wrote it. The manuscript, hardly legible, written with a trembling hand and blotted with tears, is before me, and from that I have restored a few lines that had been omitted.

Such as she appeared to me then, she appears to me now,—greater, perhaps, and more lovely, on reflection, and comparison with all else that I have seen and known, than in the first anguish of her loss. The sorrow which I feel now is calmer, but not less deep; nor do I expect or wish that it should pass away.

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The writer of the Memoir says,* "The sentiment which the Duchess of Orleans was especially fitted to inspire was sympathy." Sympathy, however, I should (from my own feelings) add, of a very peculiar kind; it was an anxious, tender, respectful *interest*, which was heightened by every new view of her character, and gradually occupied a large place in the thoughts of those who knew her.

As we advance in life, it becomes more and more difficult to find objects of warm and sustained interest. You may have admiration for one, affection or respect for another, kindly feelings for all,—but prejudice and commonplace, the ordinary littlenesses of society, or the discovery that people are in no want of your sympathy, and that the things you would desire for them are exactly what they do not desire for themselves, generally free the mind from that mixture of solicitous affection and profound sympathy which we mean by *interest*.

* Page 40.

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The Duchess of Orleans was, of all persons I ever saw, the most fitted to inspire this feeling. As the writer of the Kitley journal says,* "life was interesting by her side:" her character was always presenting itself in new and harmonious lights; her manners were indescribably graceful, refined, and winning; her conversation never flagged,—it was never trifling, never pedantic, never harsh; it always kept you at an elevation which at once soothed and invigorated the mind. Her topics were great and high, and there was dignity and grace and truth in her way of treating them.

Above all, there was not in her nature the slightest tinge of the cynical scepticism or sarcastic contempt which chill the soul and annihilate hope and courage. They are the weapons which vulgar minds oppose to misfortune;—the bitter and poisonous plants which wrongs and calamities produce in poor and barren hearts. But her tender and magnanimous nature could bring forth

* Page 149.

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nothing but what was "pure, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits."

It must, however, be admitted that she might have been all that nature and education made her, and yet have failed to excite so intense and tender an interest, had not fortune been as cruel to her, as *they* had been kind and bountiful. Her unparalleled sufferings, the wreck of her hopes, the miserable end of her cherished illusions, and the tenacity with which she clung to them,—her intense anxiety (which it was impossible to think exaggerated) for her sons,—despair at seeing the country which her imagination had exalted above every other resigning itself to the privation of all it had once seemed to value,—lastly, exile, —that evil which, like war, is an aggregate of evils,—when these thoughts and images recurred to your mind, and you felt that all these past woes, present sufferings, and fears for the future were the constant companions of the noble and delicate creature before you, the interest her great

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qualities inspired was raised by pity to a height which might almost be called a passion.

Yet in spite of the deep commiseration she excited, her presence and conversation were never depressing. An ordinary woman, sorrow-laden as she was, would have diffused gloom and melancholy around her. But her influence—if I may judge of it by my own experience—was of a contrary kind. "A veil of sadness" did, it is true, "overspread her sweet face;" but behind this veil there was always such a beaming benignity, so lively a concern for the welfare of mankind, such a high-hearted courage, that you left her cheered rather than depressed, with a stronger faith in God and better hopes for man. And even when her sun of earthly hope was overcast, the cloudless empyrean of faith was always discernible.

It is to the extraordinary power she had of giving a high tone to the minds of others, joined to the unalterable sweetness of her daily inter-

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course, that I attribute the feeling common to those who mourn her loss, so truly described by the writer of the Memoir, as "a sort of discouragement overclouding their best hopes for the future." All who knew and loved her feel that one is gone who "made life brilliant near her," and that a void is left which never can be filled. A noble and complete object of affection and solicitude is withdrawn.

The sympathy which a common sorrow has established between those who lament her appears to me as peculiar as was her power* of attaching them to herself. Even when strangers to each other, they seem to be bound together by a tie as strong as that of blood or religion.

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* This power was felt even by the humblest. A lady told me that, on her proposing to a poor girl who had occupied a very humble post in the Duchess's household, to place her in a respectable family, the girl burst into tears, and said, "I shall never serve such a mistress again. She was a mother to us all." Many are the anecdotes current among the poor at Esher of her benignant sympathizing kindness.

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I have not attempted to translate her Will. It is already before the English Public, and indeed was first made known to the world in an English translation. But I may here give the testimony of a man much respected for his learning, and far more for his political probity and independence, as to the effect produced by that remarkable document on some of the most competent judges which France still possesses.

The *Times* journal containing it reached the gentleman in question just as he was going to dine with M. Odilon Barrot, where he found assembled MM. Mignet, Cousin, Villemain, and other members of that great and brilliant constellation which, even under clouds, is still the glory of France. After dinner he took the paper out of his pocket, and told his friends what it contained, upon which M. Villemain undertook to read it aloud into French.

The sensation it produced on the hearers was

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profound. It was like a revelation. Even the men who had known and admired the Princess in the days of her prosperity, seemed now to learn, for the first time, how incomparable a treasure Heaven had bestowed on France.

When the original appeared in Paris it excited a fresh surprise. People were as much struck with the beauty of the form, as they had already been with the nobleness and elevation of the sentiments. "But where did she learn to write French better than anybody?" was the question of an eminent French writer and critic.

The last time I saw the Duchess of Orleans was on the 3rd of May. With her usual considerate kindness, she had invited me because she had a visitor from Paris for whom she knew my high esteem. I thought her looking better than I had seen her of late, much better than on her return from Kitley. At that time I was un-

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easy about her, and had warmly seconded her physician's earnest remonstrances against her returning to a climate which evidently had so bad an effect on her health.

After the rest of the family had left the breakfast-room, no one but her friend and myself being present, she entered into a long conversation (to which I have already referred) about her sons;—what they were to see and do in this country, concerning which she asked me many questions. I gave her such information as I could, and suggested some things which I thought might be agreeable and instructive to the young Princes. She received every hint with a gratitude that affected me deeply, and asked me to write down all I had told her.

This I did as soon as I returned home, adding every suggestion that I thought might be of use, and offering to endeavour to procure for her advice which I felt myself so incompetent to give. Among other things, I mentioned the annual

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fête on the 4th of June at Eton as a spectacle altogether curious, national, and striking. I thought the young Princes could hardly have a better opportunity of seeing a large assemblage of English youth, and I knew "the boats" would interest them. She expressed her perfect willingness that they should go; but how could they go uninvited? I replied that it was only necessary to tell the Provost that he might solicit an honour which he would not otherwise (being personally unknown to them) think himself privileged to ask. I well knew how gladly he would seize any opportunity of showing his profound respect for the Princess, and interest in her august sons.

His answer to my letter containing a message to that effect was what I expected, and I immediately sent it to her.

Her reply (written on the 9th of May) lies before me. Already the dire but insidious disease which was to destroy her was at work. "Je

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vous aurais écrit déjà," she says, "si, prise d'une grippe fort pénible, je ne trouvais de la difficulté à écrire." She desires me to tell the Provost of Eton, whose letter she had read, "que son invitation sera acceptée avec reconnaissance et joie," and adds other of those kind and gracious words which seemed her natural language. She then speaks with lively interest of some other projects for her sons; but adds, "Je m'arrête, n'ayant pas une tête bien libre, comme j'ai une forte fièvre."

Here any one else would have stopped; but she suddenly recollects that, with many scruples and much hesitation, I had presumed to express an opinion which I feared might not be agreeable to her. She knew that the thought of giving her the slightest pain would distress me beyond measure, and that her silence on this point might leave me in doubt and anxiety. With her head heavy with fever, she could think to add:—

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"Mille et mille remercîments encore de votre bonne lettre, dont la dernière phrase ne m'a *nullement* peinée, mon expérience maternelle m'ayant déjà parlé dans le même sens. Les jeunes gens doivent voler de leurs propres ailes; c'est chose toute simple, dont le contraire serait fort mauvais.

"Adieu; mille et mille amitiés."

I hesitated long before I could consent to speak of a circumstance which concerns myself; but it is too characteristic of her to be suppressed. Nothing recorded in the Memoir can more clearly show that her benign care for the feelings of others never for a moment forsook her.

These are the last words she addressed to me. None could more perfectly bear the stamp of her character.

Though there was nothing to excite apprehension in this letter, which seemed, on the contrary, "full of life,"* I felt unusual anxiety about her, and immediately wrote to a lady who resided with her, and whose devoted affection would, I

* Page 149.

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knew, be prompt to take alarm. Her answer (dated May 11th) assured me that, though still very ill, the Princess was not in a state to excite the least uneasiness, that the fever had gradually abated, and that she hoped in two or three days all suffering would have ceased, and nothing more would be required but care. She added, that the Princess desired her to tell me she should ask me to present to her a gentleman she wished to see, as soon as she was recovered.

On the morning of the 18th (Sunday having intervened) I received a letter, dated May the 16th, from the friend of the Princess before alluded to, who had just returned to Richmond after an absence of some days, containing these words, "Il n'y a, grâce à Dieu, aucun danger dans son état." So it appeared to all the loving and anxious hearts around her.

At the time I received this letter, she was no more.

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Much more might be said, as I am assured, of the edifying beauty of her last hours—"her perfect and unbroken presence of mind, joined to that consummate sweetness and benignity which she retained to her last breath."

But it is enough to say that her death was worthy of her life.

In France this book has been universally received for what it is; a perfectly spontaneous and womanly tribute of faithful attachment. Some attempts have been made in this country to invest it with a political character, and impute to the writer the calculations of a partisan; but no such misconception prevails in France, where she is well known to be as far removed from political intrigue as from literary ambition. A letter I received from a member of the Académie, who was always in opposition to the Government of Louis-Philippe, and who

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never spoke to the Duchess of Orleans in his life, says:—

"Vous connaissez sans doute la biographie de la Duchesse d'Orléans par Madame la Marquise d'——. C'est excellent. C'est un récit des plus simples et des plus modestes: aucune visée politique; de longs extraits de l'admirable correspondance de la Princesse."

Several other letters, from persons of different opinions, speak of it in the same tone.

There are people, and unhappily not a few, to whom it is intolerable to be made to believe in exalted virtue or disinterested attachment; and they are ingenious in hypotheses, by the aid of which they may escape from so disagreeable a necessity. But it is consolatory to know that neither this nor any other of the causes which might be presumed to be hostile to the book has prevented justice from being done to it in France.

It is a remarkable fact, and one which does the highest honour to the press of France, that

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not a word has appeared, (as I am assured on unquestionable authority) that could give pain to those who cherish the memory of the Duchess of Orleans. Neither the violence of party feeling, nor the desire to conciliate the powerful, has induced a single journal to refrain from mentioning the book, or to mention it in a hostile or disrespectful manner. Even those whose trade it is to jest at everything have felt the sanctity of the subject, and of the motives which actuated the biographer, and have spoken of them with unwonted and becoming seriousness and delicacy.

The translation has been a work of extraordinary difficulty, and I am quite sensible that it contains many Gallicisms. To say truth, I have sometimes preferred to retain forms of expression which I saw were not pure English. They are so indissolubly connected with modes of thought and feeling, that it is impossible to give a perfectly English garb to the former without

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robbing the latter of their peculiar and appropriate character. The structure of the style is also consummately French, and has graces of its own which a translator would vainly attempt to imitate.

But besides those *finesses* of language which, while they leave some things half told, suggest a thousand others, there is in this volume a good deal of intentional vagueness. The state of the press in France is not favourable at this moment to clear and distinct utterance; and a writer who aspires to be anything better than a sycophant must often trust to the sagacity and apprehensiveness of his readers to supply what it might be dangerous to say. It was, as we know, a similar necessity which gave to the style of the French writers of the last century that peculiar polish and *finesse* which the English have had little occasion to study, and probably will never acquire. It will easily be understood that the difficulty of translating a style formed under

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such circumstances is extreme. But as neither literary success, nor any other personal motive, would have induced me to depart from my resolution to undertake no more labour of this kind, my only solicitude is that I may not be found to have disfigured the bright image presented to us in the original, and living in my own heart.

My poor labours are the only offering I have to lay on her tomb. She would accept them, for the sake of the faithful attachment that prompted them.

S. A.

Weybridge, March 3, 1859.

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THE DUCHESS OF ORLEANS.

"*France*,
Whose heart I thought I had, for she had mine."

"We have just sustained a cruel blow: we have lost one of the objects of our tenderest affection; and Death, who has robbed us of that being so loving, so devoted, so necessary to all belonging to her, has presented himself amongst us in all his solemnity, though divested of his horrors. The passage from this life to another was fearfully abrupt; never was the transition so rapid, never did life appear to us so ephemeral. God grant that the salutary impression may remain for ever engraven on our hearts!"*

* All the passages in inverted commas are expressions of the Duchess of Orleans—generally taken from her letters.

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Scarcely a year had elapsed since the Duchess of Orleans, speaking of the sudden end of her sister-in-law, the Duchess of Nemours, wrote these lines,—and now, she too has disappeared! Twice within that short space of time has "Death, though divested of his horrors, presented himself in all his solemnity." Claremont, "that great tomb which brings misfortune to all who inhabit it," mourns once more a young, beloved, and most precious being. May her memory, also, remain engraven on our hearts! May the illustrious Princess receive, at least after her death, the respectful homage due to her from a country which, through all the wreck of her hopes and the destruction of her illusions, she never ceased to love with passionate attachment.

That country promised her a happy and brilliant destiny; it sent her to finish her days in exile; but never did she confound the French people with the men whose instability and desertion filled her with painful amazement; never for an instant did she cease to cherish good hopes of France; never were despondency and

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bitterness mingled in her heart with the sentiments which that name awakened in her.

And accordingly she is not forgotten by all. The friends who had been touched by the greatness of her soul, her genuine simplicity, and the incomparable charm of her character, feel an irresistible desire to make her better known; fain would they communicate to other hearts some part of the affection which her person inspired, and of the regrets which her death implanted, in their own;—as if they could thus atone for some of the sufferings of her life.

She is no more; and long before her death she had been stripped of all the splendours of her rank. The prestige which formerly surrounded every individual of royal birth has given place to an almost contemptuous indifference. We need therefore no longer fear to express the admiration with which a creature so rare inspired all who approached her, and no one can attribute what may be said of her to any other sentiment than that of a genuine and heartfelt attachment.

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We may therefore say, without scruple, that the Duchess of Orleans would, in any station, have been worthy to be beloved; that the heroic courage she displayed, and which, in one of the darkest pages of our history, will ever surround her name with a bright halo, was combined with the gentlest virtues, the most exquisite qualities, of a thoroughly feminine nature, and with an entire devotion to her duties. Her virtues would have been no less suited to a private and obscure station than to the most exalted; she showed herself, simply and invariably, equal to the circumstances in which she was placed, whatever they might be. Her nature was at once strong and flexible; her soul was one of those to which everything naturally presents itself under its grandest aspect; and as this corresponds the most perfectly to the ideal they bear within themselves, they have no need to seek greatness out of their natural sphere, nor in deviations from ordinary rules of conduct.

Never did she attempt to intrude herself into political affairs. On the other hand, never did

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she shrink from them, through weakness or timidity; and when, in the midst of the greatest perils, she accepted the part which was almost forced upon her, it was because she could only have avoided it by deviating from the straight and natural path of duty.

Politics, indeed, held but a secondary place in her thoughts; if she felt ambition, it was only for her husband, her country, her children: from the day when her own happiness was crushed, she transferred to the latter all that remained to her of youth and ardour.

It was her constant thought, not to allow them to sink below the high position in which Providence had placed them. Mother of a son who was born to a throne, she strove to keep alive in him the hereditary principles and virtues which, in happier times, he would have devoted to France; which, in all times, were fitted to give elevation and honour to his own existence. What distinguished her from other fond mothers was her clear and distinct view of the end to be attained, her ardent attachment

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to ideas of which her son appeared to her the natural representative, and her firm will in the midst of trials such as few women are called to pass through. Though she was endowed with extraordinary political tact, though, from the elevation whence she looked on all things, she sometimes judged them with a sort of divination (proofs of which will appear), she was not a female politician, in the sense usually attached to that word; she had not the faults, nor even the ungraceful merits, which it generally implies.

She was wholly incapable of making sentiment yield to interest,—least of all, to her own personal interest; and indeed her sentiments were too strictly bound up with her duties, for her to think she had a right to sacrifice them. However remarkable her intelligence and knowledge, she *felt* more than she *knew;* that was the peculiar charm—perhaps the fault—of her character; at all events, it was what rendered it so painful to differ from her. One felt a sort of self-reproach at having to combat her opinions, for

she always maintained the cause which was the most attractive to the imagination; and one was ashamed to talk prudence and reason to her, when her view of things was always the most generous, lofty and liberal. Unfavourable events —what are called the lessons of experience— had no great effect upon her; so that there was little hope of convincing her. To say the truth, her opinions were sentiments; more profound, and less precise, perhaps, than was generally supposed: they were rooted in her inmost soul, which circumstances might sadden but could not alter. She was sincerely liberal; but what she loved in liberty was, above all, the generous sentiments which that word awakens; what she chiefly hated in despotism was the general degradation of character, the triumph of force and the compression of intelligence which are its necessary consequences. To her apprehension, constitutional monarchy was something more than a political system ably and dexterously framed; it was also a combination of reciprocal duties, freely and cordially accepted on both

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sides, binding the most enlightened portion of a nation to one family, for the welfare of all. Hence she seemed to feel a sort of pang, like that of wounded feelings, when the colder arguments of political prudence were opposed to her generous devotedness.

Parties will perhaps use her name in the service of their own interests and passions. But her true life was passed in loftier regions; and the treasures which lay hid in that richly-endowed soul must be sought where those mean and transient passions can never enter.

What can be more tragical than the destiny of the Duchess of Orleans? When did history ever in so short a time heap more sorrows upon a single head? Where is the life more ceaselessly agitated, yet so pure that not an action nor a thought need dread the light?

So many misfortunes and so noble a character would doubtless have rendered her in other times one of those poetical figures which take possession of the popular imagination; but what is the life, or what the cause, which have any hold on it now?

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Yet at least let us seek among our mournful reminiscences traits of her greatness and virtue which may serve as examples to our own time. These must be drawn not only from the portion of her life which is known, but from that more intimate part of it which we dare only touch upon lightly,—and even so, with much hesitation and many fears; for better were it never to pronounce her name, even though it were to render it an object of universal love, than to raise the veil higher than she would have permitted.

But it is in the power of no one to hide her beloved memory within the sanctuary of private life; it may perhaps be possible to shield it from the judgments of ignorance or prejudice, but not from the publicity which her high rank and tragic fortunes conferred upon her, spite of herself. And what surer means can we take than to show her, such as she was in the presence of God? greater and more simple, if that be possible, even than she appeared to us; as ardent on behalf of every idea which is destined to outlive time; more detached from what ends with this

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world; animated (we cannot too often repeat) by a patriotism which nothing could dishearten, which refused to see in her adopted country any qualities but such as may be eclipsed, but not annihilated, which, though clouds covered the sky, desponded not, and maintained hope, "the invisible soul of her courage."

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I.

The Princess Helen Louisa Elizabeth of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, born at the castle of Ludwigslust, on the 24th of January, 1814, was the daughter of Louis Frederic, Hereditary Duke* of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and of Caroline of Weimar, his second wife. Princess Caroline, remarkable for her charms and intelligence, was the daughter of one of the most distinguished princes of Germany, Duke Charles Augustus of Saxe-Weimar,—the friend of Goethe and Schiller,—and of that Duchess Louisa of Weimar, of whom Madame de Staël has left a

* The Dukes of Mecklenburg and Saxe-Weimar received the title of Grand Duke in 1815.—*Transl.*

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charming portrait, in which we seem to recognize the image of her granddaughter. "She was," writes Madame de Staël, "the true model of a woman destined by nature to the most illustrious rank; free alike from pretension and from weakness, she inspired equal confidence and respect. The heroism of a chivalrous age had tempered her spirit, without depriving her of any of the softer qualities of her sex." The Emperor Napoleon, who was not given to admire (especially in a woman) intellect united with dignity of character, could not but acknowledge her rare merit. "She was," he said, "the only Princess he had met with in Germany;"* a eulogy

* After the retreat from Jena, whilst the Duke of Weimar was at Berlin, the Duchess Louisa had singly to contend for the interests of her country against the demands of the conqueror Napoleon; but though she succeeded in obtaining less hard conditions for her people, they were ruined by the sufferings of a long war. To mitigate so much misery she made a present of all her diamonds to the States; who would accept them only on condition of pawning them, and, at a later period, restored them to her. The Princess Helen, to whom they were given on the death of her grandmother, could never look at them without emotion. They did not re-

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unjustly exclusive, and doubtless little flattering to her who was the object of it.

The Princess Helen was only two years old, when the Grand Duchess Caroline died, when still quite young. On her death-bed, it is said, she entreated her husband to replace her loss to her children, and mentioned her cousin, the Princess Augusta of Hesse-Homburg, as the mother she desired for them. Never was maternal solicitude more happily inspired. Princess Augusta, who, in 1816, became Hereditary Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg, and was soon afterwards left a widow, devoted all her affection to the children of her cousin. She withdrew from the world, to give herself up more entirely to their education, especially to that of the little Princess Helen, who at once formed a strong attachment to her,

main in her hands, however, but returned to the poor, to whom they appeared to her to belong. From the time of her arrival in France the Princess knew not how to refuse a petition, nor even to hear of a suffering without wanting to alleviate it. She sold her valuable diamonds, "which," as she said, "the King's goodness rendered quite superfluous," and devoted all the money to her charities.

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and ever after retained for her the tender love of a daughter.

It is interesting to trace in this sweet and graceful child the qualities which we find in her at a later period. To this unchanging character, perhaps, were owing her perfect simplicity and entire forgetfulness of self. A peculiar charm, and one independent of their intrinsic worth, attaches to such unvarying natures; they seem never to lose the freshness of childhood. Virtues, on the contrary, acquired in the conflicts and experiences of life, are rarely found combined with an entire unconsciousness of self; the very efforts they have cost us recall them continually to our minds, and we involuntarily regard them with a kind of complacency. When only four years old, the Princess Helen showed the same generosity, the tenderness toward the sufferings of others and the fortitude in enduring her own, as we in France afterwards witnessed. "She never knew a selfish feeling," say those persons who educated her; and hence, at that early age, she inspired them with a devoted attachment which has never

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varied, and which now leaves a mournful blank in their lives. Her piety and benevolence were too fervent to be always restrained within the strict bounds of duty. One day, when surprise was expressed at the ardour with which she sacrificed some childish fancy, she replied in a low voice, "Our Lord said, 'whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.'"

Before she was permitted to visit the poor herself, and direct the charitable institutions founded by her mother, (which she afterwards did with remarkable intelligence,) her instinctive charity found exercise in the families of her dependants; she had their children brought to her, and taught them what she had herself just before learned. This gentle and fragile being inspired with a tender respect the sturdy, robust little Mecklenburgers who stood before her, listening and gravely answering her questions, and left her more often rewarded than punished. The presents which were yearly hung for her on the Christmas-tree were soon in the hands of her playfellows; though they had resolved

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never to admire anything in her presence, well knowing that the object she most valued would be the first and the most joyfully sacrificed. The loving desire to give pleasure, to see herself surrounded by happy faces, which in children may be merely a graceful sort of coquetry, arose in her from more serious feelings; and thus, unconsciously, she early won the deep and faithful attachment of all who approached her.

Her instructors, though delighted at her ardour for learning, were often obliged to interrupt their narratives, from fear of the effect of a touching history or a trait of heroism upon her delicate organization. Even then, her health was not strong enough for a nature whose impressions were keen and vivid as those of the Southern races, while their depth and constancy sufficiently proved her German extraction. At twelve years of age, having lost a friend who had shared her studies and lived several years with her, her sorrow was so great that she fell seriously ill. From this time her countenance assumed a tinge of melancholy which did not

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naturally belong to her features, though a long series of sufferings afterwards rendered it habitual.

In the Spring of 1827 the Grand Duchess took her for the first time to the Court of Weimar. Until this time she had brought her up in almost entire solitude. Residing during a great part of the year in the country, either at Doberan on the shores of the Baltic, or at Plushow, an estate which had belonged to the Hereditary Grand Duke, the young Princess scarcely knew, beyond the circle of her family, any one but her instructors,* (men of well-known merit,) and the excellent and distinguished woman whom her mother had attached to her person when she was only eighteen months old, and who never quitted her for an instant until her marriage. To this serious mode of life she was indebted for a cultivation of mind rare in any woman, and for very simple tastes,—the source of a thousand enjoyments throughout the changeful course of her destiny. Accustomed to live in a

* Professor Schubert, and afterwards Mr. Reinecke.

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kind of intimacy with nature, she felt its beauties in all their details, as well as in their general aspects; a sunny day, a walk in some beautiful spot, flowers, which she loved to gather herself, were the joy of her childhood, and afforded her, even at a later period, moments of pleasure.

The Princess Helen did not appear surprised at the new and animated scene which the Court of Weimar presented to her; with a mind already open to all the pleasures of intellect, she was at her ease there, as everywhere else, and seemed to have passed her life in the midst of those to whom she was introduced. The image of that little girl of thirteen has remained stamped on their memory as a poetical and charming vision. "I see her still," wrote one of them, "clad all in rose-colour, without any ornament in her fair brown hair, light as a bird, yet full of nobleness in all her movements; and I remember with what tender and just pride the old Grand Duke of Weimar fixed his eyes upon her."

A journey in Switzerland, whither she went to join her brother Prince Albert, was the only

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break in the even tenor of her life from 1827 to 1830. On leaving the wide sandy plains of Mecklenburg, its monotonous marshes and sombre forests, the first sight of the splendours of Switzerland filled her heart with such strong emotions, that she frequently could not find words to express them. She was surprised standing in tears before the Falls of Schaffhausen, the white foam of which sparkled in the sun and enveloped her in its golden mist.

After again passing some time at Doberan, the Princess Helen returned with her mother to Ludwigslust, where, on May 30th, 1830, she received the rite of Confirmation in the parish-church. The inhabitants of the Commune, who had known her since her birth, and loved her dearly, attended the ceremony, joining their fervent prayers to those of "their good Helen,"—("unsere gute Helene.") When she knelt before the altar, after the clergyman had laid his hands upon her head and given the benediction according to the Lutheran ritual, the voices of all present joined with emotion in the hymn, which

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she herself had chosen,—" O herzlich lieb habe ich dich, o Herr!" (" From my heart do I love Thee, O Lord!")

We dwell perhaps too much on details, the tranquil simplicity of which contrasts with those scenes of a sterner reality that have given such a melancholy interest to the memory of the Princess Helen: but it is not merely because we feel a mournful pleasure in lingering over these peaceful incidents of a life so full of agitation, but because they render more striking a quality for which she was remarkable. Accustomed to this familiar and patriarchal interchange,—respectful confidence on the side of the people, and paternal protection on that of the princes, which are maintained in Germany more than in any other country,—surrounded with love,—experiencing from those beneath, as well as those around her nothing but affection, to which her own heart readily responded, it might naturally have been supposed that she would find it peculiarly difficult to understand the widely different society and country to which

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she was transplanted; and that her imagination would not readily accommodate itself to such new forms of social life. But she was eminently gifted with that faculty which belongs as much to the character as to the intellect; the rapid, and, as it were, instinctive perception of different situations; the comprehension, nay, more, the admiration, of all that awakened in her the idea of a grand work to be accomplished, of a noble cause, of noble sentiments, under whatever forms they presented themselves. To this rapidity of comprehension, this gift of assimilating to herself by sympathy all that stirred the hearts of men however far removed from her, it was owing, that in her retirement at Doberan, a Princess of sixteen years of age, knowing of France only what her books and her masters had taught her, hailed with ardent interest the events of 1830, and with marvellous sagacity discerned what distinguished them from an ordinary revolution. In that struggle, where she saw a people armed, not to attack, but to maintain the laws against a power which had attempted their sub-

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version, all her sympathies were, from the outset, on the popular side; every day she watched for the arrival of the French newspapers, with as much impatience as if events of a personal nature were at issue; copied the articles which struck her the most, and, in short, shared in all that conflict of opinions apparently so foreign to her, with singular emotion. This early enthusiasm, kindled by the names of France and of liberty, left deep traces on her mind, and the family of Orleans had become deeply interesting to her long before she could have the slightest presentiment of her destiny.

From this time French literature acquired a new interest in her eyes; her studies lay almost exclusively in that direction, and she now began to speak by preference a language which she had spoken habitually from her birth.

But ere long personal anxieties succeeded to the disinterested emotions which the events in France had excited in her. The Grand Duchess fell seriously ill, and was sent to Toeplitz in such a state of feebleness, that it was feared she would

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hardly reach the end of her journey alive. Her daughter, sitting beside her, watched her with tender anxiety, though she did not suspect that at any moment she might be left a second time an orphan. She was spared that terrible affliction; and the visit to Toeplitz, to which she owed her mother's restoration to health, had perhaps a decisive influence on her own destiny. The Princess seldom quitted the sick chamber, and was seen by very few persons; but not one of those who did see her remained insensible to the singular charm of her person and character. M. Bresson, the French Minister, met her accidentally, and, though he was not presented to her, she left an impression on his mind which was never effaced. It was at Toeplitz also that the King of Prussia, who was allied to her family by the marriage of one of his daughters with the Hereditary Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, saw her for the first time. Attracted to her by the extraordinary intelligence which her extreme youth rendered the more striking, he daily took increased pleasure in conversing with her, and conceived

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a tender affection for her, which endured to the end of his life.

Among the proofs of kindness which she then received, there is one more precious than all the rest, which we should regret to pass over in silence. It is consolatory to reflect that two persons, widely severed by their adverse fortunes, yet worthy of each other from the true elevation of their characters, met once on earth, and, in spite of the differences of age and situation, were attracted by a common sympathy.

The Dauphiness called with the King, Charles X., to inquire after the Grand Duchess, who was still kept a prisoner to her room. The Princess Helen went to receive them, and to convey to them her mother's thanks. With the rapid instinct of the heart which gave her the key to a noble life as well as to generous ideas, she instantly felt the moral grandeur which was veiled under an appearance of austere simplicity. In the dignified countenance of the Dauphiness she read a fathomless depth of suffering, concealed under an expression of firmness and gravity. In

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her turn she inspired such a lively interest, that her sweet image remained impressed on the memory of the royal exile many years after their meeting. Some Frenchmen having visited the Dauphiness at Prague, she immediately enquired for the young Duchess of Orleans, whose name they had not ventured to pronounce. "Is she happy?" she asked with interest. "I hope so, for I know her, and I know how well she deserves to be happy."

The year 1834 was marked in the Princess's life by one of those sorrows the traces of which are never entirely effaced. In exploring some ruins near Jena, her brother, Prince Albert, had a dangerous fall. He was conveyed, at his own request, to his family at Mecklenburg, where, after lingering some months, he expired. His sister nursed him with the utmost tenderness and assiduity, but without any hope of seeing him restored to health. During these days and nights of anguish she suppressed her own grief, that she might help him to bear his sufferings, and to quit life with resignation, at the early

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age of twenty-two. It was perhaps during this great trial that she learned to control her acutest feelings, and acquired the firmness, composure, and self-possession which, in spite of her extreme sensibility, so remarkably distinguished her. Seven years later, when in the enjoyment of complete happiness, she wrote:—"The date of my letter will have recalled to you the trial which marked this day. The Lord has richly blessed me since that sad epoch: He has given me a friend and a protector, instead of the one I lost: He has permitted me to taste a happiness of which I had not even an idea; nevertheless I feel that my heart was crushed by that blow, and that I have never recovered the joyous elasticity of youth. But tears have borne their fruit; I felt it then, and I feel it now, and I render thanks to God. I have learned to love his holy will, even when it afflicts me, and to acquiesce in it with a cheerful heart."

She spent the winter which followed the death of her brother in the country, in the greatest seclusion. Wholly occupied in sustaining her mo-

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ther's courage, the only relief she sought was in frequent visits to the poor. The more she herself suffered, the more she felt the need of assuaging their sufferings by her bounty.

To praise a princess for generosity seems to be a eulogy of little value; to give, is to her so easy, that we are tempted to ask how her beneficence is distinguishable from an amiable caprice; but, thank Heaven, the exclusive privilege of true charity is not reserved to those only who give of their necessity. To bestow her time, her attention, her heart,—to leave traces of happiness wherever she passed,—to give the poor not only alms, but pleasure, and to show them that it was not solely of their poverty she thought, but of themselves;—to give significance to a present to the affluent by the circumstances that accompany the gift, and to stamp upon it the value of affection,—all this the Princess Helen did at every period of her life; and therefore we venture to call her generous, without fearing to confound her honoured name with those on which such praises are often so lightly bestowed.

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It was not without a great effort of her will, and of submission to the wishes of her family, that she returned to Schwerin after a long mourning, and took part in the fêtes given at the Court in celebration of the fiftieth year of the reign of the aged Grand Duke, her grandfather.

We would fain avoid repeating the hackneyed expressions applied to princesses, whatever their merits; but it may truly be said, that there, as in every place where she appeared, she was beloved; that a peculiar interest attached to her, because she imparted a peculiar interest to the most ordinary actions. The internal grace diffused from the soul over the features, the air at once of youth and of thoughtfulness,—" frutto senile in sul giovanil fiore,—"surprised and charmed all who saw her. Old and young, high and low, felt her gentle and vivifying influence, and quitted her presence with a more ardent love for all that is good; whether she entered the cottages of the poor or the assemblies of the noble, her presence lighted up all faces like a sunbeam.

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Let those who knew her say, whether life did not seem brighter by her side; whether the thought of her did not mingle with all their recollections, as well as with all their hopes; whether since her death a kind of despondency does not overshadow the future.

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II.

Who has not experienced a melancholy feeling at the sight of a vessel launched upon the pathless sea? fain would we hasten, yet fain hold back the hand that is about to let go the last cable: however smooth the face of the waters, however bright the horizon, our imagination sees in the distance tempestuous waves, and dark, menacing clouds.

Such are the feelings with which we arrive at the moment when the fate of the Princess Helen is about to be decided; we reluctantly quit with her the peaceful dwelling, where, as yet, she has known of life only tranquil joys, or sorrows tempered by those consolations which God never withholds from us in the trials that proceed

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immediately from his hand. From the point at which we are arrived the narrative of her life forms a portion of the history of France, and her happiness and her misfortunes become our own.

In the spring of 1836 the Duke of Orleans and the Duke of Nemours quitted France for the first time since the year 1830, and arrived at Berlin, where the King received them at once with his usual cordiality; charmed at finding so much solid merit under so engaging an exterior, he conceived for them an almost paternal affection, and good-naturedly expressed his regret at having no daughters whose happiness he could confide to them.

Then it was that the image of the young Princess whom he had seen at Toeplitz rose up before him. He did not however forget the various qualities which must be united in the future Duchess of Orleans. None but a lady of royal blood could be thought of as daughter-in-law to Queen Marie-Amélie; yet it was indispensable that she should enter France as well informed concerning that country as if she had been edu-

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cated in it. She must be eminent for her virtues and the superiority of her mind, or she could not take her place by the side of our Princesses. Lastly, while she rose above the narrow prejudices and the puerile mistrust with which the government of the King was at that time regarded by the Courts of Europe, she must be able to face with firmness all the chances, or even dangers, which the consort of a French Prince might have to encounter.

These conditions, so rarely united, the King of Prussia found in the Princess Helen of Mecklenburg, and in her alone; and the affection he felt for her, as well as for our Prince Royal, made him extremely anxious to bring about a union between them. He appeared to take a personal interest in their destiny, which no opposition offered by his own family could diminish. Whether the King had betrayed his wish to the Duke of Orleans during his stay at Berlin, or whether he caused it to be intimated to him afterwards, the Prince desired, before entertaining such a project, however suitable on all

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public grounds, to convince himself that the King's affection had not blinded him as to the merit of the Princess, and that she was indeed such as he had described her. He had too much feeling and honour to regard marriage merely as a duty to his family and his country; he regarded it as the most serious affair of his life; and, though nothing would have induced him to disregard the obligations which his rank imposed on him, he did not hold cheap any of the conditions that ensure domestic happiness and intimate union. He did not therefore disclose his intentions to any of the King's Ministers, until he had had an opportunity of forming his own judgement of the mind, character, and personal attractions of the Princess: not until then was M. Bresson instructed to ascertain the disposition of the Court of Mecklenburg, and to demand officially the hand of the Princess Helen.

It is well known that the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, her brother, showed at first little inclination for the alliance. It would be unjust to regard his hesitation as merely a syste-

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matic opposition to the political views of the Government of 1830 and the House of Orleans. In his anxiety for the welfare of his sister, he might well take alarm at seeing her depart for a country so fatal to its princes. If we ever had a right to blame him for his reluctance, have we it now? But we may at least admire in the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg, her mother, a still loftier, though not less tender affection, and in the Princess Helen herself a greater grandeur of mind. All that was known of the Duke of Orleans was doubtless calculated to captivate the imagination of a young girl, and the prospect of sharing the throne of France with such a man must have appeared to her extremely brilliant; but these were not the motives that most forcibly actuated her mind. Happiness, indeed—keenly as she enjoyed it while God granted it to her in so rare a maesure—had not for her that engrossing importance which it has for souls of an ordinary stamp; happiness was not her first object; or rather it did not consist, in her eyes, in the quiet possession of

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the good things of this world, but in the employment of the noblest faculties of the soul and intellect; in the fulfilment of a "noble, great, and important task." Hence she felt herself attracted to France and to the Orleans family by the very circumstances which repelled minds of a less heroic temper. She was not ignorant of the perils to which the King and his sons had been incessantly exposed for the last seven years; she knew in what anxiety the Queen passed her days, between the dangers which the Princes voluntarily sought in Africa, and those which pursued them in their own country: but these perils and these cares she accepted with a firm will. She resolved to devote herself to the Prince whose noble character inspired her with confidence, and, together with him, to the accomplishment of a grand and noble work. These lofty and heroic views of the uses and ends of life had their reward; all the rest was added unto her; but we may affirm that, in making her decision, she was not hurried away by a romantic fantasy.

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The Duke of Orleans seems to have divined what was passing in her mind, and to have responded, as if instinctively, to her thoughts, when he wrote the letter (addressed to M. Bresson, but in reality intended for the Princess Helen) in which he stated with perfect frankness all the objections the Mecklenburg family might, in their solicitude, make to their union. "I have gathered from this letter," said the Princess, "strength to encounter all the difficulties I can foresee." From that moment she no longer hesitated; supported by the approbation of her mother, she gave herself up to the hopes which dawned upon her, and turned all her thoughts toward that country she was going so completely to adopt as her own.

The marriage contract was signed April 5th, 1837, and on May 15th she quitted Ludwigslust, accompanied by the Grand Duchess her mother, who wished herself to present her to the Queen. From daybreak the passages and staircases of the Castle were filled with the old servants and early companions of the Princess,

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anxious to see her once more. She thanked them, and smiled through her tears when she saw the ground all strewn with flowers. Nosegays, thrown by friendly hands, filled the carriage, and she had some difficulty in making her way through them. Four lines composed by her, and traced upon one of the windows of the palace, recall the mingled feelings of happiness and sorrow which agitated her at the moment of her departure.

"So lebe wohl, du stilles Haus,
Ich zieh betrübt aus dir hinaus;
Und blüht mir fern ein schönes Glück,
Ich denke gern an dich zurück.

"*May* 14*th*, 1837."

Along the whole of her route she received touching marks of affection; the peasantry, as well as the great landowners of Mecklenburg, sent deputations to offer her their wishes for her happiness. The King of Prussia requested the Princesses to stop at Potsdam, where he received them, surrounded by the Royal Family and his Ministers. He could not restrain his emotion, when, in bidding them adieu, he gave

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his solemn benediction to the young Princess, whose destiny he had mainly contributed to determine.

On the 22nd of May, the mission appointed to receive the Princess on her entrance into France, and to escort her to Paris, arrived at Fulda, and was presented to her. In putting the Duke de Broglie at its head, the King marked his desire to associate with the marriage of his son a venerated name, attached to a union of virtues and endowments which, even singly, have been bestowed upon few. The Princess was fully capable of appreciating this choice, and expressed her thanks for it to the King.

On the 25th of May, a beautiful spring day, the Princesses crossed the frontier, under a triumphal arch, in which the word *France* was inscribed in large letters formed of flowers. Without dwelling on all the official receptions which succeeded each other from Forbach to Fontainebleau, and which, at least externally, resemble one another on all occasions, we cannot but notice the effect everywhere produced by

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the betrothed Princess. It cannot be doubted that she was agitated by conflicting emotions. As she confessed at a later period, some sad presentiments mingled with her hopes, some regrets for her native country, with sincere love for the country of her adoption; but her secret feelings were always concealed under a veil of graceful dignity. People were astonished to find in her, combined with all the modesty of a young girl, the ease and self-possession of a Princess born to a throne. She appeared neither elated nor intimidated by having become all at once the object of universal attention. She said to every one, not what had been dictated to her, but what she felt at the moment, and what she felt was sure to be the most appropriate thing; so well was she guided by her unerring and delicate instinct.

At Metz especially, the first French garrison town, her tact, in which there was no appearance of study, her high-bred air, without any trace of hauteur, were most striking. At Forbach she had been met by a country population; and

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the good-natured simplicity and cordial welcome of the village mayors of Alsatia, might almost remind her of the friendly familiarity of her good Mecklenburgers. But at Metz, she was completely in France; she had arrived at one of our provincial towns, which are ever ill-disposed towards foreign faces and fashions, and more ready to criticize than to approve. When she quitted it, she had, in a few hours, captivated the idle and curious multitude. The officers of the garrison, who had been presented to her soon after she left her carriage, when she had had but a few moments of rest, declared that they should have felt almost over-awed in the presence of this young girl, if her child-like and modest graciousness of manner had not at once captivated them.

In fact, the inexpressible charm of her face was felt from the moment you saw her. If no particular feature attracted attention, there was so much harmony and nobleness in all her person, that the eye dwelt upon her with lively interest, and could hardly detach itself from her. Her look, at once mild and penetrating,

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seemed to dive into the thoughts of the speaker. Her refined and benignant smile, her expression, sometimes brilliant, sometimes affectionate and tender, reflected her soul, and gave back to the speaker the impression made upon her by every word that he said. Although the rare distinction of her air and manner continually reminded you of her rank (which never occupied her own thoughts), we may safely affirm that the sentiment she peculiarly inspired was that of sympathy.

At a later period of her life, when grief under all its forms had penetrated her very being, the extreme mobility of her countenance was veiled under a light but unvarying cloud of sadness and gentleness; her look, as animated as ever and far more touching, seemed to implore a word of hope. Lastly, the agitation of her heart, which nothing but a will so firm as hers could have controlled, betrayed itself in her movements, which, though always graceful and dignified, were more rapid than before.

The arrival at Fontainebleau was one of those

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many splendid and striking spectacles which that spot has witnessed. It was one of those moments, now become so rare, when the country and the family who governed it shared the same emotions; the political interests, were identified with the domestic happiness of the House of Orleans. The marriage of the Prince Royal seemed to provide against every future contingency. People felt as if they were embarking on a tide of prosperity with full sail; the marks of public satisfaction bespoke a genuine enthusiasm, and the carriage of the Princess was welcomed amidst repeated cries of "Vive le Roi!" The inner courtyard was lined with troops; an immense crowd pressed around the railing. At the foot of the grand flight of stairs stood the King with the Princes, his sons, awaiting her; near him, the Duke of Orleans, just returned from Châlons, where the first interview with his betrothed bride had taken place the evening before. At the top of the stairs stood the Queen, surrounded by the Princesses, the ladies of her household, and those who were invited to the marriage festivi-

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ties; and lastly, behind, was a group of gentlemen, composed of all who, for the last seven years, had appeared in the great arena of politics; all whom France then possessed, illustrious for their talent, or distinguished by their eminent position in the country. The young Princess stepped from the carriage, the eyes of all rivetted upon her, with singular grace. She bent before the King, and kissed his hand with affectionate deference; then threw herself into the arms of the Queen, with an emotion so genuine, yet so subdued, that no one could remain an indifferent spectator.

"It was a touching scene," wrote one from Fontainebleau. . . . The young Princess has a truly regal air; she appears to command all who surround her, and yet she has a youthful, nay, even a childlike look. Her face has just the degree of beauty which is requisite to second the charm of mind and character: it is a face which you gaze on, not for itself, but because it is the organ of the soul; her eyes are full of life and intelligence; it is impossible to possess

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more consummate dignity, and she has an air of perfect ease, without the least boldness. She is original, strong, and simple; a person who has a great air, great qualities, and perfect self-possession. . . . In the midst of the splendours of her wedding gifts, (*corbeille*) of gems and laces and all those magnificent trifles which fill the heart with a sentiment of sadness and void, the Princess does not appear for an instant to have her head turned. . . . Towards the end of their stay intense anxiety was felt about their reception at Paris, and a certain vague terror cast its dark shadow over all these grand shews and vanities. The Royal couple have however been very well received; the people were both orderly and enthusiastic, peaceable and joyous. At the moment of entering the Tuileries, the Princess, with the sudden impulse of a child, rose upright in her open carriage, to have a view of the whole *coup d'œil*. This spontaneous movement produced the greatest effect on those who witnessed it. What an entrance, at the age of twenty, on

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what a career! Her face does not for an instant lose its calm expression,—a proof, as I think, that God dwells in her inmost heart. She is like a princess in a Fairy Tale, transported by some good Genius into a golden palace."

How like a dream does it appear, when, from these fêtes, these triumphs, this youthful Princess adorned in splendid attire, and welcomed everywhere with acclamations of joy, our thoughts turn to the fatal passage from the Tuileries to the Chamber of Deputies!

She alone has not changed; there is the same dignity, the same grace, the same self-possession. Serene and untroubled in the most appalling danger, as amidst the splendours of Fontainebleau. . . . But let us hasten back to the bright days of her life,—alas! how few and brief!

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III.

The years which immediately followed the marriage of the Duchess of Orleans were marked by a union of all the joys that earth has to bestow. Perfect happiness in the bosom of her family, the *éclat* of a young and brilliant Court, the sincere homage rendered, not to her rank but to the rare qualities which began to be known and appreciated, all the hopes for the future yet unclouded —nothing was wanting to complete the felicity of the young Princess. She was happy, and she felt her happiness with all the fullness of a nature at once so sensitive and so thoughtful.

"Today," she writes to the friend of her childhood, (the 30th of May, 1838, the anniversary of her marriage,) "my heart is fuller than

ever of happiness and of gratitude. This is one of those days which brings each time a new emotion. What a difference from last year! Now, all the hopes I then cherished are realized, and fresh hopes attach me to the future. A profound and true affection, the germs of which were on that day implanted in my heart, but of which I had then no adequate conception; my position firmly and distinctly settled, as it regards my family, and based, as it regards the country, on no distant hope;—these are causes for gratitude, of which we foresaw indeed some; but they have been extended and multiplied more than your kind heart and that of my Mother could venture to hope;—more than my own could even imagine.

"It is two o'clock. At this hour last year I was in the midst of the luxury and elegance of the *corbeille de mariage*. What a load weighed upon my spirits! That luxury has since become, God be praised! very indifferent to me; and I have learned to regard what then overwhelmed me, as an inevitable condition of my existence,

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the true value of which I ought to learn to appreciate.

"Then the evening—those successive marriage ceremonies, without any interval for calm self-examination or devout reflection; even while they set the seal on my happiness, they distressed me by the sort of spirit that reigned in them. Oh, what recollections! What a difference! Let us together bless God, who showers down his mercies upon me, and who has given to my life an object so grand, so beautiful, so important. It appears to me that God gives me too much happiness; and though I feel full well that it exceeds all that I deserve, I accept it with gratitude, and will enjoy it as long as it shall be granted to me.

And when the hope she alludes to was realized, what a hymn of joy are those words, written a few hours after the birth of the Comte de Paris, in which her maternal transports are blended with the sublime sentiment of her new duties towards France!

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"How merciful is God! Your heart has, I know, risen, like mine, in thanksgivings. You have felt all the extent of my felicity. Yes, your child is the happiest of mothers, and her heart seems almost too narrow to contain the whole of her bliss. A new world opens before me; a child to love and cherish,—the hopes of a nation to realize, by the future life of that child!" The task is a great and noble one; may God grant us light and wisdom!"

The ardent interest which she took in the glory of her country was heightened, if that was possible, by her personal happiness. The course of public events, and the movement in the world of literature, excited her attention even more than before. By associating herself with the Prince Royal in the cordial and intelligent reception he gave to all men distinguished for intellect and talent, she was already preparing the circle in the centre of which she hoped to see her son grow up to manhood.

She was singularly endowed with all the qualities and graces which would have tended to

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increase the number of devoted personal friends of the royal family, amongst men of all shades of political opinion. But her affectionate submission to the King's judgment led her to avoid giving any pretext to party men, who are always ready to imagine a divergence of views between the heir to the throne and its actual occupant. She avoided with scrupulous delicacy whatever could attract particular attention or homage to herself. Denying herself the noble pleasure of assembling about her a society suited to her own tastes, (which malevolence might have transformed into a political coterie,) she made not the slightest distinction between her own manner of living and that of her young sisters-in-law. Part of her mornings was passed with them in the Queen's room, in which each had her work-table. The King generally joined them, and had the most remarkable publications of the day read aloud to him in the midst of the family circle. In the evening, the Princess Royal took her place by the side of the Queen, and, when her Majesty retired, returned to her own apartments and em-

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ployed herself with the Prince in reading. The activity of their minds gave life to their domestic privacy; nor did they ever seek frivolous amusements as a relief from the monotonous duties of representation. An enlightened taste for art gave a higher tone even to the dull uniformity of Court fêtes. Sometimes the first artists of the Conservatoire were summoned to the Tuileries, to execute the music of the greatest composers;—they still remember with what pleasure the King used to listen to the airs which brought back the recollections of his youth. Sometimes the Duke of Orleans revived the elegant splendour of other times at Chantilly, now a desert. The Duchess gave a charm to these fêtes by her youth, and her graceful and unaffected gaiety; but then, as always, she was afraid to allow herself to be carried away by the current of happiness, and contemplated the extreme brilliancy of her life with a sort of anxiety. One day (the eve of a *bal costumé* which she was to give at the Pavillon de Marsan), she sent for a friend, and entreated her to tell her with perfect

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sincerity, whether she did not think it blameable to encourage amusements which were not only frivolous but perhaps dangerous. With the most charming *naïveté* she begged for the answer, which she dreaded to receive. This little incident, trifling in itself, is important, as revealing the inmost nature of the Duchess of Orleans. She was always given to this scrupulous self-examination, even when she seemed the most absorbed by the cares or pleasures of the moment. Every passing event interested her; but the same ardour of mind which led her to take so lively a part in human things, raised her constantly above them, and bore her thoughts to Heaven.

Thus, looking back on the year which was just closing, her heart overflowed with thanksgivings and prayers.

"This year will soon be ended," she writes (31st of December, 1840). "It has been rich in blessings. May God grant us thankful and faithful hearts! May he give us strength in his wisdom to resist our enemies, both those with which the world surrounds us and those we

find in our own hearts! May we serve him, the God of Mercy, by our words, our actions, our whole lives! May he be with those whom we love, may he lead them to himself, protect them, bless them! Ah, how is the heart filled with wishes and prayers, and how does each year add to their number! In this solemn hour one can think of nothing but God and those one loves!"

In the month of May, 1841, the baptism of the Comte de Paris took place.

"Here is the spring come upon us in all its magnificence," writes the Duchess. "It will be the most beautiful ornament of the fêtes we are expecting. . . .

"Those hours passed in Notre-Dame on Sunday, the 2nd of May, will be hours of emotion, prayer, and hope. I wish that no lesser cares were mixed with these feelings. But the fear of seeing my child restless, frightened, perhaps even obstinate, at that solemn moment, torments me much. Read, I beg you, what Fénelon says on the subject of baptism; the passage is beautiful and instructive."

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And on the following day (3rd May):—

"Nothing could be more beautiful or more solemn than the ceremony of yesterday; nothing more touching, more pure, than my little angel when presented at the altar; nothing more profoundly moved than his poor mother's heart at that moment. I know not if I deceive myself, but I thought I saw in the eyes of all present a look of tender affection for this child. It was not flattery; no, it was truth. The baptismal prayers are beautiful. I followed them throughout the ceremony, and I found them very much in harmony with my own sentiments."

The birth of her second son, the Duc de Chartres (9th November, 1840), completed the happiness of the Royal Family. A new horizon opened to the Duchess of Orleans; her heart overflowed with joy, but serious thoughts ever mingled with her liveliest enjoyments. She was not indifferent to the simplest pleasures, nor was there one, however simple, that did not excite in her a train of the loftiest sentiments.

A few fragments of letters written at this time

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permit us to raise the veil which concealed this pure and fervent soul from the world.

"You know that nature has always had a great influence over me. I think that we cannot sufficiently identify ourselves with her by observation, for she is one of the admirable manifestations by which God speaks to our hearts. I think it is good to encourage this taste in children; in admiring the works of nature, they learn to love the Creator. You may imagine therefore that I do not let a beautiful sunset, or a bright moonlight escape me, without pointing it out to my child, or without speaking to him of the Being who made these wonders. The sense of the beautiful must be developed in all its forms in these infant souls." . . .

"Yesterday I called up all my courage to part with Robert,* and to establish him in his new lodging with Paris. We went in a sort of a triumphal procession; Paris ran merrily on before; I carried the little one; then came my mother, and then all our women. I had the happiness

* The Duc de Chartres.

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of putting the poor babe to sleep, before I left him. I recommended him earnestly to the care of Madame G——, who has taken the superintendence of this household, and went to give Paris his soup; he was engaging and sweet as an angel. This was one of the evenings I love, they leave such tranquillity at the bottom of the heart; they are rare now, for I comply, as far as I can, with the numerous exactions of the world." . . .

"The minds of children unfold themselves more freely when we are alone with them. I try to be as much as possible alone with my son. Today I took him back to Neuilly. He fell asleep in my arms, and I laid him down on his bed, and did all sorts of little offices for him. You should have seen how caressing and tender he was. Oh, how happy is a mother in humble life!"

And again, on the return of the Duke of Orleans from his last expedition to Africa.

"June, 1840.

"Here is my protector, my friend, my life, once more returned to our own little home! His

absence seems to me to have been a long dream. Yesterday was a blessed day; I can compare it to no other, except that on which Paris was born. My heart was full of gratitude, and throbbed with joy. Some visitors came; then we were left alone for a few minutes. Our little one was shut up in my bedroom;—presently the door half opened and he came in, looking rather shy, but putting out his hand to his father, who thought him grown. The family went away, and we dined *téte-à-téte*. The little one trotted round us, singing, laughing, and charming the heart of his father, who would not let it appear that he was delighted. We had a good, dear evening of confidential talk."

One of those events by which, during the eighteen years of the government of July, France was continually reminded of the value of the King's life, now interrupted the peaceful course of her domestic joys.

"Providence has again protected us in a visible manner," she writes after one of the at-

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tempts at assassination; "the King, the Queen, my aunt, and all who accompanied them, have been spared, and for the eighth time these infernal attempts upon so precious a life have proved abortive. At the first moment, the sentiment of the goodness of God overcame the horror which such a crime must inspire, and I could not sufficiently bless Him who had preserved us from such a frightful calamity. We went afterwards to St. Cloud, in order to be with the rest of the family. It was there that I felt most strongly, on seeing the King again, and embracing him tenderly, how great had been God's mercy in preserving him to us. We were present at a *Te Deum* in the chapel of the Château. I joined it with all my heart, as you may imagine."

Another time, at the news of a similar event, she entered the room where the Comte de Paris was taking a lesson, and said with great emotion, "Go on your knees, and thank God with me!" Even after the shock and agitation of such events were past, a feeling of the insta-

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bility of all things dwelt upon her mind—a sort of vague terror at the excess of her own happiness. A letter written from Dreux, on the 7th of July, 1841, expresses in a touching manner the almost superstitious fears which sometimes crossed her mind.

"I saw for the first time the tomb of my poor sister-in-law.* There I saw the vaults where we are all to be one day re-united, where so many tears will flow, where mine, perhaps, will precede my ashes. All these thoughts, which gave a very serious turn to my mind, led me to put myself anew with full and absolute trust into the hands of the Lord."

Nevertheless, she passed through this year (1841) in the plenitude of earthly joys and blessings, and everything conspired to awaken the hope that it would be followed by similar ones. The Duke of Orleans, who had been ill for some time after his return from Africa, was entirely recovered. A journey he made with the Duchess in the south of France, where both were received

* Marie of Orleans, Duchess of Wirtemberg.

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with enthusiasm, showed his increasing popularity. The King, struck with his son's capacity, initiated him more and more into public business, and by so doing strengthened the general confidence in the future.

"The Prince," wrote the Duchess of Orleans, "finds his occupations multiply every day,—to my great satisfaction, though they often take him from me. I say to my satisfaction,—for I have a great deal of ambition *for him;* and when I see him succeed in everything he undertakes, when I see that confidence in the wisdom of his views increases every day, when I see the King entrust him with affairs to which he attaches great importance, I am proud of him, and that sentiment is sometimes a compensation for the loss of his presence."

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IV.

Nevertheless these happy anticipations were not unmixed with cares. The physicians were uneasy about the Duchess of Orleans's health, of which she herself never took any heed; they insisted upon her going to take the waters of Plombières, but had great difficulty in persuading her to believe it necessary. It cost her much to leave her children at the time of year when she could most enjoy their company in that charming retreat, Neuilly, where her domestic life was less interrupted than in Paris by the duties she owed to society. "If you only knew," she wrote some days before her departure, "how I delight in summer in the country! in the beau-

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tiful weather, and more than all in the children, who are so fresh, so rosy, so charming, and who pass the whole day on the grass! They look like little flowers in the middle of the long grass which overtops them."

She gave way at length to the prayers of her family; but, as if she felt the necessity of fortifying herself against some unforeseen disaster, she sought the consolations of religion, to receive which she prepared herself with more than ordinary fervour. She quitted happy Neuilly with the Duke of Orleans on the 3rd of June. Although the manœuvres at the camp of St. Omer did not permit him to be absent for more than twenty-four hours, he insisted on conducting her himself to Plombières. They were accompanied by General Baudrand,* M. de Montguyon, and Madame de Montesquiou, lady-in-waiting to the Princess. In traversing the ex-

* General Baudrand, who had been Governor of the Duke of Orleans, was, at his death, appointed to fill the same office to the Comte de Paris.—*Transl.*

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terior Boulevards, they passed by a cemetery, round the entrance of which there are little shops hung with funereal wreaths and ornaments for sale. "I hate these people who speculate on sorrow," said the Prince. "Look!" he continued, glancing his eye over the different inscriptions, "they have calculated on everybody; here are garlands for a young girl, and here is one for a little child." These words touched the Princess, who no doubt thought of her absent children, and her eyes filled with tears. The Prince smiled, and taking her hand, continued, "Well, then,—no, it shall not be for a child; it may perhaps be for a man of thirty-two." She raised her head directly, and looking him in the face, affectionately reproached him with trying to banish one sorrowful thought by another infinitely sadder. But he soon succeeded in diverting her mind, and this last journey which they took together ended cheerfully.

"I am so happy," said she one evening, "that I have not the least desire to get well. If I had not this trial, I should perhaps have one much

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more painful. Of all pains, physical suffering is the most bearable, and I only go to Plombières because my family wishes it."

Although the Duke of Orleans had expressed his desire that the Princess might be spared the fatigue of official receptions, they were received with acclamations in the department of the Vosges. Triumphal arches were erected in all the towns they passed through, and their carriage was surrounded by crowds, eager to show their joy at the sight of them. The Duke of Orleans arrived at Plombières on the 5th of July, and employed the following day in inspecting the establishment prepared for the Princess, paying the most minute attention to everything that could contribute to her comfort and pleasure. He repeatedly recommended her to the care of those whom he left about her; reminding them that she had never been careful of her own health, and was always ready to overtask her strength as soon as she felt it return.

Towards evening the Prince visited the pretty valley of Saint-Loup with her, and on seeing

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her gather some mountain flowers, he plucked a bunch of wild Scabious,* and brought them to her. At the moment, these melancholy flowers attracted no attention, but their sad significance afterwards recurred to those who saw them gathered.

On the 7th of July the Prince departed early. "Our separation will happily not be long," said the poor Princess with emotion, "but the first moment of parting is always painful."

On Thursday the 14th, the weather being fine, and the Duchess enjoying the feeling of returning strength, she proposed a walk to the valley of Gérarmé, inhabited by several generations of a musical peasant family, who still show with pride a piano-forte made by their grandfather. The Princess asked to see it, and rested for some time in the cottage, where a young shepherd played on a bad guitar various airs, which she playfully tried to imitate, to the infinite delight of the poor family. It was late when she returned to Plombières, where she was to receive a few

* Called in France, La Fleur des Veuves.—*Transl.*

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persons at dinner. Enlivened by her walk, and with her hands filled with flowers (which were found and carefully preserved the following day), she hastened upstairs and began to dress. Madame de Montesquiou likewise had just begun her toilet, when a servant came to tell her that General Baudrand begged her to go down into his room. Surprised by this request, she made him repeat it again.—"Madam, he begs you will go down this instant."—"Good Heavens, Monnier, you look quite aghast!"—"Madam, come down directly, I conjure you."—"Good God! what has happened? Is the King assassinated?"—"Madam, you must be prepared for the worst; but do not stay so near to the Princess! come downstairs quietly."

She went downstairs to the General, whom she found holding a letter in his hand, unable to speak or to rise from his chair. He reached her the fatal letter, which contained only these words, "The Prince Royal is dead." Had the Duke of Orleans been assassinated? Had he fallen in suppressing an insurrection? Had he

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been carried off by a sudden illness? These few words announced only the irreparable calamity, which must be communicated to the Princess without preparation, without any circumstance of mitigation or comfort. Time pressed; the valet-de-chambre, who had his watch in his hand, said, "It only wants a quarter of an hour to dinner-time. No one here has yet heard the news; it is still possible to conceal it from the Princess." But this suggestion was rejected, and the prefect and physician were sent for. The latter insisted that she should only be told at first that the Duke was dangerously ill; "her life depends upon it," said he; "I shall hold you responsible for it." At length it was determined that the prefect should himself go and write a despatch, ostensibly received by the telegraph, announcing that the Prince Royal had been taken seriously ill at Paris. There was no further time to deliberate; in a few moments the Princess would leave her room.

Madame de Montesquiou, imploring God to give her the strength she vainly sought in her-

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self, ascended the stairs which led to the Princess's room and were only separated from it by a small enclosed landing-place and a glass door. On reaching this door she stopped a moment. Through the thin curtain which covered the glass she saw the Princess finish her toilet, and then, elegantly dressed, graceful and smiling, open the door. Leaning motionless against the wall, Madame de Montesquiou could not summon courage to utter the words which were at once to destroy the whole fabric of her happiness. "What, not dressed yet!" said the Princess cheerfully. "But what is the matter?" she added, coming nearer; "you are very pale—what has happened to you? Some misfortune in your family? Are your children or your husband ill?" Madame de Montesquiou took her hands and pressed them without answering; but even her silence aroused no suspicion of the truth in the mind of the Princess. "No, Madam," said Madame de Montesquiou, at length, "no misfortune has befallen me; but I am very unhappy, nevertheless. I have to tell your Royal Highness" . . . At these words

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she started back. "Good Heavens! what has happened? My children? The King?"—"Alas, Madam, the Prince Royal is dangerously ill."—"Oh God, he is dead, I am sure of it! Tell me...!" and she fell on her knees, crying, "Oh God, take pity upon me—do not let him die—thou knowest that I cannot survive him." She remained for a few moments absorbed in prayer, then asked to see the despatch, and read it over several times. "This is not the usual form of telegraphic despatches," said she,—a doubt flashing across her mind; but it was soon dissipated by the prefect. She burst into tears: then, rising with firmness, she said, "I will set out this instant, perhaps I may still be in time to nurse him." Orders were given for her departure; at moments she had gleams of hope, and said, "Perhaps I may find him nearly well, and then how he will scold me; but how happy I shall be to be scolded!" Then fear predominated again, and she said, "He is so afraid of alarming me, he must be ill indeed to desire that I should be informed of it:" and her tears flowed afresh.

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At eight o'clock in the evening the carriage, containing the mournful party, left Plombières, surrounded by a sorrowful crowd, all weeping, and holding out their hands to the Princess, who bade them a kind and sad farewell. She had to pass again under the garlands of flowers with which the streets were still ornamented. The Princess prayed and wept in silence, no one venturing to address a word to her. At midnight they reached Épinal. Madame de Montesquiou kept her eyes fixed on the window, in terror lest some public demonstration should inform the Princess of the extent of her misfortune; but the crowd which filled the streets remained silent. Through the darkness she saw the General in command of the division approach the carriage-door; without daring to ask him any questions, she said to him in a low voice, "We are returning to Paris." He made no answer, and she saw from the expression of his face that he knew as much, probably more, than herself. They set out again; at about one o'clock the courier told them that a carriage was

coming in the direction of Paris. "Open the door," cried the Princess, and she was with difficulty prevented from rushing out of the carriage. At that moment she saw two men advancing towards her, and recognized M. Chomel, physician to the Royal Family. At the sight of him she uttered a piercing shriek. "Monsieur Chomel! Oh, God! The Prince?"—"Madam, the Prince is no longer living."—"What do you say? no, no, it is not possible! What disease can have carried him off thus? Speak, and kill me at once."—"Alas, Madam, a strange and dreadful catastrophe,—a fall from a carriage . . . He never recovered his consciousness; a few words of German, which he pronounced from time to time, were the only sign he gave of life. No doubt it was some remembrance to your Royal Highness."—"No, it is not possible," replied she, "I cannot believe it;" and her words were stifled by sobs. She then turned to Madame de Montesquiou, and said, "But the illness of which you told me?"—"Madam, it was to prepare you."—"What! you knew of his death?

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Ah, what courage you have had!" added she, with that delicacy of feeling which never forsook her.

For nearly an hour she sat thus on the high-road, in profound darkness, weeping in her carriage, with the doors open, while the persons of her suite sat on the steps vainly striving to contain their own grief; their sobs burst forth in spite of themselves, and broke the silence of that fearful night.

When day dawned, "Alas," said she, "what a day is beginning for me!" and grasping the hand of General Baudrand, she continued, "Dear General, you can feel the extent of my misfortune more than any one else; you knew his value; you who guided him in early youth, and loved him so tenderly. Oh, I have lost everything! and France too, she has lost him who idolized her, and who understood her so well. But even you did not know, as I did, all his kindness—what patience, what gentleness, what good advice he bestowed upon me. I cannot live without him."

Some one spoke to her of her children.

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"My poor children!" said she, "as yet I can feel for no one but him; he had my whole heart."

At four o'clock in the morning she was joined by her sisters-in-law, who had come to meet her; they embraced her without speaking, and placed themselves beside her in the carriage. From this moment she seemed absorbed by a single thought,—to behold once more the features of him she was to see no more alive. She only stopped for a few moments of rest in the most retired villages.

After two dreadful nights, the party arrived at Neuilly on the 16th of July, at about nine in the morning. The King had dismissed his household, and awaited the Duchess, accompanied by his own family and the young Princes, who had arrived the day before from the Château of Eu. They led her into a room, from whence a few broken words were heard from time to time; "Oh, my dear Helen," said the King, "the greatest of all misfortunes has fallen upon my old age."

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"My beloved daughter, live for us, and for your children," added the Queen, in her tone of gentle authority.

In a few minutes the Duchess of Orleans left the room, supported by the King and the Duke of Nemours; the Queen and her little sons followed her weeping. She entered the chapel where the body of the Prince Royal had been placed. The coffin, already closed, alas! stood in the middle of the chapel, which was hung with black. She knelt beside it, gazing intently upon the pall which covered his remains: after a short prayer she rose strengthened, and withdrew to her apartment, to put on the mourning dress which she never again laid aside.

Those who saw her then were deeply struck by the pallor and rigidity of her face; life seemed to have departed from her, and she remained for a long time in a state of stupor, alarming in one so fragile.

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V.

But a common courage, derived from their common reliance on God, sustained the hearts of all the sufferers.

Five months after the fatal event, the Duchess of Orleans wrote as follows: "Yes, the Lord who smites us is a merciful Father. Of this I have an unshaken conviction, even when I cannot feel the soothing consolation which it ought to bestow. I am suffering under a trial which demands implicit faith: sometimes I feel this very powerfully, and in those moments love and hope are granted to me like rays from on high; but at others I feel the wretchedness and infirmity of our nature, and it is impossible for me to raise

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myself up to God. But what patience must he have with us! And shall we not have patience to endure the burthen he lays upon us?"

And on the 14th of July, of the same year, she wrote from Dreux:—"The date of this letter will tell you plainly enough what I feel while tracing these lines; but let not your heart be troubled; let not your affection for me be a source of suffering to you."

"Thank God for me; he has powerfully assisted me, and has made me to feel his peace, and his presence; he has permitted me to breathe the air of eternity; and my soul, which when I came hither was trodden down and parched like the sands of the desert, is now strengthened, refreshed, full of thankfulness to the merciful God who causes such sweet consolations to spring up out of the lap of death. My prayer has been heard. When I drew near to this place I cried to God, O Lord! let me not faint utterly! let not my soul despair as before, when alone before this tomb, I could see only the nothingness of this life, and

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eternity was hidden from my eyes. God has had pity upon me; he has given me grace to be able to shed softer tears,—I could almost say, tears of joy. My heart has been penetrated with the sense of that eternal felicity which awaits us; it seemed to me that I was already translated from the world and from my sorrow; that I already enjoyed communion with the beloved soul, and tasted some portion of the felicity in which it dwells. Thanks be to Him, who in the midst of the shadows of death has made me taste the rich blessings of his love!"

". . . The preceding days were terrible. That is the reason why I did not write to you. The 6th, the anniversary of the brightest day of my life; the 7th, that of my departure for Plombières; the 10th, on which I went to consecrate by my tears and my prayers the chapel built on the spot where the calamity of my life was consummated;* the 11th, the day of its solemn re-

* The Chapel of St. Ferdinand, built on the spot where the Duke of Orleans was killed, was consecrated on the 11th July, 1843.

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ligious consecration; lastly, the 12th, the day of our pilgrimage to Dreux: all this time I endured a thousand deaths, and was bowed down to the earth, until I found the Lord in the sepulchre. Now, I feel at peace with Him, with my cross, and with my future life on this earth. On Sunday, at ten o'clock, I shall receive the Holy Communion in Paris, and shall again pray to God to confirm my soul in the peace, the faith, and the love which I now feel, and which nothing ought ever again to trouble."

But this faith and love were sometimes faint and feeble; if God sometimes lent her wings to ascend to his throne in search of strength, yet, when she came back to earth, her burthen seemed to her very heavy; and after catching a glimpse of Heaven, her grief returned, with all its poignant regrets, its heart-rending recollections, and its faintness of spirit; any event in the family, the sight of a face seen in happier days, a date, were sufficient to revive all her anguish.

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"Ah, how I suffered in speaking to N—— of the sacrifice his wife is making for him! How happy do I think her, in having the power to prove to him that she loves him better than all the world besides, and that, to follow him, she is willing to leave her dearest treasures—her children. How I envy her! But why do I mingle tears with every event of life, even with circumstances which do not concern me? My grief is like a glass, in which every object is reflected."

"1843.

"My sister-in-law is married. You will have heard that I had not courage to be present at the ceremony. I have been several times to St. Cloud, to see my beloved Louise.* I love her so dearly that I know not whither I would not go to meet her. The Queen and Victoire† cheered me by their warm and tender affection! The behaviour of all the family touched me deeply; and I felt that every one of them suffered for me. My heart was at Fontainebleau

* The Queen of the Belgians. † The Duchess of Nemours.

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—in the past. But I heard a voice in my inmost heart which spoke of comfort, of eternity, of reunion. I have spent the night in writing and thinking. . . . .

"I have determined to make my appearance sometimes in the salon, which costs me a most painful effort. Yesterday some mere formal words of condolence from a General made me burst into tears: that often happens to me. I do not remain there long, but I see that the King and Queen are pleased at my resolution, and that will lighten the anguish I feel. . . .

"I have been obliged to receive the Ministers and the officers of the household with my son Paris. It was evening: the apartments which *he* had so often illumined by his presence seemed once more alive. They were lighted up as formerly: all had the air of a *fête;* but alas, what a *fête!* In all this company there was but one thought, but one regret. One beloved and noble countenance looked down upon all the heads which surrounded me. The portrait of the Prince, by M. Ingres, hangs in my salon. It is under

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the eyes of this beloved image that every act of my life must pass."

"Nothing new in our quiet and melancholy home. The lovely days of Spring delight my children, and awaken in me unutterable anguish. He so loved this season! We used to take walks together; we went to see the children at Neuilly; there he made me nosegays of the earliest flowers; he would not put any in his button-hole, as he used to do; 'It is not sedate enough for a man who is past thirty,' said he. He made the children stay abroad all day long, and when I sent for them to come in, he said laughing, 'You think the children are well as long as they are under your eye.' We sometimes dined at five o'clock, that we might drive out after dinner; we passed the evening in that perfumed garden of Neuilly, in making enormous bouquets. At nine o'clock we came in; we talked, we discussed all the important and serious topics of the moment. The politics of the day led us to his favourite subject, the moral greatness of France,

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her influence in the world, her defence, her isolated position, the character of her people, etc. I felt the indefatigable ardour of his mind, and the admirable and dispassionate calmness with which he judged his country, its position, and its prospects." . . .

"Here is Spring again! again that balmy air which he so loved to breathe, those flowers, those birds which he was fond of observing, and of making me observe with him; again those happy children running about the meadow; but all is changed. The very sun is not the same to me. This sky, this sun, have lost their brightness, or rather their brightness gives me pain. I would fain hide myself from them,—fain not behold this revival of nature, which but revives my grief . . ."

And some weeks later:—

"You were right in thinking that this month, which closes with the fairest day of my life (not indeed that it was fair in itself, but in what it promised)—you were right in thinking that it has suggested a continued series of heart-rending comparisons. Six years ago, this evening, I saw

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for the last time the sun set on my native land. The confidence which had sustained me through the whole journey failed me for a moment. I don't know if you recollect the difficulty you had in raising my spirits and giving me courage. I shall never forget my feelings on that last evening passed in Germany. In the midst of the hope which animated me, I felt an indefinable sadness, and I then attributed to the solemnity of the moment what now seems to me a presentiment of my misfortune But, if my calamity is boundless, so was my happiness. . . . I try to be grateful, not only for the blessings which remain to me, but for those which I have enjoyed."

An accident, which was near costing the lives of almost the whole Royal Family, broke the melancholy uniformity of these days, in which she "retraced, step by step, the whole course of her misfortunes." In the detailed account of it which she gives to her friend, she expresses in a lively manner her thankfulness to God, who

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preserved those dear to her almost by a miracle; but the bitterness of her own affliction tinges, spite of herself, the expression of her joy.

" Château d'Eu.

" Yesterday the King resolved to take a drive in a char-à-bancs; I asked permission to accompany him with my two children, which I had not done before. The King was on the front seat with Aumale and Paris; the Queen, I, and Robert were on the second; Françoise and Clementine on the third; then Joinville and Auguste. The King alighted at ——, a little village on the edge of the sea, where he inspected a battery, and had a cannon fired off by Paris, who put the lighted match to it with a coolness that delighted everybody. The King got into the char-à-bancs again, to go to Tréport, where he proposed to inspect another battery. To reach Tréport you must pass over a bridge across flood-gates; the Queen begged earnestly to be allowed to alight, declaring that it was dangerous to cross this bridge, the side rails of

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which were so low as to be hardly perceptible. I had passed over it the day before, and my horses had been frightened; I told the King so, and entreated him to get out of the carriage. "These are childish fears," said the King; "let us go." At the same moment the cannon roared, the flood-gates opened, the horses started off, and three of them rushed headlong into the abyss. The char-à-bancs would have been dragged down, if the postilion who rode the wheel-horse had not, with uncommon coolness and presence of mind, held in his horses, which were on the point of following the others. Fortunately the traces broke, and the char-à-bancs stopped. I shall not attempt to tell you what I felt in that moment, which seemed to me an age. When the King and my children were once out, I thought of nothing more; for my own part, I could willingly have ended my life there. My heart was filled with thankfulness at seeing all those I love saved. And yet it was not unalloyed with bitterness, and some murmurs mingled with my thanksgiving.

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Why was the divine protection, which saved us now, withheld then? Why did we *now* escape, as by a miracle, from a danger a thousand times greater than that which had such cruel results? Not even a horse was hurt. This fall from a height of five-and-twenty feet into a gulf of eddying waters did not cause the smallest wound,—and *then*, so slight a fall was followed by such desolation! The more we think, and the more we question, the more we murmur. Nevertheless, I fain would not; but my poor heart is forced to do so, spite of myself.

"After the accident, the King proceeded on foot with us to the battery of Tréport. An immense crowd followed him with shouts of joy; all looked happy. I alone of all the train was weeping, for it recalled to me another train, in which the King, then as now on foot, and giving his arm to the Queen, followed the body of the victim."

As might be foreseen, it was through her children that life gradually returned to her. "It is

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they who make me live," said she, "and who sometimes conceal from me what is at the bottom of the cup. . . . To me everything is covered with a veil of melancholy, except the joyous existence of my children.

"Today, being Paris's fête-day, I invited all the poor children of Eu and Tréport, which delighted the little fellow. For this day even I have tried not to look into the depths of my own heart; I made myself a child, and enjoyed like a child the joy of those around me."

Her whole existence was interwoven with that of her children, and the smallest circumstances instinctively brought back her thoughts to them.

"I went lately with the Queen to visit Mr. Scheffer. His Saint Augustin really edified me. Nothing can be more sublime than the countenance of St. Monica; she looks like one already in Heaven. I was much affected by it, especially when I felt the pressure of Paris's little hand in mine."

To bring up her sons as their father would

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have brought them up, to labour thus for the welfare of France, for which she could now do nothing except through them, became the sole and all-absorbing occupation of her mind. It was most touching to see a woman of her remarkable faculties give herself up to the most minute attention to their health, their plays, their earliest lessons; and in all this there was nothing puerile or trifling, for it was inspired by a sentiment as lofty as the end she had in view, and of which she never for an instant lost sight.

Thus also the attention she gave to politics, the assiduity with which she followed the debates in the Chambers, her anxiety (too fully justified by the event) as to the state of public opinion toward the end of 1847, were only different forms of the maternal solicitude which kept watch in every direction. Though a foreigner by birth, no one had a quicker or deeper insight into our national character,—a quality as rare and valuable as patriotism itself. She had that sort of sympathy with France, which, without necessarily supposing that she approved of them, sup-

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posed that she understood the ideas prevalent in the country. She was one of the first to feel the shudder which precedes the storm; and though she, like others, did not exactly explain to herself the nature and extent of the danger, or the causes of the disquiet which took possession of the people early in February and soon spread to the Court, she felt them long before.

"There are," she writes in 1847, "some distressing subjects now commonly discussed, which make me blush to open the newspapers. I am saddened to the very soul at the perturbed state of the public mind, at the discredit into which the higher classes have fallen, the general disaffection of all below them, and the sort of vague disgust which seems to have taken possession of everybody.

"The moral disease manifests itself, not in sudden attacks or violent convulsions, but in the growing weakness of the rulers and indifference of the people. We want a reaction. To check the evil, an able hand is wanted; to cure it, a sympathetic heart. Alas! I can think only of a

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prince who understood the character of his time; whose sensitive mind shared in all the moral sufferings of his country, or rather divined them beforehand. He would have known how to infuse fresh vigour into the country, and to give a new direction to its efforts; his intentions would have been seconded by his firmness; his ability would have aided his integrity; France has need of him, but God has taken him from her!

"What is before us? This is a thought which robs me of sleep by night and troubles my hours of solitude. The evil is deep-seated, because it lies in the moral condition of the people. Is it transient, or is it a symptom of weakness and decay? I cannot decide, but I pray God to breathe some vivifying spirit over our old land of France."

However extravagant were the demands of certain parties, the Duchess of Orleans thought them, as a symptom, deserving of serious attention, and deeply regretted to see the King's Ministers, confident in the power of reason and

law, which were clearly on their side, entirely free from alarm. But whatever were her fears, whatever her leanings towards a line of policy which, by appeasing hostile passions, appeared to her more conducive to the security of the throne, her sincerity in expressing them before all the members of the Royal Family was only equalled by her discretion and reserve in not permitting them to be known out of that circle. If she was mistaken in thinking it possible to prevent the disasters of 1848, it must be confessed that the anticipations of many other persons were no less falsified by events. Malevolence alone could blame her for having a presentiment of those disasters, or accuse her, because she foresaw them, of holding herself prepared for a convulsion so destructive of the fortunes of her family.

The only answer to such calumnies which is not unworthy of her, is the simple recital of her actions, her words, nay almost her gestures, during that memorable 24th of February, on which the sudden and unexpected nature of events laid bare

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what was passing in all hearts. It is with great regret that we pass by in silence the noble examples of dignity and courage then exhibited, which refresh the soul, wearied and disgusted by the spectacle of that dark period. We can hardly help pausing before the majestic figure of the Queen,—so intrepid in danger, so resigned in misfortune; we long to pay homage to the Prince who, with no other ambition than that of saving the lives of the widow and children of his lamented brother,* and from no other motive than duty, nobly sacrificed his rights and faced every danger. But as it is no part of our task to give a general view of scenes so often described, and as we have never proposed to ourselves any other object than that of exhibiting a faithful portrait of the Duchess of Orleans, we shall follow her only in the midst of the general disorder, and through the frightful and calamitous scenes at the Tuileries.

* "I love Nemours more than a brother," said the Duke of Orleans; "I have more confidence in his judgment than in my own."

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If we are so fortunate as to succeed in our endeavour, the Duchess of Orleans will appear in no respect different under the circumstances which, in the eyes of the public, constitute all her glory, from what she was before, or from what she was after that eventful day. It will be evident that those circumstances did but serve to bring to light the great qualities which were inherent in her; and that, on every occasion of her life, she evinced the same mixture of feminine delicacy with constancy in action,—of exquisite sensibility with steady self-control.

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VI.

The night which preceded Thursday, the 24th, was one of terror and anguish to the Princess. Even the least timorous began to be alarmed. "We had not even strength to pray," she said; and, in fact, what had just before appeared only a ministerial crisis, assumed all at once the aspect of a revolution. The less it was anticipated, the greater was the disorder; in a few hours all regular and legal solutions of the difficulty were exhausted; they no longer satisfied the feverish desires of a frantic mob. The hope which one minute brought, was swept away by the next; men hitherto the most popular, were suddenly raised to power only to be as suddenly dis-

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placed. M. Guizot was succeeded by M. Thiers; M. Thiers by M. Odilon Barrot. It was thought that, as the cry for Reform had been successfully used to get up a factitious excitement, the concession of it, though tardy, would allay the passions it had roused. But though this promise was circulated from rank to rank in the National Guard, and among the crowds congregated before the railing of the Tuileries, it produced no impression; as if words had no longer any significance or power.

The King, bewildered by conflicting counsels and contradictory reports, which were brought to him from all sides, determined to make a last effort. Followed by his sons and aides-de-camp, some of whom had not even time to put on their uniform, he mounted his horse and rode along the troops drawn up in the inner courtyard of the Palace, and on the Place du Carrousel. The Queen with the Princesses, and near her the Duchess of Orleans with her young sons, were at the windows, following him with anxious looks. Repeated cries of "Vive le

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Roi!" for an instant revived their hopes; but soon these shouts were overpowered by those of "Vive la Réforme!" The King saw clearly the state of things. The coolness with which the National Guard received him showed him at once that his natural supporters, those upon whom he had a right to rely, deserted him; his countenance betrayed neither fear nor agitation, but wore the calm sadness of a man struck to the heart. He returned to his own room, and whilst sitting there, with his head in his hands, trying to collect his thoughts, an officer hurriedly entered and exclaimed, "Sire, there is not a moment to lose; give orders to the troops, or abdicate." It was about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. The King, after a moment's silence, replied: "I have always been a pacific King,—I will abdicate." Then, rising from his seat, he opened the door of his closet, adjoining the apartment in which the Queen and Princesses were assembled, and repeated with a firm voice, "I abdicate."

At these words the Queen and Princesses

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rushed up to him, and conjured him to recall these fatal words. The Duchess of Orleans, bending respectfully before him, took his hand and kissed it with tenderness. "Do not abdicate, Sire, do not abdicate!" she said, bursting into tears. The King, without replying, returned to his closet, whither all the Princesses followed him, and sat down deliberately to write the act of abdication, which he then read aloud in the following words:—"I abdicate the Crown, which I assumed in compliance with the will of the Nation, in favour of my grandson, the Comte de Paris. May he succeed in the great task which this day devolves upon him!"—"May he resemble his grandfather!" exclaimed the Queen. The Duchess of Orleans reiterated her earnest entreaties to the King; she implored him "not to impose upon his grandson a burden which he thought himself unable to sustain." A mother's instinct told her but too well, that "to take the crown from the King's head, was not to place it on that of her son." When she saw prayers were unavailing, when, as the King wrote the last

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letter of his name, her last hope fled, she threw herself weeping into the Queen's arms. They clasped each other's hands for some minutes in silence. But these moments were short: the King was urged to go, and a few parting words were hastily exchanged. He went out, followed by the Queen and some of the Princesses. The Duke of Montpensier hesitated not to leave his young and suffering wife to the care of a friend, that he might watch over his father's safety.

When he quitted the Tuileries, the King still believed that his departure would appease the tumult; that he was leaving his grandson on the throne, and his daughter-in-law surrounded by adherents; but events followed more rapidly than even the imagination could have anticipated. Hardly had the King quitted his palace, when it became doubtful whether Royalty itself would not cease to exist. The insurgents approached the railings of the inner courtyard, and tried to pull them down. The crowd, which had just been forcing their way into the King's apartments, had dispersed, and the Duchess of Orleans was

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surrounded only by the members of her household (not one of whom quitted her for an instant) and a few Deputies, who urged her to assume the Regency, which, in their opinion, was the last chance of salvation for the Monarchy. "It is impossible," she replied; "I cannot sustain such a burden; it is beyond my strength: no one is prepared to see me Regent,—I, less than anybody." Whilst she was speaking, the sound of musket-shots approached; it was clear that in a few minutes the Tuileries would be taken. She had yet time to escape,—to save her own life and the lives of her sons; or she might attempt, at the peril of her life and theirs, to preserve the crown for the Comte de Paris, and to defend the rights guaranteed to him by France. Placed in this alternative, she thought her duty clearly marked out; she felt neither hesitation nor tremor. Taking her two children by the hand, she walked with them through the long galleries that led to her own apartments; and stopping before the portrait of their father,* she said with calmness,

* "Before this portrait, all my most important actions

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"If we are to die, it must be here." She then ordered all the gates to be opened; preparing to undergo herself, and to see her children undergo, the most frightful death, should her calm courage fail to subdue the fury of the frantic multitude whose cries already reached her ears.

At this instant two Deputies* entered hurriedly, and told her, from the Duke of Nemours, to go without delay across the garden to the bridge; that he had been himself to watch over the departure of the King, and would return to her and protect her on her way from the Tuileries. They appeared to her a succour sent from heaven; she had no time to ask questions, and set out, almost borne along by the group of persons who surrounded her, and tried to guard her from the bayonets that glittered at the railings of the Carrousel. As she passed through the garden-gate, the mob took possession of the Tuileries.

must take place," (January, 1843). She did not act, as we see from the enthusiasm of the moment. (p. 80.)

* MM. Dupin and De Grammont.

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On reaching the Place Louis XV. the Princess saw the Duke of Nemours on horseback; but, separated by the crowd, they were unable to have any communication. She knew nothing of the measures he had taken to escort her to St. Cloud. Her instinctive courage urged her to take the way to the Boulevards; there she would encounter the real people of Paris, and not a mere band of insurgents: it might be that she would perish there; but it was also possible that her presence might recall the people to reason. M. Dupin dissuaded her with all his power. Just then one voice exclaimed, "A la Chambre!" and the cry was instantly repeated by the crowd. Thinking that she was doing what seemed best to the Duke of Nemours, she turned, or rather she allowed herself to be carried along, in that direction. The Duke saw her from a distance without having the power to stop her, and could only follow. The crowd, well-disposed at this moment, shouted, "Vive la Duchesse d'Orléans! Vive le Comte de Paris!" They formed as it were two walls, between which the Princess ad-

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vanced, holding by the hand the Comte de Paris; whilst behind her, M. Scheffer, in his uniform of officer of the National Guard, carried in his arms the little Duc de Chartres, who was ill, wrapt in a cloak. At this moment, M. Odilon Barrot went in search of the Duchess of Orleans at the Tuileries, in order to conduct her to the Hôtel de Ville; but he could not penetrate the crowd, and returned to the Chamber, where the Duchess had already arrived.

When the Princess entered the Assembly, the disorder was extreme; the Deputies besieged the tribune; a strange crowd blocked up the lobbies, barring the passage of the royal party. Cries of "Pas de Princes! Nous ne voulons pas de Princes ici!" were heard; but they were soon overpowered by louder cries of "Vive la Duchesse d'Orleans! Vive le Comte de Paris!" She took her place near the tribune, and remained standing there, with her two children at her side; behind her stood the persons of her suite, using all their efforts to keep off the crowd that pressed around her. M. Dupin ascended the

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tribune; he announced that the act of abdication was about to be presented to the Chamber by M. Barrot; meanwhile, he strongly urged that the unanimous acclamations, which had hailed the Comte de Paris as King, and the Duchess of Orleans as Regent, should be entered in the Procès-Verbal. These words were received with violent opposition from a part of the Chamber and the tribunes. The President thought fit to call upon all strangers to quit the Chamber, and requested the Princes to withdraw, "in deference to the rules." "Sir," replied the Duchess, "this is a royal sitting." Some of her friends, alarmed at the increasing tumult, entreated her to leave the Chamber. "If I leave this Assembly, my son will never enter it again," she replied, and remained immovable in her place. But the crowd kept advancing, the noise increased, and the heat became so excessive that the young Princes could hardly breathe. The Princess was then conducted along the left-hand lobby running at the back of the semicircle, to the upper benches opposite to the tribune, where she seated

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herself with the Duke of Nemours and her children. At this moment M. Odilon Barrot, who had just returned from the Tuileries, obtained silence. "The crown of July rests upon the head of a child," he said. . . . At the acclamations of "Vive le Comte de Paris!" the Duchess of Orleans rose from her seat, as if to speak. While one side of the Chamber cried out "Parlez, parlez!" the other tried to drown her voice. She began with the words—"My son and I are come,"—but was instantly interrupted. She again attempted to speak, but was unable to make herself heard, and sat down. Several speakers rose one after another, amidst a confusion which it is impossible to describe. At length M. de Lamartine advanced toward the tribune. The first sentences he uttered revived the hopes of her friends; but with her sweet and melancholy smile, she made a slight sign, which showed them that she did not share their illusion.* Towards the close of the speech, a

* At the time of the discussion of 1842 on the project of a Regency, the Duchess of Orleans, speaking of the eulogies

violent knocking resounded through the Hall; the doors of the tribune of the Press were burst open by an armed mob, who rushed forward with loud cries; they pointed their loaded muskets towards different parts of the Chamber, till at length they perceived the royal mother and her children, at whom they took deliberate aim. Most of the Deputies quitted the Chamber, leaving the Duchess of Orleans and her little sons exposed, with no other protection from the musket-balls of the infuriated mob than that of a small number of Deputies, who remained in their places before her. From the calmness of her face it might have been thought that she only was in no danger. Leaning over to the bench below her, she gently placed her hand on the shoulder of a Deputy and said, in a voice which betrayed no emotion, "What do you advise me to do?"—"Madam, the Deputies are no longer here; you must go to the Pre-

M. de Lamartine had lavished upon her, said: "He did not speak for me,—he spoke against the King's Government."

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sident's house to gather the Chamber together." —"But how can I get there?" she replied, still without moving from her place, or betraying any alarm at the muskets which glittered above her head.—"Follow me," said M. Jules de Lasteyrie. Descending from bench to bench, he conducted her to the left corner of the Chamber, where there is an exit reserved for the Deputies, and leading into a dimly-lighted corridor; the folding-doors, one of which was shut, open only from within; the other, which was open, separates the Chamber from this corridor. M. de Lasteyrie made his way to it by pushing aside the crowd; and perceiving a company of National Guards outside the door, he called to them to form lines to protect the Duchess of Orleans, who was following him, which they immediately did.*

Meanwhile the crowd had collected again; the Princess and her sons were pushed against

* From her exile, the Duchess of Orleans sent a token of remembrance to each of these worthy men, who, by simply doing their duty, helped to save her life that day.

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the closed door, so that they could not advance. She, however, extricated herself; and before she could succeed in regaining the hands of her sons, who were violently separated from her, she was hurried through the line of National Guards to the salon of the Presidency. There, seeing that her sons were not following her, she broke out into cries of despair, which filled the hall and overpowered the din of the tumult: "My children! my children!" she exclaimed, with a vehemence foreign to her nature. Her children had been wedged in in the narrow passage. The Duc de Chartres, thrown down and for an instant lost under the feet of the crowd, was picked up and taken to an adjoining house. A workman in a blouse seized the Comte de Paris and pressed him tightly in his arms, doubtless intending to defend him; but amidst the noise, the confusion, and the darkness, every man distrusted his neighbour. The poor child was snatched from him, and borne, or rather tossed, from hand to hand to the end of the corridor, where M. de Montesquiou suc-

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ceeded in letting him down from a low window looking into an inner court, and conducted him back to his mother.

As soon as she saw him, and was assured that her younger son was in safety, every trace of agitation vanished from her countenance. The sight of her child in an instant restored her presence of mind; and passing immediately from violent despair to complete self-possession, she again appealed to those who surrounded her for their advice. To re-assemble the dispersed Deputies was now out of the question; for the salon of the Presidency might be invaded, as the Chamber had just been. The Invalides was the nearest place where she would find at least a temporary asylum, and consider what steps could still be taken. It happened that a carriage was standing at the door of the Presidency; on the back seat of this the Princess placed herself with the Comte de Paris, while two National Guards sat in front: M. de Lasteyrie jumped on the box, and, snatching the reins out of the hands of the coachman, drove off instantly; M. de

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Mornay ran by the side of the carriage, and arrived almost at the same moment with it at the gate of the Invalides. The Princess went up to the Governor's apartment. By a singular fatality, Marshal Molitor was ill, and could not leave his room. He had only a few old soldiers about him, who might, he said, refuse to obey men unknown to them. "Let the orders be given in my name," said the Princess with prompt decision. The Marshal told her his fears for her safety and that of her son; he represented to her, that the Invalides is cut off from all succour, and ill provided for defence within. "No matter, Monsieur le Maréchal," she replied; "this place will do to die in, if no morrow awaits us,—to remain in, if we can defend ourselves."

The Duke of Nemours, with a few persons, now rejoined her, and consulted together on the means of collecting troops and organizing a defence, or of attempting, if possible, to return to Paris. The Princess exhorted them to resist, endeavoured to impart her courage and ardour

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to those around her, listened to the different opinions with calmness, and, perfectly self-possessed and collected, spoke with as much authority and prudence as if, in peaceable possession of the Regency, she had been holding a council at the Tuileries. Of those who accompanied her, some remained at her side, whilst others ran to the different ministerial offices, promising to return and bring her news.

During these hours of anxious expectation, neither her mind nor even her body gave way under the fatigue and emotion. She scarcely took a moment's repose. It was no longer the excitement caused by imminent danger that raised her courage, but a clear and precise view of her duty, with all its risksand perils. Toward noon M. Biesta arrived from the Ministry of the Interior, having been sent by M. Barrot to tell the Princess that, in spite of all his efforts, he had only succeeded in collecting a handful of National Guards, that the rebellion was gaining ground, and that the armed mob was approaching the Invalides. Other persons returned from the Ministry

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of War, which they had not been able to enter, and confirmed the report that there was nothing more to be hoped; that the insurgents already knew her retreat, and that her life and that of her son were in danger. "Is there any one here who advises me to remain?" she said: "as long as there is a person, a single person, who thinks it right for me to remain, I shall remain. My son's life is more precious to me than his crown; but if France demands his life, a king, even a king nine years old, must know how to die."

At six o'clock in the evening, however, M. Barrot, who had staid the whole day at the Ministry, and had not for an instant relaxed in his generous efforts, arrived himself at the Invalides. He related what had passed at the Hôtel de Ville, and repeated that everything appeared disastrous; that it might be possible to renew the contest on the morrow, but that for the present she must withdraw from a place which would certainly be attacked, and which it was impossible to defend without troops and ammunition. It was proposed to the Princess to quit the Inva-

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lides secretly, to conceal herself in the neighbourhood, and, if a defence could be organized, to return the next day. But nothing could induce her to expose old soldiers to dangers which she could not share. "I remain altogether, or I depart altogether," she replied. When at last she was prevailed upon to depart, her friends entreated her to disguise herself in a humbler dress, so as not to attract attention. She rejected the suggestion with a sort of indignation. "If I am taken," she said, "I will be taken as a princess;" and all that she would consent to was to have the lace about her dress torn off. Fortunately, however, she was not recognized in the short passage from the Invalides to the Rue de Monsieur, whither she went on foot, leaning on the arm of M. de Mornay. The Comte de Paris followed a few steps behind her, holding M. de Lasteyrie's hand; the other persons of her suite, dispersed so as not to excite suspicion, at short distances; and lastly, the Duke of Nemours, who did not lose sight of her for an instant. At his earnest entreaties, the Duchess

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of Orleans consented to leave Paris the same evening with her son, on condition however that she should await in a neighbouring château the chances of the morrow.* On stepping into the carriage, she turned to one of those who had followed her throughout the day, and said to him, "Speak but a word—and tomorrow, or ten years hence, I will return."

The sound of wheels in the evening, in those deserted streets, attracted the attention of some of the insurgents. Levelling their muskets at the coachman, they called on him to stop; but he lashed his horses over a barricade, at the risk of breaking the carriage, and got out of Paris. Arriving by night at the deserted château,† the Princess at first thought only of giving her poor exhausted child food and rest; even this was difficult; they dared not light a fire, for fear that

* The Duke of Nemours remained in Paris, after having placed his sister-in-law and nephews in safety, and stayed there several days, in the hope of rallying the troops.

† The château de Bligny belongs to the Vicomte Léon de Montesquiou, son of Count Anatole de Montesquiou, to whose house the Princess retired on leaving the Invalides.

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the smoke might betray her presence to the villagers. She put him to bed by her side; and it was not till she saw him sleeping peacefully that, for the first time, a feeling of fear entered her heart.

Our readers will perhaps remember the terrible storms which raged in the month of February, when the King attempted in vain to embark for England. The Princess mistook the noise of the wind in the pine-trees for the sound of the drum, and expected every minute to see the chamber in which her child was sleeping broken into. That night and the whole of Friday were passed in intense anxiety. On Saturday the 26th, the Duc de Chartres was brought to her, still ill, but so happy at being restored to his mother and brother, that a faint ray of joy lighted up their countenances. At the same time, however, bad news arrived from Paris. M. de Mornay told them that not a moment was to be lost in gaining the frontier, and brought a passport for Germany, which he had procured with great difficulty. The Princess still resisted;

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she had consented to remove from Paris, but she would not quit France. The Comte de Paris too repeated that "he would stay in his own country:" words which appeared to his mother like a voice from Heaven. At length, however, she was compelled to yield to the urgent entreaties of her friends, and to prepare for her departure. It was ten o'clock at night. A few minutes afterwards M. de Montesquiou went into the room to receive her last orders; he found her on her knees, praying aloud,—the Comte de Paris kneeling by her side, the little Duc de Chartres lying on the bed with his hands clasped. He gathered these words:—"My God," she said, "protect France, protect my poor children! protect the generous friends who have fearlessly sheltered us in this time of trouble; may their hospitality prove to them and to their family a source of blessing, and may our abode under their roof never bring calamity upon them!"

A pelting rain, violent gusts of wind, and pitchy darkness, added to the gloom of their departure. Few words were spoken; she clasped

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the hands of her hosts, and taking off the rings she wore, she put them upon their fingers.

Along the whole line, from Pontoise to Beaumont, the railway had already been torn up, and the bridges were in flames. The fugitives were obliged to take the Diligence to Amiens. At Lille they had to wait some hours for the Belgian train, during which the Princess and her children remained in the carriage. They were recognized; but no one betrayed them.

On crossing the frontier, the Duchess of Orleans burst into tears, nor could M. de Mornay, who had accompanied her, restrain his. "Our tears are very different," she said; "you weep for joy at having saved us, and I weep with sorrow at quitting France,—France, on which I implore all the blessings of Heaven. Wherever I die, France may be assured that the last throb of my heart will be for her."

"When the thought comes over me," she said some years later, "that I may never see France again, I feel as if my heart would break."

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VII.

It was not in the nature of the Duchess of Orleans to allow grief to have permanent dominion over her. Her courage quickly returned; not that elastic, active energy, for which she had no longer motive or employment, but the courageous resignation, which for ten years she daily asked of God, and seldom failed to obtain.

"Perhaps," said she, on arrving at Cologne, "this trial will be useful to my sons; exile will give them the education it gave their grandfather. Who knows whether it will not be the best they could receive?"

She had, as may easily be imagined, brought nothing from Paris; the little money that had

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been hastily got together had been exhausted by the journey, and the Princess passed the first days of her exile in absolute want of everything.

Her mother's family had, it is true, eagerly offered her hospitality, and all that the most sedulous affection could contrive to enhance the value of hospitality. She was touched by their kindness; but she declared that it would be impossible for her to accept anything beyond the shelter of a roof. It was on this condition only that, in the beginning of March, she took up her abode at Eisenach.* There she lived in the simplest manner, up to the moment when she knew accurately what was the amount of the fortune which remained to her; of all her trials, that was the one for which she cared the least. To say the truth, she thought not of it. The Queen of the Belgians thought for her, and instantly sent a common friend to Eisenach to make sure that her sister and her nephews were in want of

* The Duchess of Orleans passed the months of March and April at Ems, where her mother had hastened to meet her, in spite of her great age and feeble health.

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nothing. This lady found her in a large room without a fire, and in the light clothing she had worn when she quitted the Tuileries. The heat of the stoves made her ill, and an open chimney was a thing unknown in that part of Germany,—discomforts which the Princess treated with playful indifference; of what importance were they to her?

A soul less lofty and less gentle would have suffered from the thousand accessory evils which often, by their importunate recurrence, harass and depress the mind more than misfortune itself. To return an exile to the places which she had quitted full of brilliant hopes; to pass, in a few hours, from the most splendid to the humblest existence,—from the incessant variety of Paris to the monotonous quiet of a small German town; to sink from the intense and overstrained excitement of the last few weeks into a forced inactivity—certainly here was enough to produce that profound *ennui* and disgust which rob the mind for a time of all its strength and equanimity. But the Princess was no more accessible

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to trifling distresses than she had been to trifling pleasures. Her sufferings, like her enjoyments, were those of a great mind; and her heart, far from rejecting the consolations cordially offered to her, accepted them with simplicity, almost with cheerfulness. Her real wound remained beneath the surface, profound and bleeding.

France, she said, had not answered her expectations; but the country would awaken from its dream,—it would perceive that it had been the victim of a terrible surprise. After this hurricane had passed, after the period of atony which must succeed it, good would obtain a permanent and decisive triumph. We must wait with patience, without bitter reflections upon the past, and with thankfulness for what remains.

Nothing could be more touching than the reception given to the Princess by the inhabitants of Eisenach; their modest sympathy was expressed in a thousand ways. It was easy to see that their hearts overflowed with respectful and tender compassion. When she passed

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through the streets, people scarcely ventured to raise their eyes towards her, so great was their dread of intruding on the sanctity of her grief; but to invent any alleviation or diversion of her sorrow, was the thought and the endeavour of all. As soon as spring returned, her chamber, in which there was no other luxury, was filled with flowers,—rare ones from those who could afford it, wild flowers from the poor; all brought their tribute.

"A truce to complaints," she wrote on the 20th of May, 1848, "we are in a peaceful valley where the tempest of anarchy which rages throughout Europe is as yet unheard. You have learned that I have accepted the hospitality offered by my uncle* with such paternal kindness. Our habitation is just what we want,—a charming dwelling, magnificent country, good people, full of delicate and unobtrusive sympathy,—repose, and independence. . . . I thank God for having given us this asylum; but at times the separation from all dear to me, the

* The late Grand-Duke of Saxe-Weimar.—*Transl.*

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distance from the family which I love so tenderly, from the mother whom I so revere, from the sister who has been my consoling angel . . . the torturing anxiety for the future, the poignant regrets for the past, trouble my heart, and almost make me insensible to the good that God still grants me. At times I feel as if I were banished to the end of the world; dead, yet full of life; thirsting to devote myself to that country which I love too well, and bound down by a chain which pains me at every breath I draw. . . . . My existence is one ceaseless internal struggle, in the midst of which I can form but one prayer—for the welfare and happiness of France. That prayer calms me. . . . But let us not look back; we must go on without complaining, and not faint on our road; keeping our eyes fixed on Heaven, whence strength and consolation will in time be granted."

While she wrote these words, the fate of the country so ardently beloved hung once more on the issue of a sanguinary conflict. The four days of June, during which the combat lasted,

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were more dreadful to her than those of her own perils. What acute suffering, mingled with expressions of patriotic pride, breaks out in her letters of that time!

"July 9, 1848.

"Oh, my dear friend, what agony, what torture during these four days of suspense, when the fate of France, the fate of society, was decided at Paris! when our friends were on the breach! when the families of those who devoted themselves to us in exile were in the greatest danger! I could do nothing but cry to God to save France, and to spare our friends. He has heard my cry, and I bless him for his mercies; and yet my heart is overwhelmed with sadness. What a victory! and what times we live in, that we must witness such struggles!

"But also, what energy was shown in the resistance, what heroism, what constancy! If blood must flow, how thankful ought we to be that it was not shed in the name of one of our family! The men now in power have saved France; they

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are re-establishing order, and are taking wise and energetic measures; but their rule will not be long; I fear that the country is destined to pass through many successive crises before it is settled on any stable and solid foundation. Poor France!—great in her misfortunes, as in her glory;—extreme in everything!"

At the beginning of the summer of 1849 the Duchess of Orleans quitted Eisenach, to join the Royal Family in England. Painful as were her emotions at the first interview, her joy at being once more with them was great. The tone of her correspondence during her stay shows a mind at peace and comparatively happy. We shall not suffer any of the expressions of cheerfulness scattered here and there in her letters to escape us.

"Your letter found me in the midst of the family circle," she writes from St. Leonard's. "We had a bad passage, the wind in our teeth, and the sea so rough as greatly to retard our arrival, and to make us horribly ill. Except

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N——, all were affected by this frightful sickness, which seems to be worse than death, because it prostrates not only body but mind. My children suffered, but not long;—the one, witb patience, and always thinking of those who waited on him; the other, with a sort of rage against a malady whose inexorable power he would not submit to. Instead of landing in London at seven o'clock in the morning, we arrived at four in the afternoon. My sister Louise waited for us at the station, eight hours by the clock. You may think what that interview was to me. No words can describe it. I found her looking better than I had hoped, but, alas! that appearance soon vanished; her cough and her extreme emaciation make me very miserable. Chomel arrived this morning; he will tell us whether her disease is serious. God grant he may not increase my alarm! I cannot, however, be sufficiently thankful to God for restoring our mother to health; she is better than when I left her, and so affectionate, so tender, so angelic towards us! We found her, with all the family, waiting at ano-

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ther station with feverish impatience; our father, deeply moved at the sight of us; our brothers and sisters, most kind. Our father is thinner, but looks well in the face; a little more feeble and drowsy in an evening, but otherwise he has a force and clearness of mind and a magnanimity of heart which, under so great a reverse of fortune, command one's admiration. When we arrived here we found several visitors, so that being once more in this beloved family circle and surrounded with old and faithful friends, the illusion was at first complete, and happiness outweighed the sorrows which were for a moment effaced by such sweet impressions. By degrees reflection returned, and with it all the bitterness of my present situation. Nevertheless this is in some measure softened by the re-union and constant intercourse with so many noble and beloved beings, which consoles me for many griefs. I have the delight of seeing a general surprise at the appearance of my children, especially Paris. The King, my Mother, and my brothers, all think him extremely grown and developed, and all are

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interested and rejoiced at it. Mamma was very happy to see these two poor little fellows, and her chevalier has still a great place in her heart; but she also shows infinite tenderness for Paris, who responds to all these marks of sympathy more than his reserved nature allowed him to do formerly. M. Regnier* is much pleased with the development which his character is now undergoing. To this, travelling, and the various things he has seen, have doubtless contributed."

And just as she was about to return to Eisenach, she writes:—

"Our domestic life is one of tranquil happiness. I spend much time with the Queen, and also with the King, whose affectionate tenderness increases from day to day, and sinks so deeply into my heart that I dread the moment of our separation. I hope to make frequent visits to

* M. Regnier, now Member of the Institut, was charged with the education of the Comte de Paris in 1844; he did not leave the Duchess of Orleans from the time she quitted the Tuileries till the day when, having admirably completed his task, he returned to France and to his family.

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my family; the next I make will be for the first Communion of my beloved child."

The Duchess of Orleans accordingly returned to Claremont, after a stay of some months at Eisenach, and devoted her whole mind and thoughts to the religious instruction of her eldest son. She was present while he was catechized by the Abbé Guelles; shared with him the period of seclusion (*retraite*) which precedes this solemnity, and, where she could not join him in external acts of devotion, she followed him mentally with her prayers, and with that sincere purpose of doing God's will which he has promised to accept from all his children.

The Lutheran doctrine concerning the Holy Eucharist approaches much nearer to our own than does that of other Protestant churches. At the solemn moment when her son became a partaker in the Christian and Catholic life, the sentiment of the difference of confessions, always very painful to her (as we shall find hereafter) was perhaps less felt, because it was subordinate to the feeling of union, on the point which occupied

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the minds of both. Though we shall not venture to intrude into the sacred privacy of a mother and her son in such a moment, we may venture to give her own affecting account of the ceremony witnessed by the numerous friends who came from France to be present at it.

"At eight o'clock on the 20th of July, 1850, we went with the King and Queen, followed by all the family and the numerous and faithful friends who had come expressly from France, to the little French Chapel in London. Paris was placed at the foot of the altar, between the King and me, before a *prie-Dieu* surmounted with a lighted taper. He wore on his left arm a white scarf, the emblem of purity. Before mass, the Abbé Guelles addressed a beautiful and touching exhortation to him. Mass was then said by Dr. Wiseman, Bishop of London, who also, before the moment of communion, addressed a few impressive words to him; after which the Abbé Guelles led the dear boy up to the altar. He knelt down, and received the body of the Lord with a devout reverence which edified all who

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witnessed it. On his way back to his *prie-Dieu*, he passed close to the King, who raised his hand to give him his blessing. At this the dear child turned instinctively to me, and looked at me with an expression which I shall never forget, and of which nothing can convey the least idea. After the Bishop had addressed him a second time, mass was concluded, and we left the Chapel full of solemn emotion. Paris's deportment was surprising for his age. His whole person expressed candour and dignity. The King,—who said that this was one of the fairest days of his life,—the Queen, and my brothers, were profoundly affected. Even strangers, indifferent people who went only from curiosity, were struck by the appearance of this child, so pure, so pious, so grave, and so simple; many shed tears of sympathy and tender concern. Poor Robert was deeply impressed by the ceremony. At two o'clock we all returned to the Chapel except the King, whose health requires great precautions. The Bishop was there again. Vespers having been chanted, the Abbé Guelles

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preached a touching discourse, after which Paris read the renewal of his baptismal vow from the foot of the altar, with an audible voice and a perfectly firm accent. After this we returned home, with hearts full of thankfulness to the God who loves and blesses his children."

On her return from St. Leonard's the Duchess of Orleans found the King's health so much enfeebled that she gave up all intention of leaving him. She had just fixed herself very near him at Richmond, when, on the 26th of August of that same year, 1850, he died, in full possession of his faculties, with the serenity of a just and good man. He had received the sacraments of the Church, surrounded by his family, towards whom he had ever been the kindest and most affectionate parent. He closed his life, as he had passed his youth, in exile; but his middle age had not been useless to his country; and the eighteen years of peace, prosperity, and liberty which France owed to him gave him a claim, as it may be thought, to a different end. The last words he uttered were to beg his chil-

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dren never to leave the Queen. They all gathered round her, and replied, "From this day she shall be our centre; we will never leave her."*

They were soon again assembled around the death-bed of one of the most rare and beloved of women. The Queen of the Belgians followed the King her father in a few weeks. The effect produced by her death in Belgium, the mourning garb worn by the whole population, even in the

* After the death of the King, in 1850, the friends of the House of Orleans requested that, with a view to any future contingency, the question of a Regency should be immediately settled in such a manner that there might be no uncertainty as to the course to be pursued, and that all might act in concert at any moment. The Duchess of Orleans expressed herself in the most positive terms against the possibility of her taking upon herself the office of Regent; and, for fear that her reasons, though urged with great energy and distinctness, might not leave a sufficiently lasting impression on the minds of the hearers, she would have them put in writing, and passed several hours in dictating a *Mémoire*, in which she explained all the reasons which rendered her unfit, in her opinion, for the Regency. Difference of religion was one of the points she suggested. She concluded by saying, that it ought to be entrusted to the Queen. This Mémoire is in existence, and is one proof among many of her respect for the Queen and of her own elevated views on every subject.

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poorest hamlets, the veneration—almost the worship—paid to her memory, are facts known to all; but the void left in her family and the peculiar place she filled in it can never be fully appreciated by the public.

"To attempt to describe to you," writes the Duchess of Orleans (Oct. 12th), "how desolate we all feel at the loss of our earthly providence, were useless! God has taken our good angel from us. He knows what is best, but his designs are impenetrable. The calamity which has now befallen us does not only touch our hearts; it is one the extent of which will be more felt every day. In her we lament not only a friend, but a support. Since that guardian angel has no longer been here to watch over me, the feeling of isolation has once more seized me, and I shut myself up in silent affliction. I am afraid to indulge in any ardent love for those who yet remain to me upon earth; for God has a fourth time bereft me of one of the beings who possessed my dearest affections. This gloomy thought sometimes makes me tremble for my

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children. As yet they have only been objects of tender solicitude; but when they ripen into friends, and become objects of passionate affection, will they not share the fate that my love has brought upon the others I so dearly loved? Do you blame me for these sad forebodings? Be indulgent; see in them only the result of a succession of misfortunes; pray for me that God may soften the bitterness of the sorrows with which He has filled my cup.

"If you could see our Mother! If you could hear the words of submission and faith with which she astonishes all around her! Her thoughts are all in Heaven, and her sole care is that her children may go thither, and that she may be prepared to follow. She dwells in a region immeasurably above all human sufferings, for her soul is raised and sustained by God. Alas, I despair of imitating her, and I pray God to pardon me the deep affliction into which this last bereavement has plunged me."

Two years passed without any interruption to

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the monotonous sadness of exile, rendered more heavy by these cruel blows. The Duchess of Orleans divided her time between Eisenach and England. It was in the latter country that the news of the 2nd of December reached her.

So long as the fate of France remained uncertain, so long as the form of the government and the choice of the family to be put at the head of it were only secondary questions, and the very existence of the laws upon which all society rests was in danger, she had followed the struggle with anguish (as we have seen), but also with hope;* and this vague hope, which she did not even wish to see promptly fulfilled, sufficed to sustain her patience, to colour the distant

* "I have not lost the power of hoping. I have still hope for my children: I do not ask to see it realized at present, I would even defer the moment of its fulfilment if events depended on my will. For the present, I content myself with ardent prayers for that afflicted and disordered country, and I confine myself entirely to those sacred duties which God has left me; finding consolation in the development of my children, and in the constant employment they give to all my thoughts and cares."

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horizon, and to give her wings wherewith to traverse the space which divided her from it.

For some time after the 2nd of December, surprise, uncertainty as to the course to be pursued, and anxiety for her friends, kept all the powers of her mind in activity. But when she clearly saw that a new period of indefinite duration was opening, she was seized with a profound and almost bitter grief, which, in spite of her matchless fortitude, she could not always control. She had not been intoxicated by happiness: she had remained mistress of herself in danger, unmoved in the midst of the greatest misfortunes, and resigned under the hand of God. But now, though she sought Him, she could not obtain the peace she so earnestly prayed for. She tried to feel submission, but her heart rebelled. "Everything gives me pain," she said, "yes, everything; even the sanctity of the admirable Queen. I am irritated at not seeing her indignant. She has a word of indulgence and of charity for everybody. As for me, I cannot"—and she burst into tears. Were these the tears of disappointed am-

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bition? No—if by that word is understood the defeat of sordid desires and selfish projects; Yes—if it means the sadness of a heart whose generous and ardent self-devotion is left without an object; the melancholy feeling with which she viewed the wreck of all the hopes and projects of her life; and, worse than all, the thought of the aimless existence, useless to their country and their cause, to which her sons seemed destined. She wore herself out in an inward struggle between the faith which forbade her to let bitterness take possession of her soul, and the patriotic indignation (well justified by the recent events in France) with which she found it difficult not to mix more of personal resentments than Christianity sanctions.

To this crowd of thoughts and conflicting impressions was added a morbid uneasiness about her friends,—friends who suffered for a cause for which she had no longer any sacrifice to make. Her troubled imagination exaggerated the evils of their exile. She fancied she saw them banished from their country and families,

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and destitute of everything. The desire to strip herself in order to send them proofs of her sympathy haunted her incessantly. One of these exiles related with a smile, that, in the beginning of January, he received a packet containing banknotes of all values, and gold coins of all countries: she had collected in haste whatever she could put her hand upon, under the idea that he and his companions in exile, having left France precipitately, might be in want of money.

The decrees of the 22nd of January found her, as far as regarded her own interests, very indifferent; they would indeed have been a sort of relief to her, if her natural generosity had not been stinted by them. "As to what concerns us," she wrote, a few days after the publication of those decrees, "you know that we are, God be praised, beyond the reach of these measures. The author of them has done much worse in humiliating our country and persecuting our friends. The community of sacrifices to our sacred cause would be easy enough to accept, if it did not rob

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us of the greatest consolation we can now have. Until the decree has actually appeared, I beg you to use largely the powers I gave you; I cannot give up the only pleasure which remains to us in our adversity."

Some months passed thus. They were a period of great trial, the painful impression of which was never effaced from her mind. In the presence of her sons she summoned back all her strength. While she never allowed them to forget that they were out of their own country, and passing through severe trials, she found means, with wonderful skill, to banish all fruitless sadness or repining, to create a bright and cheerful atmosphere around them, and to secure them against ennui,—ennui, that scourge of princes, more noxious to the growth and vigour of their character, and more withering to their faculties, than great calamities. But when she was alone, and certain that her children were provided with work or amusement, she was beset by a thousand sorrowful thoughts, which at a single word rushed into her mind, as the blood

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gushes from a wound opened by a hasty movement. On one occasion, when taking leave of a friend, and questioning him with kind interest about his family, she said, "What is your little girl's name?" "She bears the same name as your Royal Highness," said he,—"Helen." At this word she burst into tears. "Ah, why did you call her Helen?" she exclaimed; "that name brings misfortune on the bearer." And she was some minutes before she recovered herself enough to speak.

To calm the agitation of her mind she had recourse to almost forced activity of body. She seemed to seek the repose of the one in the fatigue of the other. Long walks and incessant movement had more power to turn the current of her thoughts than reading or music; for, though she loved and felt them, she was no longer capable, as she frankly declared, of sustained attention to subjects foreign to her habitual trains of thought. No book took hold of her mind, nor did even prayer always succeed in fixing it. It is not that God was not "always at

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the bottom of her heart," but that she feared to dive into its recesses. The trouble of the waters on the surface hid from her eyes those tranquil depths in which dwelt the image of the Eternal.

She felt the imperious necessity of escaping from herself and her own reflections. She wished to travel, to exchange for a time "the heavy and enervating atmosphere of England, which," she said, "was killing her, for a more bracing climate." The close of 1851 and part of 1852 were spent between Germany, whither her mother's society naturally attracted her, and Switzerland, a country endeared to her by the recollections of her childhood. This journey, on which the young Princes started full of spirits, was near proving fatal to her. In the neighbourhood of Lausanne, at a spot where the road runs just above a small stream, then swollen by the rains, the carriage was overturned and rolled down into the water. In an instant the Princes succeeded in extricating themselves, jumped upon the bank, and looked for their mother, to assist her; but, to their horror, they perceived only her hair floating on

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the water. She had fainted, and Madame de V——, likewise senseless, had fallen upon her; her face was already under-water; and she was taken out with the greatest difficulty. On coming to herself, her first cry was one of joy, on seeing her sons safe at her side. The children's terrified look at the thought of their mother's danger,—the infantine caresses of the one, and the more quiet and subdued tenderness of the other,—the presence of mind shown by both,—made a far stronger impression upon her than the accident itself. Of her dislocated shoulder, of the suffering she endured in returning to Lausanne in a carriole, every jolt of which put her to torture, she used afterwards to speak lightly; but she could not recall without deep emotion the anxious attentions of her sons and her friends, and especially the arrival of the Queen, who had hastened from England to see her. To a person however of her active and nervous temperament it was no little trial to be confined to one posture for weeks; but the sweetness of her disposition carried her through it. There was

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always a smile upon her face, as she lay in bed, in a strange house, where she had necessarily to endure many inconveniences and privations, in spite of all the attentions of her hosts,—excellent people, full of pity and sympathy for the gracious and considerate sufferer.

As soon as she had sufficiently recovered to quit Lausanne, the Duchess of Orleans returned to England. In the beginning of the autumn she took a house in Devonshire, one of the south-western counties of England, the aspect of which on a sunny day almost reminds one of Italy. But she found even there the fogs she had sought to escape. From the month of November to the following April she saw the beautiful view of Kitley, with its woods of varied foliage and its large lake communicating with the sea, through a grey curtain of mist and torrents of rain. The winter days and long evenings, unenlivened by any society or amusement, might well have depressed a spirit gifted with less elasticity. She bore the ennui patiently; or rather, her unceasing solicitude for others, and her desire to diffuse

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gaiety in the circle around her, kept alive her own animation. Her good-humour never failed. She walked through roads covered with mud, visiting the poor in the neighbourhood, and took an interest in agricultural affairs, from a wish to produce a taste for them in her sons. In short she lived that natural kind of life which refreshes and invigorates the mind, and studied to compensate for the disadvantages of an isolated and private education, by giving her children habits of observation and a knowledge of realities.

"Kitley is growing charming," she wrote in the beginning of April. "The spring gives it new attractions: roads bordered with hedges full of flowers, fresh gushing springs, and shady woods. It is a wild spot, where the hand of man is hardly perceptible, and yet an agreeable residence. I have made the acquaintance of some of the families in the neighbourhood, who are very agreeable and well-informed, and have abundance of pursuits."

She paid visits to her neighbours; frequently invited them to Kitley; and, to set them the more

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at their ease, talked English with them, with perfect simplicity, and laughed at her own mistakes. Nothing could exceed the cordiality with which, as mistress of the house, she received her guests. The following notes, written down every evening during a visit to the Princess, show her from this new point of view, and give a pleasing picture of the unceasing care and attentions she bestowed on her guests.

"*Monday, June 20th*, 1853.—I had just risen, and was at my toilet, when I heard a gentle tap at the door. The Princess entered; she was already dressed, and came to inquire whether I had all I wanted, and whether I was not fatigued by my journey. She sat down, and we were just beginning a conversation, when a servant came to tell her that the medical attendant was come. She quickly left me, to accompany him upstairs to see one of her maids, who was ill. The girl is a German, and as the medical man speaks only English, the Princess went to interpret between them. In a few minutes she returned, and we resumed our conversation, repeatedly in-

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terrupted by household orders she had to give. Then the hour's lesson in history, at which she is always present, called her away to her children. At noon we sat down to breakfast; at the table, as in everything else, there is no show or luxury; all is simple and pleasing to the eye, like herself. All the arrangements here seem to me to show the elegance of a high and refined taste,—no trifling luxuries, none of those exaggerations of 'comfort' which show an excessive devotion to physical well-being. The servants behave as if they formed part of the family; they have none of the stiff and constrained air of people chosen for their good looks rather than for their fidelity. This home life would charm me anywhere." . . .

"*June* 21*st*.—We left Kitley at noon, and returned again at nine o'clock in the evening, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, but delighted with our day's excursion. As the Princess's horses were ill, we hired a little hack carriage, and nothing could be less brilliant than our equipage. The Princess and I could not help laughing, when, at the entrance of Mount-Edge-

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cumbe Park, his Lordship's steward, who knew that the Princess was coming, rode to meet us, mounted on a magnificent English horse, and in the most ceremonious manner offered his master's apologies for not being able to wait upon the Princess himself. The man's respectful gravity contrasted strongly with our humble carriage; but I said to myself that no one could mistake the character and station of her who was seated in it: she would look what she is, were she clad in a peasant's dress and sitting in a cart. On our return by sea, when the boat inclined for an instant to one side, the Princess uttered a cry of terror. I smiled when I recollected those appalling dangers which had not even blanched her cheeks. I observe that she never speaks of those moments of her life. I do not think she is conscious of the matchless courage she exhibited at that time, for she is never occupied with herself when she acts.

"*June 22nd.*—A day of rain. It was impossible to stir out of doors. Kitley is enveloped in a shroud of fog. We have spent the whole day

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together, and I have not felt a moment's *ennui*. We began to read 'Polyeucte.' She feels all its beauties, and appreciates them fully; but after two scenes we were at Paris. The future, the past, the present condition of France,—the difficulty of resignation,—the problem, which continually perplexes her, how to reconcile detachment from the world with activity in it,—were all discussed, and the poor Polyeucte remained open on the table.

"She asked me to sit down to the piano-forte and play. "Music calms my most agonizing thoughts," she said, "and leads them into another channel without abrupt transition. How I wished that Paris should love music! When he was seven years old, I had musicians to play to him,—but the only effect was, that I gave him an aversion to it. I wanted to hasten on the time for everything,—I wanted him to be quickly a man."

"*June* 18*th*.—An excursion to Torquay. As we drove down to the shore, we met an old man, whom the Princess had employed the year before

to polish the many-coloured pebbles which are picked up on the beach. Recognizing him, she stopped the carriage, to bid him good-day, and to make some purchases of him; the poor man went away radiant with joy. The Princess returned to Kitley, laden with presents for everybody. Giving—always giving—this is the only luxury she permits herself to indulge in.

"Some young companions of the Princes arrived this evening. As there are no more spare rooms, the Princess ordered beds to be made up in the library, superintending all the arrangements herself.

"*Sunday.*—This morning, on my return from church, I found her more sad than usual. I offered to read to her some religious book. She replied, 'I was going to ask you to do so.' We went upstairs to her chamber, which is furnished very plainly; there are portraits and souvenirs, but no useless ornaments; the room, in short, bears the stamp of her whole person. I read some pages. 'I can hardly fix my attention,' she said, after a few minutes. We spoke

of her children. 'My wish is to draw around them a really good and instructive society, to bring them acquainted with a number of distinguished men and women,—not frivolous, worldly women, but good mothers, occupied with the education and welfare of their children. I wish them to see what a virtuous, happy, and natural life is. At times a thought crosses my mind which troubles me: my health is not strong,—I may die. For myself, I am ready, but I think with terror of my children!' A cloud passed over her features, and a sudden pang flashed across my heart; it was only a flash—she is so full of life.

"*June 26th.*—I took leave of her this morning. She would rise early, to see me off. We were all moved, even the children, whose imagination she has captivated, as she has captivated mine. How, I could not say. I have seen persons of as rare natural gifts, but life becomes interesting in her society. I hardly know any other woman with whom I could converse for twelve hours together, without for an instant feel-

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ing void or weariness. I feel as if I had always something to say to her, for her interest never flags; but she exhausts her strength; she lives too many hours in the day, and on too many points at once. Nothing is indifferent to her; her soul has life enough for several robust bodies, and alas! she has but one, and that a very feeble one."

During the close of the year 1853 she suffered so much from mental agitations that we cannot pass them over in complete silence. The subject however of these sufferings is one which we are bound to touch with the utmost caution and delicacy. At present, it were useless, or worse than useless, to discuss it; and our only purpose in alluding to it is to explain the point of view from which it was considered by herself.

With regard to a question of great interest, but not demanding an immediate decision, she differed from friends whose advice she would willingly have accepted, if she had believed she could follow it consistently with her duty. Her

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conduct in this matter was guided by two considerations; one of them relating to the interests of her adopted country, and the other concerning the interests of her own children. With regard to France, (or to that part of the French nation which had rejected the revolution of the 24th of February), she thought herself bound by the solemn compact which in 1830 had vested the guardianship of its liberties in the family of Orleans. With regard to her children, she thought herself bound not to compromise their future condition, and not to alienate what she considered a deposit confided to her keeping, by any engagement made during their minority, and to which, by reason of their years, they were not capable of giving a well-weighed consent.

If she had been called upon to join in a measure of immediately practical moment, meeting the wishes of the French nation, and likely to give it lasting happiness under a free government, she would (we may confidently affirm) have lent her aid without hesitation. She would

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have sacrificed to the interests of her country all the preferences and reminiscences connected with the lively and cherished impressions of her youth. She would even have postponed to those interests her duties to her husband and children. By that sacrifice, she would merely have subordinated those duties to a higher and more urgent duty; she would have acted with the deference to the wishes and interests of France which she had learned from her husband; and, as the measure would probably have promoted the honour of the whole of the Bourbon family, she would not have diminished by her compliance her husband's honour and reputation.

But as France was apparently resigned, and certainly silent, there was no call for immediate action. She was invited to participate in a political combination, which, even if it might have promoted the ultimate interests of her children, would not have been productive of direct good to the country. She therefore concluded that she was not authorized, as their mother and guardian, to deprive them of the highest good which

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fortune had left them, by depriving them of the power of deciding thereafter for themselves. In coming to this conclusion she may have been mistaken, and have acted under illusions. But her illusions, if such they were, were generous, lofty, and sincere. If she adhered to her resolution with passionate persistance, her motive was maternal love; which, of all the passions, is the most tenacious of its purposes, and which was exalted and strengthened in her by what she believed would have been the resolution of her husband.

But the firmer her convictions, the more acute were her sufferings; for she could not enjoy tranquillity of mind while differing in opinion from those she loved and admired, and of whom she was so justly proud. Her affection for them led her to remove to a distance. In intimate and constant intercourse, shades of difference hardly perceptible in less close relations may become painful, and the effort to keep them out of sight only gives them more importance. At a distance, on the contrary, time and circumstances

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dissipate these light clouds, and union becomes closer, more affectionate, and more delightful. This was soon the case; and the Duchess of Orleans' last visit to England was the happiest and the freest from agitation of any during her ten years of exile; it was that in which she felt most keenly the force of the family ties and the charm of the family affections which had always been so dear and precious to her.

The winter of 1856, which she had passed in Italy, had fortified her health. "The impression which my stay in this country has left upon me," she writes from Genoa, "is that of a new birth. Follow my example; come and live under this incomparable sky, where to live and to enjoy are the same thing."

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VIII.

In the spring of 1857 the Duchess of Orleans quitted Genoa, and took a house at Ditton, a village on the banks of the Thames, not far from Claremont and Twickenham. The family circle was enlarged by the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Montpensier, and the Princess of Coburg-Cohari, with her children. They looked forward with joyful expectation to the approaching confinement of the Duchess of Nemours, who had never looked more beautiful, more healthy, or, since her exile, more happy, than at this moment. The most cordial intimacy, founded on entire sympathy, shed a charm over the lives of all.

Every evening the family assembled at Twickenham, Richmond, Thames-Ditton, or Claremont.

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Nothing could exceed the animation and cheerfulness of these meetings, in which children of all ages, full of beauty, life and high spirit, though obedient to the slightest sign from their mothers, forced their parents to share their own gaiety. The Queen sanctioned the unrestrained joyousness of the little band, and her eyes rested with maternal pride on each of her daughters, who, born in countries so far apart and so different in language and ways of thinking, were united in common devotion to duty, and in common affection for her. It seemed as if Heaven designed to show us for the last time what virtue, beauty, and intelligence united in one family we had rejected with disdain.

For the Royal Family this summer of 1857 was like a momentary respite from sorrow. Never since 1848 had the Duchess of Orleans enjoyed a period of so much serenity; she felt and acknowledged it with thankfulness.

"I feel inexpressible happiness," said she in a letter, "in seeing my sons' characters unfold themselves agreeably to my fondest wishes; in

seeing them acquire strength in all that is good; in seeing their young hearts expand with an almost fraternal—I might say, paternal—tenderness for me,—watching over their mother as if she were confided to their care; and in this respect my bad health does me good service. My eldest son is at an age which seems to me the most charming in the life of man; he has all the candour of childhood, the unsullied integrity of principles that have never been exposed to the friction or the taint of the world, and the freshness of early impressions; and to these he joins a growing firmness of character, a thoughtfulness which compensates for defective experience, and a constant desire to improve.

"Robert, though younger, also begins to blend maturity of character with childlike purity, and his lively and sometimes vehement temper is restrained by the daily increasing strength of his reason. You will tell me that I am blind about my sons. I assure you I am not; it is not blindness to acknowledge the blessings which God grants us as a consolation for our sufferings. I

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shall always be very exacting in what I require of them, and shall always wish them to have very high aims."

After such a succession of afflictions and disappointments, her prayers for the object nearest her heart were, for once, heard. The work to which she had devoted her life had completely succeeded, and a sentiment of implicit confidence had taken the place of anxious and unquiet affection.

"I cannot express," said she, "the change that has taken place in Paris; it is no longer I who protect him; I feel that he protects me, and I love to see that he has a conscience independent of mine. When he differs from me in opinion I am almost rejoiced at it. What I feel for him I may venture to call respect."

She was not the only one who felt this; and the paternal affection with which the youthful Prince was regarded by his uncles was already mingled with the deference with which an upright, profound, and earnest character can never

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fail to be regarded, whatever be the age of its possessor. The complete intimacy between the two brothers gave assurance that, whatever might be the fate reserved for them, they would find support in each other's friendship.

Their future destiny incessantly occupied their mother's thoughts. Her ardour in favour of all the best and noblest interests of mankind was undiminished; but a life-long devotion to duty never fails to bring with it a certain serenity. The most ardent aspirations and the fondest affections are gradually divested of all that is merely personal.

"There are moments in which I feel completely detached from the world," said she, "and in which even maternal ambition seems to be effaced from my heart; but such moments are transient, the image of Heaven grows dim again, and mortal life returns." Then she added, with that perfect sincerity which characterized her observations upon herself, "It is not detachment from the things of this world that is difficult, it is the preference for the things of Heaven. My

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mind is distracted by the necessity for action; the petty cares and objects of this life obtrude themselves upon me. How humiliating is it to look into the depths of one's own soul!"

We distinctly remember the expression of her face at this moment; it was full of emotion and seriousness, but not dejected. Shattered as her sad life had been, she still retained such a power of enjoying,—still felt that so many ties bound her to earth.

"We are celebrating Paris's birthday," she wrote. "This day nineteen years ago God bestowed him upon me. What a recollection! My heart seemed too small to contain so much joy; nor will the joy I then felt be ever troubled by this most beloved child. I have full confidence that I shall be able to say in my last moments that he never disappointed my expectations in any respect. All the family was assembled at my house, and the fête was bright and joyous."

Once more Claremont was the scene of rejoicing. The Duchess of Nemours had given birth to a daughter, beautiful as its mother, and

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the minds which had been unconsciously affected by the popular superstition* were entirely reassured. But on the 10th of November, just as the Duke of Nemours had left the Princess, radiant with health and delighted at the thought of leaving her bed the next day, it pleased God suddenly to call this pure spirit to himself.

What the Duchess of Orleans was in those terrible days, what exhaustless resources of sympathy she displayed, her family alone can tell. She lost a most dear friend, and her sensibility was very acute; but she felt that she ought not to indulge her grief, when others upon whom the stroke more immediately fell set her such examples of fortitude and resignation. She was never weary of admiring in the Queen the noble soul perfected by faith, which is neither insensible nor desponding under misfortune, but accepts it

* Claremont is thought by the people of the neighbourhood to cause misfortune to the children born there, or to their mother. The Princess Charlotte of England, first wife of the King of the Belgians, died there in the flower of her age; and by a strange fatality a series of melancholy events has since taken place there.

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with the calm dignity which no event can disturb. She reproached herself with her inability to imitate the Queen in resignation under misfortune and in detachment from earthly cares. Yet her courage was inferior to none; but it was the courage of another time of life, another nature, and other duties; she had still a part to perform in this world; life had still claims upon her. To her latest breath she felt herself called upon to hope, to act, to diffuse around her that activity of mind and body which she retained herself. What she most dreaded was discouragement; she thought it fatal to young minds, and to preserve them from it she allowed it no place in her own.

"I will not be disheartened," she often repeated earnestly; "I am obliged to anybody who raises my spirits." One day, looking over the titles of the books lying on the table of her younger son, her eye fell on the 'Essais' of Nicole. "Oh! I do not like that book for young people," said she. "It has a tendency to disgust them with life and make them incapable of action."

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This fear of losing the activity necessary to life, or of seeing her children lose it, was constantly present to her; but those who had an opportunity of conversing with her at that time remarked that there was more effort in her animation than usual, and that clouds of sadness passed over her soul. Did they proceed from the vague consciousness of failing health? Was she a prey to doubts as to the ultimate triumph of the ideas to which she had devoted her own life, and to which she wished the future lives of her sons to be consecrated? What illusions had she renounced? For a long time she had believed that the political tempest was passing, that the apathy of the public mind was merely the effect of exhaustion, and that this would be succeeded by regret for the past and loyalty for the future. At times she asked herself with grief whether she should never see a termination to the indifference into which France seemed to have sunk, not only as to persons, but principles and opinions. For her nothing was changed; the two feelings which had sustained

her—love for her country and faith in the triumph of the liberal cause—still existed; but they were overspread with "the pale hue of thought." She judged events more calmly and less confidently; nor could she contemplate even possible success without deep anxiety.

The news of the attempt at assassination on the 14th of January filled her with horror. She regarded with alarm, I might almost say with a feeling of humiliation, a state of public morals in which such crimes could be committed without exciting a general and profound emotion.

"This attempt," she wrote from Richmond, "is the most odious of all; and one is oppressed with shame for human nature, when one sees to what purposes the discoveries of science are turned. Certainly *that* is not the end I desire to see to the present government. . . . I have a horror of all the profits of crime. One cannot think without melancholy perplexity what will befall French society after this; a conflict appears inevitable, and it will be a fearful one. The part we have to play is very simple and very

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humble: we have only to pray to God, and to exhort our sons; we shall not fail in either."

Religious thoughts, which always occupied a foremost place in the heart of the Duchess of Orleans, even whilst the active duties of life seemed to engage her attention, now took more and more possession of her. She was too earnest and too sincere to enter upon such subjects when absorbed by the cares of the moment, or when she could not speak of them with entire openness; but the natural bent of her mind led her to recur to them; and the more her worldly hopes had been frustrated, the more did she seek comfort in faith. But even this comfort was not granted her without alloy. The form of the Anglican ritual did not satisfy her imagination or her feelings, and she longed in vain for one which might recall to her the language and the form of worship endeared to her by association with her childhood and her country. She joined with her sons in everything that did not conflict with her own convictions. At all festivals she

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accompanied them to church; she read religious books with them every evening regularly, and her mind, which was always eagerly seeking points of contact, found in these common occupations the highest satisfaction, and sincere sympathy concerning the grounds of Christian faith. But she was far too high-minded and upright to aim at a perfect agreement of opinion, where she knew that differences ought to exist. She had promised to bring up her sons in profound attachment to the Catholic faith; she had done so; but she herself remained a Protestant. We cannot therefore wonder at the melancholy feeling which the return of Sunday brought home to her, for she alone was isolated in the midst of the large Christian family to which she belonged.

Far be from us all spirit of controversy in speaking of a soul so sincerely, so profoundly Christian; but how can we help pitying her for having been deprived in this world of a consolation shared by all she loved—unity of faith?

During the days which those around her were

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so far from thinking the last of her life, the Princess manifested an ever-increasing fervour of devotion. She wished to have some intercourse of a purely religious character, as a means of withdrawing her mind at times from all political agitation, and of arming herself with resignation and strength for a last act of maternal self-sacrifice—the most difficult perhaps of all. She was about to separate herself voluntarily from her sons, who were to travel. It was not without anxiety that she saw the moment for their departure approach; but she was perfectly aware that the time was come when she must trust to the results of an education in which no care had been neglected, and to characters endowed with sufficient sense and firmness not to want continual direction. Her work as a mother was finished.

It pleased God to spare her this transient parting, and to veil from her eyes the moment of the long and lasting separation.

At the beginning of May, the Princess was obliged to quit the house she inhabited at

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Richmond. There was great difficulty in finding another for the rest of the summer, and she was obliged to take the only one vacant.

Cranbourne House is situated, like almost all the villas at Richmond, near the Thames; but, as it is at the bottom of the hill, and surrounded with trees, which overshadow the windows of the ground-floor, the aspect of it is melancholy, and the feeling peculiarly damp, even for England. On alighting at the door, the Duchess of Orleans remarked that the entrance was gloomy; and that the iron railings, painted black (as they are in many English houses) were like the gates of a tomb.

She however thought no more of this ominous appearance, and soon succeeded in giving a cheerful and agreeable air to Cranbourne House. An abundance of flowers, and a certain perfume of elegance which she diffused around her wherever she went, quickly effaced the first impression, and this house of mourning has left no gloomy image in the memory of those who saw her in it.

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In the first days of May, the Duc de Chartres fell ill, but though not in a manner to excite any serious uneasiness in the mind of the Duchess, she would not entrust to any one the charge of nursing him. She went continually into his room, and passed some nights without sleep. Anxiety at his illness, succeeded by joy at his recovery, might perhaps give the last shock to her feeble constitution; but in truth it was already broken. These secondary causes, to which survivors attach so much importance, dwelling upon them as if to feed their sorrow, are in reality but feathers in the balance in which our days are weighed. The long series of violent emotions which had worn out her body gave it to the last a factitious energy, which deceived people as to her real strength. So many tempestuous billows had broken over that delicate plant; and now the approach of the last and gentlest wave, which was to bear her away with it, was not perceived.

On Sunday, the 9th of May, she received a visitor from Paris, and conversed with great animation on the state of France, and the various

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chances for the future. She was already suffering from a cold, and on Tuesday, the 11th, kept her bed. From the very first, her weakness was much greater than the nature of her malady sufficed to explain; but no one thought of it as alarming. A letter from the Prince de Joinville, written at that moment, seems to exhibit the only traces of a vague feeling of uneasiness. But those around her, though they omitted none of the minute cares which her feeble health always rendered necessary, had not the slightest idea of danger; and she herself as little as any of them.

On the Thursday morning, being Ascension Day, Madame de B——, who scarcely ever left her, had gone to church at a very early hour, that she might be with the Princess when she woke. The Princess affectionately reproached her. "Why did you rise so early?" said she. "Have you been praying for me?" "Yes, Madam, as I do every day; I pray to God for your happiness and that of your sons; but you will pardon me, Madam, I never venture to form any more precise wishes."—"You are right," she re-

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plied; "so ought we to pray. We know so little what it is good for us to receive."

Fits of coughing, followed by faintings and nervous crises, occurred several times in the course of Saturday and Sunday. Scarcely had she recovered from them, when she resumed the conversation with her usual vivacity, especially when her sons came into the room. The physician begged her not to talk so much; "Let me at least look at them," said she.

She would not allow herself to be treated as a sick person, so much did she fear to hinder or interrupt what was going on around her; nor indeed was she conscious of her danger. At one moment, when the nervous distress was the most painful, she wished her friend to hold her hands in her own, which gave her some relief; but instantly turning to the physician, she said, "Is it not contagious?" At first she would not allow anybody to sit up with her; and when at length she consented, she desired, for fear of fatiguing her women, that a nurse might be sent for. Some one proposed to send for the Sœur du Bon

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Secours who had been with the King during his last illness; but she immediately suggested applying to the establishment of Diaconnesses, who also devote themselves to the care of the sick. "I should have liked," she said, "to be nursed by that good Sister; but I wish to do something for those of my own faith, and I think it right to send for one of our Diaconnesses." The letter to that Society, which was instantly written, did not reach Paris in time.

On Monday, 17th May, she was seized with suffocations and faintings, and remained for some time motionless—almost lifeless. The attendants prayed her to raise herself up, hoping that she would breathe more easily in a sitting posture, but she answered with extreme feebleness, "I cannot." The crisis passed, and she, so clear-sighted in general, did not see the alarm painted on every face. She appeared so tranquil, and even the physician thought her so calm, that those around her took courage.

The day passed without any fresh attack. She fell asleep at moments, in consequence of the

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remedies she had taken for the cough. In these broken slumbers, her attendants heard her utter some wandering words in a sort of chant, but all that they could collect was this: "My parents are buried in a spot of ground they have bought." When she woke however her ideas were as clear as usual. She asked for her sons, saying, "It is a long time since I saw them." She was told that they had not come in, for fear of disturbing her. "I should not like them to think I neglect them," said she,—words which extorted a smile from those who heard them.

On the Monday evening something was said about France; she uttered a few words in an excited manner, but was soon silent; her weakness was excessive. The family went to bed early. She took leave of her children with her customary words, "God bless you, my children!"—the last accents they were ever to hear from her tongue. They left her however without any apprehensions.

M. de Mussy began to be alarmed at her strength continuing to decline, although he had

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made her take some nourishment and a little wine. Even at this moment, attentive and kind as ever to others, the Princess turned to the woman who was waiting on her and said, holding out the glass to her, "You want strength as well as I, drink this wine."

She several times insisted that all the family should go to bed. "I think I shall be able to sleep—to sleep so well," said she with emphasis. Her attendants left the room. Her friend having retired behind the bed-curtain, where she thought herself concealed, the Princess called the physician and said to him, "Do make her sit down, Monsieur de Mussy; I see her in the glass, still standing."

In consequence of her extreme weakness, she was ordered to take medicine or nourishment every quarter of an hour; she never complained of the disturbance, but every time she softly repeated, "I am going to sleep so well." The physician approached her, to feel her pulse; surprised at such assiduous care, she said, "You think me very ill then?" M. de Mussy evaded

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the question, and said, "What do you think yourself, Madam? How do you feel?"—"Oh, not ill,—I have often been thus. I wish to rest." Upon this, M. de Mussy retired into the adjoining room and wrote notes to Claremont and Twickenham. While he was doing this the silence was profound; so profound, that a friend who had remained near the door was seized with a frightful presentiment. "It seems to me that the stillness is extreme here," said she to M. de Mussy. He went back into the Princess's chamber, gave one look, came out raising his hands to Heaven, and ran to fetch the young Princes. The passage from one life to another had been so gentle, that the two women who remained close to her bed, with their eyes fixed upon her, had not perceived the slightest distortion of her features nor the slightest change in her countenance. The only difference was that her face was of a deader whiteness.

They tried still to doubt; a friend held her for some time in her arms. Meanwhile the Princes arrived. Who can describe those moments? . . .

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For four days and nights the dear remains were watched. Some travellers from France entreated to see her once more; they entered the chamber with tears and prayers, weeping for her who had so often received them with her gracious welcome. She seemed still to smile upon them; nor can those who saw her ever forget the peaceful expression, and the youthful, almost childlike look which death had restored to her face. At length she was at rest,—the heart of the "ardent exile" had ceased to throb.

On Saturday, the 22nd of May, she left her dwelling, surrounded not by the indifferent, come to pay the ceremonious homage of respect, but by sorrowing friends. The crowd would have been greater had she been borne from the Tuileries, but it could not have been composed of more afflicted hearts. Sobs were heard from every part of the house at Richmond; and along the road through which the mournful train passed, the tricoloured flags, the closed windows even of the humblest cottages, and the tolling of the bells of all the village-churches showed the

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deep sympathy she had inspired in all around her.

Her remains were deposited at Weybridge, in the narrow vault where reposes the amiable Princess whose death has left such a void at Claremont and the King whom our regrets have at last taught us to appreciate.

Her resting-place is not far from the abode of those most dear to her, who will seek her there and offer up their prayers at her tomb.

If a single thought or word in these pages has shocked any opinion, or given pain to any person, let the blame fall on the hand that has traced them. Let no bitter feeling be associated with her, who treasured in her heart only sentiments of peace, who, not only when acting under the near anticipation of her end, but in those years when a life of activity still seemed to lie before her, pardoned all who had afflicted her, and

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begged forgiveness of all those whom she might in any way have afflicted.

If the praises bestowed on the Duchess of Orleans have appeared exaggerated, we shall not attempt to justify them. We have tried to paint her such as we find her in our own hearts. We can answer for nothing but our intentions; nor can we pretend to impartiality, if, in order to attain it, we must for one instant cease to love her. All we ask is, that those into whose hands this book may fall would read her own words in perfect sincerity of mind, without levity and without prejudice; and, if we mistake not, the following Will—a faithful transcript of her mind —will be found to justify, perhaps to surpass, all that we have said, or could say, of the greatness of her soul and the infinite tenderness of her heart.

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TESTAMENT

DE

MADAME LA DUCHESSE D'ORLEANS.

Au nom du Père, et du Fils, et du Saint-Esprit.

Je recommande en mourant mon âme à Dieu, et j'implore au nom de Jésus-Christ sa miséricorde infinie, en lui demandant de me recevoir dans les demeures éternelles et de m'y réunir à ceux que j'ai pleurés sur cette terre.

Je laisse ma bénédiction maternelle à mes fils chéris, et je prie le Seigneur de les guider au travers de la vie, de leur donner des jours prospères, et de leur accorder la félicité éternelle, quand ils auront noblement accompli leur destinée ici-bas. Je leur adresse mon dernier adieu, en les remerciant du bonheur qu'ils ont répandu sur mon existence.

Je prie la Reine d'agréer la dernière expression de ma respectueuse reconnaissance; je dis adieu à ma

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mère à qui je dois tant, à mes frères et sœurs auxquels j'ai toujours voué une affection sincère, à ma famille maternelle dont l'affectueuse hospitalité a diminué, pour mes fils et pour moi, l'amertume de l'exil, à mes amis et serviteurs, dont la fidélité dans le malheur m'a inspiré un reconnaissant attachement, à cette France enfin, que j'ai tant aimée et où les années les plus heureuses de ma vie se sont écoulées.

Je recommande à mes fils de ne jamais oublier que la crainte de Dieu est le commencement de toute sagesse, qu'elle est un guide et une lumière dans la prospérité et un appui dans l'infortune. Qu'ils restent fidèles aux préceptes de leur enfance ; qu'ils restent fideles aussi à leur foi politique. Qu'ils la servent, soit par leur constance dans l'adversité et l'exil, soit par leur fermeté et leur patriotisme dévoués lorsque les événements les rendront à leur pays. Que la France rendue à sa dignité et à sa liberté, que la France constitutionnelle puisse compter sur eux pour défendre son honneur, sa grandeur et ses intérêts, et qu'elle retrouve en eux la sagesse de leur aïeul et les qualités chevaleresques de leur père. Ils se souviendront toujours des principes politiques qui ont fait la gloire de leur maison, que leur aïeul a fidèlement servis sur le trône, et que leur père (son testament en

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fait foi) avait adoptés avec ardeur. Ses dernières directions ont été la règle de leur éducation.

En quittant ce monde, je recommande mes fils à la Reine. Mon fils bien-aimé le Comte de Paris sera émancipé au moment où mon testament entrera en vigueur; néanmoins, je compte sur l'influence morale de la Reine et sur son autorité respectée pour me remplacer auprès de lui; je compte également sur sa sollicitude maternelle pour la prier d'accepter la tutelle de mon fils bien-aimé le Duc de Chartres. Elle ne saurait lui sembler trop lourde, car je demande à mes frères d'aider la Reine dans l'administration de la fortune de leurs neveux. Je connais les sentiments qui les animent pour les enfants de leur frère tant regretté, et je suis sûre qu'ils leur témoigneront toujours une sincère affection.

Je recommande à mes fils de rester toujours étroitement unis, l'union indissoluble des deux frères étant la condition de leur force et de leur bonheur mutuel. Je désire que mon fils aîné, du jour où l'âge légal le lui permettra, prenne part au conseil de famille chargé de veiller sur les intérêts de son frère cadet.

Je désire aussi que les amis fidèles et éprouvés qui ont entouré mes fils, et qui, après avoir été les amis dévoués de leur père, n'ont cessé de nous donner des

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preuves d'attachement dans le malheur, continuent à rester auprès d'eux. . . .

Ma volonté expresse étant que mes biens, que les valeurs qui les composent, que tout ce qui a pu et dû m'advenir légalement, que tout enfin ce dont je puis disposer soit également partagé entre mes deux fils, c'est dans cette intention que je partage entre eux aussi également que possible les objets suivants que je possède, en laissant :

Au Comte de Paris :

Mon collier de perles à quatre rangs, qu'il donnera, je l'espère, un jour à la Comtesse de Paris ; les six pendeloques en diamants, avec le chaton ; l'album rouge contenant la belle collection d'aquarelles d'artistes français, ayant appartenu au Duc d'Orléans ; toutes mes fourrures ; le tableau de Scheffer, les *Saintes Femmes*.

Au Duc de Chartres :

Ma parure de perles composée de broches, d'épingles, de boucles d'oreilles, de bracelets et d'un diadème. Cette parure me provient de sa marraine, ma tante Adélaïde. Mon bracelet de rubis légué par la Reine des Belges, deux boutons en rubis, la bague en saphir et la bague en rubis, ma belle coupe en lapis, le livre d'Heures que son père avait fait faire, le né-

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cessaire d'armes et mes dentelles. J'espère que les bijoux et les dentelles pourront servir à la Duchesse de Chartres.

Je laisse outre ces objets comme souvenirs :

Au Comte de Paris :

Le grand portrait de son père par Ingres, le buste en marbre de son père par Jollet, le grand tableau des *Portes-de-Fer* par Dauzats, le petit tableau du *Col de Teniah* par Philippoteaux ; tous les manuscrits, papiers, lettres, petits livres de notes de son père, ainsi que les lettres de son père à moi adressées. Je sais qu'il regardera toujours ces papiers comme un précieux trésor, et je pense qu'il pourra en disposer un jour avec choix pour faire connaître celui que la France a pleuré sans en avoir connu cependant tout le mérite. Je lui laisse les portraits de mes deux mères, l'aquarelle de Winterhalter représentant la Reine avec les enfants du Duc de Nemours, le portrait à l'huile du Duc de Chartres par Winterhalter, le beau poignard fait par ma belle-sœur la Duchesse de Würtemberg pour le Duc d'Orléans, deux des albums contenant les dessins de son père, la Psyché qui m'a été offerte par la Ville de Paris à l'occasion de mon mariage, la statuette équestre en bronze de son père sur un socle de marbre noir, la grande pendule

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de Béquet, qui a sonné l'heure de sa naissance, ainsi que la garniture de cheminée qui l'accompagne, le coffret incrusté qui contient la montre de son père et plusieurs autres souvenirs, l'étui contenant le cachet et les couteaux en vermeil qui me servent toujours, la moitié des belles gravures d'après le portrait de son père, par Ingres, la petite aquarelle du Duc d'Orléans à cheval, d'après H. Vernet, l'un de mes quatre beaux éventails, mon éventail de mariage en filigrane qui a déjà servi à la Reine, son hochet qui a servi à tous les enfants de la Reine, mon bracelet contenant un portrait de son père destiné à sa femme, mon prie-Dieu sculpté contenant le masque de son père, mes papiers, lettres, petits livres de souvenirs que j'ai laissés en Angleterre, l'épée de son père qu'il portait le jour de sa mort, la palme qui lui fut donnée par sa division au retour des Portes-de-Fer.

Je laisse comme souvenir au Duc de Chartres :

Le portrait équestre du Duc d'Orléans par de Dreux, le petit portrait de son père par Ingres, le grand tableau du *Col de Teniah*, par H. Vernet, la tête en marbre de son père, d'après le mausolée de Triquetti, l'aquarelle de la Reine par Winterhalter, mon portrait par Henriquel Dupont, ma garniture de bureau (vase, porte-plumes, écritoire en vermeil), la

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miniature de sa marraine, ma petite montre, le carnet en écaille et or orné des portraits de la famille, l'un de mes beaux éventails peints, le bracelet orné de son portrait et de celui de son frère, destiné à la Duchesse de Chartres, l'aquarelle d'Eugène Lamy, représentant la *Revue des Chasseurs d'Orléans aux Tuileries* (1840), le grand portrait du Comte de Paris, enfant, par Winterhalter, deux des albums contenant des dessins du Duc d'Orléans, l'autre moitié des gravures d'après le portrait de son père par Ingres, l'*Arc de Triomphe de Dymilah* par Dauzats, mon orgue d'Alexandre, ma corbeille de mariage en boule, une statuette équestre en bronze de son père, avec les deux vases en bronze qui l'accompagnent.

J'indique sur une liste spéciale les souvenirs que je prie ma famille et mes amis d'accepter comme un dernier témoignage d'affection, et je demande à mes fils de se partager le reste des objets que je puis laisser, comme albums, bronzes, livres, meubles et petites bagatelles. . . .

Ayant à cœur la prospérité de notre maison, je veux, dans le cas où, par des malheurs improbables mais possibles, c'est-à-dire par le prédécès de mes deux fils, morts avant moi sans avoir laissé d'héritiers directs, je deviendrais propriétaire d'une partie de leurs

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biens, que les biens que je laisserais soient partagés entre les princes de la maison d'Orléans, et, à leur défaut, entre les princes leurs fils. . . .

Quel que soit l'exil où mes jours se terminent, et quelle que soit la tombe que j'y trouve, je demande à mes fils, et à leur défaut à mes héritiers, de faire rapporter mes cendres en France lorsque notre famille y sera rentrée, et de les faire déposer dans la chapelle mortuaire de Dreux auprès de la tombe de mon époux.

Je termine ici mes dernières volontés en assurant de mon pardon tous ceux qui m'ont offensée ou affligée, et en demandant à ceux que j'ai pu offenser ou peiner de ne point m'en garder le souvenir.

Ma dernière parole est pour mes fils bien-aimés, une prière et une bénédiction.

Signé :

HÉLÈNE, DUCHESSE D'ORLÉANS.

Eisenach, ce 1^r^ *Janvier*, 1855.

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APPENDIX.

From the Athenæum of Saturday, May 22, 1858.

(*Written on the day of her death.*)

The consummation of that tragedy of which we have long been witnesses,—a tragedy than which history or poem has never painted one more memorable or more mournful,—has arrived. The Duchess of Orleans is dead.

We can only attempt to give a faint outline and a transient record of the virtues, rare as her misfortunes, of this the last of the noble women whose calamities are identified with the calamities of France.

The Duchess of Orleans was, as most of our readers will recollect, a Princess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. Her mother, who died when she was an infant, was a daughter of one of the most enlightened, brave, and generous princes that ever sat upon a throne,—Karl August of Saxe-Weimar, the friend of Goethe and of

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Schiller; a daughter, also, of that intrepid and high-hearted princess, Louisa of Saxe-Weimar, whom all the cannon of Napoleon could not (as he said) intimidate, when she presented herself, alone and unprotected, to plead for her husband and her people. To say that the Princess Helen of Mecklenburg was worthy of the heroic blood that flowed in her veins, might seem to be praise enough. But the qualities of this noble princess transcended those of her ancestress as much as her calamities. The Duchess Louisa lived to see her enemy prostrate; her country liberated from tyranny; her husband restored to his throne and his subjects, beloved, honoured, and contented. She died in her own home, and among the people she had risked everything to protect and to serve. *Her* enemy was an external foe. She was not threatened, insulted, driven out by the people among whom she had hoped to pass her life, and to whom she had devoted all her thoughts and all her sympathies; whom it was her fondest wish to serve, and from whom no extremity of ill-treatment could ever wean her affections.

Such cruel trials (and a crueller than all—the sudden and tragical death of a young and passionately loved husband) the Duchess Louisa was spared; but they were accumulated on the head of her gentle and delicate though heroic granddaughter. Nobody

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that beheld her could, at first, believe that she was the woman who had sat in the Chamber of Deputies with her little son by her side, and with loaded muskets pointed at her; not a feature of her fair, pale face betraying the smallest fear. We have heard from several eye-witnesses a description of this ever-memorable and fatal scene—far more fatal to France than to her who is at rest. Some of them were men whose theories were hostile to any form of monarchy: yet even they confessed that nothing could be conceived so sublime and so touching as the attitude of the young widow; the defenceless mother, calmly looking in the face the most horrible of deaths,—massacre by a mob,—that she might assert the claims of the fatherless boy by her side.

But enough of the irrevocable and fatal Past.

No discerning person could approach the Duchess of Orleans without being struck with the extraordinary combination she presented of the most refined feminine sweetness and grace, with masculine courage, sense, and magnanimity. All her views and sentiments were high and great. Never, in the most intimate conversation, was a particle of resentment against those who had so cruelly ill-treated her discernible. She always spoke of the French people with the deepest attachment and the most earnest wishes for their prosperity; nor would she suffer any

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severe comments upon them. On one occasion (as we have been informed), shortly after the marriage of Louis Napoleon, somebody repeated one of the many stories told to the disadvantage of the present Empress of the French. The Duchess immediately put an end to the conversation, and requested that nothing to the disparagement of that lady might ever be uttered in her presence.

We see it stated in a daily journal that the Princesss Helen of Mecklenburg went reluctantly to be the bride of the Duke of Orleans. This is an entire mistake. The strenuous opposition of the Duchess's half-brother, the then reigning Duke of Mecklenburg, is well known. Nothing could reconcile him to a French alliance. But his sister, without being at all blind to the perils of the high station to which she was called, had a soul of too heroic a temper not to desire to share those perils with such a husband, and for the sake of such a country. To that country it was her dream—a dream from which she never awoke —to devote herself. Those who witnessed her intense anxiety about the education and character of the young Princes, must have constantly perceived that it was not the mere anxiety of a mother for the welfare of sweet and noble sons; but that it was the welfare of France that was at the bottom of her heart. Earnestly as she deprecated the idea of the Comte de

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Paris being regarded as a Pretender, it was impossible not to feel that her most intense desire, the object of which she never lost sight, was, to make him such, that, if France, in her need,—in any of the convulsive struggles which too often shake her frame,—should call upon him, he might be ready to obey her call, and fitted to guide her destinies with a wise, firm, and stainless hand. This desire was not to be confounded with vulgar ambition, nor with the fond cravings of a mother's heart. She knew that the crown of France was not a thing that a loving mother could desire for her son. But her opinion was, that to certain stations certain duties are attached; that Country has claims which nothing can cancel; and that the higher the station, the larger and more imperative do they become.

The Duke of Mecklenburg was not the only one of the Princess's relations strongly opposed to her marriage. Her venerable uncle, the late Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar, spoke to the writer of these lines, with tears running down his cheeks, of his repugnance to the marriage, and his forebodings for the happiness of his niece, to whom he was extremely attached, as he had been to her mother. The Grand Duke's anticipations and tears were prophetic. The clouds that afterwards gathered so black around her had not then begun to darken her brilliant prospects.

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If the Duchess's misfortunes were august, solemn, and terrible as a Greek tragedy, her heart was large, high and strong enough to meet them. In her gentle presence one might forget that she had any defence but Christian and womanly patience: but when one remembered what she had endured, and what a front she had opposed to all the strokes of calamity, one felt inclined to bow down before her, as to one tried and strengthened beyond the ordinary measure of our feeble nature.

Her mind had been early and largely cultivated, under the care of her excellent stepmother, to whom she was tenderly attached. Her reading was extensive, and her intelligence acute and clear. But the most striking feature in her character was its moral grandeur. When in her presence, you were continually reminded of Milton's exquisite lines,—

> "Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
> Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
> About her, as a guard angelic placed."

S. A.

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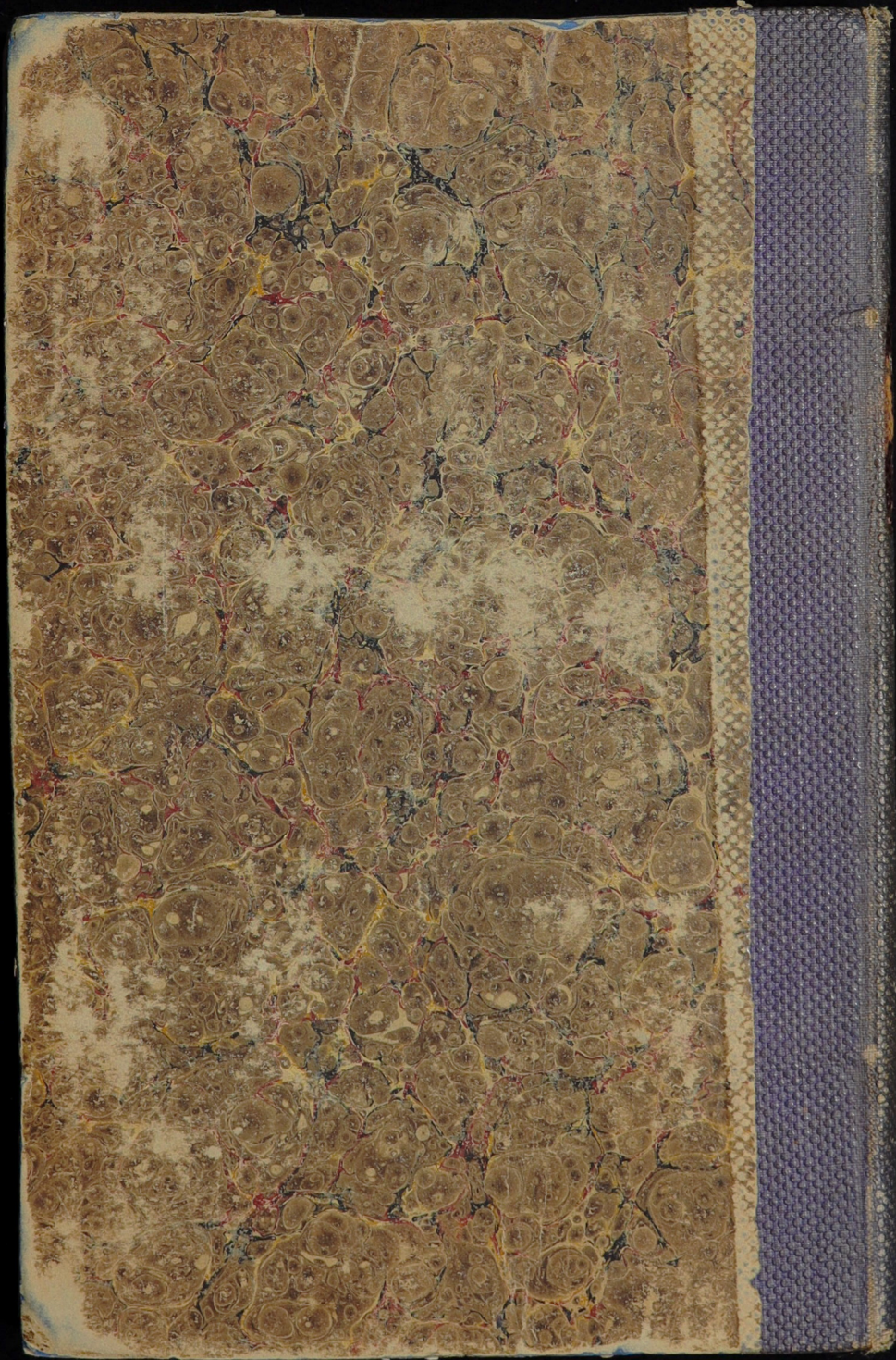

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