

an answer at once, although I told Agnes when I wrote to her the other day that I should not write to anybody else before my coming home.

Your letter is very largely about Johnnie. My dear Tood, you must not let his going away depress you too much. I know you like him, and that he has been very good to you; but such separations have to come, and you will no doubt see some other young man some day that you will like just as much. You do not think so now, but you will, and he no doubt feels very bad at going, so you must be as cheerful as you can and make it as easy as possible for him.

Remember!

I am on my way home now, and next Saturday will see me back again in Clarendon street. All the dear little Chinese, with their pigtailed, and the dreadful, great Mormons, with their hundred wives, and the donkeys and the buffaloes and the red Indians will be far away, and I shall see you all again. I am impatient for that, for the people out West are not as good as you are. I am going to preach to them this morning to try and make them better, and it is quite time now to go to church.

Your affectionate uncle,

P.

## THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS ACHILLE MURAT IN FLORIDA.<sup>1</sup>



CATHERINE D. MURAT was born at Willis Hall, near Fredericksburg, Virginia, August 17, 1803, and was the daughter of Colonel Bird Willis and of Mary Lewis, who was a niece of General Washington. Catherine was not only a child of engaging manners, but she possessed a beauty which increased as she advanced in age. At the age of fifteen she was married to Mr. Gray, a Scotch gentleman, and a neighbor of her father. In a little over a year Mr. Gray died, leaving his young wife a widow and a mother at the age of sixteen. The child survived its father but a short time. These were the first trials that her childlike nature was called upon to bear, and it was some time before she recovered from the shock. She then returned to her father's house and made it her home. About the year 1826 Mr. Willis, having met with a reverse of fortune, decided to remove to Florida. His family, consisting of his wife, three sons, and four daughters, accompanied him, leaving one married daughter in Virginia. He rented a house in Tallahassee, the capital of Florida, on Monroe street, southeast of the State House; and here it was that the young and beautiful widow Catherine Gray first saw Prince Achille Murat (the eldest son of the King of Naples and Caroline, sister of Napoleon Bonaparte), who, being exiled from France and Italy, had, a short time previous, selected Florida as his home. In Tallahassee she was surrounded by persons of intellect and refinement to an extent not often found in a

frontier country, as Florida then was. Among the gentlemen were Governor W. P. Duval, Judge Thomas Randall, General R. K. Call, Colonel Gadsden, and others; and among the ladies were Mrs. R. K. Call, Mrs. "Florida" White, Mrs. Nutall, as well as the family of William Wirt.

Mrs. Gray soon became foremost in this circle, and attracted the favor of Prince Achille. She was not pleased with him at first; for though he was a man of education, and could entertain a company by the hour with his remarkable memory and genius, still he had allowed himself to fall into such careless habits that he did not at all approach the beau-ideal of the delicately nurtured and fastidious lady. It was only after listening to the persuasion of her parents, and seeing the constant devotion of Achille, that she could look with a favorable eye upon his suit. However, on the 30th of July, 1826, the two—the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte and the grandniece of George Washington—were married. The couple soon moved to Lipona, Prince Murat's plantation in Jefferson county. Around them, within an area of a few miles, lived many of those whose names have already been mentioned; and a constant round of gaiety was kept up, all unnecessary etiquette being laid aside.

Thus were passed many happy years, Mme. Murat still enlivening all with her attractive society, and the prince passing his time in the acquisition of learning. The range of his experiments may be inferred from the prince's declaration that "alligator-tail soup will do, but the turkey-buzzard is not good."

On one occasion when, at Achille's suggestion, Mme. Murat had gone to spend the day with a friend, he took the opportunity to test the merits of a plant which he thought would make

<sup>1</sup> See also, in this group of papers, "Bordentown and the Bonapartes," in this magazine for November, 1880; "Napoleon's Deportation to Elba," March, 1893; "Joseph Bonaparte in Bordentown," May, 1893; and "The Death of the Prince Imperial," June, 1893.

a fine dye. He knew the process would occupy some time, and that his "dear Kate" might be an obstacle to his undertaking. When she was about to return, the coachman called her attention to a cloud of smoke rising from the plantation. Mme. Murat, seriously alarmed for fear the house was on fire, was driven home rapidly, accompanied by some of her friends. As they approached, a huge kettle could be seen, under which was the fire that had caused the anxiety. Over it, heated and smoke-stained, they detected Achille, eagerly at work. As he saw his wife approaching, he rushed to her and said, while his face was radiant with success: "O Kate, I have made all your clothes a most beautiful pink! You will look so lovely in them!" Sure enough, to her dismay, she discovered that he had dyed, indiscriminately, all that he could lay his hands on — sheets, pillow-cases, table-cloths, and various articles of clothing, even including dresses, though the servants, seeing what was going on, and knowing that their mistress would disapprove, had hidden a great deal from him. Years after, I heard Mme. Murat relate the circumstance with much feeling. She never could refer to him without tears in her eyes; for, notwithstanding his eccentricities, he was a most affectionate husband.

A trip to Belgium, where they remained two years, made an agreeable change in their mode of life. Prince Murat was assigned to the command of a regiment in the Belgian service, and their home was in Brussels. During their residence in that city an amusing incident occurred. An English family, in which were two grown daughters, were near neighbors, and with them Mme. Murat soon came to be on very friendly terms. One day, when the young ladies wished to ride, their mother gave her consent, provided Mme. Murat would be their chaperon. She readily acquiesced, and the party were soon mounted. Mme. Murat being, like all Southern ladies, a fine horse-woman, was given a lively English steed. They set off merrily, and soon her horse showed a disposition to keep in front. She tried to curb his impatience, but found she had not physical strength sufficient to control him. Of course the young ladies felt in duty bound to keep near their chaperon, and every now and then she heard them mildly asking her if it would not be more agreeable to ride a little slower. Mme. Murat, having a good share of national pride, decided to conceal the true situation, and gave some excuse for continuing the rapid motion. It was useless for her to try to slacken the gait of her animal, for hurry on he would, and all followed at John Gilpin speed. She was greatly rejoiced when they reached their destination, for she was very tired from

her unusual exertion. While the others were engaged in viewing the objects of their visit, she was dreading the prospect of a similar ride in returning. She had to conquer her pride and acknowledge the truth, or bear the annoyance. Meanwhile all were profuse in their admiration of her as an equestrian, saying: "How well you ride, but how fast! Do all Americans ride that fast?" She only smiled in reply, and soon all were in the saddle again. Alas! it was the same story. Off went her Rosinante, and, although the repeated cries of "Madame, please do not ride so fast!" were in her ears, she was unable to check her horse, and finally reached home very much fatigued, and glad to be delivered from the danger. Her prudence forbade her trying the experiment again.

The striking resemblance which Prince Murat bore to his uncle Napoleon Bonaparte seemed to awaken the love and esteem of many whom he met in Belgium, and frequently he was stopped in public by the soldiers and subjects of his uncle and father, who knelt to him, covering his hands with kisses. There were those in power at that time who began to fear that the enthusiasm thus elicited might prove a nucleus around which sufficient troops could be raised to restore to his family their respective crowns. Consequently, by the order of the King of Belgium, the regiment was disbanded. On taking leave of his soldiers, Achille addressed them in seven different languages, such were his proficiency and the variety of nationalities represented.

It was the pride of Prince Murat's heart to see his lovely Kate prove herself, by her beauty and graceful manners, in no way inferior to the courtly ladies with whom she was in daily intercourse. The Bonaparte family was at that time exiled by France and Italy, and when the Prince and Princess Murat made London their home, they enjoyed the society of the imperial family, as well as that of other distinguished Europeans, and of many Americans of note, among whom were Washington Irving and John Randolph of Roanoke. Louis Napoleon was their constant guest; and at that time he predicted that, at a future day, he would be on the throne of France, often saying, "When I am emperor, Cousin Kate, you shall have a château and everything you want, in return for your kindness to me now." Doubtless Prince Murat had a latent hope that such would be the case, and probably it was because there were no signs of its speedy realization that at the end of a year he concluded to return to Florida. He lived for some time in St. Augustine, and afterward in Tallahassee. It was while the Murats were in St. Augustine that Louis Napoleon came to New York. He was on his way to visit his cousins in Florida, when, hearing of

the severe illness of his mother, he returned to Europe.

Prince Murat now determined to study law. After his admission to the bar, he moved to New Orleans and formed a law-partnership with Mr. Garnier. While thus engaged, he purchased a sugar-plantation on the Mississippi river, near Baton Rouge, where Mme. Murat spent much of her time in winter, although her husband owned a handsome residence in the city. One day, during the season of sugar-boiling, Achille approached too near the edge of one of the large vats of syrup, which had been left to cool, and accidentally slipped into it; and while all around declared that it was hot enough to scald him, he said, after a few minutes, that his whole thought was, "Kate will make me wash." He had a decided aversion to water. He never drank it without adding whisky to it. He said, "Water is intended only for the beasts of the field."

Prince Murat was rather visionary in his ideas, and after several years spent in Louisiana he became embarrassed in his planting operations, and was on the eve of leaving them in disgust, when he heard of the death of his mother. He then persuaded Mme. Murat to stay with her father in Virginia while he went to Europe to look after his interests. He was absent about a year, and returned without having arranged his business satisfactorily. He again went to Florida with his wife, and established his plantation, called Econchattie, in Jefferson county, where they lived several years. About this time began the Florida Indian war, in which Prince Murat took an active part. He was aide-de-camp to General R. K. Call, and was also commissioned colonel and appointed to the command of the forces then guarding the frontier settlements, and exhibited much bravery and discretion. Although at the risk of her life, his devoted wife never left him. On one occasion he was so very ill that she was afraid he would die during the night, and yet, for fear the Indians would see the light and murder them, she could not even have a lamp burning. In the dark she would often put her hand on him and listen to hear if he were breathing.

During their residence at Econchattie their house was the resort of many friends. Groceries were sometimes difficult to obtain, having to be brought from Tallahassee, twenty miles away. Numerous guests were once visiting them, when the cook informed her mistress that the last barrel of flour was nearly out. Mme. Murat immediately asked her husband to send for a fresh supply. A wagon was hurriedly despatched with an order in the wretched handwriting of Prince Achille; but

unfortunately the messenger was not informed what he was sent for. It was many hours before he returned, and, to the consternation of Mme. Murat, he brought no barrel. As he approached she inquired, "Where is the flour?" "I dunno, missis," was the reply. "I gave mahrs's letter to the sto'keeper, and he could n' read it. He tuk it to some gemen, and they could n' read it, and at last they 'cluded this was what he wrote for," and he pulled out of his pocket a kind of lancet with which to bleed horses, called a "horse-fleam." None but a lady who knows how hard it is to provide with a scant larder can realize what her feelings were.

After a lingering illness, Prince Murat died April 15, 1847. His remains were deposited in the Episcopal cemetery at Tallahassee. His widow bought a house called Belle Vue, two miles from the city, and there made her residence. She was, however, so much attached to Econchattie that the premises were always kept in repair, and she spent a great deal of time there every year. Had Prince Murat lived a few years longer, he would have seen the restoration of the Bonapartes, which he had so long hoped for and expected. Louis Napoleon did not then forget his kind "cousin Kate," and when the Bonaparte family assembled in Paris, she was there also, and was received by the emperor with appropriate honor as a princess of France. At the same time he bestowed upon her forty thousand dollars, and the privilege of using the royal livery, which she did during the remainder of her life. She was invited to dine with the emperor, and was conducted by the grand chamberlain to an elevated seat in the drawing-room of the palace, where a large party of guests was assembled. She did not know that she occupied the seat of honor until her ears caught the words, "La Princesse Achille—La Princesse Achille Murat," whispered around the room. This in a measure embarrassed her. When the cry of "L'Empereur!" announced the approach of Louis, who walked directly to her and, after a most cordial welcome, offered her his arm to escort her to the dinner-table, her excitement was such that, as she laughingly said, she hardly knew how she came down the steps. Notwithstanding her usual ease of manner and familiarity with court etiquette, to feel that she was the observed of all observers mantled her cheeks with blushes. At the state dinner she occupied the seat at the emperor's side which was always reserved for the empress, whose non-appearance, it was then presumed, was caused by indisposition. The ceremonies of the dinner being over, the emperor invited the princess to accompany him into the reception-room of the empress. To her surprise, she

found the empress perfectly well, and warm in her reception of her "dear cousin Kate." In her eagerness to meet her, she tripped and nearly fell, when the emperor playfully remarked, "Ah, Eugénie, will you never remember that you are an empress?" She then said that she had absented herself from the table only to enable the emperor to show his cousin every possible respect and attention. All restraint was now put aside, and they laughed and talked about old times.

The emperor tried to persuade the princess to make her home in France, offering to fulfil his promise of giving her "a château and everything she wanted." But her love for her Florida home, added to the responsibility she felt as the mistress of two hundred slaves, bequeathed to her by her husband, caused her to decline his kind offer and to return to America. She brought with her many mementos of her friends in the palace.

Prince Murat had been obliged to mortgage his land and negroes to the Union Bank of Florida. He always expected to get money from Europe, and he had asked his wife, whenever she had it in her power, to redeem the property. The generosity of the emperor now enabled her to do this, and feeling, with all good owners, that slaves, like children, were to be taken care of, she did all in her power for their comfort.

Settled now at Belle Vue, the princess continued her wonted hospitality to the poor as well as to the rich. Her delightful entertainments and her many deeds of charity, unostentatiously bestowed, will long be remembered. Those in trouble found her a sympathizing friend, and she always took the part of the oppressed. She was made Vice-Regent of the Mount Vernon Association of Florida, and by her great liberality and energy succeeded in raising in the State nearly three thousand dollars toward the preservation of the Washington home. Like other relatives of Washington, she bore a striking resemblance to the first President, and was asked by strangers if she was not a relative of his.

In the course of time the secession of the Southern States took place, and then the war. She contributed most liberally to all "soldiers' aid societies," and was prominent in doing all she could for the Southern soldiers. Her carriage was often seen at the doors of the hospitals, where fruit, vegetables, and numerous delicacies were taken by her to the sick. The officers she did not have so much sympathy for, because they were the pets of society; but the private soldiers she looked upon with a motherly interest and pride. On one occasion she had a breakfast at her home for the entertainment of those at the hospitals in Talla-

hassee who were sufficiently convalescent to attend.

When the war was ended, and the princess saw so many of her old negroes, as well as those who were too young to work, cast out penniless on the world, she was much troubled in their behalf. She was then unable to assist them, and really had no means of her own. She sent some valuable jewels to New York to be sold, giving directions to have the money arising from the sale invested in provisions and other necessaries. Her wishes were complied with, but the goods purchased were unfortunately shipped without being insured on a steamer bound for Jacksonville, Florida, which was lost at sea, and thus she gained nothing by her sacrifice. Her former slaves were still allowed to live at the Econchattie plantation, with the privilege of cultivating the land. The following Christmas many of them brought testimonials of their affection and gratitude to their "mistress," as they still preferred to call her, in the shape of chickens, eggs, syrup, etc., of their own raising. Her tender heart, much touched by their kindness, prompted her to decline those gifts; and delicately returning them, she added presents to them, telling her people she hoped they would still be as merry and happy as of yore.

Her generosity was rewarded in a manner which is thus described by one of her friends: "It was early in 1866 I met Mme. Murat, much agitated. Handing me a document, she said: 'Read this. Ten minutes ago I did not know that I possessed a dollar in the world.' I found the paper to be a letter from the private secretary of Louis Napoleon, informing her that his Majesty had settled upon her a large annuity. It was a moment of exquisite pleasure to us both, and most pleasantly did we mingle our tears of gratitude. In broken speech she said: 'God bless Louis! His gift shall relieve many a poor widow and orphan.'" In a letter to me on the subject, after telling me the good news, the princess added, "I feel, of course, very happy that I shall not only have it in my power to be more comfortable, but can help my friends and relations." In speaking of the matter to me afterward, she said, "I lay awake one night thinking what I would do for money to live on, and the next night thinking what I would do with my money." The desire to assist others seemed to be ever prominent in her mind.

In 1866, having suddenly become ill, with symptoms resembling those of paralysis, a voyage to Europe was prescribed by her physicians, and, accompanied by one of her nephews, she again left Florida.

Again she was received by her husband's relatives with an affectionate welcome. She related many incidents of the Southern Con-



ENGRAVED BY R. G. TIETZE.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY DISDÉRI.

THE EMPEROR LOUIS NAPOLEON.

federacy to the emperor and empress, together with the sacrifices and privations the South was called upon to bear. The princess asked the emperor, if he felt so much for the South, why he had not helped the Confederacy. His reply was: "Cousin Kate, you all had my warmest sympathy and hopes for your success; but on account of slavery I did not dare to send an army to your assistance. Had I done so, I should have had a mob in Paris." Mme. Murat spoke of the empress as a person of lovely character, being constantly employed in deeds of benevolence, even visiting the hospitals. The prince imperial she spoke of with much affection, he being then a most interesting youth.

In one of her conversations with Eugénie, Mme. Murat asked her if she led the fashions, or followed them, to which she quickly answered that she only followed them. While in Paris she was invited to visit her relatives at the castle of Mouchy. The Duke of Mouchy was married to Anna, the daughter of Prince Lucien Murat. Anna, with the natural buoyancy and affection of youth, was in constant dread lest some grim specter with a well-filled purse would be allotted to her, and when she was one day sent for by the empress, she knew her fate was sealed. She left home in tears. Great was her joy, however, on being informed by the kind empress that her hand had been promised to the young and handsome Duke of Mouchy, to whom she was already attached.

After a most pleasurable stay in Europe, with health apparently restored, the princess returned to America in 1866.

A few months later sorrow darkened many a household when it was announced that Princess Murat's health was declining. I went to see her, and well do I remember her bright smile of welcome as I entered her chamber door and saw her reclining on a couch in a handsome dressing-gown, with a rose in her hair. She was so devoted to flowers that she always wanted them near her. "I am so glad you have come. You must not leave me," were almost her first words, and it was my pleasure to be near her for many weeks. For a long time she could not be persuaded to change her couch for a bed. I think she hoped that by the resistance of her will her slow typhoid fever would abate; but hope had to yield to its ravages, as day by day she lost her strength.

From week to week her sickness continued. Friends were constantly around her, and relatives at a distance were summoned, who remained at her side until the close of her life.

Her negroes at first were not uneasy, one of them exclaiming, "It is *impossible* for missis to die!" and much amused was that mistress when the quaint remark was repeated to her by some one who had heard it. As the fever progressed, they began to be alarmed, and they came to see her so often, even all the way from Econchattie, that, as they were very numerous, the physician, fearing the bad effects of excitement, gave directions that none should be admitted but those who waited on her. One elderly woman who had long been deranged in mind, but harmless, would watch around the doors late in the evening, and if she could find a moment when there was no one in the room, would slip in and quietly take her seat. Once she ventured to speak, and, looking affectionately at her mistress, said, "You ain't dead yet!" as much as to say, "You will yet get well." Her former slaves had frequent prayer-meetings for the purpose of imploring divine aid to save her life. For months her illness continued, and still their devotion did not cease.

The physician had long urged her removal to the sea-shore as the only hope of recovery, but the princess could not be induced to be taken anywhere else than to Econchattie, the home endeared to her by so many tender associations. There, still surrounded by relatives and friends, she lingered. She had surrendered all hopes of life, and arranged her affairs accordingly, making her old friend Mr. Octavius H. Gadsden the executor of her will. With the exception of a few legacies, including land and money to her servants, William Hughes, Patsy Lee, and Jerry Hughes, her coachman, also former slaves, her entire property was left to be divided equally between her brother and two sisters.

On the 6th of August, 1867, in the firm hope of entering into a happier life, after an illness of five months, her spirit took its flight. Her remains were taken to Tallahassee, and buried by the side of her husband.

When her negroes found that their best friend had really left them, their grief knew no bounds. A large procession of them, with badges of mourning, followed her to the grave. While the coffin was in the church, the deranged woman before referred to placed herself as near it as possible, weeping bitterly. William Hughes, who was inconsolable, requested that he might be allowed to assist in carrying the coffin from the hearse to the grave; and while gentlemen were at each side, he supported one end. In such fashion did her former slaves share the grief felt for their beloved mistress by all who had known her in society.