

LEFT TO GO TO RUIN.

THE MANSION ONCE OCCUPIED BY PRINCE MURAT.

Plantations Near Tallahassee That Point the Moral That Florida Needs a Larger White and Thrifty Population—The Decline in Land Values.

[SIXTH LETTER.]

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., March 18.—Touching the marriage of the Duke of Sutherland, of which a long account appears in the newspapers, I am reminded that his Grace spent some time, a few weeks since, at the Leon hotel in this city, occupying some half-a-dozen rooms for himself and retinue. I formed the acquaintance of a Scotch gentleman here who came out with the Duke in his yacht on a former occasion, and taking a fancy to this section of Florida, he purchased large tracts of some of the finest land in the neighborhood, altogether about 1,000 acres. Five-and-a-half miles from town he has a plantation which he calls "Ivanhoe," situated on the side of a majestic lake, fringed with live oak, magnolia, weeping cedar and other handsome trees, the foliage of which is reflected mirror-like from the placid bosom of the lake, reminding one of the pictures on our walls of tropical scenes, slumbering as it were, in the glow of midsummer heat, and bathed in tinted sunlight through a hazy atmosphere. Standing at one end of this lake, and slightly elevated, a new mansion has just been erected by the proprietor, from which a charming view of lake and landscape is to be had, and I thought at the time if one would not be contented here, with such surroundings, he could not be contented anywhere, provided always, of course, his digestion is good, no political kites flying, no envious of others—in a word, at peace with the outer world and a clear conscience towards God and man. A new vineyard has just been planted, comprising about three acres, which will be fruitful next year. Then there is a pear orchard, and well advanced peaches, cotton, tobacco and such like as are indigenous to the soil and climate; altogether a plantation worth having and caring for.

Then again, if we have a live duke living not many miles away from us (Tampa), so have we a dead prince and princess as well, whose graves I stood beside yesterday in the Episcopal burying ground, and read as follows:—

Deparled this life, April 8, 1847, CHARLES LOUIS NAPOLEON, ACHILLE MURAT, Son of the King of Naples and Caroline Buonaparte. Aged 47 years. Erected by his wife Catherine, in perpetual memory of his love.

This tribute has been since duplicated and the two obelisks (marble shafts about 12 feet high), standing at the heads of the remains of each, are precisely alike, husband and wife. The epitaph on the latter I did not copy, as it is nearly the same, except as regards names, age and time of death; age 64, death in 1867.

Depending upon my memory, I would remark that at the time of the shattering of the paper throne set up by Napoleon, just before his expatriation to Elba in 1814, a decree of banishment on the Bourbon restoration went forth against the imperial princes. Some of them found their way into Belgium, and others went to England. At all events Prince Murat finally crossed the Atlantic, (probably about 1820) brought up at Fernandina and afterwards came to this place, while Florida was yet under Spanish rule. Joseph Buonaparte, ex-king of Spain took up his abode in Bordentown, N. J., where he resided for some years. My memory is defective as to what became of the other brothers, Louis ex-king of Holland, and Jerome ex-king of Westphalia, or even the once dashing cavalry general Murat, the ex-king of Naples, who ere he was placed on the throne married Napoleon's eldest sister, Caroline, another of the subject of this sketch. History ceased to take further notice of these imperium in imperio, or rather, the worthies who governed prior to the disruption of the empire and banishment of the master St. Helena, although their movements are all chronicled in an ephemeral form.

The Prince Murat resided in this part of Florida including Jefferson county up to the time of his death, about 25 years. When Florida was ceded to the United States, the Seminole Indians were then on the war path, killing and destroying the properties of the white man without mercy. General Call, governor of the state, (whose daughter I referred to in my last as the author, also another daughter, Mrs. Broad, was the American hero of many a savage encounter, and to his staff was attached Prince Murat who now took upon himself the sobriquet of "colonel." Like his father the great cavalry general of former days, the colonel was dashing and brave, the old Napoleonic blood coursing in a fiery flow through every vein in his body. But, he was also a man of contraries—kind, eccentric to a fault, full of animal spirit and yet easily aroused, quite regardless of his own personal appearance, indifferent to the conventionalities of society, and to those more immediately about him—very like no doubt a child who had been weared within the precincts of a palace, with grand surroundings, and when cast upon the world and his own resources, had a great deal to learn as to what was due to ordinary mortals, as well as to himself. He was a man of extravagant luxurious habits. His entertainments were upon the most recherche scale, and Tallahassee had

in the colonel and his amiable wife a Kohni-ror society man of the first water.

I am indebted to an old gentleman here for the above references to Col. Murat. I now turn to Florida Breezes, the work already referred to, written by Governor Call's daughter, Mrs. Long, only one or two copies of which are extant, in order to shed a few more rays of light upon the life of Prince Murat, when dispensing the hospitalities of her own mansion. It also serves as an illustration of Florida society life during anti-bellum days:

There was a parlor that opened on the veranda, and behind was the refreshment room, and here we found tea and chocolate, creamy milk, the finest of cakes and dainty salads, and there were works of art to be seen—flowers, birds, beasts and many designs carved in green sweetwoods, and yellow that floated in crystal-like syrups; and of these even did we eat. This point de reception stood in the centre of a large square garden, planted in orange, shrubs, vines and vegetables, with the usual flowers.

Next follows a description of the furniture, plate, linen, with the imperial crest worked thereon. Our authoress continues:

Some of the ladies were favored with hand towels bearing the name of Pauline embroidered upon them. . . . However, to sip Arabian coffee and Asiatic tea from golden spoons bearing the great Napoleon's crest, and the use of royal damask, were at least continental variety not usual.

Then we are told the walls were hung with fine pictures, and the bust of Queen Caroline in marble, by Canova, a work of great value, stood in a conspicuous niche. So much, then, for the prince and his household. Now for his beautiful wife. I again quote:

But it is madam that gives tone to her home. She is there the master spirit. Beautiful, sweet-tempered, cheerful, genial—she beams radiantly and kindly upon all within her reach; softening and refining with an angelic grace life in the woods. She is a Virginia lady. Her father, Byrd Willis, was an early emigrant to Florida, and though only in the second decade when she met Col. Murat, she was a widow, Mrs. Gray. . . . They were made one at the capital, Jan. 12, 1820.

Both now lie beneath my feet, in this old churchyard. All that remains of their former glory is to be seen in the two plain, simple obelisks described at the beginning of this article, while the epitaphs tell the dates of their deaths and burial. Murat died the very year of the revolution (1847), which brought his cousin, Louis Napoleon, to the surface, from whence he boldly vaulted into the imperial chair of his uncle by a coup d'etat, which must forever tell in history as a very black spot upon his escutcheon. Had Murat lived a few years longer, no doubt he would have returned to France and once more become an imperial prince.

I next visited the Murat mansion, where madam (its last occupant) lived in retirement after the death of her husband. It is situated two miles out of town. Here, where erst upon a time all was chivalry and gaiety, I found everything shut in from the light of day—the doors and latticed shutters closed, the building itself fast crumbling to decay, the lofty portico and steps leading thereto almost unsafe to walk upon through neglected repairs; in short, the whole tout ensemble gave evidence not only of entire abandonment, but of having outlasted proprietorship whatever—a property without an owner. The cottages in the rear, the residences of the domestics in slavery days, were also deserted, except one, from the window of which emerged a dusky head. "Who's dat?" was the inquiry. "It's I, and, with your permission, I would like to go into the house"—meaning the mansion. "Certain, massa," was the reply. The key, large as the Bastille key hanging up in the hall of Abbotford, was soon produced, and after much perseverance with the lock, the front door creaked upon its rusty hinges and we entered. On either side of the hall are two large rooms, perhaps 30 feet square each—the old parlors of the place, the scene of all the gay festivities, where Florida's finest sons and daughters were wont to assemble and partake of the delicacies so graphically described by Mrs. Long in Florida Breezes, and where dancing to the strains of voluptuous music ruled the hours. In the rear was the banquet hall. These rooms are now used as store-rooms, for great piles of cotton seed, ready for planting, cover the floors; while the moles, and bats and ants revel uninterruptedly throughout the building, its sole possessors. What a change and contrast. We were glad to get out into the sunshine once more and leave our reflections behind on the mutability of all things mundane. Over the fireplace in one of the rooms there was a rude sketch of a guitar, done by some amateur hand, which brought to my mind the following ditty, by Moore:

The harp that once through Tara's hall Its soul of music shed, Now hangs as mute on Tara's wall As if that soul were dead. No more for chiefs and ladies bright The harp of Tara swells— The chord alone that broke at night Its tale of sorrow tells.

It was Tara's hall deserted, indeed—no more to be rehabilitated by mortal man, unless the work of decay be at once arrested. The garden and grass plots—the shrubbery and walks, and ruins of summer houses and grottoes, and sly nooks and recesses, where flirtations may have been carried on, while dancing, feasting and jesting ruled the hour inside—all these have passed, or are passing, away—the hand of the destroyer (Time) is visible on all sides. Tobacco, corn and cotton plants are now in possession of these once luxurious grounds, and also as far as the eye can reach, for the plantation once

comprised thousands of acres all under cultivation, wrought by the hands of hundreds of slaves, but now cut up and subdivided and owned by the descendants of those very slaves themselves, but worked in the most primitive fashion, the earth being only scratched up and seed thrown in, without depth, system or order—a hand to mouth living gained from the soil is the only recompense looked for or cared for—all the rest appears to be stubble, sunshine and laziness.

Opposite the Murat mansion, far in the distance, stands another plantation, once owned by an ex-governor, but now belonging to a Cincinnati gentleman who comes here once or twice a year. In company with my friend, Mr. Lockie, we visited a few days since this immense district of country, once in a high state of cultivation, about 4,000 acres. Standing in the portico of the old residence, and casting one's eyes around, it would seem as if the horizon only was the boundary of this once fine plantation, a rich rolling country with miniature lakes or ponds interspersed, and magnificent live oaks, singly or in clumps dotting the landscape like so many sentinels keeping watch. A gentleman from Holland (Mr. Doake and his family), appears to be "the lord of the manor" at present, being in full charge, as agent for the owner. He works much of the land himself, it is worked under his supervision, but like the obliterated estate, this is also cut up and subdivided, on rental among the colored successors. This plantation, I was informed, was worth before the war \$50,000. Now \$10,000 will buy it, because there are no laborers to be had to work it. A rich soil, a fine climate,—no blight, no mildew, no rusts, no weevil, no fearful waiting upon or apprehension of capricious skies for the ingathering of the crops, nor even doubts entertained of the yield's abundance. If the poor reapers, tillers of the soil, suffering and groaning in misery for the wherewithal to keep soul and body together, could only be transported to this Eldorado—a land, truly, that might be made to "flow with milk and honey"—what a blessing it would be not only to them and their children, but also to the land of their adoption, for the fruit of their labor would be felt far and wide in this beautiful state of Florida, so sorely in need of a larger white and thrifty population. But, notwithstanding these drawbacks, there is a bright future in store for her.

G. E. F.

A Paralyzed Audience.

A New Glasgow man who writes funny articles under the nom de plume of "Mack Deo" was booked to lecture at Hopeville, N. S., last Wednesday evening, but either for lack of advertising or the apathy of its people, no one attended except a man named John McArthur, whose laugh is set on a hair-trigger. When the appointed hour arrived, John first acted as chairman and introduced the lecturer, and when the funny man mounted the rostrum took his place as audience. At the first faint attempt at wit the audience broke into a broad grin, then it laughed outright; next it fairly roared with merriment; then it doubled up and rolled on the floor, kicked its feet against the seats, and mutely appealed to the lecturer to desist. But the funny man kept mercilessly on, telling joke after joke, while the entire audience rolled on the floor and held its sides. At the close of the lecture the audience was unable to go home and the lecturer was obliged to procure a team and get medical assistance. The doctor administered a dose of chloral, and as a sort of counter irritant, ordered him to read the debates in the Nova Scotia house of assembly.

It Wasn't a Free Lunch Counter.

A Portland liquor dealer had a surprise a short time ago, in the shape of a little bill amounting to about \$16 from his next door neighbor. The liquor dealer, believing in the maxim that "the early bird catches the worm," has been in the habit of opening his place of business at a very early hour in the morning. Thinking it was not worth while going home to breakfast, he was also in the habit of dropping in and taking his morning meal with this next door neighbor of his, being under the impression that he was always welcome. He never imagined for one instant that his friend had been running a small dining saloon all winter for his special accommodation. He was therefore very much surprised when he took his little bill. Despite the fact that the very moderate rate of 25 cents per meal was changed, the liquor dealer "kicked" against the bill. It is now rumored that the case will be taken to court.

The Groom "Set Her Up."

Some of PROGRESS' volunteer correspondents seem to have strange ideas of the class of news that is suited to a society column, and others dress their items in very peculiar language. Of this latter class is a gentleman in the north, who describes a wedding and adds: Mr. Blank had his cage all ready for the bird and after working all day he retired to the home of the bride and took her to his cage all ready and waiting for them.

The boys gathered about the house and gave them royal salute after which Mr. Blank set her up for the crowd.

For purifying the blood, stimulating the appetite, and invigorating the system in the Spring and early Summer, Ayer's Sarsaparilla is unsurpassed. Be sure you get Ayer's Sarsaparilla and no other; else the result may be anything but satisfactory.—Aid.

UNDER A LUCKY STAR.

SUCCESSFUL EX-MAJOR CHIPMAN, OF ST. STEPHEN.

Not a Lengthy Career, Measured by Years, but One That Has Been Crowded Full of Well-Earned Honors, Business, Political and Social.

About 33 years ago, John D. Chipman, ex-mayor of the lively town of St. Stephen, first saw the light. On that momentous occasion a lucky star must have been shining very brightly directly above him, for his life has been largely undisturbed by the cares and worries which make the earthly existence of many mortals a burden and a sorrow. Educated at the St. Stephen schools and Sheffield academy, at an early age he entered the service of a large mercantile house doing business in New Orleans and Quebec, his station being New Orleans. Here he remained for two years. The balmy airs of the south and the beauty of the southern ladies, however, could not blot out the recollection of the sterner skies and paler beauties of his northern home, and, induced by this as well as by the failing health of his father, the late Mr. Z. Chipman, home he returned. Since that time he has resided in St. Stephen, where, up to the time of his father's death, he did business as a member of the firm of Z. Chipman & Son. Since that event he has been occupied in winding-up his father's estate and looking after the varied interests included in it.

Ever since his return to St. Stephen, Mr. Chipman has taken an active part in the



JOHN D. CHIPMAN.

social, religious and commercial life of the town. An adherent of the Methodist church and superintendent of the Sabbath school, his means are liberally contributed to the support of its work in the various branches, while there are few organizations or societies in town of which he is not a member, and of which he has not at one time been a prominent officer. President of the St. Croix Printing and Publishing company, a director of the St. Stephen's bank and of the St. Croix Bridge company, the Frontier Steamboat company, the Calais Tug Boat company, secretary-treasurer and director of the N. B. & C. R. R. company, and filling 25 or 30 other offices and positions of trust, he yet finds time to throw a "stone" in winter as a member of the curling club, and to wield the mallet in summer as a cricketer.

Previous to the last federal election, when the Conservative party of Charlotte was casting around for a candidate to contest the constituency which had so long voted confidence in that old politician and staunch liberal, Hon. A. H. Gillmor, their choice fell upon Mr. Chipman and he was accorded the unanimous nomination of the party by a convention representing every part of the county. The liberals appeared satisfied with the nomination, for they naturally supposed that the inexperienced "boy," as they called him, would render the election of their candidate an easy task.

They were doomed to disappointment, however, for the vigorous canvass as once instituted by Mr. Chipman, his personal popularity, his pleasing addresses and convincing eloquence soon demonstrated that the fight would be a vigorous one, and that something more would be required of them than the boast of easy victory. And when on nomination day Mr. Chipman delivered the ablest political address ever heard within the walls of the court house in St. Andrews to the largest and most enthusiastic body of electors ever assembled there, they were almost inclined to despair. The tradition of the county proved too strong, however, and Mr. Gillmor was elected, though by a narrow and much reduced majority. Since the election Mr. Chipman has been recognized as the leader of his party in Charlotte.

On the occasion of the civic election in March of last year, Mr. Chipman was selected without opposition to fill the mayor's chair in St. Stephen. His term has been marked by a careful and economical administration of town affairs, by the inauguration of a more satisfactory system of account-keeping than formerly prevailed, and by other reforms, while the different departments of the town service have been efficiently maintained. Of his own choice, he retired from the mayoralty at the expiration of his term, last Monday, his many private interests requiring his undivided attention for the present.

Mr. Chipman is, emphatically, "one of the boys." Fond of that fun which aims to please, without wounding, with a hearty greeting and a cordial word for all, and filled with a sympathy which is ever ready to respond to the joys and griefs of others, he is a prime favorite wherever he is known, and throughout the province and dominion his friends are numbered by the score. With all this, he is a thorough business man, a forcible and eloquent speaker, a good citizen, a thorough Canadian. Should the promise of his early manhood be fulfilled, he is undoubtedly destined to fill a much larger place in the public eye than that he now occupies as one of St. Stephen's first citizens.

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ST. JOHN, N. B., March 15, 1889.

HARRY COMEQUICK.

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Your friend, T. H. E. TRUTH. P. S.—At Night Look for the Red Light.

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