REMARKABLE EVENTS

CAREER OF NAPOLEON.

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PREFACE

We propose, in the ensuing work to open out a Cycle of Life-Pictures from the Age of Napoleon

As far as relates to the plan of the writer, his desire is to present historic truth in the guise of poetic images, to furnish graphic portraits, or like David and Vernet in their compositions to interweave all his fantasies with the web of truth According as it seems desirable to present to the view of the reader, at one time scenery, at another characteristics, at another opinions so will his sketches bear at one time the impress of historic portraiture at another of romance, they will alternately be tragic and comic, they will contain fantasies and traditions

The events of this one brief quarter of a century offer materials for thought sufficient to employ the minds of men for a thousand years to come These events were so great and wonderful, that we should sin against humanity in general did we consider them only as the result of the actions of a single great man Napoleon is only the *superscription* of the century The whole course of events did indeed gather around him from the year 1795 to 1815, but yet these were set in motion by an overwhelming combination of powerful minds each one of which was perhaps gifted with as much force as the genius of Napoleon Characters and spirits such as those of Mirabeau, Carnot, Kosciusko, Sièyes Talleyrand Fouché—of the marshals of Napoleon, as well as of his enemies, Pitt, Metternich, La Charette, Stein, Andreas Hofer, the Queen Louisa of Prussia—to name but a few out of many—although they have not, indeed, produced events of such gigantic dimensions, have yet exercised almost as powerful an influence on the course of events One must study history in its minor episodes fully to apprehend the fact that Bonaparte with his gigantic powers of mind, was yet only the accidental central point of the world s course, that it was not so much *he* who gathered events around himself, as the *events* which clustered *themselves* around *him* If one comes to consider with an attentive eye the events in La Vendee, St Domingo, Spain Egypt, the Tyrol—in Italy, Germany England, and Holland—it will be seen that each has a separate history of its own, in which Bonaparte can hardly be said even to play the *most* prominent part But in how partial a degree he was the lord of the world s history has been shown by his fall

It is by no means our aim to write his Odyssey our design is rather to sketch a picture of the manners, circumstances, thoughts,

and characters of his time, a picture of society at the commencement of a century which bids fair to prove the most remarkable in the annals of the human race, for the great world crisis is yet far from being at an end there are yet, in this portentous century, questions of no less moment at stake than those which involve the well-being, if not the very existence of civilised society

In thus venturing upon the difficult task of depicting this remarkable period of the world's history, the author can only adduce in justification of his purpose, and in excuse for what may seem at first sight a presumptuous undertaking, that he has had the good fortune, in later times at least, to be able to observe individually many of the acting personages, that he has taken much pains in studying their several characters and that innumerable traditions of this period have been related to him by eye witnesses He has, moreover devoted the chief part of his life to the study of the best modern histories, and has personally visited many of the scenes of the most remarkable occurrences, whilst he has ever sought most earnestly to free his mind from those political passions which inevitably obscure the mental vision He has endeavoured, for the better comprehension of his subject, to place himself in the position of a tranquil rambler, who, resting upon the ruins of Carthage looks back thoughtfully upon the past He cannot deny that, in spite of his eager search for truth, much has yet remained dark and inexplicable to him but much also which had heretofore been dark, has he discovered buried beneath fragments, upon which History has scarcely deemed it worth her while to bestow even a contemptuous glance Whether his abilities are equal to the task he has undertaken, is not for him to decide, but that his *will* to search out truth has been sincere—that he has done his best to judge without perversion and to depict with clearness—the present work will testify He has only called Imagination to his help in order to see Truth in its entireness It was, perhaps unavoidable that at some times he should have failed to see things in their truest light, but he comforts himself with the thought that everything human is imperfect

Consideration for many living persons and existing families must necessarily impede the full development of some of these pictures, but not so much as to render it a difficult task for thinking readers to supply what is wanting out of their own imagination

Whilst we are far from wishing in the present work to occupy the *teacher's chair*, yet we would gladly present anew to the minds of all parties, living representations of those reckless spirits whose steps so many seem once more disposed to follow in blind and implicit trustfulness "With stupidity even the gods strive in vain,' and now, as ever, it would be well for those who are treading this perilous path to study the history of the past, and to remember that they "who *sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind* We have considered this exposition of our intentions as necessary to obviate misunderstanding and trust that we have here laid claim to no higher pretensions than we may be able to justify And thus, trusting to meet with friendly and indulgent readers, we would bid them a kind farewell

REMARKABLE EVENTS

THE CAREER OF NAPOLEON.

BOOK I.

THE ROMANCE OF THE REVOLUTION.

MIRABEAU AND MARIE ANTOINETTE.

THE period which we are now about to depict, by presenting sketches of individual histories before the eyes of our readers, and showing their connection with the great events which affected the destinies of empires, is perhaps one of the most important in the history of European civilization.

MIRABEAU is one of the first *boundary-stones* of this period. With him began the destinies of the Revolution, in him were embodied for the first time those new ideas which overthrew the *old* world.

It is not our present aim to relate the *history* of these revolutions, the effects of which we still feel in this our own day. We would rather confine ourselves to the delineation of some scattered *portraits* and *family scenes*, of which this stormy period may form the background, and thus seek to gain a clearer insight into the character of the principal men of that day, and to form a juster estimate of their modes of thinking and acting.

We must therefore pass lightly over well-known historic

facts, and concern ourselves chiefly with the family histories of that eventful period—a period so rife in broken hearts and lives of silent suffering. History, engrossed by the great world-struggle, too often commits to oblivion these minor incidents, forgetting that they not unfrequently form the chief motive agents in those convulsions which shake the kingdoms of the earth to their foundations. We have, indeed, been told many interesting anecdotes of these domestic histories; and it has been allowed that love and friendship, and even the petty workings of minor passions, have not been *altogether* without their influence on the weightier occurrences of the world around us; but yet we have too commonly been led to believe that only *great causes* can produce *great effects*. so that, although truly a glass of water inadvertently spilt was *once* the cause of a bloody *war*, yet that so mighty a revolution as that which has been progressing around us for the last fifty years could only originate in a universal enlightenment of the human race, in the discoveries of philosophers, and in the development of new ideas concerning freedom and its requirements.

We are not disposed at present to dispute this point We will gladly leave each in possession of his own theory, nor expect him to accept of ours as an exclusive revelation. We do not wish to impose silence on the criticism of each individual by a categorical *quos ego;* but this much we may without presumption assert: that those great philosophical discoveries which have in every age been considered as more peculiarly the possession of *enlightened* minds—those theories of freedom which only give expression to the innate desire for liberty that lurks in every human breast—have too frequently been made the cloak for selfish intrigues, having a far other aim in view than either the happiness or the freedom of the human race.

Some of the leading characters of this great drama have opposed the voice of conviction and of custom to that of passion, with more or less of firmness and resolution, but *all*, without exception—and how natural this is to human nature let each man's own heart declare—have received the impress of their characters, and even of their very virtues themselves, from the circumstances in which they were placed, and the development of individual feelings. The poor man, struggling for his daily subsistence, and he who

was destitute, from whatever cause, of all that lends to social life its *agrémens* and its charm, quickly became a cold stoic, a stern republican; whilst he who had been nursed in the lap of luxury and the pleasures of dominion remained an aristocrat and an advocate for arbitrary power. The ambitious warrior would fain become a hero, whilst those who in every struggle were defeated and dispersed became prophets of evil, fanatical martyrs, *wise men*, who wept over the world's errors, or *scorners*, who turned them into ridicule.

Amongst all the characters which were raised up at this period, as instruments for the fulfilment of the mysterious purpose of Providence, one of the most singular and the most powerful was Mirabeau; and we have much reason to believe that without him the course of the Revolution *might* have been far other than what it *actually* was. But, in truth, it was not, as superficial observers have imagined, his gigantic genius, his heart moved by strong passions and ardent philanthropy, which worked so powerfully on the progress of events, but rather his personal misfortunes, his individual desires, which set his stronger passions in motion. Nor is this any disparagement to his greatness; for that which befel in his case befals in that of almost every individual of the human race The *avalanche* which descends from the hill, in such devastating power, is not the less great or the less powerful because it was the falling branch of a rotten tree which first loosened it from its hold Mirabeau still remains a great character, although this character was drawn out by causes which were frequently trivial, and too often even pitiful, and its noblest features marred by the daring profligacy which has disgraced his memory. The mind of Mirabeau was not so full of contradictions as has been generally supposed. Nature knows no contradictions she solves them all harmoniously. The Marquis de Mirabeau of the old *régime*, with his chivalrous inclinations and his loose habits of thinking, his devotion to the court and to all the old aristocratic virtues, was yet in all respects the very *same* man whose ready pen and thundering eloquence spoke to men of their "rights," their "freedom," and even dared impiously to dictate, as it were, to his Creator, the "System of Nature"! The world often sees differences where there are none, and condemns the changes it perceives in a

character as marks of double-dealing, whilst perhaps it is all the time only its *own* want of *clear-sightedness* which makes things *seem* double.

Mirabeau, like every man who rests on his own independent judgment, had no party faith: he was neither a republican nor a royalist. Reason and genius in general are of no *party*. All that we can decidedly say of him is, that he was a man of most impetuous passions. The court at which he lived was well calculated to fan these passions into a fearful flame Louis XVI. had not, it is true, inherited the dissolute manners of his fathers; but he *had* inherited their court, their parasites, and the destinies of their house. An atmosphere of sensuality pervaded every apartment of the kingly palace. The King of France was king of pleasure. Men were accustomed both to expect and receive it from him. All who came within the charmed circle became intoxicated with enchantment. The royal dwelling had been, from time immemorial, a palace of delight; and all who crossed its threshold were accustomed to enjoy themselves. These court ladies and cavaliers knew no other aim in life, sought no higher occupation for their time, than love-making, trifling if not demoralising books, and the excitement of the pastoral drama. The queen was expected to be the queen of one life-long, uninterrupted feast; the king was looked up to by the courtiers who surrounded him only in proportion as he catered fresh pleasures to satisfy their pampered tastes. The dissoluteness of manners at the courts of Louis XIV. and XV. has ever been considered one of the chief causes of the Revolution; but it is far from improbable that Louis XVI. might have longer retained his throne had he allowed as free a course to the prevalent corruption of the day as his predecessors had done. In consequence of the natural uprightness and simplicity of his character, Louis XVI. favoured virtue, piety, and regularity of life, to a degree which was far from acceptable to the prevailing opinions of the day, and thus conjured up against himself all the hatred of disappointed passion, and the intrigues and persecutions of his profligate courtiers. The ruling etiquette, which had heretofore been nothing but a screen behind the protection of which men had been in the habit of doing everything that was contrary to the laws of morality and of religion, had now, under Louis XVI. become burdensome to

all. They ceased to love a king whom they deemed too *narrow-minded* to be able to comprehend the free habits of thinking which were prevalent at his court—a court from whose trammels he was yet too weak to free himself. He was sincerely devout; he strove with an honest mind to fulfil the duties of government; and yet, when it came to the point, he almost wholly neglected these duties, from his deficiency in strength of character, and brought to his Creator no other or costlier offering than that of his good-will. Hence it naturally arose that he was the more hated on account of his *will* to be a good king, the less power he possessed to be a good king in *deed*

There can hardly be any room for doubting that the manners of the French court were not unpleasing to Marie Antoinette Luxury, splendour, and, above all, that etiquette which was so full of the intoxicating incense of flattery, and which rocked the sovereign majesty in a blissful dream of their own similitude to gods, was most grateful to her feelings. She was frivolous in her tastes, often ambiguous in her actions, and too frequently afforded to her calumniators ground for scandal. Her husband was too indolent and unconcerned to seek to influence her conduct. The Emperor Joseph, her brother, was the only strict censor whom Fate had given her. When he visited Paris, he derided most unmercifully her cosmetics and her patches, her laced bodices and her riding habits; all the useless and tasteless tinsel which surrounded her, and the idolatrous homage which she encouraged in those around her. He laughed when, on occasion of some unimportant visit, one of the ladies-in-waiting, forgetting some trifling point of etiquette, would stand overwhelmed with embarrassment. He used to compare all these strange appearances and courtly formalities with the most laughable things under the sun, and ceased not to turn them into ridicule Accustomed to the hard couch of a soldier, to go about in plain clothes, to talk to every one, to speak the truth to everybody without ceremony, he appeared in the midst of this corrupted court, palisadoed with Chinese formality, like a barbarian from whose uncourtly love of truth it was vain to seek to escape. The painted ladies of the court shot forth fire and flame against him; his sister became angry; even the king did not know how to take his plain-dealing. Yet higher rose the indignation of the

court when Joseph sallied forth in his gray great-coat, and walked about the streets of Paris without either pomp or retinue, or any of the insignia of his rank; without either runners or fore-riders; and yet produced an effect which the king with all his *cortege* had never yet produced; for the populace welcomed him with enthusiastic acclamations. Then resounded in France, for the first time, that cry of "*Vive l'empereur!*" which a little later was destined to electrify the whole nation. Almost everybody in Paris was of opinion that this affable, philosophic, and simple-minded emperor, would be a much more suitable king for France than Louis XVI. Even the fish-women of Paris shared this opinion, and manifested it openly by sending a deputation to offer their homage to the emperor, who "showered down his gold with an open hand."

Joseph's clear and upright understanding discerned at a glance the whole condition of the French state. One evening, when the acclamations of the people had accompanied him to the very gates of the palace, and the court had received him with the customary ceremonies, he took occasion, from the courtly congratulations which were offered him on account of the enthusiasm which welcomed him on every side, to endeavour to open the eyes of the royal pair to the real state of affairs around them. The burdensome formalities whose restraint had become so wearisome to him, afforded him a welcome opportunity of expressing his opinions with that inconsiderate frankness which was peculiar to him.

"Might I be allowed to offer my candid opinion on all these matters?" said the emperor to Louis XVI.

With a smile of embarrassment, Louis sought to conceal his dissatisfaction. He had already suffered so frequently from the unwelcome candour of his imperial brother-in-law; he had so often, with his measured politeness, cut but a poor figure when brought into close encounter with the sound good sense and natural wit of the emperor, that he trembled at this announcement, lest he should be about to suffer from some new indiscretion. For *indiscretion*, according to the manners of that age of etiquette which preceded the Revolution (that *rococo* period, which Hogarth has so admirably depicted with all its vice and littleness), indiscretion was everything that came from the heart; everything that attacked the faults of others, or aimed at

their improvement. This period, entrenched behind all its formalities and fashionable courtesies, was so strongly guarded against truth, that it was an almost unheard-of thing for any one to venture on forcing these entrenchments, and no offence was less readily forgiven than a display of this inconvenient candour.

Joseph the Second, who resolutely seized every opportunity to further the cause of goodness and of truth to the utmost extent of his power, did not allow himself to be checked by the discouraging aspect of his brother-in-law or the reproving glances of his sister, but addressed the king thus abruptly:

"My dear brother, it pains me to see that you are not accustomed to any demonstrations of enthusiasm on the part of your people; and yet, if there be any monarch whose goodness of heart and honesty of purpose would well deserve these tokens of applause, it is, sire, yourself. Why does this nation receive its king in silence? Why does no voice of rejoicing greet his approach? It was an enigma, sire, to me before I came to France You have here a nation under your rule which has raised itself by its own exertions to a degree of civilization which I have vainly sought to attain amongst my own subjects by my utmost efforts You have in rich abundance all those things in which my states are deficient: institutions for the culture of every species of science, a flourishing industry, a blooming art, active *savans*, talents and abilities of every kind in plenty But this overflowing wealth, this superfluity of intrinsic powers and of all the elements of life, needs activity; requires to be united to an energetic *state-life*, and to be under the direction of a powerful government. Thus alone might France through its moral power become a new Rome But you have retreated into a sort of private life: a fashion which your predecessors introduced from their love of ease, and which degrades the king to be nothing more than a *maître de plaisir* for his people. You have cut yourself off so entirely from your subjects by an injurious ceremonial, that they look upon you almost as a stranger. Whilst no Frenchman, no matter how high be his rank or station in society, can contrive to tell you the most trifling truth; whilst all the wishes of your people, the cry of the starving, the despair of the hopeless, only reach you by the most circuitous route; whilst you are surrounded by de-

ception on every side, the voice of scandal yet knows well how to find access to your most secret chambers I must own to your majesty, with deep sorrow, that as I wandered in disguise through the Parisian coffee houses, many things were told me concerning your and my sister s private life which proved to me, that those who allow no sunbeam of truth to light on their anointed heads are too often made subjects of scorn to their people This state of affairs is also, not without its peril to your throne, for I have re marked, that, whilst it is *my* constant object to impress upon the most subordinate of my *employes*, that *he* like my self is a *servant*, not a *lord* of the people, the French have already begun to discover that the kingly dignity, unaccom panied by the power of virtue and of talent, is an empty bugbear, whilst greedy cormorants, in the name of the divine right of kings, rule the state to the profit of their families and their favourites, and degrade the sovereign to a mere creature of their intrigues

The emperor paused Louis XVI paralysed by surprise and vexation, remained silent Whilst Marie Antoinette, glowing with shame and anger, vainly sought to interrupt her brother, Joseph turned quickly towards her, and said—

"And you madame, how much do I compassionate you, that, seated on the fairest throne the world has to bestow, you can find no better employment for your time than that of dissipating it in the frivolous tinsel of a scandalous luxury! Blinded by vanity, you seek to be the idol of this joyous people, instead of striving to be, as you ought, its good genius Instead of introducing at this court more simple manners and a more cordial tone, and thus facilitating the mutual understanding between the French na tion and their king, instead of seeking out the dwellings of the miserable, and there learning that a French queen has no time for heartless pleasure, you have cultivated a taste for the frivolous customs of high society, beneath whose false shadow you conceal your good heart and blameless life, whilst the people, unaccustomed to look below the surface, imagine that nought but evil is veiled beneath that frivolous exterior. Thus are you in danger of losing your good name, and with it you lose everything"

Louis XVI. was conscious of the good intentions of the emperor. Although by no means gifted with any extraordinary degree of understanding, he still could not but

feel that the emperor was acting contrary to his own interests, inasmuch as he, instead of seeking by flattery to overreach the king, as other princes and diplomates would have done, gave him advice which was as offensive as it was well-meant. But even the very circumstance, that the good intentions of the emperor put it out of his power to be angry with him, wounded his pride more deeply than if the same things had been said with a malicious design. Like all weak rulers, he preferred rather to be deceived than to be awakened from his dream of peace and security. Therefore, when Marie Antoinette took upon herself to reprove her brother for his want of courtesy, and observed that he had gained nothing in *politeness* since his accession to the throne of the Kaisers, Louis embraced the opportunity to interrupt the conversation, by saying good-humouredly, although in a somewhat proud and decided tone—

"You have, doubtless, sire, made acquaintance with the Abbe de l'Epée. How do you like him? I should think he must be a man after your own heart."

"Indeed he is," replied Joseph, with a sigh, as he looked sorrowfully upon the king, who, he plainly perceived, was too weak to bear the wholesome maxim of truth. "He *is* a noble and glorious man. I have sought his counsel, and hope to benefit by his experience when I return to my own kingdom. But I have also visited those abodes of misery which are the scenes of his unwearied benevolence, and I have found that more misery exists in France than is compatible with the security of your crown."

When Marie Antoinette perceived that it was vain to seek to divert her brother's mind to any other subject, she hastily put an end to the conversation by saying, as she rose from her seat, "It is time to go to the theatre. I hope your majesty will do us the honour to accompany us, and permit us to share the applause which your appearance will doubtless excite. It will help to dissipate your hypochondria, and reconcile us to your somewhat too German *openness*. The king, I have no doubt, has already forgiven the eccentricity of your imperial manners, but I am not quite as good-natured as he is."

Thus ended the conversation. Joseph ceased to molest the royal pair with any further waverings; but his sarcasms were only the more unsparing in his intercourse with the

courtly puppets who formed his sister's court. Their laced bodices, which he compared to *cuirasses*, their riding-habits, their formality, their grimaces, were occasions of unfailing derision to the imperial censor. At last he left the court, and Louis XVI. thanked heaven that this burdensome visit was at an end, and that he was once more *free;* whilst all the court ladies pronounced this barbarian emperor to be perfectly *unbearable.*

It is difficult to pronounce what amount of evil might have been averted from the kingdom of France and from her royal house, had the counsels of the good Joseph been attended to. His visit to Paris soon, however, left no other trace behind than a multitude of anecdotes relating to his popularity and his inconvenient frankness. Louis XVI remained in a state of passive tranquillity, insensible to the great movement which was going on in the minds around him, whilst Marie Antoinette quickly forgot her brother's good advice, which had so deeply wounded her sensitive vanity. Her noble heart, her strictly moral education at the court of Maria Theresa, always preserved her from sinking amidst the general corruption; and her really innocent, though frivolous diversions only furnished a ground for suspicion to the most decided scandal-mongers In the midst of a round of intoxicating pleasures, in the midst of the deceitful adoration of a hollow court, Marie Antoinette felt a solitude of heart which her attachment to her royal partner could not altogether supply She allowed herself to be carried away by the gaieties of the court; she sipped the intoxicating cup of flattery which was daily presented to her; but she did so only because in France she missed that treasure which even the might of a French king could not secure to her—deep-feeling German hearts When memory, as by the touch of an enchanted wand, brought before her the beautiful home of her youth, the cordial good-nature of the Austrian people, their undissembled and true-hearted attachment to every member of their sovereign's family, a feeling of depression would steal over her spirit, and a consciousness that neither the fair kingdom which she ruled, nor that royal nuptial couch which in a few short years was to be dyed with her blood, was sufficient to compensate her for all she had sacrificed when she gave up her German home. Hence it arose that she was ever on the look-out for diversions, for amusement,

for little love affairs, in which she would play the part of the love-and-constancy-protecting fairy; and this also led her to mix herself up in family affairs, which a right-minded woman should ever seek to avoid, unless on those rare occasions when by mingling in them she can remove causes of domestic dispensation and reconcile divided hearts. These, in themselves, harmless occupations not unfrequently assumed an appearance of evil, in one of her light and thoughtless character, and thus afforded ample materials to the tongue of slander. People would have it that they had seen the queen walk out by night in disguise; and in truth she *did* particularly enjoy these nightly promenades, when, unwatched, as she fondly deemed, by malicious eyes, freed from all the chains of etiquette, she sought for a few brief moments to enjoy that *happiness* which is free to all who have not the *unhappiness* to wear a crown.

It was natural, however, that a court at which the most dissolute manners were prevalent should have been little disposed to look upon these adventurous dispositions of the queen as mere harmless diversions; and thus undeserved blame became attached to the name of Marie Antoinette Many of the courtiers were encouraged, from these circumstances, to treat her with a marked attention and an unseemly familiarity of manner. Amongst those who sought with the most *empressement* to win her favour was the Marquis de Mirabeau. Of unprepossessing appearance and unattractive manners, Mirabeau was well aware of his deficiencies, and knew that his claims to the favour of the other sex were but small. Still the consciousness of his intrinsic superiority, of his genius and his fame, caused him to overlook these defects, or at least to underrate their importance. With the self-confidence of a man conscious of superior abilities, he arrogantly laid claim to a sort of universal homage. It seemed to him not only natural, but fitting, that in all societies he should be made the object of distinguished attention; and least of all was his ambitious mind disposed to except the queen from the number of his admirers: her, above all others, did he wish to see enchained to the triumphal car of his genius. With a morbid sensitiveness, he fancied that she did not pay him the attention he deserved; and in proportion as his pretensions increased did his wounded vanity foster in his breast a passion such as none but a Mirabeau could have

conceived. Too proud to betray his weakness to the eyes of the world, he sought to veil his passion by continually holding forth against the habits and manners of the queen. She was constantly made the butt of his wit, which was inexhaustible in the invention of biting sarcasms. He spared neither her character, her person, nor her descent By a strange perversion of human feelings, his passion only showed itself by the most persevering malice As he was ever surrounded by a little circle of admirers, all his witty sayings were carefully treasured up and rapidly circulated. All this was made known to the queen by some of her faithful servants; and she resorted to the king with a request that he would command the marquis to retire from the court Whenever she saw him, she treated him with lofty dignity and cold disdain Mirabeau was not slow in plotting his revenge; for his influence had become so predominant at court that the queen was powerless against him. This struggle was flattering to his vanity; nothing could afford him greater satisfaction than to inspire the queen with fear, to cause her to feel that there was a might beyond that of royalty—the might of genius But even this was not enough to satisfy the cravings of his vanity. He was determined that the *woman* who had dared to treat his strange courtship with merited disdain should be made deeply to feel her own weakness. To accomplish this end, he wove an infernal plot with cold-blooded malice.

Monsieur de Serniage, captain of the royal guard, appeared to him a man well suited to his purpose The queen had on many occasions treated him with distinguished favour, and shown a marked interest in his welfare. His prepossessing appearance, his amiability and good-nature, had rendered him a special favourite with the female sex, and had especially made a very deep impression on Mademoiselle de Beaufort, to whom he had now been for some time betrothed. The queen showed so deep an interest in this connection, that Mirabeau resolved to turn her sympathy for the young couple into a deadly weapon for the destruction of her good name. He began by persuading the good captain, who was not overburdened with wisdom, that the queen was in love with him herself. Serniage believed it, and the queen's cordial demeanour towards him confirmed him in his madness. He became cold and re-

served towards his betrothed. She, deeply wounded, turned to the queen for comfort and besought her mediation. The day for the wedding had been already fixed, but Mademoiselle de Beaufort quickly perceived that her betrothed was seeking to *loosen* the bond which united them to one another rather than desirous to confirm it Marie Antoinette with affectionate tenderness compassionated the sorrow of her young friend; and as courtly etiquette forbade her summoning the captain to a confidential interview at the palace, she decided on appointing him a solitary rendezvous in the garden of the Tuileries. The captain, whose reason was completely bewildered, resorted to the spot at the appointed hour, having previously dared to send a letter to the queen through Madame de Brilliere, expressing the ardour of his attachment. The queen, amazed and distressed beyond measure, hastened to the spot, in order to awaken the unfortunate man from his dream of madness, and restore him, if possible, to his faithful bride. He no sooner saw her, however, than he cast himself at her feet, and even ventured to seize her hand and press it to his lips. The queen, who now perceived the false position in which she had been placed by her thoughtless good-nature, burst into tears, and was unable to utter a word. In this situation she was surprised by Mademoiselle de Beaufort, to whom Mirabeau had betrayed everything Blinded by jealousy, she mistook the good intentions of the queen, who, wounded by her bearing, hastily retreated from the spot, without condescending to enter into any explanation of the scene. The consequence of this was, that Mademoiselle de Beaufort gave up her lover, who took the matter so composedly that the court looked upon it as a proof that the queen had received his homage not unfavourably. Mirabeau turned this occurrence to his own profit in a most disgraceful manner. He immediately circulated a satirical poem, filled with the most cruel *persiflage* against his royal mistress. At the same time he persecuted her by using his utmost efforts to cross her path wherever she sought for solitude. In every direction she was sure to stumble on Mirabeau, who followed her like an evil genius, and fixed upon her glances which expressed at the same time hatred and jealousy, passion and malicious joy.

One evening she encountered him in a remote quarter of the royal gardens. Instead of retreating as usual from

her presence, with an ironically respectful greeting, full of exaggerated reverence, he this time remained standing before her, as if bound by some irresistible enchantment The disturbance of spirit evinced by his victim, her evident distress, gradually produced a violent emotion in his own mind, which caused him entirely to forget himself and all that was due to rank and station, as well as the most ordinary rules of *prudence*, which were far more important in *his* eyes than those of morality. The queen, who had begun to find her position unbearable, and longed to free herself once and for ever from the basilisk glance of her persecutor, could no longer resist the temptation to give free vent to her indignation against Mirabeau. For a few moments she looked at him steadfastly, whilst her eyes flashed with scorn, and she trembled in every limb. At length she became more composed, and stepping hastily forward, thus addressed him:—

"Wherefore, do you thus persecute me, Monsieur de Mirabeau? Wherefore do you lay traps for me on every side? Wherefore watch my steps with such culpable suspicion? What have you to reproach me with that you will not leave me in the quiet enjoyment of a peaceful conscience, but pursue my steps like an evil genius, when I am indulging myself in the most innocent enjoyments; enjoyments which I confess that I peculiarly prize because they are not ordinarily considered compatible with the formal dignity of royal etiquette?"

As the vivacious Marie Antoinette thus spoke, her cheeks glowed, her voice trembled, and her whole bearing was less that of an offended queen than of a child whose pleasures had been interrupted by a severe schoolmaster.

Mirabeau felt perplexed, overwhelmed. He was confounded by this vehement expression of feeling on the part of the queen, this total oblivion of her dignity as a *sovereign* in the expression of her wounded feelings as a *woman*. He for the first time felt conscious of the disgraceful part he had been playing. His spiteful malice, his revengeful feelings, his bitter scorn, all forsook him. The corrupt passion which had long influenced all his actions now showed itself under a new light. Stammering, trembling, and confused, he felt his thoughts wander, a sort of frenzy seemed to possess him, and casting himself at her feet, he exclaimed—

"Condemn me, madame, as you will; trample me beneath your feet; *I love you!*"

For a single moment Marie Antionette stood as if petrified. Astonishment, anger, and contempt, were alternately depicted in her countenance; and with a movement of haughty dignity she was about to turn her back upon the bold offender, and deliver him up to merited chastisement, when suddenly her womanly anger yet more than her natural good-nature triumphed over the impulse of offended dignity, and looking with a sort of disdainful pleasure on her crushed enemy, she said—

"How!—you love me? In truth I can find no words sufficiently strong to express my surprise at your strange presumption. Doubtless, you would say that you love me as a subject loves and ever should love his queen, the wife of his sovereign, but tell me, Monsieur de Mirabeau, if you love me thus, how comes it that you have ever taken delight in aiming at my character the shafts of your malicious wit? How comes it that you have invented and circulated amongst the people the most detestable anecdotes concerning me; anecdotes which represented me in the light of a Messalina? How comes it that my evening walks for the purpose of innocent recreation have been represented to the king in the light of culpable levities? that my delight in trying to make others happy, in seeking to reconcile divided hearts, and bringing back to the path of duty those who had wandered from it, has been placed in an insulting point of view? that in consequence of your scandalous libels I have been surrounded with spies, my own waiting-women alienated from me, and compelled by promises and threats to retail my every action? How comes it, Monsieur de Mirabeau, that a subject who loves me has induced my confidential friend, Madame de Brillière, by means of flattery and unworthy artifices, to present me with the homage of one whom I had indeed treated with peculiar kindness, but on whom I had not surely thus conferred a right to insult me and to abase me in my own eyes? How comes it that snares have been laid for me on every side, and the degradation of a *beloved* queen has been insolently sought? Speak, Monsieur de Mirabeau, and justify yourself if you can."

Mirabeau did not dare even to raise his eyes towards the angry queen, who stood like a chastising seraph, whilst she

cast upon him glances of mingled scorn and contempt. With a cold shudder he perceived that the burning fever which had hurried him on in his remorseless course had left him, and he realised the disgraceful, the contemptible position he occupied in the presence of her he had long considered his deadly foe. He attempted at length to escape from his embarrassing position by having recourse to lies; and confiding in the weakness and vanity of a woman's heart, from which he deemed even a queen was not exempt, he said to her in an agitated tone—

"Never, madame, have I been guilty of acting thus; and if, indeed, I *have* ever so far transgressed the bounds of that reverence which I feel for your royal person as to encroach upon your solitude, I did so only under the influence of a passion which, it is known to all, has wrecked the strongest minds."

"You deny it, then?" said the queen, firmly, whilst a half-malicious smile played around her lips "You confess that all the reports which have been spread concerning me are scandalous and unfounded? Speak, sir, if you please."

Mirabeau, in truth, completely bewildered by his passion, mistook the queen's emotion; he imagined that the vivacious and almost joyous tone in which she uttered these words offered some encouragement to his hopes. Dazzled by his foolish vanity, he thought that it now lay in his own power to win the favour of the queen He therefore replied in a tone of enthusiastic passion, as he raised towards her his clasped hands—

"I not only deny it, most gracious queen, but with my sword am I ready to defend you against every vile calumniator!"

"Listen to him, I beseech you!" said the queen, turning suddenly round towards Madame de Brillière, who at that moment approached, holding in her hand a dark-lantern, the light of which she allowed to fall on the countenance of Mirabeau. "Listen to the confession of this miserable wretch, who owns himself to be a calumniator, inasmuch as he calls his *own* inventions *calumnies!* Depart, unhappy man! you are unworthy even of my anger!"

Thus saying, Marie Antoinette retired, leaving Mirabeau still upon his knees, but in a state of mind which was destined to be the spring of a fearful vengeance. From that

hour forward Mirabeau became in *truth* that which he had hitherto only sought to *appear*—the bitterest enemy of the queen. Not long afterwards appeared the "Correspondence between Marie Antoinette and her Mother the Empress," a scandalous manual of gallantry, which was, not without reason, attributed to the malice of the Marquis de Mirabeau.

THE TRAGEDY OF LA VENDÉE.

The Marquis of Cligny was a genuine royalist, an old offshoot of the so called *good times* of the ancient monarchy. He had attained his fortieth year, and having, as he said, dismissed all idle passions, had taken the calm voice of reason as the guide of his life. This meant, in reality, that in everything he undertook he no longer followed the impulses of his heart, which in his case was no very difficult task, for his heart had long ceased to make itself heard. In his character were reflected all the "*good*" characteristics and principles of the monarchy. He was heart and soul a *statesman*, and prided himself justly on having formed himself after the great models of Richelieu and Mazarin. With the aid of his sophistical intellect, he embodied the principles of these two great historic characters into a system, which, in fact, only constituted a definite embodiment of the state policy that had governed France for the last one hundred years.

He had occasional access to the king, who, although at heart truly attached to far different principles, was yet not ill pleased when a sophist such as Cligny undertook to justify a policy which his own conscience but too often condemned, whilst, at the same time, he was deficient in that strength of character which is necessary in order to effect a change in a course of things that has been long established. Those who lay to the charge of weak monarchs all the miseries endured by the people under their rule, would do well to remember that the administration of the system rests not in their hands. The Marquis of Cligny considered himself in duty bound to admire every action of the government and the court. The existing order of

things was the deity he served, the ruling power his idol, to which he paid unbounded homage and idolatrous worship. He knew no more of God and of religion than the Encyclopedists chose to tell him; for it was long since any other Godhead had been honoured at the court of France, save the kingly idol who had honours and emoluments to bestow, and in whose power it lay to forward the welfare of every empty sycophant.

The king was conversing one day, as was his wont, with the Marquis of Cligny, on the subjects which, for the last fifty years, it had been the fashion to discuss at court The marquis used his utmost endeavours to pervert the mind of the king, which had naturally a religious tendency, towards that cold, atheistic creed which had been generally adopted by his ministers and the greater number of his courtiers.

"And if, as you say," replied the king, shuddering, "there be no God, who then has made all these things?"

"How can we tell?" said Cligny. "The secret powers of Nature; the universe is in itself an eternal, reproductive power."

"If that be the case, then can no state of reward or of punishment be in store for our good or our evil actions; then can there be no duties for a monarch to fulfil, except to follow the dictates of human prudence."

"That, sire," replied the marquis, "is the conclusion I would draw. With the present life it is that *our* concern lies; that beyond the grave is regulated, I conceive, according to certain unchanging laws of nature, which we can neither alter nor evade. The sovereign, exalted far above the passive *masses* of creation, has no other duties to fulfil than those which policy prescribes to him for the sake of his own interest; for in *him* are represented the interests of the whole community. In his person alone do they centre; and thence it follows that to this great head must all individual interests be sacrificed, if need so require."

"A fearful and a heartless doctrine," replied the king. "What ground would the subjects have for obedience to their sovereign, if they were deprived of their faith, and led to adopt this profligate philosophy of which you speak?"

"And which is that, sire, of your ministers, without which they could not govern your kingdom, protect your throne, or defend you from traitors and from rebels. It is indeed

true that it would not be for the well-being of the state if religion were to be altogether annihilated; therefore it is that we keep up the priesthood and the churches, and enforce the laws of morality, because we would fain guide the people by the leading-strings of their superstitions."

Although Louis XVI. instinctively shrank back from these blasphemous doctrines, yet the weak prince forgave the marquis his bold expression of opinions which he knew but too well were long prevalent at his court, and pervaded every department of the state, which was consequently governed by the same cold Machiavelian policy that had ruled France since the days of Richelieu. The truth was, that Cligny could ill be spared. He had long been one of the most constant hangers-on of the royal house, and had given innumerable proofs that he considered the person of the king *his* deity, on whom alone he sincerely believed, because he *saw* him, and received benefits visibly from his hands.

But in 1789, when royalty shook to its foundations, and the law-giving, ruling power passed to other hands, then the Marquis of Cligny truly in no wise changed his principles: he only served as zealously his new divinity, the House of Representatives, and believed no longer on the king, whose power ceased to be visible, and from whose hands he could no longer receive benefits without at the same time incurring peril. The same ideas, the same principles, the same characters, and even the very same *persons*, who *had* been the main props of the *fallen* power, were those who most zealously served the *new* one which succeeded it, when they saw it rising up in the fulness of its youthful vigour. The same principles which had induced them blindly to serve a weak monarch, led them unhesitatingly to transfer their allegiance to whatever power reigned supreme. They now conspired against the king with the same zeal with which they formerly conspired against the people, and used the same means of state policy to confirm the *new* power that they had used in former days to preserve, or (might we not rather say?) to *undermine* the *old*.

In La Vendée, however, the hearts of the people still clung to their ancient prejudices; they still feared God and the king, and did not wish to give up either. They desired to free the king from his imprisonment in Paris, and he received from them innumerable assurances of devotion to

his cause, and offers of help from numbers who professed themselves ready to die in his defence.

Amongst the leaders of these fermenting masses, who were prepared to rush on Paris, one of the most noted was a Marquis of Chaulieu, a young man full of enthusiasm, who clung with old-fashioned credulity to that form of government which he deemed to be of God's appointment. This young man had a noble, unsuspecting, and devout heart, he was inexperienced enough in the arts of the Richelieu state policy not to believe in its existence, and treated as scandalous fables all that he was told of its principles and mode of action He possessed a property in La Vendée, and was united to a young and lovely wife, of sensitive temperament and great ambition, and withal endowed more largely than her husband with the grace of personal charms and mental accomplishments It so happened that this character, united to a want of steadfastness in principle, rendered the Marchioness of Chaulieu accessible to the flattering homage of gayer and more lively men, while she felt discontented and unhappy by the side of her grave, enthusiastic husband, whom she considered to be far more addicted to patriotic fantasies than was suitable in a youthful bridegroom.

Cligny, as a zealous servant of the new power, had possessed himself of all this information; and, in the true spirit of his great models, he founded thereon a devilish plan for the destruction of the loyal enthusiast, who was labouring with the utmost energy of his character to restore the monarchical power There was at this period in a prison of Paris a young man of a handsome, dashing appearance, who had committed several forgeries He was well known to the Marquis of Cligny as an accomplished villain, who, by means of successful intrigues, had perpetrated an unheard-of amount of disgraceful treachery This was the tool whom Cligny selected for his purpose

"Would you like to become a rich proprietor in La Vendée?" said he to the young man

The latter replied, as was natural, that nothing could be more agreeable to him.

"Very well," said the marquis. "You must set off at once for La Vendée, and when arrived there, make the acquaintance of the Marquis of Chaulieu, who is at present trying to sell a part of his property, in order to intrigue

against the new form of government and reinstate the ancient monarchical despotism He is a man of slender ability, but of great energy, and of an unbending character, and he is not altogether pleasing to his wife Now, you must make it your business to win the affections and gain the confidence of this lady, to find out by her means her husband's secrets and the undertakings he may have in hand and to foil them by every possible means You must do your utmost to cripple his property, to get *him* into your own power, and to gain ultimately the full possession of his wife

The unprincipled wretch gladly embraced the opportunity thus afforded him of displaying his talent for base villany before such an experienced judge as Cligny He set out for Picqueville, the residence of the Marquis of Chanlieu, without loss of time, well provided with the necessary funds, and quite ready to commence his operations But the scheming genius of Cligny could not rest satisfied with this single means of accomplishing his object He became acquainted with a young girl named Julie Deblanche, lovely in person, but utterly destitute of principle with a poetic temperament, though uncultivated mind, and concealing the subtlety of a serpent beneath the semblance of guileless innocence Her position was a miserable and degraded one This was the instrument selected by Cligny for the further accomplishment of his designs, and to her he thus addressed himself —

"I commiserate your unhappy lot, and feel that, endowed as you are with many noble qualities, you deserve a better fate A happier career is now open to you, but you must be ready to act a part the termination of the romance will, however, rest with yourself, and you will have every opportunity of becoming, if you please, a rich and distinguished lady"

Julie, it may readily be conceived, did not require much pressing on the occasion, but urged Cligny to put her in possession of full particulars of the circumstances attending the position in which he offered to place her Cligny at first affected reserve, and it was only by degrees that he allowed the secret to be extracted from him "The whole affair," said he at last, "is very simple. All you have to do is to bring a madman to his senses He is a young man who is plotting treason against the govern-

ment. It is true, he is already married, but his wife is not very devoted in her attachment to him. You must seek to dissuade him from his undertakings, and in so doing will perform a good work, for which your reward is sure. As the wife of this man has so little regard for him, and is already under the influence of another, it will doubtless rest with yourself to occupy her place as Marchioness of Chaulieu, and should this scheme fail, you shall receive from me twenty thousand francs as the reward of your heroic deed"

Julie set out for Picqueville with a letter of introduction, which she hastened to present to Joli, the agent of Cligny, through whose means she was to be introduced into the house of the marquis. Joli had already made wonderful progress in his intimacy with this family. He found no difficulty in persuading the marchioness to take Julie, "*the destitute orphan of an old officer*," as governess to her infant children. With wonderful facility she accommodated herself to her new position. Although her stock of knowledge was but slender, her tenderness of manner and her wonderful tact seemed to render her admirably fitted for her office She won the hearts of the whole family by her gentleness, her quiet, retiring manner, and the charm of her musical talents The marquis felt himself drawn towards her by the influence of compassion as well as of admiration, and, almost unconsciously to himself, this artful and fascinating creature began to exercise a powerful influence over his mind.

In the mean time the lively Joli had made equal progress towards the accomplishment of *his* part of the scheme. As a neighbouring proprietor, he had gained a ready access to the domestic circle of the marquis. His sprightly humour, the lively sallies of his wit, enlivened both the marquis and his wife; and the regard of the former for this *house-friend* was fully equal to that of his wife. Whilst the latter found in Joli a ready sympathizer with her sentimental feelings, the marquis felt grateful to him for the amusement he afforded him by his humorous conversation; and it was, besides, no small comfort to him that his wife had some one who could help her to beguile the monotony of her country life; for, to own the truth, her excitable mind had often wearied him not a little

The news from the capital became, however, in the

mean while, each day more formidable Whilst the government became increasingly under the dominion of all the republican *virtues;* whilst, according to all appearance, the Age of Reason had begun, and this false goddess had usurped the place of religion in dictating laws to humanity; one scene of terror after another, intrigues and conspiracies without end, uprisings of the people on every side, all bore witness to the fact, that a very different system was really in operation from that which the new social theories of the day appeared to prescribe. Ancient vices, ancient despotisms, ancient fanaticism, only changed names and forms, to lead men more securely to their destruction People went forth rejoicing to welcome the rising sun of Freedom, which was to usher in a new Age of Reason and Enlightenment: they dreamt not that the greatest horrors of the Age of Despotism were stepping forth in their fullest development, whilst veiled beneath the toga of republican virtue The base hypocrites misused the noblest elevation of the spirits of men for their own selfish purposes. The Marquis of Chaulieu wept over his country, and drew together a band of conspirators, amongst whom he admitted Joli, who gave himself out for a good and honest royalist By this means Cligny was placed in possession of full information concerning all the proceedings of the future head of the insurgents who dared to rise against the blood-thirsty monster, the new-born Freedom.

Strange tales have been related of the wonderful doings in La Vendée; but the fearful stories of crime in families, from which these deeds took their rise, have often escaped the notice of the historian. And yet this was the very source and spring of them all, from the heroic conduct of the brave La Charette to the cruelties practised by the common *Chouans.* The working of individual passions, ever the most powerful lever in the history of the human race, acquired unprecedented power in consequence of the hideous policy of the revolutionary party, which drove its victims almost to the extreme of frenzy. During a succession of so-called chivalrous ages at the court of France, the force of passion, and its not-to-be-computed influence on men in general, became well known by experience. The acknowledged sway exercised by royal favourites had familiarised all with this influence. The *nimbus* of regal power disappeared, the cloud which had veiled all the

actions of royalty was dispelled, and it was seen that the king upon his throne was a man even as others Then it was that the thought suggested itself to the new rulers of the age, to turn these instruments of power, these human passions, to their own account They had learnt to *know* the weaknesses of the great; they determined to *avail* themselves of them, in order to rule those whose ambition it was to rule the world Thus arose that fiendish policy, which in truth was not a *creation* of the Revolution, but was formed by it into a new system, which was too often encountered by its opponents on its own vicious principles.

These arts were first exercised to their full extent in La Vendée. Both sides sought to corrupt the people. The emigrants used the old weapons of intrigue, which the Richelieus of politics had first suggested, and which were in truth the only ones fitted for those who had long been enervated by the corrupt atmosphere of a court which had lived solely for pleasure. Whilst the monarchy was gradually going to ruin, an ever-increasing noxious brood, that of spies and forgers of plots, was spreading itself throughout the length and breadth of the land, and insinuating itself even into the bosoms of families. Poisonous parasites, such as those who had fastened themselves on the Marquis of Chaulieu, had taken root likewise in almost every family of note. They gradually overgrew the whole domestic life, drew the sap from its very heart's blood, and utterly destroyed, often after a long course of years, the parent stem; taking away by degrees the light, and heat, and nourishment which had once given life and beauty to the tree beneath whose shade they had been fostered. Whilst the emigrant party made the exiles abroad, who had been chiefly injured in their properties, the prime objects of their exertions; whilst they supplied the most distinguished families liberally with gold, and animated them by promises, the divers ruling bodies, who followed one another in rapid succession, used the very same means in order to demoralize, undermine, and if possible annihilate, these families, who thus instigated and supported the enemies of the republic. The spirit which inspired these disgraceful intrigues was plainly showed before long; on the one side, by the attempted murder of the First Consul of the Republic, the treacheries of the demagogues who

enjoyed in so great a degree the confidence of the people, and the horrors of the Reign of Terror, which were called forth partly by the discoveries that were thus effected, partly by the direct working of foreign intrigues; on the other, by the deeds of domestic horror in La Vendee, where they subdued the spirit of the populace and of the nobility, not by the strong hand of power, but the cunning devices of treachery and fraud.

The family of the marquis was one of the most respected in the province Both parties fixed their eyes upon it; both sought to gain it for themselves. The country nobles, in general a spiritless and impoverished body, were by no means an inflammable mass, and long resisted the power of foreign intrigues, it needed spirits of a more fiery and fanatic temper than that of the marquis to rouse them into action; whilst the lower classes were in general too well satisfied with the growth of liberal institutions and the abolition of feudal privileges to leave much hope of inducing them to rise against the republic But what at first seemed so hopeless was brought about by those dark plots in the bosom of families, which at last caused that fatal struggle that ended in the almost total annihilation of the nobility, and the sacrifice of countless victims to the relentless fury of the republican party.

Joli was mean while making rapid strides in the favour of his selected victim The marquis, who was frequently absent on political affairs, was too fully engrossed by the intrigues of the emigrant party to have any spare time to devote to the amusement of his young and lively wife. The marchioness began to remark with disappointment that married life had not afforded her the unmeasured satisfaction, the inexhaustible happiness, she had expected from it. Her husband had but little taste for the old-established usages of chivalrous gallantry: the gravity of his character disposed him rather towards a Spartan severity of manners, and he attributed to their disuse the decay of the romantic age. On the other hand, his wife had no taste for the involved political plans which occupied *his* thoughts; his passion for politics only filled her with detestation for the subject altogether; the pride which impelled him to plot against the Republic, against the government of the *landless* many, was a stranger to her soul; and the freedom and unconstrainedness of manners which

marked the time of the Republic was far more agreeable to her than the philosophy and the enthusiasm of her husband. She had, it is true, a sincere affection for him, and she esteemed and honoured him most truly; but her soul was incapable of the elevation which actuated his conduct. She remained behind, solitary, overcome with *ennui*, and fancying herself neglected and despised. The young *roué*, who constituted himself her Cicisbeo, found it therefore an easy task to enchant her by his countless attentions, and by showing her that *he* had, in fact, no other object or occupation in life save that of devoting himself to her service, and seeking to make every hour of her existence agreeable and happy. Inexhaustible in flattery, unwearied in his efforts to please, bold, insinuating, and importunate, he soon led her to consider him a pleasant and amusing companion, and then an indispensable friend. This once accomplished, he found it no very difficult task to wind himself into her confidence; to persuade her that she was neglected by her husband, whose thoughts and time were devoted to political interests, whilst *he* lived but for her and pitied her fate. By degrees he undermined her principles and perverted her feelings. The weak heart of a vain woman is ever disposed to look upon herself as a victim to another's coldness. If she is not worshipped as a goddess, she feels mortified and offended, and the presence and sympathy of a stranger feed this morbid state of mind. The deluded woman now felt herself for the first time really unhappy. She thought over her husband's conduct until she became fully persuaded that it was both heartless and cruel. He whom she loved beyond all others appeared most unpardonably to neglect her. "I am here," thought she, "only for *his* satisfaction; but he thinks not on me, he cares not for my happiness. I am only looked upon as a means of affording him a momentary recreation. He is an egotist; he loves me not." Thoughts such as these her deceiver nourished in her bosom, until at length, one day, with tearful eyes she exclaimed, "Ah, yes! it is but too true; mine is indeed a sorrowful life. None cares for my happiness—unless, indeed—*you*. I do in truth feel grateful, very grateful to you." From this fatal hour the misguided woman suffered herself to be entirely led by her infamous deceiver. Having admitted him to her own confidence, she soon learnt equally to betray to him the secrets

of her husband Under the pretext of preventing the marquis from sacrificing their future comfort by his perilous undertakings, and of saving their property, Joli persuaded her to withdraw her marriage portion from under his power. She then alleged her solitary condition as a motive for requiring so much diversion and such expensive recreations as called for amazing sacrifices on the part of her husband, in order to satisfy her incessant demands Wounded by her reproaches, the marquis exhausted his means in the fruitless attempt to please her Thus by degrees the full horn of abundance began to empty itself, the well-being of the house was destroyed, and the marquis saw himself forced to abandon his long-cherished plans, because the means to accomplish them had been squandered in idle vanities.

MADEMOISELLE DE FLEURY.

In the mean while Mademoiselle de Fleury was not idle. The Parisian grisette and government spy had assumed this aristocratic name in order the more fully to excite the sympathies of the noble family under whose roof she dwelt.

When she first became their inmate, she affected the greatest coldness and reserve in her conduct towards the marquis; and if at times his sympathy for her misfortunes and admiration of her talents elicited from him any expression of his feelings, she would seem instinctively to avoid more carefully his society, and to seek refuge in that of the marchioness, whose praises she set forth with unwearied assiduity. This conduct only increased his interest in the "orphan girl,' and raised her in his esteem Insensibly his compassion for her misfortunes deepened into a more tender feeling; and thus it was that by degrees he, whose heart had beaten but coldly towards his light and frivolous wife, was won by the apparently virtuous and high-minded girl, whose manners contrasted so favourably with those of the marchioness. One day, in an unguarded hour, he avowed to Mademoiselle de Fleury his real feelings; whilst she, apparently overwhelmed by the discovery, betrayed by her deep emotion that the sentiments he had

expressed struck a corresponding chord within her own bosom. She pressed him to allow her to withdraw from his house, urging the misery it would cause her if she were to be the means of alienating his affections from her "beloved friend, her benefactress, the angelic marchioness!" Thus request, as she anticipated, was refused, and she yielded to the urgent petition of the marquis to remain beneath his roof, but she now secluded herself more than ever from his society, and, when she did appear in the domestic circle, devoted herself most assiduously to Jolı, thus exciting the jealousy of the marquis, and leading him to betray his passion more openly than he had heretofore done, whilst the marchioness revenged herself upon her husband by treating him with cold disdain. Thus was the domestic happiness of this wretched pair irretrievably blighted by the nefarious arts of these two unprincipled adventurers.

The marquis sank into a state of deep melancholy. Not only did he, under these circumstances, fail to render the expected aid to the Vendean plot for a royalist rising, but the most important undertakings were frustrated on account of his insolvency. A large consignment of English arms, which he had purchased at an enormous expense, fell into the hands of government, in consequence of his having initiated Jolı into his secret. Correspondence on matters of the weightiest import, which he carried on in the most thoughtless manner, was interrupted, and the marquis saw himself threatened not only with the confiscation of his property, but with an inquiry which might involve peril to his life. But he looked with apathy upon the threatening storm which was gathering over his head. The conspirators vainly urged him to a prompt rising, and to strike at once a decided blow against the "Blues." Already several committees of inquiry had been organised, and the Reign of Terror had begun. More than once did the marquis seek to free himself from the nightmare which oppressed his spirits. But it sufficed for Mademoiselle de Fleury to send him a flower, to look at him with her sorrowful, expressive eye, and again he sank back into his fatal lethargy. Jolı, who acted partly in understanding with Mademoiselle de Fleury, drew the net ever closer and closer around the marquis, and began to hope that the moment was not far distant when he should

see him conducted to the scaffold. Already had a writ of imprisonment been issued against him, already were the Blues on their way to his chateau, when Martineau, a farmer who lived on the property of the marquis, undertook the difficult task of awakening him from his perilous dream He had discovered the intrigues of Joli in his own family, for this unprincipled villain had sought to draw the wife of the *farmer* as well as of the *noble* into his snares. But the stout-hearded Vendean peasant was not to be so easily deceived He behaved as though he saw nothing, but took all due precaution to prevent the possibility of his secrets being betrayed. The proceedings at the château had long ceased to be a secret to him, and his instinct told him that Mademoiselle de Fleury was playing the same part as Joli. Foreseeing that in the present state of things he would gain nothing by imparting his suspicions to the marquis, he concerted with the peasant conspirators a scheme as bold as it was judicious, to free the former from his trammels and to deliver La Vendee from its oppressors Mademoiselle de Fleury had also, at this period, come to her own conclusions. She resolved to choose a decisive moment, not only to cripple the powers of the marquis to act in his country's cause, but also to secure for herself both his person and his property She was desirous not only of frustrating the plans of Joli, but of obtaining for herself the crowning object of her ambition, the title of marchioness. In that time of anarchy divorces had become matters of common occurrence This artful woman hoped to be able to induce the marquis, first to break his matrimonial ties, and then, through her influence with the Convention, to get him reinstated in his property as *her* husband. It harmonised well with her character to frustrate the designs of the party whom she professed to serve, and to preserve for her own purposes the victim whom they had selected for the scaffold. Her plan was a simple one, but it was bold and sure. She designed to wait for the moment when peril seemed most imminent, and then, when she had raised the attachment of the marquis to the highest pitch, by saving his life, to take advantage of his gratitude by inducing him to fly with her.

The preparations of the Vendean peasantry for a general rising were in the mean time advancing with strides as rapid as the tyrannical system of government which was

exercised by the Republic Britanny and La Vendée had been the first to welcome the freedom of the people, liberal institutions, even the very Republic itself. These provinces were distinguished beyond all others by their determined resistance to every kind of tyranny and to all species of oppression. But if they were but little disposed to bend beneath the yoke of royal caprice, still less were they formed to become slaves of a government whose despotism exceeded any that has ever been recorded in the annals of history They made several attempts to shake off the yoke; but all the popular risings which preceded the year 1793 had no results, being deficient in unity and in a well-digested plan of operations. These ill-ordered risings were ever hastily terminated, and many lives were sacrificed in these fruitless attempts Thus it was that the Mayor Delouche rose against the ruling power in 1792; but the disorganized mass under his orders were hewed to pieces by the Republicans; and the ears, noses, and hands of the slain were carried in triumph by the victors on the points of their bayonets. In vain did the noble Duchatel seek to protect the prisoners or oppose the murderers with main force. All his efforts were fruitless: the prisoners who took refuge beneath his care were murdered in his arms, and he himself was wounded in seeking to defend them.

These inhuman barbarities called for a bloody vengeance, and the Vendéans of all ages were not disposed to be slow in rendering a just retribution to their enemies The surgeon Joly revenged at Sables d'Olonnes the bloody sacrifices of La Bruissière The hair-dresser Gaston took possession of the uniform of an officer whom he killed, and headed the peasants when they sallied forth, and defeated their adversaries with promiscuous slaughter The wild and reckless Souche devastated Poitou with fire and sword. At length, as a last resource to subdue the refractory province, the government issued the tyrannical edict relating to the conscription; and then *rose the whole of La Vendée as one man!*

Immediately before the outbreak of this fearful insurrection, which will occupy the pen of the historian, and the poet even, for many an age yet to come, orders were issued to a division of the Blues to surround the château of the marquis silently by night and take it by surprise. On the morning of the 1st of March he was to be arrested,

his papers were to be sealed up, and he himself was to be conducted without delay before the bloody tribunal which now ruled in Paris. Joli already revelled in anticipation of the good fortune which awaited him as the promised possessor of the marquis's property, as well as of his lovely widow. In the joy of his heart, and in order the more certainly to secure the presence of the marquis at the château on that eventful night, he confided to Mademoiselle de Fleury the fate which was in store for her lover, with the object of inducing her to appoint to meet him on that day, "in order to confer with him on some important matters." He vowed to her, by all the gods of heathendom, that to reward her for this good service he would make her his wife. But the heart and the head of Julie had other intentions, for she had played with a two-edged sword, and the passion which she had first only simulated she now began really to feel. She knew well, however, with whom she had to deal, and therefore feigned to give a joyful assent to the plans of the deceiver.

Four-and-twenty hours previous to the time appointed for the arrest of the marquis, she appointed him to meet her in a neighbouring coppice, as she had some intelligence of moment to communicate to him. The marquis hastened to the spot, and found her overwhelmed with undissembled emotion.

"My lord marquis," said she, trembling from head to foot, "never would I again have admitted you to a private interview, were it not that I feel at this moment all personal considerations must be waived. Your freedom, your life, your honour, are at stake. All your plans are betrayed, all your letters intercepted, and every preliminary measure has been taken in order to secure your person."

"And how, may I ask, have you discovered all this, of which I have not received the slightest hint, although I have hundreds of spies in my pay, who bring me tidings of everything that happens amongst the Blues?"

"Wonderful indeed and fearful are the discoveries which I have made, and deeply will they wound your heart. Can I ever hope for your forgiveness if I rob you of your most sacred treasure—your confidence in the love and in the faithfulness of your wife?"

As she said this, tears started to her eyes. The brain of the marquis reeled.

"My wife!" he exclaimed, in a tone of horror "What can *she* have to say to the Blues?"

"More than is consistent with your security This correspondence with Joli will tell you more than I should dare to impart to you It proves a guilty communication between the marchioness and this M. Joli, who is a spy of the government."

"A spy" replied the marquis doubtfully· "this harmless man who only lives for pleasure! Who *can* have told you that?"

"Himself," replied Julie, in a grave and decided tone "He himself, whilst at the same time he made me the offer of his hand, and of *your* possessions, which he hopes to obtain by confiscation, when you have through his means been brought to the scaffold"

"Infamous!" exclaimed the marquis, whilst a deadly paleness overspread his features as he glanced over his wife's letters "devilish!"

"It is so, in truth There is no other means of safety left for you but flight To-morrow it will be too late"

"Flight! and from the treachery of my wife!" cried the marquis, despairingly

Mademoiselle de Fleury was silent The marquis appeared to be absorbed for some moments in deep and agitating thought At length, as if overcome by the clearness of the evidence, he exclaimed, "Well, then, let us fly!"

In a few moments all was finally arranged, and everything was prepared for their flight, which was to take place that very evening. The marquis was to carry with him all his ready money, and, departing for a New World, to enter into the bonds of a more fortunate union, leaving it to his Vendéan countrymen to free themselves and their native land from the bonds of tyranny.

Joli, in the mean while, was beginning to feel anxious lest the insurrection should break out before he had fully perfected his plans. He betook himself to Martineau, whom he knew to be the chief leader of the peasant bands, in order to see if he could extract anything from him.

"Good day to you, Martineau!" said Joli. "How goes the world with you? and how does your wife do?"

"She pleases *other people*," replied Martineau, with a malicious glance at the agent. "As for myself, I am in

very good humour, and only pray that we may have a little fighting before long."

"Well, I think it will most likely not be very long before your Christian wish is fulfilled, many significant hints have been thrown out, that the country people are uniting for the defence of the king and the restoration of the church to its rights. In confidence, let me ask whether you belong to the party of these well-disposed men?"

"That is my present intention," said Martineau.

"And do you love this king, this Louis XVII. very much?"

"I am not so sure of that. I have never seen him in my life."

"And have you a very great reverence for the pope?"

"No more than is necessary. As far as I am concerned, he may remain pope a thousand years if he wishes it. I trouble myself mighty little about it."

"Then you cannot be one of the well-affected. I am very sorry for this; for you have the repute of being one of the most loyal men in La Vendee. You will be waylaid and murdered. These worthy countrymen are by no means disposed to allow of any white ravens among them."

"They are all exactly of my opinion," said Martineau, drily.

"I doubt that," said Joli, hoping by contradiction to break through the reserve of his companion.

"You are quite at liberty to think as you please; but *I* tell you, we care neither for the king nor for the pope."

"And yet, is not '*Vive le Roi!*' your war-cry?"

"One must have a war-cry of some kind."

"You pray before every crucifix on the high-road."

"And *you* do not; so much the worse for you. Should we not pray to our God?"

"You kiss the hands of your priests, and pay them a homage which borders on idolatry."

"That is custom, but we honour only the *good* priests."

"Strange!" murmured Joli to himself: "either this man is seeking to deceive me or he is not the man of whom I am in search."

Joli was one of those cunning every-day characters who, by a continual exercise of all the arts of base intrigue, acquire such a ready aptness in their use that they *appear* to be endowed with an extraordinary degree of cleverness.

And yet, this is in truth by no means the case; their readiness only arises from a sort of mechanical skill Any commonplace mind could do the same if it were to undergo the same training. This sort of cleverness resembles in some degree the juggler's art, which depends upon practice rather than upon any extraordinary degree of power or of skill. Hence it arose that Joli never formed a correct opinion of the occurrences which were going on around him He had been told that the Vendeans were fanatics and royalists; he acted accordingly, and formed his judgment of two-thirds of the insurgent party from a false point of view. After a few moments' consideration, he resumed his attempt to elicit some information from Joli

"If you are not on the side either of the king or of the pope, why are you not on that of the Republic?"

"We are not opposed to the Republic."

"But, for heaven's sake!" said Joli, becoming every moment more perplexed, "tell me, for whom then *are* you" In what cause are you shedding your blood?"

"In that of freedom," replied Martineau, "in that of God and of the king."

"In that of God and the king too! How do you unite them both?"

"I will tell you," replied Martineau, "and that candidly; for we have *taken care* that it shall not lie in your power to repeat it"

"How so?" exclaimed Joli, casting around him a glance of terror and surprise.

"I will tell you that by-and-by. Do not disquiet yourself, M. Joli. I promise you that you shall soon understand the whole state of the case. When first the monarchy was brought to its trial, and we were promised *freedom* and all its blessings, we gladly and with honest hearts lent our helping hand to the work; for we believed we were doing a good deed, and one for which our children would have cause to bless us in ages yet to come. But when a band of ruffians in Paris seized the reins of government, and far exceeded their predecessors in tyranny; when we saw that we should have much more to suffer from the new *régime* than from the old, when we found that we were forbidden the use of arms under pain of death, and that all who said a good word in favour of the olden time were dealt with as traitors to the state; when we were

required, moreover, to send our children into the field and suffer them to be shot in defence of this rascally government, then we began to ask ourselves at last, whether, if we *must* die, it were not better to die in defence of our freedom and on our own native soil Then we came to the conclusion, that nothing better remained for us to do than to restore monarchy and place Louis XVII on the throne But, mark me well, we arrived at this conclusion for one reason alone namely, that this was the only condition on which we could obtain weapons, money, and leaders from England and other foreign lands, to fight against the Blues We should, however, have hesitated to place ourselves under the protection of the stranger, or to seek assistance at his hands, had not these demons in Paris sent amongst us whole troops of villains, who insinuated themselves into our houses, destroyed our domestic peace, and sought to pry into our secrets This it was, M Joli, which first drove us to despair and led us to resistance We saw ourselves forced, at it were, to protect our families from those who sought ruthlessly to destroy them We had no choice left we must either obey the Blues as our tyrants, or seek to preserve the king and to defend the church And our motive for trying to uphold the church was rendered doubly powerful by seeing that faith and truth were rapidly disappearing amongst all those of our countrymen who yielded allegiance to this infamous government and their infernal agents

At this moment Martineau was interrupted by the entrance of a messenger, who brought him word that the insurrection had broken out in the neighbouring village of St Florent Martineau invited Joli to accompany him to the scene of action Joli assented, feeling that it would be useless to refuse

Saint Florent le Vieux is a village on the left bank of the Loire, charmingly situated, and built upon a granite rock which overhangs the river Here, as from a terrace, the eye commands a glorious prospect of the rich valley beneath, the two lovely little islets which divide the course of the stream, and the picturesque village of La Meilleraye on its opposite bank The irregular and winding course of the Loire here presents a most picturesque effect, forming, as it does, a succession of small lakes, which are [illegible]ver-shadowed by groups of trees rich in luxuriant foliage.

During the struggles between the native Bretons and the Franks, this little town was repeatedly bathed in human blood. It is full of historic remembrances, but yet better known by a legend which has been handed down from the middle ages viz that here, once upon a time, the Abbe Morone fell asleep in a grotto on the river bank, and after slumbering for a hundred years, woke up again to life and returned to his monastery, where he was much surprised at not recognising a single acquaintance amongst the brethren of the order.

It was the 10th of March, 1793 The commissaries of the district, fearing for their lives, had assembled themselves in the Benedictine chapel, which had been converted into the parish church It was an eventful day. The whole of the male population who were fit for conscription were called upon to draw the fatal lot, which was to decide who amongst them should follow the banners of that Republic which they looked upon with detestation A cannon had been placed at the door of the church, in order to intimidate any who should linger or shrink back when called upon to draw the lot The young men of the district assembled within range of the cannon, accompanied by their parents, their brides, and their friends Each hour their ranks increased on the *Place* of the *Puits-Billot;* but not one answered the call which summoned them to the church Gradually the spirits on both sides became more and more inflamed The summons to submit to the orders of government was at first issued in a tone of dry command, and then repeated with an accompaniment of threatenings and words of insult Nor were the assembled populace backward in replying to these insults by words of contemptuous defiance "We will not serve the republic· off with you!" exclaimed one foolhardy peasant "We will stay in our own country; perhaps we shall have work enough here yet"

One of the commissaries now stepped forward impatiently, and exclaimed in a tone of anger, "Come forward and draw the lots, or else you are dead men!"

A young emigrant, Réné Forêt, who had lately returned to his native country, now stepped forward, and standing in front of the crowd of incensed young Bretons, exclaimed, "Let us repel force by force!"

The words were hardly out of his mouth when an explo-

sion shook the air: the cannon had been fired, and many a fearful gap it had made in the ranks of the intended conscripts. But in a moment their companions had armed themselves with stones, hastily snatched up, and a formidable volley was directed against the commissaries and artillerymen, who were wounded and scattered on every side, and the conscription was quickly brought to an unforeseen conclusion.

Flushed with their victory, a number of young men paraded the streets, causing the air to resound with their insurrectionary cries. They then repaired to the town-hall, where they broke open the public treasury, and celebrated the triumph of the day with the wildest extravagance. At length, towards evening, the young men withdrew, intoxicated with their victory, and fully believing, in the simplicity of their hearts, that the whole thing was at an end. Each one betook himself peaceably to his home. Martineau alone—who had remained on the *Place* during the whole scene, with the trembling Joli, whose arm he held tightly grasped within his own, by his side—wandered with a few of his friends throughout the streets, abusing and scolding those who were so quietly dispersing themselves. At length they encountered a handsome man, about fifty-three years of age, with an open, true-hearted countenance, who seemed evidently to sympathise in Martineau's feelings, and to be by no means disposed to retire to his own house. "Ah! look here, M. Cathelineau!" exclaimed Martineau as he approached him; "you are the only man who can help me here. Do prevent these fools from going to sleep!"

This Cathelineau was a poor hawker, the father of five children, possessing a small house and earning a scanty subsistence, but honoured as a saint by all the neighbourhood. News of the revolt had reached his ears, and inflamed by love towards his country-people and an earnest zeal in their behalf, he had hastened to the spot to see whether he could help his brethren in the hour of their peril. Cathelineau did not, therefore, require much pressing. Martineau gave him a brief and hasty sketch of all that had occurred, and then, without losing a moment, he hastened forward to gather around him, without an instant's delay, the thoughtless youth who were dispersing themselves on every side. Joli seized this moment in order to

attempt to escape; but Martineau arrested him with a resolute determination, and said to Cathelineau—

"Here, M. Cathelineau, we have already one prisoner: a spy, a seducer, and an explorer of secrets. He tried even to pump *me* with regard to the plans of the peasants, their resources, and their arms, and when he learnt that we were well supplied with all, though *he* had betrayed our transports to the Blues, then he begged of me to recommend him to the English as a spy! We must not allow this gentleman to escape, else he will go running about the whole district to call together the gens-d'armes."

"Bind him fast!" said Cathelineau, "and take him along with you. When we have leisure we will bring him to trial."

Vain were all Joli's prayers and protestations. His hands were firmly bound together, and Martineau led him by the rope like a horse, administering a kick every now and then, when he attempted to offer the slightest resistance. Cathelineau now turned towards the young men, and said, calmly, "Well, my friends, what are you thinking of doing with yourselves now?"

"We wish to keep quiet and go to our work."

"You will not have time to work," said Cathelineau.

"How do you mean?" inquired the peasants.

"*You would all have to die*!" said Cathelineau, in a firm and resolute tone.

They did not understand him; they hesitated

"Do you think, then, children, that the gens-d'armes whom you beat this morning will not get reinforcements and come against you to-morrow, either to kill you in your homes or to take you prisoners?"

The simple peasants stared at the pedlar in astonishment. Just then was brought in the corpse of one of their number, who had been shot down the preceding day.

"And have you then no heart for the sorrows of those who, on seeing this corpse, will mourn over a son, a brother, or a husband?"

"Yes," replied the peasants, "but *we* have done *our* part."

"And on that very account must you do yet more. Henceforth you must either be the friends or the enemies of the republic. What you have already done requires to be followed out. The skirmish of an hour demands a war of ten years. Once assembled in open rebellion, you must

not again separate. Yesterday you were peasants, to-day you are soldiers Therefore must you bid farewell to your homes, your wives, your children—your carts, your oxen You must now live on the battle-field, draw cannon, and wield the sabre It is no longer a question merely of resisting commissaries and gens-d'armes, of breaking open doors and windows The question now is, whether you will *defend* your wives, your children, by going boldly forth to meet the armies of the republic To arms, then, my children! Save your altars and your homes All that is holiest, all that is dearest to you, is at stake—God and your lives! Or are you willing to become the mockery of these republicans? Are you ready to send forth your children in their armies to be slaughtered in a bad cause? Are you ready to fight against your *friends?* You had been promised freedom, but what has been given you in its stead? Freedom to desecrate your altars, to insult your priests; freedom to lead the innocent astray, to trample under foot the manners and principles of our forefathers! They say our religion is antiquated and we must destroy it. But, my children, this religion teaches us to *love one another.* And what kind of new religion have these republicans discovered? That every one is at liberty to do as he pleases, whether it injure his neighbour or not Have we gained anything either by the change of government? They took away from us a good king, who in our troubles was ever ready to listen to our prayers and our complaints, and given us in his place a ruling body without a heart, who are not to be moved either by our tears or our entreaties.

"*Reason* shall govern us, say they, but Reason keeps all for itself, and gives nothing to anybody else. Therefore, my children, take up your arms; defend yourselves even to the last drop of your blood, and God will do the rest!"

These words, uttered with that deep emotion which speaks to the heart as no studied eloquence ever can, produced an extraordinary effect. This simple pedlar accomplished that which the united statecraft of all the Richelieus and Mazarins in the world never could have effected He induced a patient populace to rise as one man, and to stake their lives and their properties to accomplish the will of their leader. Such power lies only in the voice of honesty, of goodness, and of courage. If one compares this movement with the results which took place during the agitation

of religious feeling which was stirred up later from state policy, and which failed so entirely on all sides in accomplishing its Machiavelian end, we shall find no difficulty in discovering the mother-evil of this weak and demoralising policy: its *falsehood*. For has not Despotism used these very same arguments in order to subdue the freedom of nations and of individuals? Is it not in the name of the same God and the same religion that men have addressed the people whom they sought to subjugate? And yet, was it not that very same enthusiasm which in La Vendée stood forth in the lists in the cause of religion and of royalty, which afterwards turned its energies in the very opposite direction? Yes, it was the very same enthusiasm which resisted the Republic in La Vendée, and which, a little later, in Italy, greeted the armies of France as the deliverers of the fatherland. In the one case, as in the other, it was the cause of freedom for which the people fought!

Seven-and-twenty Vendéans, armed with clubs, formed at this moment the whole fighting force of La Vendée; but they were heroes. Quickly they scattered themselves over the whole province, in order to rouse the people into action. The alarm-bell sounded through every village, and wherever its voice was heard, there without delay the peasant clasped his hands in prayer, embraced his wife and his children, seized his fowling-piece, his axe, or, if he had nought else, his club, and hastened forth to join the banners of Cathelineau. In three months twenty thousand Vendéans were under arms, ready to lay down their lives rather than submit to the despotism of the new Republic. Every mountain, every valley, resounded with the cry, "*Death to the Blues!*"

Martineau, at the head of a small band, set forth without loss of time to seek for a commander for this little army.

"Hearken to me, Master Cathelineau!" said he. "We must, above all things, have a general."

Cathelineau shrugged his shoulders.

'I know what you would say, continued Martineau "You think if we do not act as our own leaders, we shall be but ill led, for the nobility though they did talk so big, are easily discouraged, shy, and not to be depended on, and, moreover, our peasantry are by no means disposed to submit to military discipline But notwithstanding all this, we must have such a thing as a general, were it only as a banner around which to marshal our forces I know only one man fit for our purpose, and he is sick

"Of what use then can he be to us

"I think we might cure him, but there is no time to be lost I speak of the marquis

"He is bound hand and foot by the chains of passion said Cathelineau, indignantly

'We will free him from them, replied Martineau with a gloomy, mysterious air and believe me, I am the man who can best help him to awake out of his dream

"What do you mean' inquired Cathelineau

"That I cannot now explain to you, but leave it to me to act Give me six men, the rest I will undertake myself

"I know you to be a man of honour, Martineau, Go and do your part You will find weapons in the barn, and may you be able to awaken the marquis from his dream, as you hope He is a brave man but I fear that women have unnerved him Be on your guard

Once more Joli sought to escape, but Martineau seized him, bound his hands behind his back, and said—

"Halt there, fellow! we have to-day an account to settle We are going to pay the marquis a visit I have no doubt he will receive you very graciously I will take care of that"

The evening was closing in Torches and weapons were procured, and in death like silence the little party struck into the path which led towards the chateau Joli, who had been placed in the midst of the escort, sought by means of flattery to propitiate Martineau

"Father Martineau, said he, "what a way this is to treat an honourable man! What have I done to you' Have I not ever honoured you as a father' You are such a good, honest fellow, how can you find it in your heart to treat me so'"

"Spare your flatteries," replied Martineau "I am no

woman; and you may look as pitiful as you please, but you will never touch *my* heart"

"Oh, is it that?" said Joli: "you are *jealous* What can have made you take such an idea into your head? Your wife loves you too well to show favour to any one else. Do you imagine I could ever dare to think of supplanting such a man as you? Are you not as young as I am? and as regards your personal appearance, surely such a vagabond as I can never for one moment be compared with you Do not be so foolish, Martineau Let me go; I swear to you by the Holy Virgin I am innocent"

At this point his eloquence was arrested by a smart blow from the stout fist of the peasant.

"There thou hast something in the name of the Holy Virgin, and I would advise thee to beware how thou venturest again to take her name on thy unworthy lips."

Joli, almost weeping in the anguish and terror of his mind, continued his entreaties and protestations of innocence; but fresh insults from his escort at length reduced him to silence.

As the party approached the château, they saw two figures gliding through the coppice.

"Halt! who goes there?"

No answer.

"If you have any value for your lives," replied Martineau, "answer me."

"It is I," said the marquis. "What is your business here?"

"We are in search of *you*, noble sir," said Martineau, reverently doffing his hat "The devil is loose! the Blues are all in motion. We have come to ask you to lead us The time is come; the hour of vengeance is arrived!"

As the marquis saw before him these six peasants, their eyes flashing with rage and their weapons swung threateningly in their uplifted hands, the patriotic ardour which had once burned brightly in his bosom was rekindled with double force.

"And is it you alone who are ready for this bold venture? you alone who are ready to encounter the Blues in open war?"

"Not we alone: the whole district is in a state of insurrection. Do you not hear the church bells sounding the alarm? This very night ten villages will be under arms.

Bethink yourself, noble sir; it is the seed you yourself have sown which you now see springing up around you. Desert us not now, when we must either conquer or die."

The companion of the marquis at this moment burst into tears, and clung to him in evident alarm. The touch of her hand worked electrically upon his mind, and quenched in a moment the noble enthusiasm which the faithful peasant had rekindled in his breast He said with a sigh—

"It is too late for me, my good friends: I cannot be your leader."

Martineau stepped forward, and approaching Mdlle. de Fleury, allowed the light of his torch to fall upon her face.

"Is it this wench who takes away your courage? If so, it is well that we have met. I will quickly set you free from the enchantment."

With these words, he hastily snatched away her veil, seized her by the hair, placed a pistol to her forehead, and in a moment its contents were lodged in her brain. Without uttering a single cry, the unfortunate Julie sank expiring to the ground. All this passed so rapidly and so unexpectedly, that the bloody deed was done before the marquis could make the slightest effort to interpose in her behalf. He uttered a cry of horror, and threw himself upon the dying woman whom he had loved so blindly. In the anguish of death she clasped his hand. One word alone escaped her faltering lips. It was—

"Just!"

In a few seconds she ceased to breathe. The marquis started to his feet, drew a pair of pistols from his belt, and rushed towards the peasants.

"Murderers! bandits!" he exclaimed, and cocked his pistols. But the peasants, foreseeing this, and prepared for the attack, had seized him from behind, and disarmed him in a moment.

"Hold him fast," said Martineau, "until I have spoken to him. He deserves pity. This woman had altogether turned his brain."

Thus saying, he advanced towards the marquis, and resuming once more his respectful demeanour, thus addressed him:—

"For heaven's sake, sir, tell me, did you know this woman?"

"Scoundrel!" cried the marquis, "she was Mdlle de Fleury; she was under my protection, and you shall pay with your blood——"

"Mademoiselle de Fleury?" said Martineau. "She was a grisette from Paris, and as little of a lady as this spy here, this M. Joli, is a baron."

"You lie! she sought to save my life, and even informed me of Joli's treachery."

"In order to lead you to destruction in her own way, and for her own ends."

"What object could she have had in flying with me *from* the Blues? She had urged me to escape with her to a New World."

"And is it possible, noble sir, that you felt no shame at the thought of flying with such a one as *this*, deserting your own family, and leaving *us* in the lurch?"

"My wife has deceived and betrayed me," replied the marquis.

"Then is *she* guilty; though perhaps not altogether without some excuse. But who told you, noble sir, to confide your political secrets to your wife? Had I done the same, all might have been lost; for this villain almost turned the head of my wife as well as yours."

"Why should we not hang him at once?" inquired the peasants.

"It is not yet time to do that," said Martineau, drily; "he must first make his confessions. Besides that, he possesses some gold, of which we may, perhaps, stand in need. He must deliver up to us his money and his papers. Then we will deliver him up for his merited punishment—to the *women!*"

The marquis, in the mean while, seemed almost overcome by the vehemence of his grief. The peasants, seeing that he no longer offered any resistance, unbound his arms and retreated to a respectful distance. He seated himself upon a fallen tree, and remained for ten minutes immoveable as a statue, and filled with the anguish of despair. The peasants stood reverently in a semicircle around him, and looked at him with mingled compassion and anxiety. Martineau availed himself of this pause to approach the marquis, whose grief seemed renewed by every fresh glance he cast upon the lifeless corpse, and to offer him an explanation of the conduct they had pursued with regard to this woman.

"Permit me to speak, noble sir," said he in a voice of deep emotion, "and seek to recover your presence of mind in order to hear me. Do not think that I am a thoughtless, cold-blooded murderer. I have only executed an act of justice. Those devils in Paris have directed all their efforts to render our best men unfit for service. They sent down a heartless villain to mislead your wife; to excite in her a taste for dissipation and extravagance, in order by these means to exhaust your property; to *you* they sent an artful coquette, whose whole aim was to bind you in the enervating fetters of guilty pleasure, so that, engrossed by by your own passions, you might be lost to the cause of La Vendée. The proofs of all this are in my hands. Saintjean and I intercepted a courier who was the bearer of secret dispatches to both these spies. Both were in the pay of government. Your domestic peace has been destroyed, your fortune ruined, your family honour blighted. Will you leave all this unrevenged, and folding your hands in idleness, weep in silent sorrow for a woman who took advantage of your weakness in order to betray you? Be yourself once more, noble sir. You see us all around you here, ready with heart and soul to shed our blood in your cause."

These words failed not of their end. After a moment's consideration the marquis sprang to his feet and said—

"Where are the proofs of which you speak?"

"Here, noble sir," replied Martineau, as he handed some letters to the marquis. The latter glanced over them rapidly, and, whilst he read them, his sorrow was quickly converted into rage, which was followed once more by a state of utter exhaustion. The peasants witnessed all these varied emotions with sympathizing anxiety. They now took up the corpse of the grisette, and depositing it amongst the bushes, covered it with boughs.

"Is it safe to leave it there?" they inquired of Martineau. "May not they discover the corpse?"

"So much the better if they should," replied Martineau: "it is well that these Blues should know how their spies will be treated for the future."

At length the marquis recovered his composure, and stepping forth into the midst of the little band, exclaimed—

"Come on! I will be your leader, and fearful shall be our revenge on these ruffians, who call themselves a government. But if you accept me as your leader, remember

that I expect to be blindly, implicitly obeyed. If any one act contrary to my commands, he is a dead man! Will you now, in your own names and in that of your friends, swear to follow me wherever I may lead you, were it even to certain death?"

Without a moment's hesitation Martineau stepped forward, raised his hand to heaven, and said, whilst each one there followed his example—

"We swear!"

The marquis was pale as a corpse. the tears had not yet dried upon his cheeks; but his whole bearing was expressive of an earnest and a concentrated strength. One after another, he grasped the hand of each peasant, and last of all that of Martineau, to whom, in a voice yet tremulous from emotion, he said—

"You have rendered me a fearful service; never can I forget it. But suppose I had refused to lead you; suppose I had obstinately persisted in going to America; what would you then have done?"

The peasant hesitated a moment before he replied, and stood turning his hat in his hand as if perplexed. At length he said—

"Noble sir, I should have dared to send a ball through your head too."

The marquis was but little startled by this reply. He knew the spirit of the Vendéans. he felt it kindling within his own breast. It was only such a resolute will as this which could accomplish anything great in the unequal struggle in which they had embarked. He pressed Martineau's hand within his own, and said—

"You would have *done right!*"

THE WOMEN OF LA VENDÉE.

Whilst the marquis thus accepted the post of head of the insurgents, and many noblemen in Britanny and La Vendée followed his example, all organizing separate corps; whilst the warfare raged furiously on every side, and the cottages of the peasantry were deserted by almost the whole of the male population; the captive Joli was delivered over to the

women of the little village of Quievrain, in which was situated the dwelling place of Martineau.

He was brought into the kitchen; a large fire was burning on the hearth, and the women were quickly assembled to pronounce judgment on the unhappy man. Madame Martineau, enlightened by her husband as to his real character, united in her own person the offices of plaintiff and judge. A consciousness of the disgrace which he had brought upon her, and a burning desire to revenge the wrong which had been done her, transformed the wife of Martineau from a woman into a fury—from being Joli's friend, into his blood-thirsty, his mortal enemy. She presided over the tribunal of women, whose minds, depraved by the habits of the age, had acquired a character of savage hardihood, and mingled a sort of religious fanaticism with the most reckless indulgence of their cruel passions, in the fulfillment of their pretended *duties*. The Blues and their adherents, when wounded or taken prisoners, were tortured in every possible way by these fanatic Messalinas, who excused the committal of these barbarities by the right of retaliation. The tenderness of woman's nature had been so perverted by the wrongs they had endured, that those feelings of compassion which are instinctive in their sex, even in the most savage state, seemed utterly extinguished in *their* breast. When Joli found himself in the power of these furies, his fear was converted into a sort of cold, speechless terror, which left him utterly incapable of attempting either resistance or defence. He was placed sitting on the floor, and Madame Martineau herself conducted his examination.

"So you are a spy, my gentleman?" said she, as she stood before him with folded arms.

Joli made no reply.

"You deceived me with your protestations of affection, only to extract from me my husband's secrets? You have retailed to the Blues every word I ever said? Where are your papers? Where is your gold? Speak!"

Joli still remained silent, but he trembled from head to foot.

"He is shivering, poor wretch!" said one of the women. "We must warm his feet for him a little: he will, perhaps, learn to speak then."

"Yes, that we will," replied Madame Martineau, a stout,

robust woman, about thirty years of age. "Come," she continued with an infernal laugh, "we will act as his valets, and draw off his boots."

Thus saying, she seized Joli's feet and did as she had proposed. The other women then dragged the unfortunate delinquent towards the fire, and placed his bare soles so near the glowing flame that he uttered a fearful scream.

"Will you speak now?" said Madame Martineau. "It will abridge your punishment."

Joli, writhing with anguish, could only pronounce the words, "Grace! grace!"

"Fie! who calls for grace?" she exclaimed. "Were *you* not ever a gracious gentleman yourself? Be so gracious now, I pray you, as to tell us where you have hid your gold."

Perceiving from the ferocious character of those who surrounded him that no confessions would avail him anything, Joli sought by his cries of anguish to move these cannibal hearts.

"He has had enough of it," at length said one of the youngest of the party; "let us now put him on his trial."

"In order to make it as short as possible," said Madame Martineau, "pronounce at once what punishment is due to a convicted spy."

"Death!" exclaimed the women with one accord.

"Death!" cried Madame Martineau: "that is evident; but what kind of death? Must we not *all* die? Is it just that such a villain as this should simply *die*, even as we all must do? Has not the wretch deserved that we should roast him slowly before this fire?"

"No, let us rather saw off his head," said the wife of a carpenter.

"What is the use of these cruelties?" interrupted one of the more compassionate among them. "All that is necessary is just to get rid of him out of the world, in order that this gay gentleman may never have it in his power to pervert another mind or turn another head. Let us then, without more ado, just chop off his head."

"Would it not be better to lock him up until our husbands come back?" said another.

"To lock him up! and run the chance of the Blues setting him free?" exclaimed Madame Martineau, as she shook her fists at the unhappy man. "Heaven preserve us from

such folly! Now hear my advice. Since you think it would be too great a piece of cruelty to burn him alive, let us crucify him Indeed, it is almost too great an honour for such a dog as this to be allowed to die the same death as the Lord himself died"

This proposal was received with universal acclamations. Joli struggled desperately to burst his bonds; he even strove to thrust his hands into the fire, in order that the flame might snap the rope asunder; but the women prevented him from doing so, the moment they perceived his intention

"Let us scourge him!" exclaimed Madame Martineau with savage joy.

The miserable man, who at first had foamed with rage and anguish, now sank into the calm of powerless despair. These incarnate fiends now bound him to a post, and each seizing a rope or a twig, rushed on him with relentless fury. At length life seemed on the point of extinction; and, fearing that death might rob them of their prey, they desisted from their work of torture, and began to nail a beam transversely across the post, in order to complete their cruel work. Joli, who seemed almost deprived of consciousness, stared wildly at what was going on around him. The instrument of death being at last completed, some of the strongest of the party placed him upon it; but death came quickly to his relief: for scarcely had he felt the first blow of the hammer, when, with one fearful cry of anguish, life fled from this miserable and guilty being!

And now the wild cries of rage were stilled. Vengeance had done her fearful work, and was appeased. All was still, a sort of terror came over these reckless spirits; even Madame Martineau shuddered. These cold-hearted, bloodthirsty furies, who had not shrunk from inflicting the most refined tortures on the living, trembled before the dead! Even to their hardened hearts, the sight of the *cross* recalled some better thoughts, and awakened in their breasts some more human feelings. A sort of superstitious awe thrilled through their veins; as they gazed in mute horror at their victim, they fancied that the head moved; and with a cry of terror and dismay they fled wildly from the room.

The same wild fanaticism which, in the lower classes, degenerated into a sort of ferocious licentiousness, produced amongst those of more cultivated minds examples of heroic

virtue and patriotic self-devotion, such as were but rarely to be met with amongst those of the opposing party.

The Vendean women vied with the men in the display of warlike virtues and resolute courage they bore their part in the brilliant successes which attended the first outbreak of the Vendean war, and they shared in the misfortunes and the sufferings with which the insurrection closed The attempts of the government agents to demoralise the families of La Vendee had this result alone they worked up the minds of the victims of this heartless policy to that fearful state of *exaltation* which raises an individual far above the majority of men around him, and renders him capable of actions which exercise a powerful influence over the spirits of his fellows, because, sprung themselves from a lofty inspiration, they render a spirit of self devotion almost epidemic That vicious refinement of policy which was displayed by the republican government defeated its own ends, for it imparted a tension to the minds of men which finally ended in an explosion that overthrew all their calculations

A few days after the atrocities of Quiberon, an army of very singular organization was set in motion against the Blues In an extensive valley which stretched itself out for some considerable distance from the walls of the chateau, the chief of the Vendean army had assembled his forces. They consisted of men collected from every class, in every imaginable dress, and armed with weapons of every possible description. Here might be seen the boy just starting into life, the middle-aged in all the pride of manly strength, and the gray-headed far advanced in years Some were armed with muskets, pikes, sabres, and lances, whilst others bore pitchforks, hoes, halberts, and scythes Some wore coats, others short jackets and trousers; whilst the feet of many were bound up in rags. Here might be seen a commanding officer in the costume of a Turk, which he had taken from a strolling player; there, a man on horseback in the trailing robe of a Jew, or the cowl of a Capuchin friar. But a very few amongst them wore uniforms. Their head-dresses were equally diversified with the rest of their accoutrements. Some had handkerchiefs twisted around their heads; others wore the red cap of Liberty; others, round hats; and some few were provided with helmets

At the head of this singularly-attired troop rode the Marquis of Chaulieu in his ordinary dress, and armed with a long sabre By his side rode a young and handsome woman in a black riding habit, a man's hat upon her head, and the token of the royalists—a cross laid upon a heart—hung as an order on her breast This lady bore a brace of pistols suspended from her girdle, whilst a long Turkish dagger hung by her side. Her bearing was grave and dignified; her former cheerfulness had been transformed into an air of cold but calm tranquillity To share with her husband every peril in the field, cheerfully to undergo all the hardships of the war, to shed her blood, if need so required, in the cause of her king and of her country; this was the penance which this now repentant and noble-minded woman had imposed upon herself. The division of the army under the command of the marquis united itself on this day with the main body of the Vendean forces, which was already in a state of organization

This is not the place to relate the whole history of this remarkable struggle, in which the *women* of La Vendée bore no inconsiderable share. Some from amongst all classes accompanied the army under La Charette, and shared the perils of the war. In the midst of these bloody scenes, amusement was still eagerly sought after. Balls and assemblies were held in the midst of the camp, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the opposing army, whilst victory was but too often celebrated by bacchanalian orgies A republican freedom of manners mingled with the customs of aristocratic society, and with a certain *parade* of devotion, which was as strange and inconsistent as it was utterly hollow. Sacred songs and litanies alternated with street ballads, and the same spot was made the scene of prayer and dissipation. These irregular habits quickly put an end to all concord and unity of purpose amongst the leaders. The forces of La Vendée, after a heroic and most noble struggle, were utterly annihilated. A succession of glorious victories only led the way to their destruction. The passage of the last scene of this great and eventful tragedy: the republican *virtues* unhappily regained the upper hand.

It was the 18th of October, 1793. The heights of St. Florent form a semicircle, and at their feet extends a wide plain which reaches to the Loire. Eighty thousand men

pressed through this valley. Soldiers, women, children, old men, wounded, all mingled in one confused mass, without order and in a state of the greatest panic, fled before the fire and sword of the republican army. Behind this crowd of miserable beings, who constituted the remnant of the Vendéan army, might be seen burning villages which the republicans had set on fire. Nought was to be heard on every side but cries of lamentation and the groans of the wounded, the voice of weeping women and the cries of terrified children. In the midst of the panic-stricken crowd, each sought to discover his relatives, his friends, his protectors. All strove to cross the stream, and yet no one knew what might be the lot which awaited him on the opposite bank Many endeavoured to swim across the river on horseback, whilst multitudes stretched out their hands vainly imploring aid from those who had already gained the other side. Numbers were drowned in attempting to cross, and their heart-rending cries increased the universal feeling of hopeless despair. The fearful words of Fayan in the Convention—"We must send an army of firebrands into La Vendee, who shall leave nought behind them but a scene of devastation; so that for one year at least this hostile soil may afford no nourishment for either man or beast!"—were carried out to their fullest extent Every dwelling-place was ruthlessly destroyed; the royalist army saw their families cast upon the world without a home or a sheltering roof, and themselves hunted down like wild beasts on every side. Their resources were exhausted, their hopes annihilated; they felt that destruction was awaiting them. Nor did their sufferings terminate with the passage over the Loire· the horrors of the Reign of Terror yet awaited the unhappy fugitives. Orders were issued to the republican army to exercise every sort of cruelty on the vanquished; and as women and children had displayed an unexampled heroism in the defence of their native soil, therefore did these remorseless tyrants extend their cruel persecution even to the helpless and unprotected.

The Marquis de Chaulieu, severely wounded, was carried along in a cart, amidst the disordered crowd. His wife, exhausted by the hardships and sufferings of every kind which she had experienced, was seated by his side, watching with anxious eyes the sufferer's every movement,

and seeking to support him in her arms, in order that he might the less acutely feel the joltings of the rough waggon in which they were placed Her eyes swam with tears, and she forgot her own sufferings as she thought on those of her husband. And yet, notwithstanding her tender care, he became rapidly so much worse that it was impossible for him to continue any longer with the army. The marchioness saw herself, therefore, obliged to join a company of about five hundred women, children, and aged men, who had concealed themselves in subterranean vaults in the neighbouring château of Clisson Here also the peasantry of the surrounding country had brought some of their flocks; and here it was, in this gloomy abode, intermingled with the beasts of the field, that these unhappy beings awaited a day of deliverance, which, alas! they were never doomed to see Nourishment and assistance were conveyed from time to time to these poor creatures by all who had a spark of human feeling left, whether amongst the royalists or the republicans. The children used to creep out in the dusk of evening, to implore help from the compassionate and kind-hearted, and to gather grass in the court-yard of the château. This sorrowful abode was filled with anguish and lamentation, its inmates trembled at every movement, fearful lest the Blues might have discovered the place of their concealment. This terrible state of things lasted for some weeks Destitute of all the ordinary comforts of life, and without medical assistance, the wounds of the marquis here assumed a malignant form, and slow fever gradually consumed his remaining strength. Night after night, his unhappy wife ventured forth from her hiding-place in order to procure medicine for her husband. She cast off her own clothes in order to avoid the danger of recognition, and in exchange for a costly jewel purchased the dress of a peasant girl. Thus disguised, she used to repair to the neighbouring village in search of the assistance of which she stood in need. One evening she was remarked by two Blues, who, attracted by her beauty and the gracefulness of her appearance, tracked her, unobserved, to the château, where she suddenly disappeared. With surprise they remarked a slight noise, which seemed to proceed from the ground beneath their feet. They lay down, and applying their ears to the spot, quickly perceived a sound as of human voices. They directly sum-

moned their comrades to their assistance; and suddenly the unfortunate and helpless crowd saw themselves surprised and driven by force of arms from their dreary hiding-place The unfortunate creatures cast themselves at the feet of these barbarians, with cries of bitter anguish; the marchioness clasped the knees of one of the leaders of the party, a young man, who looked upon her, as she fondly deemed, with something of pity and compassion

"Sir," she cried, in a voice of earnest entreaty, "have pity on the defenceless Do not disgrace the profession of arms by the exercise of useless cruelties Save these unhappy wretches, who are not capable of inflicting any injury on the Republic"

The officer made no reply, but turning to his companions, said—

"She does not speak the dialect of the country This can be no peasant woman"

"She addressed you as 'Sir,'" replied the other "She must be the wife of one of the leaders"

The two young men now lowered their voices, and after speaking to one another for a few moments in an under tone, they began to laugh

"Madame," at length said the officer whom the marchioness had first addressed, "I will see what I can do for you Will you have the goodness to present me to your husband?"

"He is lying at the point of death," replied the marchioness, "have compassion on my sorrow, and deal mercifully with him"

"Before I can comply with your request, madame," replied the officer, "I must be permitted, in the first place, to make his acquaintance I will not conceal from you, fair lady, that the fate of these wretches here is already sealed. We can give no quarter, more especially to women, who often seek to mislead our soldiers by their flatteries and caresses, in order to take advantage of their blind security, that they may poison or stab them in an unguarded moment If, therefore, you are anxious for the safety of your husband, you had better point him out to me at once, so that I may be able to distinguish him from the remaining prisoners. Whatever his lot may be, I promise you that it shall, at all events, be a milder one than theirs."

Whilst the marchioness still wavered, and debated within

herself what course she should pursue, the marquis stepped forward with a tottering step from the midst of the crowd and said—

"Madame, this is beneath your dignity These wretches do not deserve that a lady of your rank should humble herself so far as to seek any favour at their hands Let us *die* together with courage, since we can no longer *live* with honour

"Who are you' inquired the officer with an expression of malignant joy, I fancy I am about to make an acquaintance which will be rather interesting to me

"My name must indeed be sufficiently known to you said the marquis, proudly "I have often enough taught *you* to know your own

"A good catch, this, said the other officer, as he suddenly recognised the marquis 'he is the very brave general by whose orders a band of the Chouan women crucified an agent of the government Truly, Sir General, you carry on here a very original mode of warfare

"We defend ourselves, replied the marquis, 'as best we may, but as concerns the cruel deed which you have now laid to my charge, it was *not* done by my orders, and its horrors are far exceeded by those which the women of *your* party perpetrate on the prisoners who fall into their hands

"I am sorry,' interrupted the officer, "to be under the necessity of putting an end to this conversation We have no time to lose, La Charette is at our heels, and we cannot drag five hundred prisoners along with us I have promised your wife to distinguish you from the rest, therefore we will carry you along with us As for your wife you may dismiss all anxiety on her account, for I will make her my peculiar care

With a scream of terror, the marchioness threw herself into the arms of her husband, whose cheek blanched and whose lip quivered with rage, but the soldiers tore her rudely from him, whilst they bound his arms behind his back and led him away

"Sir, exclaimed the weeping and enraged marchioness, as she drew a dagger from her breast, and rushed upon the republican, "you are a pitiful coward!'

Quick as lightning, however, the soldiers wrenched the weapon from her, and the officer coolly replied, "You

seem very furiously disposed, my dear madame. If you go on in this way I shall be under the necessity of binding you, but I hope soon to see you in another mind. I trust you will excuse my leaving you for the present, as my duties call me elsewhere, but my people will pay you every attention in the mean while."

The officers now began to consult together what was to be done with this multitude of wretched beings, who were filling the air with their cries and lamentations.

"We dare not give any quarter," said the captain of the Blues "We have only five hundred men altogether in our company, and La Charette may overtake us at any moment. The prisoners, too, are, for the most part, women; and this increases our embarrassment One may almost take it for granted that every one of these Vendéan women is a Judith, who will take the first opportunity she can of cutting the throat of one of our soldiers I submit this to your due consideration, citizens; and beg to say that I will not take any responsibility upon myself in the matter."

"But what then is to be done with such a crowd? They are five hundred in number at the very least."

"I have it! I have it!" exclaimed an old sergeant, who had been exploring the whole château. "There is a great cistern down there: there will be room enough for them all in that."

There was a pause of universal surprise. The noble council of war required a few moments to collect their thoughts. But the proposal was too original not to be favourably received by the officers, whose fancy was much taken by the singularity of the idea. The carrying out of the plan also seemed to them to promise considerable amusement, and a full satisfaction of their vengeance on the *égorgeurs*, *échauffeurs*, and crucifiers.

"Have you anything to say against this plan?" said the captain at length to one of the lieutenants.

"Not I," he replied.

"Nor I either," said another

"It will be a good example," added a third.

"Well, then," said the captain, "I see no reason why we should not set to work at once."

"Stop a moment!" exclaimed one of the younger lieutenants, as he twirled his moustache. "It seems to me

we might as well save the lives of some half-dozen of the prettiest girls in the lot. This fighting is very dry work, and they will help us to beguile the time a little."

This proposal met with universal approbation. The Blues now commenced their hellish work Old men and children cast themselves imploringly at the feet of the officers, but were repelled with brutal insolence. Seven young girls were torn from their parents' arms, amidst the tears and imprecations of the multitude They knew that the fate which was reserved for these unhappy children was even far more fearful than the death of agony which was in store for themselves. When they found that all entreaties were but vain, the most stout-hearted of the party prepared to offer some resistance This brought about a tremendous struggle, which only hastened the fearful catastrophe The soldiers struck down with their bayonets every one who opposed them; and as the children who came across their path often impeded them in their work of destruction, they mercilessly trampled these little ones under their feet.

"Now," said the sergeant to the captain, "I think it is time we should set to work in downright earnest"

"Goriot!" replied the captain, pointing to the seven trembling girls, "had you not best conduct these first to a place of security? Bind them fast together, and the *generales* with them, by their hands and feet, and bring them to the neighbouring village."

"Just as you please, captain But you know that there are companies of freebooters in all directions, who will be very apt to deliver our prisoners if we set out without the escort of the whole company."

"You are right," replied the captain, as he rudely shoved the poor girls into a corner and ranged them in order.

There was such an incessant howling and lamentation during the whole of this conversation, that it was with some difficulty the captain could succeed in making himself heard.

"What an infernal howling!" he exclaimed at length in a voice of thunder. "I verily believe that this rabble have a talent for screaming beyond that possessed by any other nation on the face of the earth. It would be enough to move a stone, if only they were not Vendéans. We must

make an end of them as quickly as we can, Remember, soldiers, your comrades at St Florentin; think on the victims of Machecoul, where these wretches cut our men to pieces with their scythes; and have no pity on these yelling tigresses!"

"Mercy! Compassion! Pity! Holy Virgin, help us!" exclaimed the helpless crowd, as they felt themselves crushed on every side, and remorselessly knocked about with the butt-ends of the muskets. But the soldiers had been worked up to a pitch of frenzy by the recollections which their captain had awakened in their minds.

"You infernal wretches!" they exclaimed, "had you any compassion when you roasted our companions alive? We will make you pay dearly now for the Vespers of Machecoul"

"Form a circle around them!" cried the commandant; "drive them here to the left; down with them all into the cistern!"

One loud shriek of terror burst from the crowd, and then these despairing women engaged in a desperate struggle hand to hand with the soldiers: a struggle for their *lives!* They clasped their arms around them, and sought to drag them to the ground; others tried to wrench their muskets from their hands, whilst others sprang upon their shoulders, or, like wild beasts, bit their hands and arms, thus inflicting the greatest agony on their murderers.

"Look at these furies!" cried the captain, "they are destroying our best men. Here we have already half-a-dozen soldiers *hors de combat* in this fight with a set of women! Make an end of them at once! No quarter! Shove them into the well!"

And fearful indeed was the scene which ensued; a scene which beggars all description, and which was worthy of the pencil of that Italian painter who loved to depict the sufferings of the lost. The soldiers required the aid of all their weapons to defend themselves against the mingled crowd, who with a fearful death-cry rushed upon them in mortal combat. Women clinging in despair to their aged fathers, who clasped them weeping to their breasts; helpless invalids and wounded men, borne upon the shoulders of their oppressors, and looking round with dim and glassy eyes on the scene of horror; mothers who raised their children in their arms, whilst they offered

their own breasts to the bayonets, in order to save their little ones, still breathing bodies, which lay helpless on the ground trodden under foot both by friend and foe, long tresses of raven hair scattered on every side! These were the details of the heart rending, the sickening scene One mother in wild despair threw her child amongst the soldiers they received it on the points of their bayonets, and raised it on high as a standard! Now began in its most terrific manner a scene of promiscuous slaughter; short, ringing cries, which met the ear on every side, denoted the moment when thrusts from the sabre and the bayonet terminated the sufferings of those who were nearest to the soldiers, the remainder of the miserable crowd were driven closer and closer to the cistern, around the margin of which there still stood a circle of human beings, who offered the firm resistance of despair to the pressure from without But at last a gap was made in this living wall, and about a dozen of wretched creatures thrust head foremost, one over another, with a fearful shriek disappeared in the abyss Each one, as he fell, drew others with him in his vain attempt, by grasping their clothes, to rescue himself from destruction Gradually the whole crowd disappeared, sinking one after another into the earth, weaker and fainter arose the wail of the sufferers, and at length the whole cistern was filled with bodies, heaped one above another, and writhing in the agonies of death The bloody work was accomplished, and the last corpse thrown in, but in the depths of that living grave a number of men yet moved and groaned, surrounded on all sides by the corpses of those who in life had been most dear to them

The wearied soldiers, with oaths and imprecations, washed away the blood from their savage and reckless countenances

"We have had enough of it," said the captain "let them settle matters down there now amongst themselves as they like They will soon, I suspect, make an end of one another."

And so saying, he stepped to the edge of the cistern, and with a fiendish smile looked down on the wretched mass of his fellow-creatures who lay beneath in ever-increasing torture

"Not one has escaped," said the sergeant. "We must

set a watch over them at present by to-morrow, I think, they will all be quiet enough."

"Truly, they are pretty well packed," said the lieutenant

"We must now think of our own safety," continued the captain, as he marshalled his troop "Have you got any booty, my boys?"

"None worth speaking of," replied the sergeant "a few shabby crosses and paltry rings, some head-kerchiefs and shoes, which are of no use See!" said he, as he picked some of them up; "they have not a whole sole amongst them"

At this moment a down-pour of rain began to fall.

"That comes in good time," said the captain. "We will make a little gutter, which shall discharge itself into the cistern, otherwise some after all might escape, and it would be too hard work to make an end of them all with the bayonet."

"A capital thought! This stream of water will be quite a refreshment to them!"

Some of the soldiers set to work directly and dug a little channel, by which the rain-water was conveyed straight into the cistern. The captain then summoned his men, and went through the roll-call.

"We have lost no one," he then said; "but Georges is minus an eye, and Brison has a broken leg. How did this happen?"

"One of these women of Machecoul dragged him to the ground, and smashed his leg with the butt-end of his own musket," replied one of the soldiers; "but I gave her a good thrust with the bayonet in return for her pains."

"But what in the world do I see here?" exclaimed the captain, stepping up to one of his soldiers. "Why, comrade, you have no hair on your head. What is become of your wig?"

"Oh! as for that matter," said another soldier, "*that* is a trifle indeed; but I have only one *ear* left: one of these wretches bit off the other"

"As for your ear, good Briol," said the sergeant, "I suppose it has gone to keep company with Jouï's nose Look at the poor devil! the women have disfigured him for life."

"There are more soldiers here," announced another sergeant, "who have lost their ears and their eyes."

"Forty five men have been rendered unfit for service, on account of their feet having been lamed from the violence with which they were trampled upon'

"We have had altogether two hundred men mutilated, and others more or less severely wounded"

"And how they have bedaubed our faces! See! do we not look like a set of tattooed savages!"

"Where is Malin, our carpenter!" inquired the captain

"Here!" groaned out a feeble voice from the midst of a heap of brushwood which lay near the cistern

"He seems unable to rise," said the captain as with some other officers he approached the spot where Malin lay, breathing with considerable difficulty His uniform was torn to shreds, and his body covered with fearful gashes

"How do you happen to be so badly wounded?" inquired the captain

"There!" replied the sufferer, as he pointed to an object which lay by his side "it was a sickle"

"The devil take these furies!" exclaimed the enraged captain, "to maul my people in this way! It is really unexampled!"

In no very good humour—for there was scarcely one of the party who had not received some kind of injury in the course of the late struggle—the little troop once more prepared to set forward on their march The captain now approached the captive women who, pale and trembling, clung convulsively to one another The marchioness sat, as if petrified, upon a fragment of rock, and received the captain with a look of withering scorn Some lingering remnant of shame was awakened for a moment in his bosom, and he said—

"Citizen, the guilt of the act you have now witnessed does not rest with *us* this is warfare according to the fashion of La Vendee"

The marchioness made no reply, but turned her back upon him in disgust The captain, however, seized her by the shoulders without ceremony, and forcing her to return to her former position, said—

"When people have such handsome faces as you have, madame, they should not turn their backs on a man who has acted so magnanimously towards them as I have towards you"

"Let her alone," said the sergeant; "she will soon learn to be more submissive."

"I fully intend that she shall, and if not, we shall quickly find means to tame her spirit. Madame,' he added in a severe tone, "for doubtless this title is more pleasing to your ears than that of simple 'citizen,' I leave you your choice. will you take my arm and proceed upon your journey *free*, or do you choose to be bound and led along by a soldier, who certainly will not deal with you as gently as I should do?"

The marchioness made no further reply than simply to hold out her hands with an aspect of firm determination. The sergeant bound a handkerchief firmly round her small wrists, took the two ends in his hand, and with a derisive laugh uttered the word of command, "March!" The remaining prisoners were led off in the same manner. The officers attempted to draw them into conversation, but they made no reply. As the little group walked sorrowfully onwards, their lips might have been seen to move in prayer, and, as they thought upon their murdered mothers and sisters, they wept.

The village lay at the distance of only about a quarter of an hour's walk from the château. It was therefore quickly reached, and the soldiery betook themselves to their quarters. The marquis was shut up in the desolated church, whilst his wife was conducted to the abode of the captain, who invited her to partake of the supper which had been prepared for him.

"Madame," said he, "you see I treat you like an angel. I might have bound you with cords, and thrown you into a miserable dungeon, or allowed you to share the fate of your companions in the cistern, but there is something about you which pleases me, and I therefore ask you once more, whether do you choose to be treated as a friend or as a prisoner?"

"As a prisoner!" replied the marchioness in a decided tone, as she withdrew to the farthest corner of the room and seated herself upon a wooden stool.

"It shall be just as you please," replied the captain; "but, even for your husband's sake, it might perhaps be as well for you to treat me a little more courteously. He is doubtless very dear to you, and the constancy with which you have adhered to him in his misfortunes bespeaks a

noble mind, but this old system of life long devotion is now become quite antiquated and out of date Might not a brave republican soldier prove a better protector for you than a broken down royalist' Besides, much lies in my power and, if you consent to share my fortunes I promise you that this husband whom you seem to love so well shall be rescued from the fate which now awaits him

The unhappy marchioness sat speechless and as if paralysed with horror, while the rude soldier thus addressed her At first she seemed hardly to apprehend the full import of his words, but gradually a fearful conflict of emotions was awakened in her breast The remembrance that she had *once* wronged her husband filled her soul with the bitterest anguish, and she felt as if *now* she ought not to shrink from any sacrifice which might purchase his safety How could she bring herself to seal his doom with her own lips' How could she deem any sufferings of her own worthy of a moment's consideration if they might only rescue him from a miserable death' The agitation which was depicted in her countenance betrayed her emotion to the young officer, who, seeing his advantage urged her yet more eagerly to close with his offer Bewildered and oppressed she at length exclaimed in a tremulous voice—

"If you will only set him free I will consent to unite my fate with yours

Transported with this concession, the captain seized her hand and pressed it with ardour to his lips She started back from his touch, as though she had been stung by a viper

"Stop, sir' she exclaimed in a determined tone, "you must not dare to approach me until your share of the compact is fulfilled

'You are a strange woman, he replied 'Do you then really suppose that your husband will be satisfied with this arrangement' It was only in joke that I promised you to save his life Take my advice and trouble your head no more about him He is a lost man'

The marchioness, enraged as he said this, started to her feet and exclaimed, "If this be so indeed, then, sir, rather than become your wife, you shall see me fall at your feet a lifeless corpse' Write for me this very moment an order to your sergeant to deliver up the prisoner into my hands"

"Well, you must have your own way," said the captain; "but were it not that you have bewitched me with your beauty, I should not run the risk of losing my head to please you or anybody else I suppose, however, that I must do as you wish, or I shall never have a moment's peace I should like to know, though, what use there is in peilling both your head and mine in this matter Your husband is so badly wounded, that, if he attempt to make his escape, he will die on the road"

"That is no concern of yours, replied the marchioness "better that he should be dead than in the hands of your soldiers'

At length, with an unwilling hand, the rude republican wrote the promised order "It is, perhaps, my death-warrant, said he, "but what matters it? To-day or to morrow, it is all the same The life of man is short enough at any rate, so I will take my chance, and enjoy it while it lasts

Thus saying, he laid the order on the table, and placing over it a dagger which hung from his belt, he said, as he led the marchioness towards the supper-table—

"It is time that we should partake of some refreshment; the sights you have seen this day are too much for weak nerves A glass of champagne will enliven you a little"

With mingled hatred and disgust she took her seat by the ruffian's side, her eye rested upon the written order, and upon the glittering weapon which lay beside it A fearful thought flashed across her mind

Intoxicated by his supposed triumph, the young man quaffed one glass after another of the exciting draught, until, stupified by his own excess, he sank back in a heavy sleep upon the sofa

The marchioness looked once more upon the dagger, and then upon her slumbering companion, and she shuddered In one moment she might free herself for ever from her hated lot, and secure the safety of her husband Her heart sickened at the thought of shedding human blood, and yet it was her only alternative With the concentrated calmness of despair, she at length grasped the dagger, and, raising her eyes towards heaven, as if she would seek forgiveness for the deed, she plunged it into the breast of the sleeping villain One faint groan—one convulsive shudder—and the unhappy man had passed from time into

eternity. The resolute woman had acted with so much presence of mind and so much quietness of action, that no sound could have been heard sufficient to excite the slightest suspicion. Even had any one been watching at the door, he could only have supposed this passing murmur to proceed from the disturbed and unquiet slumbers of a drunken man

The marchioness now hastily cast from her her blood-stained dress, and put on in its place a uniform of the young officer's, threw his cloak over her shoulders, buckled his sword to her side, drew his cap low over her forehead, and then, having lighted a small dark-lantern which hung against the wall, she took it in her hand and left the apartment, not, however, without first securing the precious order for the deliverance of her husband, which she thrust into her breast.

When the sentry on guard saw an officer coming out of the captain's quarters, he concluded that it was no other than his commanding officer himself, and duly presented arms The marchioness hastened quickly past, and reached the street in safety. The darkness favoured her flight, and the dazzling light of the lantern prevented others from recognising her, whilst it enabled her to reconnoitre all whom she encountered Well acquainted with all the customs of war, and in possession of the watchword, she passed along in perfect security, and without meeting with the slightest impediment She soon reached the church, which was occupied by a strong detachment; and a glance at the numbers she would have to encounter here left her fully persuaded that no degree of cunning or presence of mind could avail her in the midst of so many watchful and observant eyes. She therefore struck into a path which led towards the country, passed in safety by one or two detached sentinels, and in a few moments more had turned her back upon the village. A watch-fire indicated to her that place of horror where the Vendean women lay in the cistern, enduring, in so many cases, the anguish of a living death. Thither it was that she directed her steps

The republican commander, acting on the supposition that all the women who had been cast into the well were either dead or dying, only left behind him at the château a single man on watch. As night closed in, and this poor creature found himself utterly alone, a sort of superstitious

terror crept over him, which was by no means alleviated as the incessant groans from the cistern fell upon his ear. In order a little to divert his mind from the melancholy thoughts which were suggested by the scene around him, he retired to a tolerable distance from the spot which he had been set to guard, and lighted an enormous fire. Here he paced up and down, longing for break of day, as he well knew he was too far from the rest of the troop to expect that any one would be sent to relieve him from his dismal watch. Gradually, some few of the unhappy sufferers had regained a small measure of strength, and, armed with the resolution of despair, extricated themselves from the heap of dead and dying who surrounded them, and clambered up the side of the well which formed their living grave. Suddenly, the terrified sentry perceived crouching, wailing forms creeping forth from the well, and, dragging themselves slowly along on their hands and feet, approach the margin of the hill on which the castle was built. Fear, and perhaps some lingering spark of human feeling, prevented him from noticing these wretched beings; with regard to whom, moreover, he could not help feeling some uneasy doubts as to whether they were real flesh and blood or only wandering ghosts. With averted eyes, and leaning against a crumbling wall, which afforded him protection from any sudden attack from behind, he remained blind and dumb as concerned all that was going on around him, whilst he gazed intently into the crackling fire and supplied it unceasingly with fresh fuel. This enabled the marchioness to approach him sufficiently near to observe all his movements without being herself discovered. The ashy paleness of his features, the tremulous movement of his lips, as in a suppressed tone he muttered to himself a few broken sentences, the restlessness of his manner, and his downcast eyes, all betrayed to her his inward terror and anguish of mind. Yet she dared not leave him alive, whilst she proceeded to accomplish her task, lest he should hasten to the village and betray her. Without allowing herself a moment for consideration, she steeled her heart and nerved her arm once more to the deed of blood, and rushing wildly upon the terror-stricken man, plunged her dagger into his breast. The unhappy man invoked his guardian saint, and sank lifeless upon the watch fire. The marchioness withdrew the weapon from his body and hastened towards

the well As she approached, the stifled cries of the sufferers who were seeking to escape met her ear, and she called aloud to them in accents of hope and comfort—

"It is I—the general's wife!' she exclaimed "I am coming to deliver all who are yet within the bounds of deliverance"

"All-merciful heaven!' exclaimed a feeble voice, "is it possible? Has God indeed not forsaken us?'

"Yes, it is indeed I! Take courage! We will pray together and stand by one another Perchance we may yet be able to rescue many from the jaws of death The ruffians did their work so hastily that it must needs have been done imperfectly

"Ah! there are many in the well who are yet alive, some are altogether unhurt, others only slightly wounded, but all are perishing for lack of assistance, and from sheer terror and despair!'

"Let us then spend no time in useless words, but go directly to their aid I remember to have remarked a long rope in the cellar of the chateau, which seemed to be intended for this well Let us fetch it

"God reward you to all eternity! God bless you!' exclaimed the already rescued women, as they sank on their knees before their *generaless*, kissed her hands and feet, and bathed them with their tears

This scene at first deprived the heroic woman for a few moments of her self-command she burst into a flood of tears, embraced the poor peasants, and, looking up to heaven with a glance of earnest supplication, as if nerving herself for the work which now lay before her, exclaimed, "My God! my God!'

But soon she was recalled to herself by the recollection of her still-imprisoned husband, to whom a moment's delay might involve fatal consequences Without, therefore, allowing another minute to be devoted to the indulgence of grief or of emotion, she hastened to the cellar, found the rope, and quickly returned with it to the cistern. A suffocating vapour arose from its depths The mephitic exhalations from the stagnant water, and the heated, suffering mass of human beings, poisoned the whole atmosphere around, and converted this abode of horror into a complete pest-house As the miserable wretches who lay beneath saw the glimmering light approach the mouth of their

dreary prison, and heard the voice of the marchioness, which spoke to them in words of comfort, there burst from them a cry of mingled joy and lamentation, a confused murmur of groans and supplications, with earnest cries to heaven for help and for deliverance. The marchioness stood in need of all her presence of mind to preserve tranquillity and order in this agitated mass of human beings.

The now suddenly-quickened throng of intertwined, crushed, and wounded bodies, threatened to deprive those who were yet unhurt of their little remaining strength, and altogether to extinguish life in those who had been already wounded.

"For God's sake, keep yourselves still! let none move out of her place, and each wait quietly till it comes to your turn. The rope will only bear one at a time, and we are not strong enough to save you, unless you keep yourselves in peace and resign yourselves to the will of God."

"Let us in the mean time sing a litany," said an old woman in the depth of the well "that will give us courage and strength to wait patiently."

All directly became tranquil, and the voice of united supplication burst forth with one accord from the suffering multitude, and ascended towards the calm vault of heaven. Just then a passing breeze parted the clouds; the moon shone forth in tranquil lustre, and shed her clear, soft light over the scene of so much crime and horror. The dying sufferers, as they saw those most dear to them delivered, felt comforted, and smiled in death. But ere the marchioness proceeded with her work of deliverance, she bent over the edge of the cistern, and cried in a voice which bespoke the wild excitement of her mind—

"Vendean women! ye lionesses of this tortured land! hearken to my words. You are covered with the blood of your children and your sisters, who have expired by your sides! Are you ready to revenge yourselves?"

Suddenly was hushed the soft, plaintive voice of supplication; the accents of praise which glorified the God of mercy ceased to ascend towards heaven; and in their place a wild cry was heard, as from a wounded jackal. It was a speechless sound, but the marchioness understood its import.

"Well, then," she exclaimed, "when I have restored you

to life and liberty, remember that you are not worthy to live if you are not ready to revenge your husbands, your children, your parents, even at the cost of your lives The Blues lie asleep yonder, intoxicated with wine and drunk with bloodshed Let us surprise them in their slumbers and repay like with like!"

When she ceased, fearful pledges of revenge were re-echoed on every side; threats were uttered which made the very blood run cold—threats of such fearful import that one might almost be disposed to doubt that those from whom they proceeded could be beings of like nature with ourselves In the midst of these furious exclamations of hatred and revenge began the work of deliverance, and quickly was it accomplished The wounded forgot their sufferings, the mothers their murdered little ones, whom they had hitherto held clasped to their hearts in mute despair, and the sight of whom had, but the moment before, bowed their spirits to the dust *Sorrow* was forgotten in the wild thirst for *revenge!*

Half-an-hour sufficed to draw the uninjured and the wounded out of the well only the corpses, which were for the most part covered with water, were left behind Earth was thrown over the bodies, amidst the tears and benedictions of the survivors, as though they had been committed to their kindred dust in an ordinary grave The wounded were conveyed into the cellar, and committed to the charge of an aged woman The doors were barricaded with blocks of wood and implements of divers kinds; torches were then lighted, and the little band assembled for further deliberation in the court-yard of the château. They were about forty in number, and consisted for the most part of young and hale countrywomen, who had survived the horrors of that fearful day, and had saved themselves from death by the same instinct which leads the worm to assume the appearance of death when it sees approaching peril.

The sight of these women in their torn and bloody garments, shivering with cold and dripping with wet, was fearful and repulsive Even the countenances of the young girls had a wild and savage expression, which altogether effaced the original stamp of youthful grace and comeliness

"We shall die of cold," said one of the peasants, "unless we find some means of drying our clothes."

"Oh! as to that," exclaimed another, "I have made a discovery of something which will warm our blood though it cannot dry our clothes. There is a cask of wine lying in one of the side vaults of the cellar; we will go and fetch it."

"We shall lose precious time," said the marchioness, "and perhaps fail in accomplishing our revenge."

"Have no fears on that head," replied one of the women; "we shall only be the sooner ready to proceed with our work."

With wild shouts of joy the infuriated band hastened to the cellar; in a few moments the cask was emptied, and nought was heard on every side but wild songs accompanied with cries of rage and awful imprecations. They seized one another by the hands and joined in a dance of savage triumph; they seemed as if possessed by some evil spirit. Some armed themselves with poles, others with divers implements of husbandry—scythes, sickles, and pitchforks, which they found in the unguarded and forsaken storerooms which they had broken open; and in a very short time the whole band thus formidably armed stood before their conductress.

"We are only forty in number," exclaimed one of the most collected of the party; "what can we hope to effect against a party of three hundred well armed and disciplined Blues who are now in possession of the village?"

"We have certainly only one resource," replied the marchioness; "we must set fire to the church in which they are all lying asleep upon the straw. If we can but once overpower the guard, none will be able to escape from the church. The muskets are lying piled up before the door; we will secure these weapons, and then six resolute women will easily be able, by taking up their post at the door of the burning church, to cut off every one who shall attempt to escape."

This proposition was received with loud acclamations. They hastily collected straw and other inflammable materials, extinguished their torches, and began to descend the declivity which led from the chateau of Clisson towards the village. The voice of song and the cry of triumph were hushed, and in deep silence did the incendiaries approach the wretched spot which they had devoted to such utter destruction.

The most perfect stillness pervaded the whole village The forced marches they had made, the bloody work they had executed during the day together with excessive drinking, had left the Blues perfectly defenceless The greater number lay upon the straw in a state of utter unconsciousness, the sentinels reeled about, anything but obey and the whole troops were in that state of apathy which so often succeeds a day of intense excitement or exertion The cottages were all forsaken by their inhabitants for the country people had fled into the woods carrying with them their little properties The Vendean women accordingly reached the village quite unnoticed The republican sentries saw themselves suddenly surrounded and they surrendered themselves without resistance The women flew upon them like furies and strangled them on the spot As they approached the centre of the village, the marchioness commanded her little band to retire into the neighbouring cottages, and conceal themselves there whilst she went forward alone to procure the freedom of her imprisoned husband Assuming a bold and confident air, she approached the door of the church, where she found the sergeant lying fast asleep near the sentry on a bundle of straw The sentinel presented his musket at her, and asked, according to orders for the watchword

Make way, my good friend, said the marchioness, at the same time giving the watchword 'I am come with commands from the captain

The sergeant raised his eyes in astonishment, and looked with no little surprise on the young, and to him unknown officer, read the order which was presented to him, and said—

What *can* have come over our captain? I suspect he must have drunk last evening a little more than thirst required Who are you?

"That is no concern of yours, replied the marchioness, 'obey the orders of your commander'

Well, it is a strange affair What on earth can he mean by it? I cannot help thinking that there is something wrong in it I will obey the order, but you must excuse my just stepping up to the captain himself to make some inquiries on the subject

"Just as you please, sergeant. You must, of course, know your own duty best But I must request of you in the first place to produce the prisoner, that I may be satisfied there has been no foul play"

Mistrustful and undecided, the old soldier, after one more vain attempt to recognise the features of the officer, at length unwillingly complied, and summoned the prisoner, who, wakeful and suffering, had remained in the mean while an anxious spectator of the whole scene.

"Holloa here, comrade!" cried the sergeant to the unfortunate marquis; "I hope you are going to be shot, for I cannot think what else they intend to do with you"

With cold resignation the marquis raised himself from his straw couch, and followed the sergeant over the bodies of his sleeping comrades, who, lying amidst broken flasks, spilt wine, and scattered fragments of food, offered a revolting spectacle

"A pretty story this is," muttered the sergeant to himself in an anxious tone "If fate should bring the Whites down on us to-night, they would have light work of it with these swine."

"This way, general," said the marchioness, as she seized the prisoner by the hand "You are saved!" she whispered to him in a low tone· "fly as quickly as you can into the nearest cottage, and there await the rest"

As the marchioness thus spoke, she led the prisoner away with hasty strides.

"Halt!" cried the sergeant, hastening after her; "you must not go off until I have reconnoitred your order"

"Shall I fire?" inquired the sentry.

"No, no!" said the bewildered sergeant, "don't you see that he is an officer, and bears an order from the commander?"

"Let him pass on, then," said the sentinel, shouldering his musket with an air of indifference.

"That will not answer either," said the sergeant; "the affair is so very suspicious."

In the mean while the prisoner had reached the door of a house. The marchioness turned herself quickly round towards the sergeant, and discharged her pistol at his head He fell to the ground mortally wounded. The sentry now fired, but without waiting to take a steady aim; the shot

missed, and he gave the alarm. In a moment, however, he was surrounded by the women, overpowered, and disarmed

Heaps of straw were now thrown before the church door and set on fire The air resounded with wild cries, the flame blazed up with rapidly-increasing brightness, and in a moment the whole church was filled with a thick and suffocating smoke The muskets were now seized, and six robust countrywomen placed themselves before the door with pointed bayonets, whilst the remainder of the party broke in, from without, the windows of the church, and flung in through the apertures bundles of burning straw. The huge piles of this material which lay scattered about in all directions, as beds for the sleeping soldiery, now caught fire; a fearful tumult arose within the church; the intoxicated soldiers, blinded by the smoke, stumbled over one another, and rushed about distracted, unable to find the door; whilst those who lay close to the opening, and thus effected their escape from the flames, were received by the infuriated women on the points of their bayonets The dense smoke veiled from all eyes this scene of horror; the fearful screams of the burning wretches were drowned by the loud noise of the drums, which the women beat with indefatigable ardour The whole church was quickly enveloped in flames; whilst about a dozen mutilated soldiers, who had been already transfixed by bayonets, made their way through the burning mass, and sought to escape from the devouring element But all in vain! they were seized by the remorseless furies, trampled on the ground, and barbarously murdered. The yells of the agonized victims were now silenced; the door of the church, barricaded by half-consumed corpses, no longer needed a guard, the work of vengeance was complete; the whole village was in flames! With wild, exulting shouts the women danced around the burning pile, and sung the derisive songs which had been composed by the Vendéans on the hated republicans They took possession of the baggage-chests, broke open the wine and provision stores, and held a bacchanalian revel in the midst of this scene of heart-sickening horror The marchioness felt that it was quite beyond her power to restrain these excesses; and in truth, in those awful times, the fire of hatred and revenge burnt too fiercely even in the breast of the most refined and high-born women

of the land, not to lead them to look with comparative indifference on scenes which in former days they would have shuddered to behold, but with which the Blues themselves had only too painfully familiarized their minds.

The fate of La Vendee was at length decided Charette was taken prisoner, Lescure slain, every individual corps either scattered or annihilated The victors now proceeded to the trial of the offenders Amongst the number of those who had been taken prisoners by General Hoche, we meet once more with the marquis and his heroic wife. The former, after having saved himself by flight, had hired himself out to a farmer as ploughman, whilst the latter had with difficulty obtained a situation as dairy-maid. For three months the unfortunate pair thus remained in concealment, until one day a detachment of the Blues surrounded the farm, and arrested its owner as a harbourer of brigands. The fugitives were now seized, and brought to Nantes, there to be placed upon their trial The marquis was separated from his wife, who saw herself once more delivered up to the tender mercies of a rough soldiery, who sought to prove their republican *virtue* by the practice of the most revolting cruelties. The marchioness passed some weeks in this prison, where she experienced such *sympathy* as one of the *Vendean firebrands* might expect. At last both husband and wife were brought before their judges and tried The sentence of death quickly followed

So numerous were the victims under sentence of death, that the guillotine was not sufficiently rapid in its operations to accomplish the bloody work. The prisons were thronged to excess, and from their infected atmosphere contagion spread amongst the whole population The government also began to feel some fears with regard to the moral effects which the sight of this constant blood-shedding must produce upon the people. Then it was that some "practical" man amongst the republican leaders hit upon a new mode of execution, by means of the notorious *Noyades*.

Boats were constructed capable of receiving a great number of the prisoners and pierced throughout with small holes On a given signal these holes were opened and the vessel sunk in the rapid stream This method of putting the prisoners out of the world afforded the republicans, moreover a new species of diversion Multitudes of sight hunters used to assemble on the river banks in order to feed their depraved curiosity by listening to the expiring cries of those unhappy beings Young maidens women the aged and the feeble all were crammed together in one promiscuous mass devoted to this fearful death The Loire was their grave that Loire on whose banks the heroes of La Vendee had so freely shed their blood in a hopeless cause!

The beauty of the marchioness attracted attention even in the prisons of Nantes Fillipot a colonel in the service of the Republic, offered to procure her pardon but at such a price that she rejected his offer with disdain and awaited patiently the eventful evening which was to unite her in death with him she loved Since she knew that his doom was irrevocably sealed life had lost all its charms for her Fillipot, moved by her heroic spirit determined to save her at any cost The appointed hour for the destruction of the victims at length arrived the door of the prison in which the marchioness was confined was opened on her knees she awaited the executioner who should lead her out to meet her doom In his place however the colonel entered in the deepest agitation threw a military cloak over her shoulders, and dragged her hastily to the banks of the Loire, where he concealed her in a little skiff which he entered with her Hardly however had he placed her in the boat, when the discharge of a cannon announced the hour fixed for the execution The shore of the Loire swarmed with men The darkness was almost dispelled by the light of innumerable torches Suddenly there appeared upon the bosom of the clear bright stream a large vessel accompanied by a number of smaller guard boats, filled with armed republicans The larger vessel contained about three hundred Vendeans from whom at that moment burst forth a song of praise The prisoners stood entwined in each others arms and their eyes were raised to heaven Nearer and nearer they approached towards the solitary boat In breathless anxiety did the

unhappy marchioness gaze on the fearful spectacle She sought her husband amidst the crowd, and at length her eye rested upon his well known form He stood near the edge of the boat his aspect was that of calm resignation, and he seemed to look thankfully upon the friendly stream which was soon to receive him into its bosom The light of a torch at this moment fell upon the countenance of the marchioness, a cry burst from her lips, the husband and the wife at the same moment recognised one another Suddenly the larger vessel began to sway backwards and forwards the holes were opened the boat was sinking! The marchioness tore herself from the arms of her deliverer, who sought to retain her cried out to her sinking husband, and, stretching her arms towards him as if she would vainly seek once more to clasp him to her heart, she sprung into the stream!

Thus died the last heroes of La Vendee

BOOK II.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

JOSEPHINE BEAUHARNOIS

At length, after a long and fruitless Reign of Terror, the Republic began to discover that she had less to fear from foreign intrigues, from the influence of England and of English gold, which was liberally dispensed to the emissaries of rebellion, than from the spirit which was beginning to display itself amongst her own citizens The more blood flowed upon her scaffolds, so much the higher rose the dark spirit of fanaticism amongst the opponents of the government Every heart throughout France which beat with human feeling rose against the tyrants who slew their own generals, and rewarded good service done to the Republic by a bloody and disgraceful death To prevent outbreaks and the rising of factions, a proclamation was issued, commanding all citizens to deliver up their arms Every house was searched, and all weapons of defence were forcibly carried away

In a lowly dwelling in the city of Paris sat a lovely woman, still in the bloom of youth Her eyes were red with weeping, and her arms were entwined around her only son, whilst the boy looked with flashing eyes upon a sword which he held clasped in both hands This lady was the widow of General Beauharnois, who had been one of the victims of the Reign of Terror Madame Beauharnois was saved from the sword of the executioner by the amnesty which was at length decreed, and she lived in calm retirement with the only pledges which remained to her of her happy but fearfully terminated union with General Beauharnois. Here she silently wept for her husband's loss, and cursed his murderers This sword was almost the only relic she retained of her husband s possessions; and oft would she look upon it sorrowfully, and reflect with bitterness how well it had been wielded in the service of the Republic

"You must deliver up this sword, Eugene" said she to the child, in a voice which betrayed her emotion.

'Never, mamma!' replied the boy resolutely. 'I will kill anybody who attempts to take it from me. I will revenge my father with this sword. No one shall ever take it from me!'

At this very moment the government commissary entered.

"Citizen," said he, 'the government requires that all weapons should be delivered up. I come to enforce obedience to this command.'

"Citizen," replied Josephine, this sword is the only weapon in my possession. It is a legacy from my husband. I pray you to leave it to me as a remembrance of one so dear to me. It is a family treasure, and one from which my son will not hear of being parted.

"I regret that it is not in my power to comply with your wishes; my orders are strict, and admit of no exceptions to the rule. During this stormy period many lives have been sacrificed, and the number of widows in the same case with yourself cannot be few.

"But do you not see that there is no arm in my family which is capable of wielding this sword to the detriment of the Republic? Have compassion upon the heart of a widow who has lost her all, and sees in this treasure a relic which is sacred to her sorrowful remembrances. Leave to me and my son the melancholy satisfaction of looking at this sword, and of thinking as we do so, on one who wielded it honourably in his country's service.'

'I must repeat to you once more, with deep regret," replied the commissary, "it is out of my power to fulfil your wishes in this respect.'

Thus saying, he approached the little Beauharnois and asked him for the weapon, but the boy grasped it only the more firmly, and replied—

"This sword belongs to me, and I will not give it up."

"And what do you mean to do with it?' inquired the commissary, at the same time stroking the child kindly upon the head. "It is no plaything, and you are too young to be able to wield a sword.'

"I shall know how to wield it against my father's murderers!" replied the boy, with flashing eyes.

"You see, madame," said the commissary, gravely, "the

Republic has judged rightly that it is necessary for her safety to take from the relatives of her enemies the weapons which might serve the purposes of revenge I counsel you as a friend to bring up your son with sentiments different to those he has now expressed Give me the sword, my young friend, else I must take it from you by force, which I should grieve to be compelled to do; for," added he, with a smile, "I see you are a brave boy "

"In that you are right, citizen," replied the boy, as he drew the sword out of its sheath, and you will never get this sword from me by force "

On seeing the boy thus determined, the commissary turned towards the mother, and said impatiently—

"I must request of you, citizen, to put an end to this scene I would fain deal forbearingly with this hot-brained little fellow, but I would advise you not to presume too much on this, as painful consequences might ensue from his continued obstinacy The government has every reason to be strict in requiring obedience to its commands, even from women and children, for these feelings of revengeful hate have spread too widely in many families, and place the government in a painful position The Republic has already been deprived of some of her best soldiers by the hands of women and children It is therefore impossible for her to deal with the matter superficially."

"Give up the sword, Eugene," said Josephine, casting a scornful glance upon the commissary, "they are the strongest, they can kill you and me, as they have already killed your father; they can wrest the sword from your hands by force, but they cannot take from you your father's spirit or your father's courage "

Unwillingly, and muttering in a suppressed voice words of defiance, the boy at length yielded up his sword

The next morning a young boy stood in General Bonaparte's ante-room, and requested an immediate audience He was requested with a smile to give his name, and to state the object of his petition He readily complied. The name of Beauharnois, and the singularity of the child's demand, induced the officers in attendance to name the subject to Bonaparte, who immediately expressed his wish to see the spirited boy, and in the course of a few moments Eugene Beauharnois, with his open, manly countenance, stood before him.

"General," said he, without betraying the slightest embarrassment, "I come to ask you for my father's sword It belongs to me, and no one has a right to take it from me"

"And what will you do with it?" said Bonaparte, looking kindly on the brave boy

"I will one day wield it in my country's cause, and avenge my father's memory"

"Who has led you to form this resolution?"

"My mother, who often weeps over his death, and tells me that he was an honourable man, and that he was killed by treacherous murderers"

"Did your mother commission you to say all this to me?"

"No · she said, 'It is not well to provoke the wolves, but with time comes counsel'"

"Does your mother hate me very much?"

"No," replied the boy, "she told me, on the contrary, that you were a great general and a man of honour; one who would be incapable of committing a mean or cowardly act. She added, it would be well if they were all like you"

"Then you too, little hot-brain, are not my enemy, I hope. You have, I see, a brave spirit. I should wish to be at peace with you."

"If you give me back my father's sword, general, I will not do anything to hurt you," replied the boy

"Good! then you shall have your sword," replied Bonaparte, amused at the scene. "You may tell your mother that I will bring it to her myself. Greet her from me, and assure her of my esteem."

Shortly after this interview, Bonaparte, according to his promise, presented himself at the dwelling of Josephine She received him with tears in her eyes, and thanked him with an air of frank and graceful cordiality which perfectly enchanted him.

"The government," he observed, in the course of the conversation which ensued; "the government, I confess, are to my mind much mistaken in thus wounding the most sacred feelings of our nature. This is not the way in which the spirits of men can ever be subdued. Rest assured, madame, that these harsh measures do not meet

with my approval, and that I regret most deeply that this stringent law should have cost you an hour of anxiety."

"Oh!" replied Josephine, as she gazed in undissembled admiration upon Bonaparte's noble but unimpassioned countenance, "you are a magnanimous man! I knew well that you would honour bravery and misfortune, even in an enemy, that you would not show your courage by injuring the defenceless, that you possessed a heart as generous as it was brave Would that all the generals of the Republic were only like you!"

"Madame," replied Bonaparte, "judge not too severely the actions of men in these unhappy times. When the passions of men have once been strongly aroused, deeds of violence must ever follow in their train The temperament of some men draws them towards such acts as by an invincible attraction, whilst others are driven to them by unavoidable necessity."

"But why," exclaimed Josephine, forgetting, in the warmth of her feelings, whom she was addressing, "why should rule be committed to the hands of those who are too weak to withstand their natural temperament, and know no higher law than that of necessity? Wherefore should power be given to men who are acquainted with no more effectual engine of government than the hatchet of the executioner, the terror and dismay which the strong arm of the law can so easily inspire? Why should not the helm of the state be committed to men who know both how to tame their own passions and to tranquillize those of their people. men who can inspire the nation with confidence, and, by a generous magnanimity of conduct, win over even their opponents? Who are they who conduct to the scaffold every virtue which has ever been honoured among men—fidelity, constancy, patriotism, love to parents—and yet proclaim virtue as the law beneath whose name every passion is satisfied, and malice, envy, and retaliation are allowed the most unbounded sway? Forgive, general, this frank expression of my feelings. Many in your position would, I know, accuse me of high treason; but you are too generous not to pardon the weakness of a woman who has been wounded in the tenderest point by the cruelty of this tyrannical government. It is true that, in judging of this government, feeling is my only guide; but these feelings tell me that it is impolitic in any government, and bespeaks

a radical corruption in the principles which guide their conduct, when they see themselves under the necessity of uprooting every virtue, in order to maintain themselves in power."

Whilst Josephine uttered these words, with an earnestness bordering upon enthusiasm, her cheeks glowed, and her eyes kindled with an "ethereal fire," which penetrated into Bonaparte's inmost soul. These exalted feelings, united to an understanding which was so evidently of a superior order, made a most favourable impression on his mind. He listened to her with sympathizing admiration, and could not but own that the words of his fair panegyrist found an answering echo within his own bosom. Eager to hear her speak out her opinions yet more fully, he only replied to her with his usual conciseness, saying no more than was necessary to inspire her with confidence, and to stimulate her thoughts.

"You judge rightly," he said, "as to wherein the misfortune of our time consists. It lies in this: that not *capacity*, but *passion*, reigns supreme, passion which is not even guided by the rules of prudence. But think not that this unnatural state of things can be of long duration. France has great men enough within her bosom to enable her to subdue the world to herself, but these will bide their time, and that time will come, when these passions which now exercise undisputed sway over the land shall be in their turn brought into subjection by other and stronger passions which they themselves will have called into existence."

"Yes," rejoined Josephine, as she gazed significantly upon Bonaparte, "yes, there *are* such men in France; but if I deem aright, they must themselves contribute to subdue this rule of passion; they must not fruitlessly squander away their powers in the *service* of a cause which they are destined rather to *command*. Under the influence of noble feelings *themselves*, they must seek, through the same feelings, silently at work amongst the *nation*, to bring all evil passions into subjection. They must not wait to climb over the fallen, but at once exert themselves, and, above all things, withdraw their own services from a system they condemn. They must be creative spirits, not servile bondsmen of passion which they contemn, and whose weakness they have long learnt to despise."

"You are right," replied Bonaparte; "and yet all history

teaches us that these deliverers who arise in the hour of a nation's need are raised to their high pre-eminence through the instrumentality of those very passions which they are destined to bring into subjection.'

"I understand nothing of these lessons to be derived from history,' replied Josephine, "but my innate feelings tell me that evil passions must be opposed by more noble ones, in order to accomplish anything great or good, and to save a sinking state. All Europe now looks upon France with detestation. A great man would attract all eyes upon himself, would awaken the nobler impulses which now lie dormant in the hearts of the people, would supplant error by truth, and trample wickedness to the ground. He would rally around him every right-minded man in this divided land. Honoured and respected by all, thousands of oppressed and suffering families would welcome him as their deliverer, and by their prayers win for him assistance and support from above. Oh! I feel the conviction strong within me, that France for its deliverance needs only a great man, a man who believes in the power of the better feelings which dwell in every human breast, and knows how to avail himself of their influence, one who will not contend, provoke, and irritate, but rather forgive, and seek to reconcile all hearts, whilst, like a destructive storm, he sweeps away the worthless brood who promised to the misguided nation an age of freedom, whilst they turned this fair kingdom into a bloody prison-house where every virtue was destroyed."

Bonaparte listened with the greatest attention to every word which Josephine uttered; for they were pregnant with that life and energy which deep feeling ever imparts. Bonaparte, cold and calculating as he was himself, and ever bringing his *feelings* into subjection to his *reason*, yet knew well how to prize the outpourings of feeling on the part of others, and was wont, even in his youth, to avail himself of them, as of a sort of Dionysius' ear, through whose means he might collect the sense of the multitude. This lady, who had shown such perfect confidence in his honour as to express opinions which but lately would have led her to the scaffold, and which, even now, if divulged, would have placed her in no small peril, afforded him a most important criterion of the real state of feeling amongst the better part of the community. Already had ambitious designs of various kinds crossed his mind. Already had the thought

flashed before him, how easy it would be for a man of his genius to raise himself to sovereign rule, by obtaining a hold upon the more noble and more deeply-rooted feelings of the nation, and setting them in opposition to those baser and more contemptible passions which now ruled the kingdom with despotic sway It was therefore a matter of some moment to him to become acquainted with these inner workings of the minds around him, by the mouth of a woman who confided in him so entirely as to express her thoughts to him thus fearlessly and openly He accordingly sought, by a species of gentle opposition, as well as by expressions of sympathy and encouragement, to elicit her inmost thoughts

"I am quite of your opinion," he observed, after a moment's reflection, "at least on the main points at issue; but you must confess that no man, however great, can hope to establish his power on a firm basis, unless he in some degree flatters the passions of men, and employs the strong hand of power· nor can any Republic, without the use of such means, hope to save herself from the perils of foreign intervention"

"Oh! this infatuated worldly wisdom and state policy!" exclaimed Madame Beauharnais, colouring deeply· "this it is which has brought France to the very verge of destruction; which has caused the sceptre of government to fall from the hands of one party after another amongst the many who have ruled this unhappy country I cannot understand how men of such superior talents as those whom the Revolution has brought to light—how such clear, far-seeing minds can run so blindly into an error which is as evident as the day to my poor womanly understanding, which has only learnt to think through the medium of the heart. Do these men really believe that human beings are only machines, who can be moved hither and thither at pleasure by means of their passions? Are they not aware that the variations of feeling in a nation are not only endless, but swift as thought itself; and that the very same spirits which to-day are under the dominion of blind fanaticism, of prejudice and passion, may to-morrow be under the influence of the gentlest feelings of humanity and compassion? The masses, it is true, do not think; they do not act according to the suggestions of reason; but they have within them that same sort of instinct which we, as women,

feel within ourselves They are almost always led back to the path of right by the evidence of facts, which prove to them the evil consequences of their errors and their passions. They are then disposed in general to act on directly opposite principles, under the influence of that higher impulse of the soul which reason is not capable of imparting, for it is a holy inspiration, which defeats all the base calculations that are founded on human weakness, and which so often seek to misuse that weakness for their own evil purposes. Think you not that those Vendéans who yesterday arose as one man against the tyrant, who had been painted to them in the blackest colours, are the very same who to-day are struggling against the cause of freedom, because in its name their domestic happiness was destroyed, the holiest bonds of nature was recklessly torn asunder, and in the freedom of the nation, the yet more sacred freedom of individuals was invaded and destroyed?"

"You may be right in many respects," replied Bonaparte; "but were not these very Vendeans extirpated by *Frenchmen!* Have not the passions, the impulses, of patriotic pride been the instruments of subduing these fanatics, and of triumphing over passions which were at least of as mixed a character as those which were opposed to them? You, madame, are, I perceive, a little of a rebel; but I honour your high tone of feeling, and I should like to become more fully acquainted with your sentiments and opinions."

"I have no wish to conceal them from you, general," replied Madame Beauharnais, whilst she allowed her hand to remain passively clasped in that of Bonaparte, who had just raised it to his lips with an air of respectful sympathy "You have given proofs of possessing a magnanimous soul I can confide to *you* thoughts which I could confide to no other; for this time of terror has taught *me* also the sad lesson of veiling the inmost feelings of my heart. You say the Vendéans are subdued; I say, no! This great sacrifice cannot but exercise some influence over the spirits of the people. It has proved to the nation that virtue exists even amongst those she counts her foes. I am no royalist; never for one moment have I lamented the downfall of the kingly power, although I have deeply mourned over the cruelties which were practised upon its unhappy possessors; but I sincerely believe that the spirit

which animated the people of La Vendee has achieved a decided victory. Let us look back and consider what has occurred. On both sides, vice struggles with vice, crime outweighs crime, and blood and violence are met with blood and violence in return.'

"That is very true," replied Bonaparte; "the engines of attack and of defence were both alike evil; but with whom rests the guilt? Is it not with those who began the fearful struggle; with those oppressors of mankind on whom these last have most fearfully revenged themselves?"

"You are speaking of the masses, of the populace, replied Josephine, "and as far as they are concerned, you are in the right, but the leaders of these masses, on the one side as well as on the other, *they* ought to have raised themselves above these passions, and so, in a certain sense they did, but only in the furtherance of their own selfish interests. Oh, general! I have observed these people closely, I have seen much of the leaders of both parties, and I shudder when I think of them. Nothing can be more simple in its origin than the French Revolution. The people were starving, they saw themselves plundered, misused, a prey to a corrupt nobility, a faction of idle and profligate state *employés*, and a degenerate priesthood. The people uttered their complaints, but they were not listened to. They became corrupted. Men arose who professed themselves willing to defend their most sacred interests. They pleaded the cause of freedom, of truth, of reason; they prescribed to Power her limits, they sought to purify religion from superstition and from prejudice, they counselled the feeble king, and admonished and exhorted the people. Had their advice been in some respects followed, had the state been reformed at the right moment, the just wishes of the people and their leaders been attended to, all the horrors which ensued might have been prevented. Instead of this, however, those who sought to save the country met with nought but persecution. They were stigmatised as misleaders of the people; they were condemned as proud, litigious, reasoning men; they were enveloped in a net of intrigue, and traps were laid for them on every side. Cast a glance over the career and fate of Mirabeau, and you will soon convince yourself that crime and wickedness were in as active exercise on the one side as on the other. This

Mirabeau was one of the *great men* of France He united the greatest virtues with a depth of passion in which the strength of his character in part consisted When he first produced his "System of Nature," men threw stones at him as he passed through the streets, his talents were underrated, his character was insulted But soon the current of opinion changed, he was extolled to the very skies; and, conscious of his own superiority, he became penetrated with the deepest contempt for the weakness of those by whom he was surrounded, and a bitter enemy of the royal family, whom he treated with the utmost scorn, and calumniated most unmercifully He quickly perceived, however, the tendency of the storm which he had helped to raise, he saw the anarchy, the popular fury, the unchained spirits of revenge, and decided on seeking to still them by the magic influence of his powerful mind It has been said of him with truth, that he brought France to the verge of ruin, but then, he alone was capable of delivering her in the hour of her extremity. But how did the blinded rulers act towards him? They did all that lay within their power morally to annihilate him. Innumerable horrors were related of him, his faults and vices were exaggerated: he was poisoned The populace saw their protector persecuted They cried out for vengeance, and fearfully did they execute it But the leaders whom they trusted were as corrupt as were those false friends of royalty who sought to rule through crime They gave poison for poison, spread scandal in return for scandal, and excelled their teachers in the *arts* of government But the sound mind of the nation has at length been awakened; it has recovered from its paroxysm; and, believe me, general, all the better part of the French people now from their inmost hearts curse the tyrants who pretend to labour in the cause of freedom, as much as they ever did those despots who availed themselves of the sacred truths of religion as a mantle for their profligacy Yes, and if possible they hated them even more, inasmuch as this open contempt of principle is a hundred times more revolting than the masked despotism which preceded it."

* NOTE BY TRANSLATOR.—It must be borne in mind, that the sentiments here expressed are those of *Josephine*, the free-thinking republican woman, and not of the author, who represented him in the last book under a far less favourable aspect.

Bonaparte deeply felt the truth of these observations, and his kindling eyes encouraged Madame Beauharnois to proceed, and to lay open her whole heart to him. "General," continued she; "it may be that the circumstance which gave rise to this interview was specially appointed by heaven It may be that the words of an unhappy being, who, during an imprisonment of eighteen months, learnt by cruel experience all the injustice practised by the present government, may dwell abidingly in your remembrance. Yes—I own it—I am an enemy to this government. I detest it with my whole heart, and earnestly pray that God may send us a hero who shall free our land from this hateful rule I had a beautiful dream. I saw a man at the head of a body of brave men, who were ready almost to defy him on account of his courage, his magnanimity, his patriotic virtues. He stood in the presence of that many-headed body of bandits and of fools who now govern France. He pronounced them unworthy to be fathers of their fatherland, and they fled before the thunder of his voice and the glittering brightness of his unsheathed sword. He placed a crown upon his head, and said, 'This is a civic crown; let it be the symbol of Freedom and of Nationality; and woe be to him who shall attempt to lay his hand upon it!' And the people welcomed him with joyous acclamations, and cried, 'All hail to our deliverer!' And—may I venture to own it to you, General? the fame of your courage has long dwelt as a vivid image in my imagination. *The man* whom I saw in my dream, beaming with splendour and raised to the height of earthly power—it was *you*!"

As Madame Beauharnois thus spoke, she rose from her seat, and gazed at Napoleon with a kindling eye, whilst she bent reverently before him, as if inspired with an enthusiastic admiration. Bonaparte seemed deeply absorbed in thought; but suddenly he started, fastened his penetrating eye for a single moment on the graceful form of the fair enthusiast, took her hand in his, and replied somewhat coldly, "You have truly a friendly fantasy. I shall not forget the hour we have passed together, and I pray you ever to bear me in your remembrance."

Thus saying, he took his leave of her with formal courtesy, adding significantly, "Farewell, madame; and may France be delivered ere long from her present perils!"

NAPOLEON DANCES

MADAME JOSEPHINE BEAUHARNOIS was born in Martinique in which island her father possessed an extensive plantation She was the idol of her parents, and their excessive indulgence exercised a somewhat unfavourable influence on the character of their spirited and witty child It tended to render her a little coquettish, self-willed, and fond of display Surrounded by a throng of admirers, she early learnt but lightly to esteem the homage of ordinary men She seemed to consider them merely as plaything on whom she might exercise her capricious humours, and displayed no special preference for any one amongst her numerous wooers

Without being possessed of any considerable share of regular beauty, she was yet richly endowed with the superior charms of grace and attractiveness of manner Her very petulance had in it something irresistably piquant, and her winning gentleness prevented it from irritating the *amour propre* of others Although she occasionally amused herself at the expense of her languishing swains, who were destitute of any higher merit than that of trifling dandyism and handsome features, yet she could not bear, in reality, to inflict pain on any, even the most commonplace of men, and always sought to atone for her injustice by after kindness The increasing consciousness of her own superiority, fed by this continual flattery, at length led her to the conclusion that there was no one in her native land worthy of her hand These colonists and merchants had none of those lofty and stirring qualities which could enchain her heart Ambition had no play in the colony, she could discover amongst its peaceable inhabitants none who seemed to her worthy to be a hero, she could not find any great work to be done, to which she might consecrate her powers, no *life-task* which might present itself in glowing colours to her enthusiastic fancy Accustomed to a life of wealth and ease, she looked contemptuously upon an existence which was devoted to securing the means of life, to the pursuit of gain, and to its preservation when acquired The fancy at length took possession of her mind, that she would go to Europe in

search of that which in America she could not hope to find France was at that period esteemed throughout the world as the centre of all great thoughts and noble feelings. French books were the only ones read throughout the colony; French artists, statesmen, *savans*, were the only ones talked of in the little circle which surrounded her The whole history of the century appeared to be that of France alone, in which European culture and civilization had reached its highest point. Josephine's imagination dwelt continually on this land, whose fame caused her to forget her native soil and all the beauties of nature with which it teemed. *There* did she resolve to seek *him* who should be worthy to become her husband, to fill the void which lay within her soul, to govern her unformed mind, and to soothe her restless spirit She allowed her parents no rest until they consented to this strange expedition. They at length unwillingly allowed her to depart, with their blessing, after supplying her liberally with means for her journey. She accordingly set forth on her travels, and soon reached that fair land of France, which she found bathed in the blood of its inhabitants, and on whose soil she was destined to atone for her wild, adventurous spirit as no woman had ever yet atoned for her gravest faults.

The young Duke de Beauharnois by no means answered to the ideal picture which Josephine had formed to herself of the being with whom she would desire to unite her fate, but the excitement produced in her mind by the scenes around her, the novelty of the manners and customs of the day, produced in her a state of self-deception and bewilderment of mind; and she clothed him, by the aid of a vivid imagination, with every possible perfection. Thus the fair American, who had rejected the handsomest men in Martinique, was quickly subdued and captivated by the young duke, moderate as were his talents and intellectual capacities. Their marriage, however, proved a happy one They mutually adored each other, and close was the bond which united them; but their happiness was destined to be only of short duration, and to meet with a fearful termination. After Josephine had become the mother of two children, the Revolution broke out in all its fury, and General Beauharnois was called into the field. The National Assembly required from their heroes that they should ever be ready to die for their country; and on a field of battle the leader

felt that his choice lay between a victory, which often it was beyond his power to achieve, and the scaffold! When the French troops once yielded a very badly-fortified town without a struggle into the hands of an overwhelmingly superior force, the commandant, on making his report to the Assembly, was received by them with angry countenances and assailed by indignant reproaches When he asked them what they would have had him do in such a hopeless case—without provisions, ammunition, or soldiers —every voice replied, as with one accord, "*Mourir*" The Duke de Beauharnois was not a man fitted to satisfy the requirements of such a government as this. His indecision and want of energy of character soon afforded his enemies an opportunity of effecting his destruction He was called upon to justify himself for the ill-success of his arms. In vain did his despairing wife seek to save him. his blood was shed upon the scaffold, though he had been guilty of nothing but—misfortune! These fearful occurrences, this annihilation of her happiness by the rude hand of power, matured the spirit of this once light-hearted girl and made her soul strong.

Gifted in no ordinary degree with mental endowments, Madame Beauharnais with resolute courage faced her lot, and determined by her superior virtue and sagacity, not so much to master her fate as to subdue to herself the spirits of her fellow-men. Conscious of her own power, her first thought was how she might best avail herself of the influence which she felt herself capable of exercising over the minds of men, in order to procure for her children that protection which was so needful in these perilous times. She knew that she was herself powerless to save them. Held in contempt by many, and long imprisoned by order of the Convention, she yet strove successfully to gain the friendship of some of the most powerful, and, at the same time, most formidable heads of the Republic. Under these circumstances it was that she first formed the acquaintance of Barras, a man who despised and trampled under foot all the regulations of the "*old world*," but an upright-minded republican, and not unprepossessing in his appearance Her gentleness, her grace, and her many virtues made a deep impression on his mind; and he offered to her and to her children a secure asylum under his roof. The sacred tie of marriage had, unfortunately, at that period of

universal dissoluteness, ceased to be regarded as a necessary bond between those who desired to share together the joys and the sorrows of life. It may therefore readily be supposed, that the young Creole mother, accustomed from her infancy to act on impulse rather than on principle, did not shrink from an offer which promised so many advantages to herself and to her children Soon the circle which formed itself around her in the country-house of Barras became the centre of influence and the fountain-head of fortune. An air of splendour and of good taste pervaded all around. Here learning and art found a safe asylum; and, under the protection of her gentle influence, many families sought refuge from the storm which raged around.

Robespierre finished his course upon the scaffold on the 10th Thermidor (28th July), 1794 On the ensuing day he was followed by seventy-one of his colleagues The Reign of Terror was at an end. Barras had the largest share in this victory over the system of blood. This resolute character had quickly come to an understanding with Bonaparte, and recognised his superior abilities. He became his friend and his admirer The people were embittered against both on account of the torrents of blood which had been shed by the troops of the Convention, under the orders of Bonaparte; but they soon learnt to judge more rightly of these two men, who, by the energy of their characters, had in truth prevented yet greater misfortunes. On the 11th Brumaire, 1795, Barras, Carnot, Reubel, Latourneur, and Lareveillière-Lepaux, were chosen as fellow-members of the Directory. The constitution permitted to these first servants of the state a degree of splendour which was commensurate to their dignity, and enabled them to live in a style of considerable expense. Their united dwelling-place was the Palace of the Luxembourg, which had been considerably enlarged and embellished. The five Directors and their families dwelt in separate wings and stories of the palace. Burdened with state affairs, they here led a life of much seclusion. Barras alone, as Director of the Police, allowed himself a little more recreation.

At the instigation of Madame Beauharnois, he issued invitations for a ball to be given by him at Suresne, a charming country-seat which he possessed in the neighbourhood of Paris. Bonaparte promised to join the festive

scene. His fame had gone on increasing from day to day, and Madame Beauharnois continued to dream of this hero of her imagination Whenever she heard his name, a strange emotion agitated her breast; but Bonaparte seemed to have entirely forgotten their first interview. Madame Beauharnois, to her astonishment, could only perceive in him a zealous friend of her protector, whose favour it was evident he earnestly sought to obtain. In company, his manners were cold and distant. He seldom spoke but in monosyllables, and evidently avoided anything like intimacy with Madame Beauharnois, lest he should excite the jealousy of her protector But Barras was a stranger to such feelings, which *he* would have deemed a contemptible weakness So consistent was he with his own lawless soul-and-heart-destroying sentiments, that he even treated with distinguished favour any whom he believed to be peculiarly devoted in their attentions to Josephine She therefore felt no hesitation in having recourse to him on the present occasion.

Bonaparte made his appearance amongst the latest of the guests, and greeted his hostess with such marked coldness, that, with tears of indignation starting to her eyes, she drew Barras aside, and said to him—

"My friend, the only one of your guests who interests me in the slightest degree treats me with marked neglect. Covered with glory and renown, the only man worthy of notice in the room, your young friend, seems nevertheless to be destitute of a *heart*. He is a misanthrope; he avoids me as well as the rest of the company; his manners are unbearable, and he seems quite indifferent to the society of women. That is a great fault. Tell him that his conduct wounds me. I had expected great things from him; but a man without a *soul* can never accomplish anything great At his age, one could forgive a dozen acts of folly more readily than this gloomy temper, which is ever pregnant with mischief. He looks like one who would be ready to deluge the land with blood"

Barras with a smile listened to her complaint, and said playfully, "You are mistaken, my dear friend. Bonaparte is not so destitute of feeling as he appears. Learn to know him better, and you will love him He is only a little shy with women, and feels too deeply to be social and chatty like other men."

"He is a Corsican, and no Frenchman," replied Josephine: "one can see that directly He has a gloomy spirit. I cannot endure him."

Barras, seeing Bonaparte at a little distance, called to him laughingly—

"Here, general! here is a severe judge, who accuses you of being a misanthrope and woman-hater. I will now hand you over to her tender mercies, and recommend you to prove the contrary by making yourself as agreeable as possible."

Thus saying, he hastily left the embarrassed couple, who looked at each other in silence for a moment; and then Bonaparte, bowing somewhat stiffly, said—

"You *now*, then, have a bad opinion of me; and yet I remember me of an hour when you made me proud of myself. You must now perceive how greatly you were mistaken."

"Oh, no!" replied Josephine hastily: "I only see how differently you and I are constituted. *You* think only of the graver affairs of life; whilst *I*, after I have devoted an hour to graver thought, like to enjoy the pleasures which beautify our existence."

"And yet I would gladly resemble you in this also; as nearly as, on a former occasion, our opinions seemed to assimilate on more important points."

"Well, then, general, let me have the pleasure of being your instructress in the art of living joyously. In these times we have more of the grave realities of life than human nature can bear. Will you dance with me?"

"I should be most happy to do so," replied Bonaparte, with a look of real regret, "were it not that I have unhappily altogether neglected that art, and do not know a single step."

"What!" exclaimed Josephine, clasping her hands; "you do not know how to dance? What a shame for a general of the Republic! for a Frenchman! You must take dancing lessons."

Bonaparte could not refrain from laughing. "I think," said he, "it would hardly be quite the thing for a general of the Republic to place himself under the orders of a dancing-master."

"You are right," replied Josephine with a smile; "it would be too ludicrous. But what say you to taking dan-

cing lessons from *me?* If you please we will begin at once. Off with your hat, and I will give you a lesson of *grace;* for, general," she continued, more seriously, "there is no *dignity* without grace It is a matter of some importance not to look awkward when one is leading a body of men to almost certain death Have you never observed this yourself?"

Bonaparte offered but a slight resistance to the self-willed and handsome woman, who now fairly began her lesson, and made him turn hither and thither as she chose. A group of lookers-on soon gathered around the dancing Bonaparte, who now seemed merry almost for the first time in his life. He allowed himself to be spun round and round most indefatigably by his inexorable instructress, and responded to her criticisms and commendations by playful sallies of wit and gallantry In truth, cold and indifferent as he had hitherto appeared, a shade of envy had often crossed his mind when he saw Josephine whirling with others through the giddy mazes of the dance He therefore proved to be no unapt scholar, and Madame Beauharnois did not allow him a single moment of repose, until at length he sank breathless and exhausted into a fauteuil. The groups of astonished gazers scattered themselves over the ball-room, and resumed their share in the amusements of the evening; but Bonaparte approached Josephine, and thanked her with expressions of the deepest obligation for the trouble she had taken.

"For to-day, general," she replied, "I think you have had enough of it; but remember, I expect you henceforth to take a dancing lesson from me every day. Barras will be delighted to see you a little less unbending; for he well knows that, for a man of your importance, it is a matter of no small moment to stand well with the female portion of the nation. But in truth, general, you may boast, at all events, of having thrown me into a perfect fever. It seems to me as if you had cannon-balls fastened to your feet, and bore the fate of the world on your head, so stiff and unyielding does it appear."

"Gladly will it bend beneath your yoke, madame," replied Bonaparte.

"It will then do well, my little general," replied Josephine, confidingly; "for never can it meet with a more ardent admirer than in the heart of one who would rejoice to be able to lay the world beneath its feet. But, general,

it has occurred to me that it is by no means enough for you to *dance:* you must also *play* Play and dancing are the two axle-trees around which our whole social world revolves. How can you ever hope to get on in the world, to become great, without understanding anything either of the one or the other? You are a man of great merit, general; men prize your valour; they feel that they stand in need of you; but," added she in a more subdued tone, "do you suppose that you will ever be able to exercise a decided influence on society unless you understand how to make yourself agreeable to it?"

"You are right," replied Bonaparte thoughtfully "I am deficient in social qualities; but, above all, what I most need is a channel through which to gain an ascendancy over those in power"

"And why should you continue to be in want of either? Simply because you do not choose to learn There, for example, is Madame ——, the wife of one of the Directors, without whose aid even Barras himself can accomplish nothing for his best friends Her favour is only to be acquired by understanding well how to whirl her unwieldy form through the mazes of the circling waltz And as for the most influential of my friend Barras's colleagues, I can vouch for the fact, that you will be more secure of making rapid strides in his good graces by losing a few games of ombre to him than if you were to defeat ten armies. Thus it is that men are constituted; and you may conquer armies, but never can you make others different from what God has formed them."

Bonaparte yielded in this point also to the wishes of his friend, who from this time forward exercised an almost boundless influence over his mind. Although a declared enemy to all play, he yet promised Josephine not to absent himself from her card parties. He could not, however, refrain from observing to her—

"I must own that it surprises me not a little to see one who thinks and feels so nobly as you do, thus anxious to lead me to engage my mind in these idle vanities. It almost seems to me as if two souls dwelt within you, the one absorbed by frivolous trifles, the other devoted to the earnest realities of this life. You are, in truth, an enigma to me."

"It may be so," replied Josephine, with a sudden glow

of enthusiasm, "but you have the solution of the riddle in your own hands You alone are capable of wholly understanding me With you I am incapable of dissembling for a moment my real thoughts and feelings

Barras at this moment interrupted the conversation by inviting Josephine again to bear her part in the festive scene Bonaparte mingled amongst the lookers on, but his eye never turned away for a single moment from the graceful form of Josephine, who had never before looked so lovely or so captivating Her glance often encountered his penetrating eye and she felt that the most earnest wish of her inmost soul was about to meet with its accomplishment The hitherto cold and distant Bonaparte seemed to have become altogether another man When he perceived that his friend Barras only became the more cordial and friendly the more openly he manifested his admiration of Josephine, he yielded without further hesitation to the impulse of his feelings, and availed himself of the first moment of repose amongst the dancers to approach the being who had so irresistibly captivated his heart

"When I see you dance, said he, as he seated himself by her side, "I am almost disposed to envy the happy man who is permitted to watch your every movement I fear, he added with a smile, 'your friend will become jealous when he remarks the alteration which has taken place in me You have effected that which none of my schoolmasters ever could you have made me a lover of dancing! But your task is still incomplete, for it is *your* dancing only that I love, that of all others remains as indifferent to me as ever, and this is a point which might justly awaken some little disquietude in the mind of Barras."

"This arises from your wilfulness and obstinacy Barras, however, will not feel the slightest disturbance on the subject, for he is quite different from most other men He is always pleased at everything that makes me happy, and I own that I am quite proud of my triumph in having converted so inflexible a hero into a lover of the dance"

Bonaparte made no reply, but his speaking eye said more than words could express Those of Josephine sank beneath its searching gaze After a moment's pause, she said—

"Do you expect, general, that the events of the day are likely soon to put an end to our dancing lessons?'

"I fear, very soon

"Then would you rather it were otherwise?'

"Had I no country to fight for, the height of all my earthly desires would be, that I might see you ever by my side'

Josephine received this declaration with deep emotion She knew well the full significance of such words from the mouth of Bonaparte Her fate was decided

"General,' she replied, as she returned the pressure of his hand, and a tear started to her eye, "our wishes meet'

A TÊTE-À TÊTE

Some days had elapsed since the dancing lesson The general of the Republic was seated on a divan in a dimly-lighted apartment, with Josephine by his side Already were they confidential friends, already had they enjoyed several long private interviews, and Barras had already been informed by Josephine that the young general and herself were forming plans together in which their future happiness was closely implicated She had succeeded in persuading Barras that she was actuated in this matter by her love for the interests of France, for who could answer for this young general, idolized by the army, and conscious of his own power, if he were not bound by the chain of an all-powerful passion to the soil of France? Barras was too good a patriot not to be willing to sacrifice, for the sake of his country, that which was to him but the chance feeling awakened for a passing hour Love was too often deemed at that time a mere idle diversion, which men allowed themselves to enjoy when they had nothing better to do, and which was often, even then, made use of for political purposes

Before, however, Madame Beauharnois fully decided on a union with Bonaparte, she sought to investigate his character, in order to obtain a full assurance that it was one likely to secure her happiness. Although her charms were now in their full bloom, she yet remembered that the day was not far distant when they might begin to fade Her daughter, Hortense, who was already surrounded by admirers, was a remembrancer to her of the disparity of age between Napoleon and herself, which might be to her a

source of much sorrow, if Bonaparte proved not to be the kind of person whom she expected him to be. She felt that if his attachment arose from a mere admiration of her personal attractions, it would be but a passing passion; one which might leave her, even in her husband's lifetime, widowed in heart Although her heart beat with deep and passionate emotion whenever Bonaparte was near her, yet was she too clear-sighted not to tremble when she reflected that the heyday of youth with her was past and gone.

She therefore resolved to prove the very inmost feelings and thoughts of his heart. Oft had she told him with tears the story of her life, its tragic occurrences, the faults of her character and of her education. She had, in fact, told him all those things which must ever interest a man when he is about, for life, to link his destiny with that of another. What she now required on the part of Bonaparte was an interchange of equal frankness, in imparting to her the events of *his* past life. She felt touched by the gentleness and forbearance with which he seemed disposed to view many things which might have moved the displeasure and chilled the affections of a man of less noble mind She felt persuaded that his understanding bore a yet larger share in his choice than his heart; and that the openness and free expression of feeling, which might not have been without its peril had he been a man of weaker nature, might be safely indulged in towards him without the risk of thereby lessening his affection. Bonaparte met her wishes with the utmost frankness; and although his confession was not, perhaps, quite as full as her own, yet it partook of the same character.

"You ask me to tell you the history of my life, of my childhood, of my heart; nor have I any wish to conceal aught from you; but my tale must be a brief one. You must not require me to deck out my recollections of the past in that garb of gay enchantment which your own bright fancy is so ready to supply. I will be candid with you. You have deemed me to be a gloomy, morose, passionate man; but this is not the case. I really love cheerfulness. I am almost ever of a joyous spirit; but you, my friend—you, who are endowed with so much clear-sightedness—must perceive that nothing so effectually imposes upon the French people as a certain staidness and habitual gravity of demeanour. I will unfold to you my whole soul,

my thoughts on love and life, my moral principles and feelings I will impart all this to you, but to you alone: to no other mortal can I tell the inmost thoughts and feelings of my heart; for, madame, the larger proportion of mankind consists, one-half of men who cannot understand the truth, the other half of men who cannot bear it. Now, however, I must proceed with my history.

"The land of my birth is already known to you. The circumstance that I had a large family of brothers and sisters tended much to the rapid development of my character. I quickly became conscious of my own mental superiority. The family is a state in miniature: the head of the family is the monarch; and he who bore rule in our family resembled in many points the rulers of more extensive dominions. He allowed himself to be entirely governed by my mother, who was a strong-minded woman, indifferent to suffering, and holding in contempt all feminine weaknesses Our little state was not without some attendant circumstances which might easily have led to the disturbance of its internal peace. The general in command of the French troops in Corsica treated my mother with marked attention, and many ill-natured stories were circulated on the subject. Whether they had any foundation in truth I know not; but one thing is certain, that our domestic peace was in no degree disturbed by them. This has led me to the conclusion that reason is a more secure foundation for domestic peace and happiness than feeling. I saw how easily my more tender-hearted brothers and sisters were worked upon through their feelings to become the mere playthings of my caprice: hence I soon came to regard feeling with contempt. I plagued them; I managed to maintain myself ever in the good graces of my parents, whilst they were often punished. They learnt to fear me; and when I saw my own superiority firmly established, I treated them with the utmost kindness and affection, and won theirs in return. At college I made the same observations. I came to the conclusion that the greater number of men are so constituted as ever to be led by the strongest spirits. I applied myself with peculiar predilection to the study of mathematics, which I conceived to be the ground of every other science. Philosophy interested me but little; poetry I only looked upon as occupation for an idle hour; history chiefly attracted my attention. From its

pages I learnt to look upon freedom as ever the privilege of the strongest My father who was by no means a genius, but had a good, clear understanding once said a thing which I have never since forgotten —

"'If, said he, in a *consulta* in which the question was proposed, whether or no Corsica should submit to the French domination' 'if in order to be free nothing more were required than the *will* to be so, then would *all* nations be so History, however teaches us that but few nations attain the blessings of freedom, because few are possessed of the energy, the courage and the virtue necessary to attain the end for which they strive'

"It was in accordance with such thoughts as these that my political persuasions were moulded The occurrences of the present time have only confirmed me in my opinions Even whilst at the military school at Brienne, I could not but see that France stood less in need of a deliverer than of a ruler who should know how with a strong arm to govern her destinies These convictions were the source whence flowed those sympathies which first procured me the happiness of obtaining your approbation At the commencement of the Revolution, I should most probably have devoted myself with a more ardent zeal to the cause of the unhappy monarch and his family than to that of the revolutionists, had I not perceived that this family had as little power or capacity for ruling as the other party had to attain a solid freedom

"The events which I witnessed in Corsica, even in my boyish days, awakened in me at an early age much thought concerning those peculiarities in men, and in certain periods of the world, which tend to bring about revolutions My father was implicated in Paoli's undertakings, and he spoke of but little else than politics Thus were my whole thoughts and feelings concentrated on affairs of state; and I quickly came to the conclusion that they were to be settled, not through the medium of philosophical treatises, but by the power of the sword I did, indeed, make some attempts in the art of eloquence, and received a prize from the Academy of Lyons for the solution of the question, 'What are the Principles, and what is the Teaching, which should be conveyed to Man, in order to raise him to the Highest Degree of Happiness?' But I am fully persuaded that I by no means deserved this prize, although I did my

best to reply to the question; for I felt, even at the time, that I dare not express my entire convictions, and must frame my answer in accordance with the general opinions of the day When I had accomplished my task, and received the prize, I felt more fully convinced than ever that one has no business to entrust any larger portion of good sense and enlightened reasoning to the most learned universities than to any other large body of men, inasmuch as they contain in general quite as few men of real intellect as any other society I commenced my reply by defining wherein happiness consisted. even in enjoying life in the manner most accordant with our moral and physical nature. This definition was considered a good one I consider it to be a most imperfect one; and if I can ever get possession of that paper, I will burn it. No human reason will ever be able to form a system which shall be productive of universal happiness; for each one bears within himself the sources of his happiness or his misery How often is it affected by his nerves, his bodily health, the degree to which his mind has been enlarged, and a thousand other circumstances' I soon became fully convinced, moreover, that the miseries of France by no means sprung from any of the causes to which they had been attributed, but arose from certain *natural* causes, whose course no human power could arrest or turn aside. I have been accused of lending my aid to the Reign of Terror, but this was in no sense true. I only allowed that course to proceed which I felt it was vain to seek to hinder, persuaded that those wild and reckless passions which then held the reins of power must be suffered to exhaust themselves, inasmuch as they were too universal and too impetuous for the hand of man to arrest them in their course

"I now approach a period of my history which is of much importance in relation to our present friendship. I will own to you that my heart has not been altogether insensible to the tender passion. I have loved with as ideal an affection as could ever have been expected from the most sensitive-hearted youth. It was at Valence, where I was quartered as a young officer, and made the acquaintance of a Madame de Colombier. She was a sensible, intelligent woman, about fifty-four years of age: she was the leader of all social intercourse in the little town, and took a deep interest in my happiness. It has ever been for me

a good omen, that I rapidly acquired the good graces of elderly ladies; for these alone know, in general, how to value in a young man higher qualities than the mere art of making one's self agreeable. an art which I, perhaps, occupied with innumerable plans and hopes for the future, was rather too much disposed to neglect. This lady early prophesied to me that I was destined to play an important part in the Revolution. She introduced me to the best society, and in every respect treated me like a mother. She had one daughter, of considerable beauty, for whom I quickly formed an attachment, and who responded to my feelings With all the ardour of a first love, I assured her of my entire devotion; and we were both fully resolved to set all difficulties at defiance in order to accomplish our union. This, however, was more easily said than done. I had no settled income which would enable me to set up housekeeping, nor did I feel by any means disposed to renounce all the plans I had formed for the future. Our attachment, therefore, continued long to be of a very Platonic nature. Mdlle. de Colombier sighed, I sighed; we lamented over our heart-sorrows to the silent moon; we ate cherries together, and played like children. At last I began to ask myself how much longer this innocent love-making was to go on, and what I meant to do with it; and I could give no good answer to the question. Mdlle. de Colombier was, moreover, rather an every-day kind of mortal; and I soon discovered that it was in vain to attempt to converse with her on any subjects beyond those of dancing, of dress, and of our hopeless love; which conversation I soon began to find desperately *ennuyant*. The mother of my beloved in the mean time began to perceive more plainly what qualities my heart would require in a wife, and spoke to me on the subject in a kind and tender manner. I began accordingly to consider within myself what happiness I could expect to find with Mdlle. de Colombier, in whose society I often found that the hours, even now, were wont to pass but heavily. I looked around me; I saw how large a proportion of men were made miserable for life by hasty, ill-assorted marriages, formed under the influence of passions which they had never learnt to control I began to feel convinced that connections for life ought to be formed, not from the passing impulse of the moment, but from the abiding convictions of reason. I observed

men in their domestic circles, and perceived that an enduring love seldom arose out of those violent, passionate attachments, which were too often quenched by the very attainment of their object. I found that the love which lasts for life must be nurtured by an everlasting exchange of giving and receiving; a communion of thought and feeling, which alone can preserve the just balance of happiness in married life. But how can people be happy who stake their whole happiness on mutable things, of which time in its rapid course must soon deprive them? Beauty, grace, health, the fire of youth—these are possessions which it cannot be always ours to give, nor would one wish to receive them, when one has them not to bestow in return. I asked myself, also, wherefore should I sacrifice my future prospects for the sake of a youthful folly? Besides, I desired for the companion of my life a woman so highly cultivated, and of so sound a judgment, that she could appreciate my worth, cheer and support me in the hour of difficulty, and reward me for my exertions by her approving smile. I own, also, that, observing the influence which women exercise not only on the happiness of individuals, but also on the affairs of states, I desired to be able to form, at some future period, a connection which might forward my ambitious views and further my success in life.

"All these considerations, madame, these varied feelings, it is which have brought me to your feet. In your person I find united all that my most sanguine wishes can desire. You see I speak openly, and in a manner I should not venture to do, did I not believe you to be no common woman, but one endowed with a superior mind and a clear understanding, and therefore capable of distinguishing between the self-interested motives of an every-day man, who seeks to carve out for himself an easy, commodious life by means of a successful marriage, and the strivings and plans of one who would only seek to increase his powers of being useful to his native land by a union with an influential, *spiritual*, and amiable wife. You were thrown across my path; my character met with your approbation; you expected great things from me, and these great things captivated your fancy. You, like myself, take delight only in what is great. To you I may dare to say it, I feel within myself that through you and *with* you I shall become great. Condemn me for it if you will; call me an egotist if you please; but never

will you be able to declare yourself free from the guilt of having forgotten, in your strivings to waken in me a lofty ambition, the necessity of guarding me against its attendant peril—that of becoming so absorbed in the gigantic schemes which present themselves to my mind as to be led to view *you*, madame, yourself your many brilliant qualities, your virtues, your wealth, your influence, as only a pedestal on which to build up your fortune and my own, and as so many means of achieving a lot which may exalt us both far above the rest of humanity, whilst at the same time we devote our lives to further the interests and promote the happiness of the human race Since I have known you, madame, since I have been permitted to read your noble heart and commune with your lofty spirit, my ambition has become an almost ungovernable passion If my life be devoted to a struggle after power and greatness, if the consciousness of my worth and of my might is so strong within me as to lead me to aim at being nothing less than the good genius of France, on *your* head must lie the blame.

"You have now heard my confessions I leave it to you to judge me Whatever your sentence may be, I am ready to bow before it; but never forget that it was you who first inspired me with a confidence in my star, with a belief in its future splendour, which has intoxicated my mind, and has led me, beneath the beams of your soul-invigorating favour, to look upon myself already as a predestined hero"

"You *are* all that I desired to find in you," exclaimed Josephine with fervour "Yes, Bonaparte, you have understood *me* thoroughly, even as I understand *you*. You would not be the man whom I could love had you not formed hopes and expectations from me which at once flatter and make me happy Yes, Napoleon, gladly will I be the footstool of your greatness, and even should I be crushed beneath its weight, I should yet in death be happy, for I should have died for you'"

Exhausted by the vehemence of her own emotions, Josephine sank powerless into the arms of her beloved; a deathlike paleness overspread her features; and when she once more recovered her consciousness, she said with a faltering voice—

"Leave me, Bonaparte; leave me for the present I am too weak to bear my own happiness."

BARRAS.

BARRAS was originally one of those upright and honourable-minded republicans who not only embraced the principles of the new constitution as a theory, but who also, with an honest will, sought to secure to all the rights of free citizenship. This was not the case with the majority of republicans. The one side doubted the possibility of reducing their theory to practice, and of maintaining a state of things in which civil freedom was carried to an extent that allowed too great an influence to all parties in the state; whilst the other side understood by freedom the despotic rule of the *parvenus* over old aristocratic castes; the victory of the strong over the weak.

Barras alone had courage to struggle against this spirit of party, and to strive to restore one strong, undivided republic in place of this many-headed hydra. But, surrounded by enemies, he felt how dubious was any rule in which every step must be contested, and whose every measure was opposed by the will of a coterie. He therefore sought to extend his connections: he gathered around him the strongest characters and the firmest spirits, and did all that in him lay to render their talents serviceable to the Republic.

Some days after the scene which we have related, Josephine entered the apartment of Barras, with the announcement that she had something important to communicate.

"Barras!" she exclaimed, as she grasped his hand in hers, "the fate of France lies in your hands. You have it in your power to give a deliverer to your native land, who *may* be one also for the whole of Europe. I have learnt of late to know this General Bonaparte better than I ever did before. He is a Jupiter: on him hang the destinies of Europe."

"*Voyons*," said Barras, with a smile. "Do you remember what I said to you long ago? This 'morose fellow,' as you used to call him, is a genius. I know it, and therefore I sought his friendship. He can do us good service; and, what is best of all, my dear friend, I see that you have completely bewitched him. Keep him fast, now that you

have him; for we shall need such friends if the Directory lasts much longer."

"Ah!" exclaimed Josephine, as a tear glistened in her eye, "the question now to be considered is not one merely of retaining his friendship He is no common man, not one who will do anything for the sake of a woman's praise or blame Now that he really loves me, he will not be satisfied merely by my distinguishing him from other men, and seeking to flatter his vanity and self-love"

"But what then *is* the question to be considered?" asked Barras. "Speak openly, you know that I am your true friend. I desire your happiness, and watch over it, as though it were the apple of my eye"

Josephine was silent; her emotion was too great for words; but the earnestness with which she grasped the hand of Barras, and pressed it within her own, prepared him for some confession of an unexpected nature. He did not thoroughly know Josephine; he was incapable of understanding the innermost depths of her being, and of reading what was passing in her soul He had not, consequently, the most remote idea of the real nature of her feelings with regard to Bonaparte Surprised, therefore, at her unusual emotion, he took her hand, and said in a sympathising tone, "What is the matter with you, my dear friend? You seem much disturbed has anything made you unhappy?"

Josephine at length somewhat recovered her composure, and said—

"Barras, you are a true friend; you have been to me a kind protector, and one well deserving of my esteem. I shall bear you in grateful remembrance, and never will I have any concealment from you. I ——"

"What is the meaning of all this?" interrupted Barras: "have not I long known that you were a pearl amongst women?"

"You do not yet know me thoroughly," said Josephine; "our hearts are very dissimilar in their natures. You know nothing of the strength of that passion which I am capable of feeling. Hear me, Barras. *I love Bonaparte!*"

"That is very fortunate, my dear; he will be so much the more our friend. But what is there in this to agitate you so much?"

"When I say that I love Bonaparte," replied Josephine,

in a tone of resolute earnestness, "I mean to say that I will be his, body and soul, that I will be his *wife;* that I intend to marry him!"

This declaration, expressed with all the force of concentrated passion, was heard by Barras with evident surprise. A slight shade of displeasure clouded his countenance for a moment; but quickly recovering himself, and assuming a more cheerful expression, he said—

"Bah! I thought the age of romance was over long ago. So you are disposed to cling to those old-fashioned customs and prejudices? You want to be a wife like other women, and are getting tired of your freedom?"

"You judge me in a measure rightly," said Josephine. "I do feel that those laws and customs which bind society together have a *holy right;* but look at the matter now in question from a more extended point of view. I will not disguise from you my consciousness that, in some respects, I am superior to my sex. In my first marriage I for a time enjoyed much happiness But notwithstanding this, Beauharnois was not the man calculated to *satisfy* my heart. It is formed to enjoy what is *great* beyond all else. You are as fully convinced as I am that the general reformation of manners and re-establishment of domestic ties is of the utmost importance to France. You know what a Titan spirit is that of Bonaparte. I feel that I am especially destined to *perfect* this gigantic character. He is cold, abrupt; there is an incompleteness in his being which requires a *second* being united to his own to mellow and to perfect it I look upon it as no common triumph to have warmed this cold heart; that it has been permitted to me to do so is a wonder, which has doubtless been granted as a blessing to France. I have observed Bonaparte closely. The youngest and fairest women allow it to be easily perceived how gladly they would win his regard; but the greatest personal charms have no attraction for him. He could only be moved through his understanding, his intellect. he feels with the head as others think with the heart"

"That is all very true," replied Barras; "but I am astonished, Josephine, to find that you are so willing to give up your freedom. You are accustomed to rule over our sex: do you not shrink back from the thought of the obedience which will be required from you as a wife? I own

his genius, but I confess that, in your place I should not willingly become his bride A man of his description is not likely to allow himself to be governed by a *woman*"

"Ah, my friend!" replied Josephine "what you now say of him exalts him still more in my eyes Do you think I would love him if I did not feel that he was superior to me? He is a Jupiter, therefore it is that I will be his Semele

"You are using an unfortunate comparison Know you not that Semele fell a sacrifice to her godlike lover!"

"Because *she* loved him as a *god*, whilst I give my heart to the *man* and leave the thunder bearing hero to the worship of the world, to which *he* belongs, even as I do to to *him*

"You are an enthusiast, replied Barras, "but *enfin*, what is it you would have me do in order to favour your caprice? Were it not better for you, at all events, to wait a little? Perhaps it may vanish more quickly than you now expect"

"Oh, my friend!" replied Josephine, in her most winning manner, "what I would ask at your hands is a sacrifice, of which I know a great heart could alone be capable I know that my happiness is dear to your heart I rely upon finding in you a greatness of soul which I should not feel secure *of finding* in any other save in Bonaparte I will open to you my whole heart I love Bonaparte for his own sake, but a union with him cannot render me perfectly happy He will as little *satisfy* my heart as did Beauharnois, if he be not enabled to fill the position for which he was born *You* must raise him to his fitting place, through your means must he attain a position in which he may share your power, aid you by his counsels, ay, and even share with you your fame I know how much I am asking, but I know also that I am asking it less for my own sake than for the sake of France In order to guide the helm of this distracted state, a strong will, such as you possess, is not enough there must also be a strong *arm*, an unbending power, to crush party spirit and party jealousies You will indeed find you have served yourself, if you raise Bonaparte to a position in which he will share with you your power"

With an anxious eye did Josephine watch the impression which these words made on Barras She quickly perceived

it was anything but a favourable one. His eyebrows were knit, his cheeks glowed, fire flashed from his eye, and with a calm tone of bitter irony he exclaimed—

"So I have reared a viper in my bosom in this Bonaparte! I see he knows well how to avail himself of a woman's weakness."

Josephine turned pale She feared Barras, and knew well his extreme jealousy with regard to power His remark wounded her deeply, but she thought it best to make no reply Barras paced the room with hasty and agitated strides, now and then casting an angry glance towards Josephine, and then hastily turning away from her as if in displeasure

"This is, I fear, a plot against the government Your wishes know neither measure nor bounds, and you seem to have altogether misunderstood me. If in the privacy of the domestic circle I mourned over the sufferings and misery of the present day, and took pleasure in listening to your enthusiastic reminiscences of the past; if I ventured at such times to censure the vehemence of party spirit, and to condemn those who were employing it for the accomplishment of unjust ends; this was no reason that you should expect me to sacrifice to the ambition of a soldier those advantages which the Republic, at the price of her blood, had purchased for the human race. I value Bonaparte's talents; but he is only our sword, and never shall be our sceptre You do not know these soldiers You read in history of the heroes of antiquity. In those days no state existed but by the power of the sword. *We* live in a different age. Philosophy dictates *our* laws Men are to be ruled in the present day, not by the rough hand of power, but by the force of reason What you have now told me makes me, I must own, rather distrustful of Bonaparte. He rendered me most important services at the time of the outbreak of the sections; but I remarked that it was but unwillingly he saw himself forced to share with me the glory of the day I remember well his whole demeanour. And now, this attempt to win the affections of a woman, in order through her influence to rise more rapidly to power, has altogether opened my eyes This also was his motive in so coldly receiving the poet Lebrun, when he came to present him with some verses on the occasion of his victory. He enacted a comedy. Wherefore

did he not receive this trifling act of homage less haughtily? Never shall I forget his manner: it struck me directly. When the poor simpleton pressed through the crowd with his poem in his hand, the general of the Republic coldly replied in the tone of a Cæsar—'*Citizen!*' (he laid a certain theatrical emphasis on this word) 'I cannot call a success obtained over my misguided fellow-citizens, and in which the blood of *Frenchmen* alone has been caused to flow, a *victory*. These triumphal songs, founded on our internal dissensions, can never, therefore, meet with my approbation. Patriotic verses should only sing of the defeat of the *strangers*, but men should rather mourn when the necessity of the case compels us to draw our swords against our own countrymen. Let future generations rather be told that General Bonaparte would accept of no other laurels save those which he gathered on the field of honour.' The fools! they shouted applause, and knew not that he was but acting the part of a hypocrite, in order to acquire popularity with the multitude. With what ostentation did he declaim these words! Oh! now I know him! What need had he to defend himself when no one was complaining of him? It was of very little consequence whether a song were written about him or not. He was only our sword, but from his bearing on that occasion he led men to believe that he alone had achieved the victory. One must be on one's guard against him. He is aiming at nothing less than a dictatorship, and you, madame, are the means by which he hopes to attain his end. But a Barras is not to be so easily deceived. I now know him. Soon shall he return once more to his original nothingness."

Josephine quietly allowed Barras to speak out his whole mind. She knew that his fits of passion were always soon over, and were quickly succeeded by reflection. However, the reception her words had met with so far influenced her that she curbed her feelings and followed the suggestions of her reason. All the resources of her fertile mind were brought into full action. Accustomed to persuade, and conscious of her own superiority, she well knew how to play upon the weakness and upon the natural character of those whom she desired to influence. She looked calmly for a few moments at the perturbed countenance of Barras; and then said, with that air of playful wilfulness which the persuasiveness of a woman can render so influential—

"You are jealous, my good friend! This passion, which is common to all ambitious people, blinds you, and makes you misunderstand your best friends. You must consider me to be a very ordinary woman if you suppose that I am to be so easily deceived. Do you imagine, then, that I would patiently suffer *any* man to use me as a mere tool, to satisfy his ambition or his self-love? Do you really believe that I could ever love such a man? Oh no, never! I should hate him, warn you against him, render all his calculations vain, and revenge myself on him! Are you not my friend? Have I not given you a hundred proofs of my devotion to your interests? Do you think that I am likely to betray you? You speak of Lebrun, and of Bonaparte's demeanour towards him. With *my* simple understanding I can see in his conduct on that occasion a motive entirely opposite to that which you, blinded by mistrust, have assigned to him. May not the haste with which you sought to impress the representative body with a sense of your own unquestionable services have led him to the conclusion that you already began to mistrust him? Was it not noble in him to seek to tranquillize your mind by that very *ostentatious* rejection of the homage of the multitude, which I heard you, but a few days since, commend and speak of with admiration? Are *you* also influenced in your judgment by the caprice of the hour—to-day viewing an action in one light, to-morrow in another? Look back to the events of the last five years, and ask yourself whether I am not in the right. The same mistrust, the same jealousy, which is now misleading you, led your predecessors to the scaffold. They sacrificed their friends; they would not suffer near them any whose character or abilities were in any respect superior or even equal to their own. Thus it was that they delivered themselves up into the hands of their enemies. Where then is your guarantee that the same lot may not be in store for you if you pursue the same ill-judging course? Have you not to thank Bonaparte for the salvation, for the very *existence*, of the government? What would have become of you had there been a general in command of the troops who was not possessed of the courage and the spirit necessary to resist the passions of the populace? You say that he was aiming at popularity. Did he not, on the contrary, provoke public clamour against himself by the zeal with which he served your

cause? Was he not named by the people the *Cartridge General*, and calumniated in lampoons and pasquinades? How will the Directory be able to maintain themselves without a general such as he, who knows how to bridle the factions with his powerful hand? Go on, if you will, in your mad career: you are unjust, unthankful, blinded! If I do love Bonaparte, I love him chiefly because he has sacrificed himself for *you*, and because he has proved himself ever ready to draw his sword in your behalf."

"You mistake me greatly, madame," protested Barras, "if you suppose that I am jealous of Napoleon. You appear to view all his merits through the magnifying glass of *love*. He is by no means dangerous to me. He is a *good soldier*, but nothing more."

"You are not jealous?" said Josephine with a smile, as, rising hastily from her seat, she approached a file of newspapers. "It is well that I have my proofs at hand. Here stands printed your paltry, useless jealousy, and were *I* in Bonaparte's place, I should before this have had my revenge. Listen whilst I read your own speech in the Convention."

Thus saying, she prepared herself to read aloud the speech in question.

"Bah! bah! you may spare yourself the trouble," said Barras, slightly embarrassed. "I remember my own speech well enough."

"No, no!" exclaimed Josephine: "Bonaparte may remain what he is, as far as I am concerned; but what I want to prove to you at present is, that you *are* jealous of his influence. Listen to your own words: this shall be the only punishment I will inflict for the pain you have caused me. I will never see this Bonaparte again if he be indeed your enemy. I had formed great plans for you both, but I am content to let them fall to the ground; only I must be allowed to have my own way in this matter."

Josephine was one of those who seldom fail in accomplishing their objects. Barras was silent, and Josephine, with a certain air of comic humour, read as follows:—

Citizen Representatives!—The late attempt at civil war has been quenched in the blood of those who instigated it. It is sorrowful for *you* to hear, as it is for *me* to relate, the particulars of a victory which has cost the lives of so many of our countrymen. But we were com-

pelled to put forth an unusual degree of power, or we should have been altogether annihilated. You are all aware that the intention was to massacre the Convention and proclaim a king But the courage of our brethren in arms frustrated the odious and bloody plot ["Wherefore, then" (asked Josephine), "did you not here name these brave brethren in arms, or at least *him* who was in command of them?"] The rebels are subdued No king has been proclaimed, for there exists in Paris a large body of republicans who never will be disposed to temporize with the royalists I have in all directions opposed force by force Danigeaux and Montchoisy set forward immediately with two cannons, Berruyer moved on the Place Vendôme, Bruné, sallying forth from the Defilée de Saint Nicaise, swept the streets of the enemy, and finally, Cartaux marched to the Place Egalité The conflict having now ceased to be doubtful, orders were given that powder only should be employed in firing on the mob.

Here, then, is this good Bonaparte, who decided the fate of the day, designated simply as *powder* his name not once mentioned in your whole speech. Confess, now, was that jealousy, or was it not? The whole of Paris knows that it was Bonaparte who gained the day and saved the Republic: only Barras knows it not! It really is too marked the first general, the greatest genius, the bravest warrior, only named as *powder*! This is your gratitude, you Messieurs Citoyens! Fie! you ought to blush to think of the manner in which you have treated your best friend."

"Well!" replied Barras impatiently, "and what does it prove after all, supposing that I did intentionally omit the name of Bonaparte? It is contrary to the principles of the Republic to flatter ambition, or to do aught which might awaken it. Have you not read Montesquieu? Is not virtue the very principle from which freedom springs? Would it be well for us to teach our generals arrogance? Does not public opinion already flatter them more than enough? Are not attempts enough made already by foreign powers to irritate them against the *thankless* Republic? Whenever a general of the Republic begins to crave a higher reward than the testimony of his own conscience, and the silent esteem and approbation of his country, then is France lost for ever. Shall we give occasion to a military revolution? As concerns Bonaparte, I esteem and value him for his virtue and ability; but I certainly have at times had strange thoughts ——"

"Might one be permitted to know what were these thoughts?" asked Josephine, who remarked with satisfac-

tion, that the anger of her friend had gradually moderated, and that, thanks to the tranquillizing influence which she had exercised over the mistrustful feelings awakened in his mind, he no longer seemed irritated against her, but even accompanied his closing words with some faint approach to a smile

"These thoughts," replied Barras, "turned on the question, what the Convention should do if it should ever occur to this general, who knows so well how to dispense his cartridges, and who is already the idol of the soldiers, to march straight up to the palace of the Convention, and request the government to march out of it?"

"Without doubt, they must obey," replied Josephine quietly

"Do you not see, therefore, that there is a good reason for not fostering feelings which might awaken such thoughts in his mind?"

"*No!*" replied Josephine

"Did you not yourself say, that he was in a position in which he might easily have overthrown us?"

"Is *that* a reason why you should overthrow *him?*"

"No, but a reason not to raise him higher than he has already raised himself."

"It is pitiful!" exclaimed Josephine, in a tone of vexation "What a set of men you are! Do you not then understand that only those can serve you well who are also capable of injuring you? Why do you not spike your own cannon? They too may be turned against you. The power and the influence which undoubtedly are his should only afford to rational men an additional reason for seeking to secure his friendship. My opinion is, that, unless the Convention be protected by a Bonaparte, it will soon, very soon, fall before its enemies. You yourself, Barras, are in the greatest peril, for *you* would be the first victim."

"What then would you have me do?" asked Barras, more tranquilly. "Have we not, as a reward for his bravery, given him the rank of general of division?"

"What is that for such a man as he?" exclaimed Josephine with a kindling eye. "A secondary post is to him but as none. He will always be dependent on the will of the commander-in-chief, and never have the power to act with vigour and decision. Would you know *my* thoughts,

Barras? I can estimate, as none other can, what you are *both* worth, and declare that I believe you to be destined to rule the fate of France. *The government ought to be divided between you both.* This end can only be attained by your raising Bonaparte to the position he ought to fill: the rest he will accomplish himself."

Barras was a good republican; but notwithstanding this, he often found his colleagues burdensome to him. Ambitious, fond of rule, and resolute in will, the thought of such a division of power as that suggested by Josephine was not a little flattering to his feelings. Josephine had touched the right chord!

"You are a little *intriguante*," said Barras after a few moments' reflection "one can never manage to be angry with you. You are an enthusiast as concerns your friends; and this it is which in some degree tranquillizes my mind, as I flatter myself that I am included amongst that privileged number For this reason I should not willingly cause you pain; and besides, it was I myself who commended the little corporal to your notice. I will see what I can do for him. But of this you may be fully assured, that were he ever to dare to attempt anything against the Republic, I should be the first to sign his death-warrant."

"And *I* would be the first to deliver him up to you," replied Josephine playfully "But in order that your mind may be quite at rest upon the subject, I promise you that I will exert my powers of fascination in order to charm forth the most secret thoughts and wishes which now lie buried within the heart of Napoleon."

"I would advise you to do that for your *own* sake," replied Barras; "for of this you may be well assured, that the man who has once made your heart the pedestal of his greatness, will not hesitate to crush that heart, if by so doing he can mount another step on the giddy wheel of fortune."

A short time after this conversation, Bonaparte was appointed second in command of the Army of the Interior. The honour of a seat in the Convention was also conceded to him. Wearied out, however, by the frivolous discussions which he was there compelled to hear, he quickly rose to take his departure. One of the members of the Convention, seeing this, haughtily observed, "What you are now doing is a breach of the respect due to the Con-

vention. When the honour of a seat in this assembly has been conferred upon one, one ought not to leave before the sitting is concluded."

Bonaparte replied, "The Convention has its sitting here, because here also is its work: I go elsewhere, because I too have a work to accomplish!"

The first foundation-stone of the empire was already laid.

THE CONSCIENCE OF A REPUBLICAN WOMAN.

Who can fathom the secrets of a human conscience, especially when that silent monitor is lodged within a *woman's* breast! Josephine Beauharnois, educated in principles very dissimilar to those then prevalent in France, deprived, by the stern hand of the Republic, of a husband whom she loved; disgusted by the cruelties of the Reign of Terror; devoted to all that was chivalrous and romantic, and admiring the manners and customs of "*la vieille France*," had yet a conscience for the Republic, whose *ideal* was dear to her. The noble examples of heroic courage and of civic virtue which had attracted her notice in the midst of all the excesses committed by a degenerate humanity, inspired her with admiration for a form of government which she, in common with the greater number of her more intelligent contemporaries then dwelling on the French soil, looked upon as the only one calculated to satisfy the "rights of man." What Barras, therefore, imparted to her concerning his fears by no means fell on an unfruitful soil: his warnings sank deeply into her soul; she weighed earnestly and thoughtfully the perils which might arise to endanger her domestic happiness, in consequence of an unmeasured ambition on the part of her betrothed husband. It accordingly became with her almost a matter of conscience, to seek to acquire over him a power which she had, in truth, no right to exercise; and those dreams of fancy in which she delighted to indulge were often severely judged by the better portion of her nature. She made it almost the chief condition of her decision, before she finally united her fate to that of Napoleon, to be able to probe his heart, and to discover what were those plans for the future which occupied his soul. It was, truly, not without a struggle in

her own mind that she resolved upon pursuing this course. but, although at times her wishes might waver and her resolutions fail her, yet on one point her mind was always consistent with itself: she felt that if, instead of seeking the freedom and prosperity of France, her husband sought to make it fall a prey to his own ambition, then would *her* peace too be wrecked, and *her* domestic happiness destroyed. She therefore resolved to dissuade him from every ambitious project of this nature, and flattered herself with the hope, that even if such thoughts as Barras supposed had ever existed in the mind of Bonaparte, she should easily succeed by her influence in moderating wishes whose accomplishment might indeed be flattering to her vanity, but offered to her more sober judgment an endless maze of difficulty and of well-founded anxiety. She therefore took advantage of her first interview with Bonaparte, after his appointment as commander of the forces, to sound his thoughts and feelings on the matter in question. The plans which they were already forming for the future, the uncertainty attending the actual position of France, the faults and mistakes of the Directory, afforded an easy opportunity for introducing the conversation; and the inventive genius of Josephine hit on a ready means of coming directly to the point.

"Do you know, general," said she playfully, "that notwithstanding all that has passed, I much doubt whether I shall be able to marry you, gladly as I would do so were it in my power."

"And wherein lies the difficulty? What is the impediment to our happiness?" asked Bonaparte.

"You will laugh at me if I tell it to you," said Josephine, hesitatingly.

"Laugh at you!" exclaimed Bonaparte: "how many follies you must be guilty of before I could bring myself to do that!"

"Well, then, I *will* tell you: it is because I am destined to be the Queen of France, or of some other land!"

"How so?"

"Know, then, unhappy man, that an old negress in Martinique, the land of my birth, prophesied that such was to be my fate. I was then but a child, yet my dreams were ever *of crowns;* in our childish games I ever played the *queen;* and perhaps it may have been this which induced

the old woman thus to flatter me. But, be that as it may, she read my fate in my little hand, and told me that I should have a monarch for my spouse. Now, you must yourself see how impossible it would be for me to attain *this* end if I were to marry a republican general, who has sworn war to the death against all kings."

"You forget, my dear," replied Bonaparte, "that France may conquer many kingdoms, and has already as good as conquered some. What more natural than that a general of the Republic should settle down at last as king of Syria or of Palestine, and rest upon his laurels? Who knows, moreover, whether you might not transfer to your husband your destined lot, and raise him to a throne?"

"And are you, then," said Josephine, "so bad a republican as not to despise *all* thrones?—not to be ready to give the blessings of freedom to every enslaved nation?"

Bonaparte's only reply was to stroke Josephine playfully on the cheek, whilst he hummed to himself some old nursery rhyme.

"Answer me," said Josephine, eagerly: "if I am not much deceived, I do not fancy that you are so very much shocked at the thought of your exalted destination."

"Shall I speak the simple truth?" asked Bonaparte.

"It is the truth which I am longing to hear."

"Are you so wild a republican that you would not allow a crown *even* to your husband?"

"Oh! for that matter, I would allow him *three* if he chose, so that it did not turn him into a *pope*."

"Now, then, I will answer your question by asking you another. If I were to give you a diamond *parure* for your wedding present, would you keep it, or would you hand it over to the custody of the authorities?"

"What a question! Of course I would keep it. But what has that to say to the matter in hand? You are speaking merely of property in a *thing!*"

"But who bestows property in a *crown?*"

"The will of the people."

"And who can guide the will of a people?"

Josephine was silent. This short and pointed logic filled her with surprise and with admiration. She found no difficulty in following the chain of ideas just suggested by Bonaparte, and answered with beaming eyes—

"A great mind may do it."

"You jump quickly to a conclusion, my little philosopher; but these matters are not so entirely in our hands as you seem to suppose. Unless the aid of circumstances, unless the leadings of God, are in their favour, the greatest minds may fail to exercise the slightest influence on the will of the people. All one can do is to be ready to seize the opportunities as they offer themselves; and to *you* I may fearlessly avow it—if an opportunity should occur of seizing a *crown*, *I* will not be slow in grasping it."

"Even if it were the crown of France?"

"*Even though it were the crown of France!*"

Once more a pause ensued. Josephine felt bewildered, taken by surprise, her republican conscience proved too weak when brought into immediate conflict with her vanity and her excited fancy. Bonaparte seized a shawl which lay by her side, wound it laughingly as a turban round her head, and said—

"With this I crown you as my queen!"

"What is the meaning of that?" said Josephine, as with an air of comic contempt she flung the turban on the ground. "I hope you do not intend to make me a Turkish empress? In that case, I should rather continue to be the wife of a little corporal."

"Well, well! time will show what Fate has in store for you, and for us all."

Josephine was not, however, disposed to let the subject drop so quickly. She suddenly became more serious, and resuming her seat upon the sofa, whilst she carelessly turned over the leaves of a book which lay before her, she said gravely—

"Are you aware that Barras is jealous of you?"

"Yes," replied Bonaparte.

"Jealous—I mean of your *fame*?"

"I know it."

"That he does not entirely confide in you?"

"As little as I do in him."

"That he looks upon you as an ambitious man?"

"He is in the right."

"That he even fears that, should circumstances prove favourable to such a design, you might possibly be disposed to chase the Directory from its place of power?"

Bonaparte rose hastily from his seat on the sofa, stepped in front of Josephine, and fixed his scrutinising glance on

her open, truthful countenance Her eye fearlessly encountered his, he read in its admiring gaze so much confiding love, and such entire devotion, that he felt he need fear no betrayal, and, folding his arms across his breast, he said, in a tone of calm but firm resolve—

"*I would do it to morrow if I could*"

This imposing, unreserved frankness, this sentence of condemnation, thus resolutely pronounced the internal conviction of her own mind that all these Directors, her friend Barras inclusive, were incapable of long retaining the reins of power in their hands, all suddenly combined to cast to the ground in a single moment Josephine's preconceived opinions, to destroy her conscientious allegiance to the Republic, and to leave free scope to her unreserved and entire devotion to Bonaparte and to his cause With deep emotion she rose hastily from her seat, laid her hand with an almost passionate earnestness on his arm, and said—

"And in so doing you would do right!"

The confessions which Josephine and Bonaparte had now mutually made to each other were of no light moment they were the magic ring which bound their fates irrevocably together, after the expression of such thoughts, no retreat was possible on either side Josephine began to feel that in the presence of this man she was no longer the ruler of her own destiny, but was forced, as it were, to abandon herself blindly to his guidance After a moment's pause, however, she said, in a half repentant tone—

"Ah! but if these things come to pass, what is to be done with our friend—with Barras? *Him* we must never betray, he was and is my friend, my protector He may be weak, he may be frivolous, but yet he has been my friend, and that thought must ever render him sacred in my eyes

"No one is thinking of betraying him, madame," said Bonaparte, in a severe tone, whilst he cast a searching glance on Josephine "This is not the point at present for your consideration that which you would do well to consider is, whether you are satisfied to belong altogether to the man whom you have chosen as your husband, and whether you are prepared in all things to adapt your views to his? I do not condemn your friendship for Barras it does honour to your grateful heart, but I, madame, am

fully persuaded that he is by no means worthy of your friendship, and if I am ever in a position which enables me to remove him from his present responsible post, and free France from the evils produced by his influence, no private consideration shall ever prevent my executing my purpose It is well that you have led me to speak on this subject it is necessary for us both that we should understand one another Who then is this Barras, who libels me in private, whilst in public he assumes towards me the garb of a friendship which perhaps he even feels in some superficial degree, so uncertain and so hollow are all his feelings' And what do his actions bespeak' He was one of those who sat in judgment on the king Is *this* a deed for him to boast of' He was the instigator of the massacres in Toulon—massacres so unexampled and so bloody that for centuries to come their remembrance will not be obliterated from the minds of men He it is who has thoughtlessly squandered away the energies of the people and the funds of the nation, he it is who has been the means of the humiliation of France, and, to fill up the measure of his unworthiness, he it is who was ready to sell his country to the old dynasty!" *

Shocked beyond measure, and almost breathless with surprise, Josephine exclaimed—

"What is that you say?'

"*It is the truth*," replied Bonaparte, drily

"It is not possible I knew nothing of it, he could hardly have concealed it so entirely from me

"Nevertheless it is the truth Do you think me capable of calumniating him? Was he not known to be in treaty with the Comte de Lisle' Fouche, Borel, La Maisonfort, De Fleury, were the chief agents in the matter, but there were subordinate instruments, and of these he was one of the most active I know everything about it I am better acquainted with Barras than he is with me The day will yet come when we shall settle our accounts together, for he is false to his friends, double dealing and uncertain in all his actions, caring only to make a noise in the world, and to gratify his own vanity and self love He is as unworthy of your friendship as he is to rule the kingdom of France."

* NOTE BY AUTHOR —This *judgment* is *historical*, but whether it be *unjust* or not remains a disputed point

Josephine felt deeply wounded, tears started to her eyes, and she said—

"Bonaparte remembers what he has done for *you* and that he did it at *my request*

"What he has done for me that you know, but do you also know what he has done *against* me? He employed me on the 13th Vendemiaire from sheer necessity he felt his own weakness, he had no wish to render *me* any service, but made use of me as a cat's paw to draw the roasted chesnuts out of the fire for him He did not hesitate to say to Ozun that, in order not to embitter the city of Paris against himself, he had employed a 'Corsican adventurer' who bore the brunt of the affair, and was thus interposed between himself and the citizens Thus provident has he been from the very beginning! In this manner, said he, 'I kept myself clear of the whole affair, all the hatred of the people fell on Bonaparte who executed my commands, whilst I was hardly thought of But enough of this The Convention has rewarded my services and in this has only done its duty To Barras no thanks are due from me,

Josephine was beside herself She had flattered herself with being the instrument of raising Bonaparte to his high dignity, but now he had deprived her for ever of this merit He would owe nothing to *her* and this grieved her deeply She could however, subdue her feelings of vexation on this head, but that which she could not overcome was her distress at the severe judgment passed by her lover on Barras She could not help confessing to herself that the latter had not been mistaken in the judgment which he had formed of Bonaparte Although rendered somewhat timid by the demeanour of the latter, yet she could not resist saying—

"Bonaparte, leave to France the right of judging Barras with all his faults and his weaknesses he was, and he is yet, your friend, he admires you, he has dealt justly towards you do you deal gently with him

"My *friend*, do you say' exclaimed Bonaparte "I desire his friendship no longer, I despise it I am conscious of my own value It is not enough for men to profess to be my friends they must also prove themselves worthy of my friendship He is an obstacle to the well being of France, and, were it in my power, I would sacrifice him to morrow, even though he were my own brother

Josephine felt as if breathed upon by an icy blast. She shuddered before a greatness which she could neither understand nor love.

"You may be in the right, general," said she: my judgment tells me that you are, but,' added she with a sigh. "I could wish that you thought and felt a little more humanely.'

"You must forgive me, Josephine, said Bonapart more gently. You are now standing on a height where human feelings must, alas! too often be sacrificed, or at least restrained, but would you therefore wish to descend into the sultry fens and marshes of common humanity, which surround its base? Your friend is one of the Directors of France. he must not therefore either dare to spare his friends, or expect to be spared by them."

"But, my dear friend, if you set so little value on the best, or, at all events, the greatest men of the Republic, how will you deal with the Republic itself? How will you be able conscientiously to serve a form of government which, as I can perceive, is so entirely opposed to your mode of thinking and feeling? Are you a royalist or a republican? You have altogether disturbed my whole course of thought and feeling, and must therefore forgive this question, which may perhaps be a very foolish one.

"I will have no concealment from you, Josephine. I belong to no party. I belong only to myself. I have studied history much, and human nature yet more, and have come to the conclusion that it is by the strong hand of *power* alone that men can be ruled. Dynasties and republics are mere accidents, no form of government is made to endure for ever, all are changeable. But it is an unchanging law of nature, that only *one will* must rule. Wherever, therefore, the helm of any state is committed to the guidance of *many* hands, that state must be shipwrecked, and never will I be an advocate for a government so constituted. In well-organised republics there was ever one powerful man, who ruled over the spirits of men in the public assemblies of the state, either by the clearness of his understanding or the force of his persuasive eloquence; in monarchies also it was the same, and were it otherwise either in a republic or a monarchy, both must equally fall to the ground. And this will be the fate of France if it be not quickly freed from the many-headed tyrant under

whose rule it is now groaning The greater the talents of those who now rule, so much the worse is it for the country, inasmuch as it increases the difficulty of soaring above them. In the present state of things, France cannot maintain herself against her enemies for a single year, because they know well how to corrupt these virtuous republicans, and either win them to themselves, or at least, render them unable to oppose them You may say what you will, but to every man's heart nothing is so near as his own *I* to it he is ready to sacrifice his duty, his country, his all, if only he can do it without peril or disgrace The few great characters whom Nature has produced were only great for this reason that they knew how to identify their own *I* with that of their fellow-countrymen or of humanity in general I therefore tell you candidly, that were Fortune to continue to favour me as she has hitherto done, if a few successful campaigns were to add to my deserts, then should I gladly do all that in me lay to place the power of the Republic in a single hand, even though that hand should be my own '

"Then was Barras in the right, then is he, after all, no such weak-head as you take him to be, for he has judged of your character altogether justly

"He formed no judgment concerning me,' said Bonaparte, "only his *instinct* told him that I was the strongest. He felt in my presence the trembling of the lamb which sees that the lion is at hand

"You are very severe in your judgments,' replied Josephine 'never have I heard you speak thus before, it seems as though you despised all men

'I despise them not I only estimate them according to their worth It is a wise ordinance of Nature, that the larger proportion of the human race are deficient in those superior abilities which in all ages have distinguished but a few solitary individuals, scattered here and there throughout the world. There can be but *one* ruler, whilst *all* would desire to rule

"And would you therefore say that the *right* to rule only belongs to them who have the power and the *capacity* to rule' This theory would encounter much opposition in the world in the present day. What, then, would become of those 'Rights of Man' which have been so pompously set forth? And so far as you are concerned, were it to fall

to your lot to assume the reins of government, would you be the benefactor, or the scourge, of the human race?"

"I understand nothing of these theories of the 'Rights of Man,'" said Bonaparte contemptuously. "I only know that the majority of men care nothing about freedom, else were they not so willing, without a moment's hesitation, to sacrifice it, and to subject it to the will of others in a thousand every-day relationships in life I know that men can easily be ruled, if one only looks well after prosperity and well-being, and takes care duly to regulate their religious feelings and devotional tendencies. One must not require from them either gratitude or affection, only obedience; one must treat them as children, and never suffer them to be out of one's sight. All those deductions and theories of the learned, by which men have attempted to regulate the laws of government, are utterly useless Here you have a full confession of my faith?"

"You are, then, an ambitious man, striving after power and fame"

"An ambitious man!" replied Napoleon in a tone of the deepest contempt "No; never will that man who cares either for human praise or human blame produce aught that is great. But *might* is something real: might alone has power to accomplish what is good, to make others prosperous and happy, to crush vice, and to render stupidity harmless It is, therefore, the duty of every man, who feels himself called to exercise dominion over the minds of men, to strive to attain to power. But let us leave this subject," said Napoleon suddenly "No man can foresee what may occur in the lapse of time: we are masters only of the present. My hour of action is not yet come; perhaps it may *never* come —— Shall we go to the theatre this evening?"

Josephine felt completely bewildered and exhausted by this agitating conversation. It seemed to her as if this man had assumed an absolute dominion over her mind, and robbed her of all self command over her reason and over her heart.

"What is the piece to be performed to-night?" asked she.

"'Human Hate and Human Repentance,' by a German named Kotzebue."

"Ah! well, then, let us go," said Josephine. "After all

that has passed I feel as if I really wanted to be able to cry like a child."

An hour after this sat Josephine, Bonaparte, and Barras in the same *loge*. When she saw Barras so cheerful and in such good humour, and Bonaparte so unembarrassed in the presence of the man whose power he was seeking to undermine, her heart felt ready to burst In truth, during the whole evening her eyes swam with tears, and her heart was burthened with anxious thoughts

As Bonaparte bade her farewell, he could not avoid joking with his betrothed on her over-sensibility Her heart was deeply wounded; but so powerful was the fascination which this commanding man exercised on all who came within his influence, that she continued to love him as ardently as she had ever done Thoughts of him filled her mind during every waking hour of her existence, and a few weeks more saw the attached and confiding Josephine the wife of him who was destined to raise her to the highest pinnacle of earthly fame, and then to crush her wounded spirit to the very dust

BOOK III.

MADAME DE STAEL AND BONAPARTE

THE TOILET OF A VAIN AND UGLY WOMAN

A young woman, wrapped in a morning *negligee*, was seated before her looking-glass, and contemplated with evident dissatisfaction a countenance which was strikingly deficient in any pretensions to beauty. Use what cosmetics she would, she never could impart to her complexion that transparent brilliancy of colouring, which lends a charm even to ordinary features: no roses nor lilies were forthcoming.

"How happy!" she exclaimed, "how happy are those simple creatures on whom nature has bestowed a beautiful mask! They are run after, worshipped by all, men of talent and of merit lie humbly at their feet, whilst they do not even know how to make a rational use of their power. What accomplishments of mind and spirit do *I* need in order to attract the slightest attention, or to strike a single spark of admiration from the bosom of these dull cold-hearted men, who are all fire and flame in the presence of these lovely but soulless dolls! But let it be so! I will yet prove to these cold-hearted monsters that the qualities of the mind can exercise a more powerful influence than any mere personal charms."

During this mental soliloquy, another lady, yet more unattractive in appearance than the former, entered the room. She was Madame Joubry, the waiting-woman of the renowned Madame de Stael, a being whom the talented authoress seemed to have selected as her constant companion, with the special intention of keeping vividly impressed upon her own mind, that within the ranks of *beauty* might be included several degrees of ugliness.

In Madame Joubry's eyes, Madame de Stael ever passed current as a really handsome woman. She admired her full and well-developed form, for she was herself tall and

spare She praised her thick crop of hair, for she herself wore a wig. Madame de Stael was aware that the extreme ugliness of her attendant was well calculated to set off her own person to advantage In the presence of this lady she felt a conscious superiority, which imparted to her a certain ease and confidence of manner that imposed on weak minds, and placed in the most favourable light her own very inconsiderable attractions

Madame Joubry brought with her a supply of rouge, pommade, combs and books, and began the important operations of the toilet

"Really, madame," she exclaimed, as she commenced her avocations, "it is quite wonderful how much you have gained in *embonpoint* of late your figure is quite another thing from what it used to be

"I am disposed to think you are in the right," replied Madame de Stael, laughingly, "for it was only yesterday that I overheard a compliment which was paid me on this subject by a waggoner not expressed, it is true, in the most polished terms, but yet, I must own, more acceptable to me than the civilities of those diplomatists, &c who only compliment me on my learning, and never consider what a breach of good manners they are committing

"What kind of compliment was it which he paid you" asked Madame Joubry.

"Oh! it was nothing but a piece of folly," rejoined Madame de Stael "however, as I know that disappointed curiosity is capable of making a waiting-woman ill with vexation, and I should not know what to do without you, I suppose I must satisfy you I was walking yesterday on the boulevards, when I encountered a waggoner, a tall, well-built man of Herculean proportions, who attracted my attention He seemed at the same moment to be struck by my appearance, for he stopped his horses, took his pipe out of his mouth, and looking round after me as I passed, exclaimed, "Sacristie! that is what I call a splendid well-grown woman!'

"Impertinent!" exclaimed Madame de Joubry.

"Impertinent? I do not see that," said Madame de Stael, naively.

"I think," retorted Madame Joubry, "that it is almost an insult to the dignity of Sweden for an *homme du peuple* to pass his remarks in that way on the lady-ambassadress."

"Nonsense!" said Madame de Staël, "confess, now, you little hypocrite, that you would be by no means displeased to meet with a similar insult yourself."

"You seem to be in a somewhat malicious mood to-day,' said Madame Joubry. "I think it would be rather a good time to tell you a little disagreeable news. You deserve to suffer a little mortification. I have had news from Ozun."

"From Ozun?" exclaimed Madame de Staël, springing from her seat. "of General Bonaparte, my hero! my idol? Speak quickly, *ma bonne;* I burn to hear what you have to say."

"I am sorry to say, madame," replied Madame Joubry, with affected sympathy, "that the intelligence I have to communicate, and which, at your desire, I must communicate, is anything rather than agreeable. I have known it for three days past, but I wished to spare you."

"To spare me?" said Madame de Staël, turning pale. "Does Bonaparte then refuse to declare himself?" That, however, signifies nothing: he is a great politician; he admires my talents, but he will not own it until I compel him to do so."

"He does *not* admire you, though, madame," said the waiting-woman in a determined tone.

Madame de Staël seemed petrified. After a few moments' silence, during which she deliberated within herself whether it were best still to cherish an illusive hope, or to hear all that her attendant had to impart, and thus suffer it to be dispelled, she exclaimed, impetuously—

"How do you know that?"

"From the lips of the secretary of Ozun. You charged me to bribe him in order to procure Bonaparte's reply to his questions regarding you."

"Yes, so I did; and for the last fourteen days, during which I have been continually pressing Ozun to show me this answer, he has always assured me that he had as yet received no reply to his letter, and excused Bonaparte on the plea of his innumerable engagements. Truly, if he knew how duly to estimate my power, he would feel he could hardly have anything more important to do than to seek my friendship. Ozun appeared a good deal embarrassed of late when I pressed him for an explanation. I am of the same opinion as Bonaparte. Let people be friends

or foes; but, in either case, let them be so openly: I hate neutrality But this Ozun always answers me evasively."

It is natural he should do so," replied Madame Joubry, "because, without wounding your feelings, he could not repeat to you what Bonaparte wrote to him concerning you."

"And you have read the letter" asked Madame de Stael, in an anxious tone

"Not only have I read it, but I possess a copy of it."

Madame de Stael's heart sunk within her at these words. Shame at her own humiliation in the eyes of her companion, feverish expectation, restless fear before that renowned name of Bonaparte, before which the whole world was at that moment trembling, and in whose glory she had hoped in some degree to share, all combined to seal her lips, and for a moment she stood speechless But curiosity quickly triumphed over all other feelings, and she said in a hurried and agitated tone—

"Give me the letter, whatever may be its contents, whether life or death, I am now ready to bear it"

Madame Joubry drew a paper from her bosom, and handed it in silence to her impatient mistress, whose demeanour she closely watched Madame de Stael devoured the contents of this anxiously-expected letter; her eyes flashed with rage as they wandered over the page; her hands trembled with the violence of her emotions; and her lips moved, although she did not audibly pronounce the words which met her angry gaze. Madame Joubry observed her emotion with an ill-suppressed smile of scorn; for, much as she admired Madame de Stael's talents, and yet more, perhaps, her *embonpoint*, yet she was not free from that weakness of little minds, which ever feels an indescribable satisfaction in the humiliation of another.

Madame de Stael, in the mean time, read as follows —

Do you know, my dear Ozun, that you are sometimes really tormenting? For some months past you have pressed me to tell you what I think of the Swedish ambassadress. I made you no reply, because I thought it a pity to disturb you in your blissful illusion with regard to your friend, because I cannot express my real opinion of her without a breach of courtesy; because I view in a different light from you Madame de Stael's merit, as the restorer to France of the services of Talleyrand Perigord; and, lastly, because I never can feel any friendship for women who meddle with political intrigues, and mix up all their petty weaknesses with important affairs of state. But as you are so childish as to insist upon knowing

my opinion of this lady, I will tell you candidly that I always mistrust the nature of that genius which is engaged from morning till night in manufacturing mischief and weaving intrigues. Madame de Staël's admiration of me is by no means a sufficient bribe to me to give her *mine* in return; for it is a matter of but very small moment to me what is thought of me by *any* of her sex. From all that I hear of this lady, she seems to me to be a good deal of a gad-about, one who goes and comes, insinuates herself into houses, mixes herself up with everything somewhat imaginative, seek to act a part, and as her *petticoats* prevent her from openly sharing in the government she tries by cunning to acquire some degree of consideration. People say she has '*de l'esprit*.' It may be so, but not to any extraordinary degree, and who in France has it not? I think that she like her father is deficient in judgment and sound sense. She plays the schoolmistress, chatters and preaches all day, and that is not after my taste. All I require from women is that they should know how to sew well and to give good citizens to the Republic. In neither respect has Madame de Staël accomplished anything very remarkable. Nevertheless I feel obliged to her for the good opinion she entertains of me. You may tell her this, but only in a passing way, so that she may not fancy from it that she has the slightest chance of ever making me one of her puppets whom she can direct and move hither and thither according as her inclination or interest may dictate. I do not wish to quarrel with anybody, least of all with Talleyrand, who, it is said, amongst many others, is one of her devoted slaves. This does not surprise me, for the French are more easily dazzled than any other men in the world. Believe me, every woman of this stamp is more or less dangerous to the state. They either seek to rule it themselves or through the hands of their admirers. They are anomalous sorts of beings, these heroines, half men, half women, a kind of *lusus naturæ*, as the learned say. I do not like monsters of this description, and thank God when I can avoid having anything to say to them.

When Madame de Staël had perused this annihilating judgment from the pen of one whose praise she would have given worlds to obtain, she rose like a fury from her seat, tore into fragments the unwelcome letter, and paced the room in a state of the deepest agitation, without once considering that she had interrupted poor Madame Joubin in the very act of plaiting, most artistically, her long tresses. As the latter was by no means disposed to lose the labour of a weary half hour, she walked perseveringly with the tresses in her hand, up and down the room, following the irregular and uncertain movements of her mistress, who seemed quite insensible to everything that was passing around her, while she muttered impatiently to herself—

"Impertinent! shameful! contemptible! This little corporal, this cartridge-hero, this brigand, this strolling player

who is worshipped by the blinded populace—he dares to speak of *me* in this way! Wherein, then, does his greatness lie, that he dares thus to despise *me*! What, after all, is this man but a Robespierre on horseback, a *sans-culotte*, a foreign charlatan! Is it not because he is conscious that I alone have penetrated his motives and seen through the game he is playing! Is it not because he feels that he cannot dazzle me as he does others! Is it not because he thinks, and rightly, that I only admire him in order to make *use* of him! He wishes to play his part alone: he strives after a *crown*! He hates me because he knows that in many points our characters are similar: for a woman, something extraordinary; for a man, insignificant enough. Were *I* a man, I should not feel satisfied with being a Julius Cæsar or an Alexander. I would be a Marcus Aurelius, a Titus, a Solon. But *he*, a man, is nothing more than what I am already as a woman: a man of policy, of calculation, of cunning and intrigue. He designates me as a *man-woman*, but this is not the case: it is he who is a *woman-man*. His greatness only consists in possessing, in a high degree that which is ordinarily the peculiar characteristic of women, *tact*. He can see through the character of others, he is well acquainted with human weaknesses; he knows how to deal with all according to their natural disposition and capacities. That I understand and can do, as well as, if not better than he. But I possess talents in which he is deficient: the gift of eloquence, for instance. Kings and poets listen to *my* words, whilst he only knows how to address the common soldiers and the easily-excited populace. I inspire noble hearts, win over to my cause the most cultivated minds, and unite together intellect and poetry. What is he in comparison with me? I will let him feel that it is so. I will make him tremble before a *woman*! Since he disputes with me every other fame, I will, at least, have that of constraining him to own, that I have given him more to do than any of those armies of soulless puppets with whom he fights. My puppets, it is true, will not be so easy to set in motion as his; but they will effect more. I will cast him down from the height of his power, and, in falling, he shall own, 'The Stael was greater than I.' He will enter into no agreement with me. Well, then, I will unite myself with the whole world against him! Not only with his enemies, but with his friends; with those on

whom his very power has been founded; with his own wife herself. Tremble, Bonaparte! you have conjured up against yourself an evil spirit!"

Madame de Stael sank exhausted on a seat. Madame Joubry, despairing of being able to rescue her beautiful plaiting, let the tresses fall from her hands The hair streamed loosely over Madame de Stael's shoulders, and her whole aspect was wild and haggard: she looked like a Medusa. After a few moments' rest, she resumed anew her agitated walk and angry soliloquy; her breast heaved with the violence of her emotions, and the authoress of "Corinne," with her disordered dress and dishevelled hair, looked more like an angry "poissarde" than like the Sappho of the eighteenth century

"Yes, I must accomplish the ruin of this miniature hero! How can I do otherwise than attempt it? Does he not compel me to it in self-defence? Will not this accursed letter of his be handed down in history? Will not Europe laugh at the idea of *great women*, when they read that women were only created to make shirts and give citizens to the state? Yes, and *I will* be the mother of children, but they shall be a race of *giants*, who shall cast *you* down, Bonaparte, from the proud height of your power! My *thoughts* shall ever be as standing armies, ready to fight against you, whether in prosperity or in adversity! How will you conquer *them*, arrogant spirit? Your armies, even in the very career of victory, must gradually melt away; your means will become exhausted; every battle, every victory, must be won at a costly price; but my thoughts no conquest will ever weaken or exhaust; out of every fight will they come forth strengthened and with invigorated powers. In the day of your success they will turn your triumphs into ridicule, and make you a laughing-stock to the people; in the day of your defeat they will make you a subject of scorn and of derision. Never will they rest until your fate is fulfilled, and you have been forced to own that the spirit of De Stael was mightier than your own!"

Madame Joubry skilfully availed herself of a momentary pause in the impassioned tirade of the offended poetess, to suggest an idea which quickly pacified her rage.

"Madame," said the waiting-woman, "the precious moments are passing swiftly away. How the malicious mockers *à la Bonaparte* will triumph when they see the 'blue-stock-

ing,' as they venture to call you, appear in society with undressed hair and in slovenly attire! Your beautiful hair will not be seen to advantage, the new coiffure *a la Chinoise* —my invention—you ought to have it on, when you are going to an assembly where Madame Bonaparte, or the Mesdames Montalembert, Tallien, Hamelin, and many others, will display all their diamonds and set off their charms to the utmost advantage These ladies have nothing in their favour except their personal attractions, but these they know how to make the most of."

"You are in the right, my friend," said Madame de Stael, resuming her seat. "Complete your coiffure I will tell everybody that it is you who have dressed my hair so beautifully, and, *en attendant*, I will complete in my own mind my plan of revenge against Bonaparte "

"This letter was not the only subject of interest I had to impart to you," said Madame Joubry. "Madame Bonaparte has talked of nothing for some days past but her intention of ere long rejoining her husband in Italy This lady is quite ridiculously in love with her husband, and she writes to him, I hear, daily, to ask him why he married her if he did not wish to have her always near him, that, for her part, when she united her lot with his, it was her desire never to be parted from him, either in weal or woe."

Madame de Stael laughed with malicious joy.

"I am glad that you have reminded me of this, Madame Joubry. it is most opportune I shall always feel grateful to you for this good turn."

After a few moment's silence, during which she repeatedly passed her hand across her forehead, as if she would chase away all unpleasant thoughts, Madame de Stael said to her attendant—

"I have a bad habit, my friend, of uttering my thoughts aloud. I would, however, watch over it more carefully, if I did not feel well assured of your sentiments Mark well what I am about to say to you. Of your silence, with regard to the expressions which have now escaped my lips, I have not the slightest doubt; your character guarantees it to me, no less than your hatred against these republicans. But it is not enough to be silent you must never betray, in any possible way, that my feelings towards General Bonaparte have undergone a change. Even to the secretary of Ozun you must say, that you did not dare to show

me this letter. You may return him the copy; every word is indelibly engraved in my memory. It is absolutely necessary to pursue this course in order to attain the end I have in view."

Madame Joubry promised implicit obedience, and proceeded in her task of decking out her *beau-ideal* of beauty and *embonpoint* to the best advantage As she did so, she thought within herself somewhat as follows:—

"It is strange that great women think and feel so exactly like one of us. With my weak heart and narrow understanding, I should have come to just the same conclusion as Madame de Stael has done with her great intellect and strong mind, as it is called I wonder what there is about her so remarkable that everybody admires her? Her verses?—But it is said that many French poets have made much better ones, and nobody has thought anything about them. I have often heard it said that she never would have attained so much celebrity had it not been for her intriguing spirit, or for her birth in a certain class of society in which literary attainments are more thought of than elsewhere. Perhaps, after all, Bonaparte may have formed a correct estimate of her talents and of her character."

The coiffure was by this time completed, and Madame de Stael set out to present herself at the *salon* of Madame Bonaparte.

THE CONGRESS OF FASHION

Madame Bonaparte had summoned to her *salon* the *élite* of the Parisian female world, in order to have the benefit of their counsel and advice on a most important subject. No less a matter was under consideration than the momentous question of completing the revolution of all ancient manners and customs, by a total transformation in the costumes of the fashionable European world. Madame Bonaparte, who delighted in rich and tasteful toilets, and devoted one-half of her thoughts to the subject of dress, had first conceived this genial idea, which was eagerly welcomed by the Parisian ladies in general, who became quite wild on the subject Whilst her husband was labouring, amidst incessant hardships and torrents of blood, to subdue one kingdom after another beneath the dominion of France, his wife formed the gigantic project of seizing,

for *her* share the kingdom of Fashion, which exercises its sway with invisible, but not less absolute power, over the whole civilized world *Satans* were summoned to bring their learning to bear on the weighty matter, artists were required to devise new and becoming ideals of human attire, tailors and *modistes* were kept in constant requisition, and the most renowned *friseurs* must give their opinions also on the subject

The members of this congress were now assembled *in pleno* in the *salon* of Madame Bonaparte Each was attired in the most costly and *recherche* manner Satins and silks, laces, gauzes, gold and precious stones, costly shawls and splendid coiffures, all were displayed in such gorgeous profusion that the eye was almost wearied by the brilliancy of the scene It would occupy too much time to describe particularly the dress even of the most remarkable actors in this gay scene we must therefore content ourselves with simply saying a few words respecting the toilet of the lady of the house herself, the graceful Josephine, who exceeded all the rest in the splendour of her attire

Madame Bonaparte had a keen sense of the beautiful, and of what was consonant to good taste, but the tyrant Fashion regulated so arbitrarily even the most minute details of the toilet, that but little scope was left for the exercise of individual taste Every article was cut according to a prescribed form, which in most cases was anything but tasteful Josephine had, moreover, a decided preference for brilliant colours, which made the grotesque appearance of the garb, then in fashion, yet more remarkable She wore a robe of purple satin, entirely covered with transparent *linon*, her dress was trimmed with the richest point lace, the waist, according to the fashion of the day, extremely short, and the neck covered with an embroidered chemisette, over which hung a large string of coral Her beautiful hair was interwoven with rich pearls, a sort of diadem of brilliants rested on her brow, whilst above it, upright as an arrow, rose a large tuft of feathers, which imparted a comedy queen kind of aspect to her appearance The rest of the ladies were all dressed, more or less, in a somewhat similar style, and these large tufts of herons' feathers made them look very much like a party of wild Indians

Amongst all these ladies, however, Madame de Stael's

appearance displayed the most total absence of taste and elegance. The ladies took their seats in a semicircular divan, before which stood a table covered with sketches, models, "Journals de Modes," and divers other appurtenances of fashion, more frequently to be seen in a milliner's shop than in a lady's drawing-room.

When the fair *citoyennes* were assembled in full force, and had embraced each other with many demonstrations of affection, Madame de Stael drew from her pocket-book a written speech, with which she opened the congress. This speech contained a witty description of the influence exercised by fashion on the manners and habits of nations; but, clever as was the disquisition, it was listened to with visible *ennui* by the fair hearers Politeness, however, caused it to be patiently endured in breathless silence. The investigations of the learned lady extended over every article of clothing, whether male or female, from the gown to the stockings, and from the great-coat to the shoes and trousers

After this piece of elocution had occupied the congress for a full hour, the ladies began to reflect that the question under consideration embraced too wide a scope, and came to the conclusion that, for the present, it would be best to limit themselves to some few particulars. The question chosen for immediate debate was that of *hair-powder*.

Trifling as were the subjects with which they concerned themselves, yet not unimportant was the influence which these assemblies silently exercised on the manners and customs of the Republic. People ceased to *tutoyer* one another, they called each other "Madame," "Mademoiselle," &c and treated each other with the same courtesy as was in use before the Revolution broke out. Etiquette was, in fact, silently resuming her sovereign sway over the intercourse of society, and wealth and luxury were making rapid inroads on the simplicity of republican habits.

Madame Bonaparte rose to express her opinion on the subject of hair-powder

"What a horrid invention it was," she exclaimed, "to employ art in order to impart to the hair a hue which makes us look gray before our time! Is it not sad enough for us, when Nature, at the appointed seasons, robs us of an ornament which imparts to us our most attractive graces? What barbarism it is to veil locks of a raven hue, or of

still more beautiful chesnut and golden colours, beneath an ashy covering, and to twist men's hair into those frightful queues?"

"You are right, my dear friend," said Madame de Stael; "but where do these barbaric fashions find protection against the present efforts of good taste? Whose fault is it that men still wear their queues, and will not part with them? Whose but that of their leader, the hero Bonaparte? Yes, my dear, I must openly tell you that it is your husband who most strenuously opposes the abolition of hair-powder and of queues What an unreasonable demand it will be on the brains of the poor poets of the next generation! They will have to describe the hero of Italy with his white-powdered hair, his queue twelve inches in length, to say nothing of those monstrous cravats which make the heroes of the present century look like so many Cretins"

"It is quite true," said Madame Tallien· "your husband, Madame Bonaparte, is a decided enemy to good taste. The unfortunate Murat, his adjutant, is in utter despair at being obliged to disfigure in such a way his beautiful curly hair He would be the first to discard the powder and the queue, were it not for his fear of exciting the anger of his chief And this chief, madame, is your husband."

"It seems to me," said Madame de Stael, sneeringly, "that Madame Bonaparte exercises too little influence over her husband Of what use will be all our reforms, if the army does not set a good example? It really would almost look as though General Bonaparte sought to put his enemies to flight by making all his soldiers look like so many scarecrows."

"You must make some representations to your husband on the subject," said Madame Montalembert: "the world will never believe that the French have cast off all their ridiculous prejudices until this inconvenient and ugly fashion has been given up."

"Ah!" said Madame Bonaparte, "I have already written to him five times on the subject, but he has made me no reply of late. I know he used to say it was dangerous, in the present temper of the army, to put down a custom, however disfiguring, which the common soldiers appear to like. They call all those *royalists* whom they see with unpowdered hair."

"Even for that very reason," said Madame de Stael, "should you do all that lies in your power to effect the change, in order that it may not be said that the royalists excel the republicans in good taste. You have not energy enough, *ma chere*."

"You are much too diffident," said Madame Tallien: "your husband acts too independently; he does not consult your wishes enough."

"But, seriously," said Madame de Stael, as she pressed Josephine's hand, "I admire your husband the whole world knows how truly I do so; but I must say that this perverse opposition on his part to your wishes grieves me exceedingly. A wife should, under all circumstances, know how to induce her husband to respect her legitimate and reasonable wishes. You take these things too easy, Madame la Génerale."

"What would you have me do?" replied Josephine, laughing. "After all, the happiness of my married life is is no degree diminished by such trifles as these. Bonaparte is not a whit less dear to me because he wears a queue."

"But his portrait! his portrait!" exclaimed Madame de Montalembert.

"Indeed, yes," said Madame de Stael; "the portrait of the great man with a queue! Only fancy it! Have you got one of your husband in this sort of costume?"

"I have never yet been able to persuade Bonaparte to sit for his picture at all."

"Well, I must say that it is a hard case for a woman who can so seldom enjoy the society of the original."

"Much as I admire your obedience," said Madame de Stael, "yet I must own that in this case I would carry my point, and insist upon getting a portrait of my husband without this ugly queue and hair-powder. He cannot help seeing himself how much better he looks in his own natural hair."

"How could I manage to get him to do as I wish?" asked Josephine.

"By a little display of self-will, *ma chère*," replied Madame de Stael: "his fame, and, what is more, your happiness, are at stake in this matter."

"You are joking, my friend," said Josephine, laughingly.

"By no means," replied Madame de Stael, in a very serious manner. "I will prove it to you as clearly as the noonday."

"Oh! let us hear what you have to say about it, witty Pythia," said Madame Tallien "you are our oracle. It is such a pleasure to me to listen to your paradoxes!"

"This proposition is by no means a paradox," replied the poetess. "I see that I am amongst friends who may be trusted, and that our wishes and thoughts harmonise. I may therefore venture freely to express my feelings. My opinions and sentiments with regard to the great man of whom we have just been speaking are well known. Not one amongst you can for a moment entertain the slightest doubt that the earnest desire of my heart is, ever to see him great and prosperous, and his amiable wife as happy as this world can make her. But even the very sincerity of my affection gives me a right to warn you of the dangers which threaten the fame of Bonaparte and the happiness and peace of his wife."

"Good heavens!" said Josephine, as she pressed her hand to her heart; "you make me now *really* anxious. What connection can there be between your awful tone of warning and foreboding of evil and our playful debate concerning hair-powder and queues?"

"The connection between the two is self-evident," replied Madame de Stael. The obstinacy with which Bonaparte opposes your wishes, in an affair apparently of so trivial a nature, shows the existence of a fault in his character which may eventually cast him down from the lofty eminence he now occupies, and altogether annihilate the happiness which you, madame, at present enjoy. This cold, calculating spirit, at whose shrine he is ready to sacrifice good taste, betrays an ambitious struggle on the part of your husband to attain to a height at which he can never hope to maintain himself. I know that I am daring much when I venture to say this, but nevertheless it is the truth."

"Ah! madame, you are always seeing spectres," said Josephine, irritated. "You are a poetess, and consequently a ghost-seer. You like to rule men, and fortunately you manage to do so. As for me, I own that I feel my own weakness too much to attempt to manage the affairs of a husband whom I know to be far superior to me in every

respect. I have therefore altogether given up the attempt to dictate to him. He always knows best how to find the right path; and many a time, when I have trembled for him, have I seen him come forth victorious, and with a smile of triumph, from the midst of perils which caused me mortal terror. 'Believe me, a manly spirit, lofty and heroic as his, can never be rightly judged by a woman's weaker understanding. But let us quit this subject, and resume that of hair-powder"

"No," said Madame Cambacères, "let the ambassadress speak. She has often already been our good genius She knows the state of affairs in Europe, the political conjunctions: she is a Semiramis"

"Yes, yes!" cried with one voice the greater number of the ladies present, who wished to curry favour with the poetess, hoping that her influence might some day or other help to advance them in the world Some there were amongst them who had begun their career in the kitchen, and to whom time seemed to creep with a snail's pace until they found themselves ladies-in-waiting at the court of an empress.

"Were I not your friend," said Madame de Stael, "I would not urge the point any further, but I cannot conceal from you that the present state of France is pregnant with danger. In spite of Bonaparte's victories, it may happen to-morrow that all the *notabilities* of the Republic may be thrown back into their original nothingness. Bonaparte holds their fate in his hands· he may set it, if he pleases, on a single die; and he is the man to do it"

Josephine resigned herself to her lot, and patiently endured innumerable representations on the part of her friends, all of whom aimed at bringing about a compromise between Bonaparte and the Count de Lisle The majority of the Directors were already implicated in this intrigue, and had been won over to the royal cause by brilliant promises. Bonaparte alone acted an independent part; and as his wife, she would not do well altogether to shut her ears to communications of so much importance as those at which Madame de Stael hinted.

"Let us then hear," said she, "what you have to adduce in proof of the connection between queues and hair-powder and the fate of France and Bonaparte."

"I can easily convince you that they are more closely

connected than you suppose," said Madame de Stael. "The queue is at this moment the symbol of the Republic: your husband knows this right well In protecting this symbol he is protecting his own popularity with the whole army. But cast a glance upon our Parisians, who represent the whole of France All our *élégants* are beginning to appear in unpowdered hair, because all those of distinguished birth have adopted this mode, in order to separate themselves more visibly from the multitude Look around you where you will, you see on all sides a return to the customs of the ancient monarchy The French are vain: they love titles, dignities, show, decorations, luxury In all these things a republic is deficient Whilst the republican armies are gaining victory after victory, Fashion is subduing the nation All who are possessed of talent and merit in France in the present day are greedy of distinction The consciousness of their virtue as citizens no longer satisfies their minds Do you believe that Bonaparte alone—he who, amongst all others, possesses the keenest and most observant eye, and most quickly penetrates all human weaknesses—do you think that *he* does not perceive that which is patent to the whole world? No, no! But he has a covert motive for what he is doing He only continues a republican in order to snatch the victory out of the hands of the royalists, and to raise himself to the throne of France."

"That is not true!" exclaimed Josephine, eagerly.

"Can you yourself lay your hand upon your heart," replied Madame de Stael, "and affirm the contrary? How can it be otherwise? Do you think that a man of his genius can long endure the supremacy of those whom he feels to be inferior to him? The Directors are at variance with one another. They all see that they cannot maintain themselves, that the factions are too powerful for them, and that France needs to be ruled with an iron sceptre. They feel severely the weight of a military despotism. They have no choice save between the restoration of the legitimate king and a general of the Republic. The only one capable of seizing the reins of power is Bonaparte The army yields to him a blind obedience; the Directors know well that they cannot dare to dictate to him Bonaparte, moreover, feels himself already independent; and a great mind, such as his, no sooner perceives that the op-

portunity of ruling alone offers itself to his grasp, than he considers at once how best to seize it. Bonaparte would not be the great man that he is if he were not to do so. Has he not a kind of *right* to seize the reins of power? Is he not everywhere victorious? Has he not humbled the enemies of France and compelled them to treat with her? He, or none else, is called to rule over the destinies of France."

"It is true," replied Josephine, whose vanity was flattered; "but I can assure you *he* does not think of assuming the reins of government. *I* know him well, and am acquainted with his opinions on the subject of monarchy."

"Do not calumniate your husband," continued Madame de Stael. "he cannot *but* think of it; he cannot help seeing in himself the deliverer of France. He alone is capable of preserving it, and he only *can* preserve it, when the power rests with him alone."

No one dared either to dissent from or to agree with these opinions. Never before had such sentiments been openly expressed in this circle. Although every one felt their truth, yet none ventured to own it, even to themselves. It belonged to the rash and daring spirit of a De Stael alone to give utterance to such truths, in the presence of ladies whose husbands, with their whole fate, were deeply implicated in them. Josephine felt with trembling that the plot must indeed be far advanced, when Madame de Stael was emboldened thus openly to express her thoughts. She rejoiced secretly over her husband's proud, imposing might; but her gentle spirit quailed before the thought how his very success would excite envy and jealousy, and unite against him the men of chief influence in the state.

"It really appears," continued Madame de Stael, "as if Providence had raised up General Bonaparte for the purpose of founding in him a new dynasty in France."

The impression which these words made upon all present was as if they had been uttered by an oracle. A breathless silence ensued, and the tears rolled down Josephine's cheeks. To be Queen of France! What a thought!

Madame de Stael observed the emotion of the agitated lady, on whom looks of unwonted reverence were already bent by her assembled friends.

"Who worthier than you to be a queen?" said Madame

de Stael, as she pressed the hand of Josephine within her own; "and who more rejoiced than I to offer you the homage which is your due' Yes; so exalted and yet so feeling a heart as yours is well deserving of such a glorious lot. And what could the most captious reasoner find to say against such a king as Bonaparte? How will his genius, his heroic might, eclipse the glory of all those weak and ordinary beings who have preceded him on the throne of France? Alexander the Great even, and Julius Cæsar, may hide before him their diminished heads. A new age will dawn upon France, kings will draw the triumphal car of the world's conqueror, and the admiration of posterity must be his to the end of time!"

Josephine felt almost overwhelmed by the excess of her emotions. Words such as these from the lips of a woman like Madame de Stael, who was listened to with attention by the most distinguished men in France, and flattered alike by statesmen, *savans*, and artists, intoxicated her mind. Her heart, ever disposed towards enthusiasm, quickly recalled the prophecy which had been uttered in her childhood by the old negress of Martinique A thrill of pleasure ran through her veins; her fancy revelled in the enjoyment of those intoxicating thoughts of greatness which the words of her friend had suggested to her mind. Madame de Stael rejoiced at the effect which she perceived her eloquence had produced, and continued after a moment's pause—

"But let us descend from the ethereal regions of fancy into the sober realities of life. Your happiness lies very near my heart, and the first question which suggested itself to my mind, when these thoughts were presented to me, was, 'What will Josephine gain personally by such an exaltation?' And sorrowful indeed, my friend, were the reflections which the question awakened in my mind; for a very brief train of thought sufficed to shew me, that the change must be one full of unspeakable misery to you. Even those very dispositions in you which are so noble, so amiable, which render you so worthy of a crown, must prove to you in that case a spring of endless misery. How you tremble even now when you receive a letter from Bonaparte! How unhappy you are during his absence! You would die of anxiety to see him once more, were not your spirits buoyed up with the hope of clasping him ere

long to your breast, covered with laurels and with fame. Do you not daily mourn over this arduous profession of war, which must so fill your husband's thoughts as to prevent their resting each hour upon his Josephine? Are you not already jealous of his love for fame? What then will become of you when he feels a crown upon his head? How few will be the thoughts which he can dedicate to you, when it becomes his duty to devote himself incessantly to supply the wants, and to attend to the wishes and the grievances, of thirty millions of Frenchmen! All this, even in the most peaceful times, would mar your domestic happiness. The undisturbed possession, the daily affairs of a tranquil state, would engage each hour of your husband's time, and leave you solitary and desolate. But can Bonaparte hope for undisturbed possession of the throne of France? Would not the Jacobins arm themselves against him? Would he not have to pay for the pleasures of his absolute dominion, and you for the rich ornament of the queenly crown, by the blood of innumerable victims shed upon the scaffold? Would not all the monarchs of Europe perseveringly oppose his rule? What a life of conflict against the whole world, of continual anxiety for the life of one so justly dear to you!"

Josephine, deeply moved, seized the hand of the poetess.

"You are right!" she passionately exclaimed; "I should indeed be unutterably miserable."

"Ah!" exclaimed Madame de Stael, "you are even now ready to own that I have judged you rightly; and yet my picture is still incomplete. Such an unheard-of vicissitude of fortune cannot fail to work *some* change in the human mind. What assurance can you have that, engrossed by the cares and pleasures of sovereignty, Bonaparte may not cease to love you: at least with the same entire devotion he does now? One thing above all others will weigh grievously in the scale against you: *you have no children.* A dynasty calls for direct heirs. Will it not be the first duty of the monarch to guard the nation from the perils and perplexities which the death of a childless sovereign ever entails upon it? Would not your husband feel it right to sacrifice the feelings of his heart to the interests of the state? Might not his ambition even tempt him to seek a second spouse of royal blood?"

Josephine now sprang indignantly from her seat—

"Enough!" she exclaimed: "you paint so vividly that you make the very blood freeze in my veins Thank heaven! your apprehensions are founded on nothing more than idle fancies. But wherefore should you dream of things that can never come to pass" I repeat to you once more, Bonaparte has no such thoughts as you suppose. As far as I am concerned, I call heaven to witness, rather would I be the wife of a private soldier than become the Queen of France at such a price! Oh, you have terrified me! I shall dream of nothing to-night but the tears which I should weep were it possible for your dream ever to be realised."

"I knew that I judged *you* rightly," rejoined Madame de Stael, "but do not forget my words, for you may rest assured that I have judged your husband as correctly as yourself. If you let him pursue his present course, my dream will meet with its accomplishment"

"What can I do to hinder him" asked Josephine, anxiously.

"Alas!" my friend," replied Madame de Stael, shrugging her shoulders, "it is, unhappily, out of my power to tell you What is there which may not now in France be pronounced to be high treason? Who can venture here to express their opinions, especially (she added with a smile) in the presence of *ladies*, who may be said, so to speak, to hold the executive power in their hands? Who will stand security to me that to-morrow the right of the ambassador may not cease to be respected, and I dealt with as a Frenchwoman who was acting the part of a traitor to the glorious Republic?"

"Bah!" said Madame Tallien; "we are, heaven be praised! *so* far advanced, at all events, that it is permitted to us women, at least, to chatter as much as we choose. Yesterday they were going at first to put up three fishwomen who were drunk, and who screamed '*Vive le Roi!*" but the guard allowed them to make their escape, and everybody laughed at them"

"Well, then, since the fishwomen are allowed to take such liberties as that," replied Madame de Stael, not without casting a malicious glance at Madame Tallien, "I suppose I *may* venture to say what I would do were I in Bonaparte's place. In the first place, I should order the whole army to cut off their queues and give up wearing

hair-powder In the second place, I would take Venice, and have myself elected Doge without delay; perhaps also Duke of Milan And, in the third place, if I happened on my return to find the legitimate King of France on his way to Paris, I would throw no obstacles in his way. These would be three good things, which, I doubt not, would be far from displeasing to the Comte de Lisle. And should Madame Bonaparte be disposed to remain in Paris, I know not who in the whole world could prevent the Marshal Bonaparte from becoming Duke—Minister of War—a second Condé, if he chose it."

The ladies present, with the exception of Josephine, seemed but little surprised at this speech They only looked straight before them, without daring to cast a glance on Madame Bonaparte, and observed the most profound silence *She*, however, directed towards them many an inquiring look, and felt fully persuaded in her own mind, that, if the husbands of these ladies had not been already in treaty with the exiled family, Madame de Stael would never have spoken thus boldly. At the first moment, she only saw in the proposition one of those wild, chimerical plans which the *émigrés* were incessantly labouring to accomplish; but the next, she began to believe in its feasibility, and, before five minutes had elapsed, had resolved to write to Bonaparte on the subject without delay. Just as she had come to this conclusion, a servant entered with the announcement that Colonel Murat was in the antechamber, and requested permission to present himself to the assembled ladies. The permission was readily granted, and a young and handsome officer, dressed in a style of the most studied elegance, entered the apartment. No sooner, however, did he make his appearance than he was surrounded by the fair reformers, who, without giving him time for parley or objections, cut off the doomed queue, brushed away the hair-powder which concealed his jet black glossy hair, and worked away for a quarter of an hour so indefatigably, that at the end of that time the crisp, curly locks of the gallant colonel came to light in all their native brilliancy The poor man in the mean time had been hardly allowed to recover his breath sufficiently to protest against this attack upon his queue, whilst Madame de Stael stood by, enjoying with imperturbable gravity the good success of her tactics.

"Murat," said Madame Bonaparte at length to her husband's adjutant, "I command you, under pain of my high displeasure, to proceed to head-quarters, and present yourself before your commander under your present aspect; at the same time presenting to him letters which I will deliver to your care to-morrow evening."

The following day Murat set out for Italy, charged with Josephine's commission to her husband. According to her command, he appeared in the presence of Bonaparte with *unpowdered* hair, and presented to him the following letter from Josephine —

TO THE CITIZEN-GENERAL BONAPARTE

On that very day on which a festival is here celebrated in your honour, and in that of your victorious army, do I, citizen-general, feel myself compelled openly to express to you the disturbance of mind which your public career has lately caused me. I have hitherto bowed submissively before your cold logic. You did once promise me to listen to the dictates of my sensitive heart. Instead of this, you have only tyrannised over it, with sorrow I must confess it. I have no longer any will of my own, even my very *thoughts* are in subjection to you. I have hitherto borne all patiently. Your fame, your heroic deeds, dazzled me, I looked upon your every action with wondering admiration, and obeyed your slightest nod. I even reconciled myself to being obliged to live far from your side, I submitted to the painful necessity of parting from you three days after our marriage; for three days—three brief days, and they, too, partly engrossed by the cares of business—were all you could devote to your bride; whilst, even for that short time, I felt that I possessed only *half* your heart, the other half was with the army. The remainder of the year, has not your whole tenderness been expended on cannons and on muskets? And yet I have borne it all. I have never murmured against my fate, although I well knew that sixty thousand armed bullies ever shared with me the affections of your heart. But *now*, Bonaparte—now, I own, my spirit rebels against you! Wherefore, my friend, oh! wherefore have you become a friend to etiquette? Wherefore will you no longer suffer your generals to address you with that simple *thou* which you would fain banish even from your domestic hearth? Romans and Greeks, the ancient nations of whom we read in Scripture, Ottomans, and Chinese—all in their speech made no difference between man and man. It seems to me treason against the enlightenment of the age to abandon once more this simple form of speech, which we had regained amidst the struggle for freedom—that struggle which caused such torrents of blood to

flow You consider this matter in the light of a mere unimportant concession to the customs of the old world, you are desirous of regaining the sympathy of the privileged classes, it wounds your pride to be addressed by men of humble rank as a brother, as a father Look well to it that you are not sacrificing too much to your self-will For my part, I will openly confess to you, that I could not love you so much as heretofore, were I no longer to call you *thou* If the Bourbons have lost for ever their people's love—if *paternal* power has departed from the sovereigns of Europe—who knows what share the abandonment of this ancient custom may have had in the change? Be called, if you will like the sultan himself Lord of the Sun Moon and Stars only be not called *elle* To your ear *thou* sounds foolish, to mine confiding But are you already incapable of feeling a confiding trustfulness? Oh! if I thought it were so, then would my heart indeed mourn for you, for your star would be darkened, the glory would be departed from you Often have I told you, Bonaparte pride contempt of human nature, these are the mortal diseases to which you will fall a prey Oh! cast not my forebodings to the winds I feel that in these things the heart is a truer and surer guide than the understanding The victories you have gained in Italy possess no value in my eyes, if they are not to purchase for me the happiness of finding myself once more by your side Your plans appear to me to be too widely extended, too perilous Whilst I admire you yet my heart condemns you, because your will is so unbending, so like iron The most legitimate, harmless, reasonable proposals find in you a bitter opponent if they do not happen to enter into your plans I should love you, were it possible, yet more ardently than I do if you were not at all times so entirely guided by the cold laws of reason You are only twenty-eight years of age, not yet *so* old that the heart of a loving woman might not expect you now and then to be ready to commit a little folly for her sake Now I am about to require you to be guilty of a very great one All the world says that things cannot long go on as they are now in France, and that the choice will lie between you and the Bourbons If this be true, then would I rather pay my homage to the Bourbons than ascend the throne with *you* If you will not prevent the Bourbons from entering once more into possession of their ancient rights, they will leave you free to become Duke of Venice, or Milan, if you will If all this be really true which is told me by these ladies (whose society is a daily martyrdom and *ennui* to me); then I cannot see what should hinder you from making your Josephine a Duchess of Milan Duke of Milan you might be without injustice, but *not King of France* If the wishes of your Josephine can weigh aught with you, then strive after a possession which you will not be called upon to defend against half the world Would that my will might be of *some* weight with you! It is said that you are aiming at the crown of France May God preserve you from ever placing upon your head so unjust a possession, and me from the anguish I should feel when I saw it encircling your brows! Gladly will I be a queen, but only of your heart! And in order to give you a proof of my royal favour, I herewith send you one of your officers, whose hair has been dressed according to the fashion in which I should henceforth wish yours to be arranged

when you enter my queenly presence And now, farewell! Free me quickly from my Parisian prison, and send me at the earliest opportunity the Iron Crown.

JOSEPHINE

"Colonel," said Bonaparte, when he had hastily perused this letter, "you will please to consider yourself as under arrest when you leave this room I will have no petticoat government in my army I will reprimand Josephine severely for the impropriety she has been guilty of."

"General," said Murat in a tone of vexation, "put me under arrest as much as you please, but spare your wife. She said it would break her heart if you were to send her a refusal"

"I will not send her any answer at all," said Bonaparte

The same evening he despatched a courier to Josephine, with the following verbal message.—

General Bonaparte will comply with the wishes of his wife, and invites her to join him in Italy without delay, but desires that she may not bring with her either Madame de Stael or any of her other friends

BOOK IV.

JOSEPHINE IN ITALY.

FORTUNÉ.

THERE is nothing more inaccessible to the influence of reason than the heart of a woman, when once the passion of jealousy has been awakened in her soul, and she fears to lose an object in which her whole affections have been centred. Josephine, urged forward by the cunningly-devised suggestions of Madame de Stael, hastened to Italy It almost seemed as though she feared the victorious advance of the French arms News from the army, which she had been wont so eagerly to welcome, now only seemed to disturb her mind, or was received with cold indifference. She thought only of the heart of the victor, which was dearer to her than all the crowns he could bestow. She found Bonaparte in a cold and morose tone of mind He had prepared a brilliant ceremony for the occasion of her arrival in Milan, which at the moment was an attention that was far from pleasing to her, much as she generally delighted in splendour, luxury, and show. The general embraced his wife in the presence of his whole staff, and then, with an air of stiff formality, led her into the interior of the palace. The general officers followed with uncovered heads, and not very far behind, a chattering retinue of waiting-women, laden with a thousand bandboxes and an endless train of equally useless articles. The ceremonial of the entry of Josephine bore a mingled impress of old French etiquette and republican *sans-façon*. There was a wild, chaotic pell-mell of noisy cries, united with an affectation of Spanish grandeur and

ceremony. It seemed like a first attempt at train-bearing amongst the new courtiers, accompanied by a scene of boisterous uproar, to which the cold, grave dignity of the hero of the day offered a strange contrast It was no easy task for poor Josephine, in the midst of all this heartless splendour, to control her overpowering emotions, and await the moment when, alone with Bonaparte, she might yield to the natural impulse of her tender heart, and sound that of her loved though somewhat austere spouse. It was not till a late hour of the evening that this longed-for moment arrived, when, in the still retirement of the nuptial chamber, the long-parted pair first found themselves alone. The first feeling on both sides, when thus separated from the turmoil of the external world, was one of embarrassment. Both had something upon their minds, and neither seemed to have courage first to break the ice. Each loved the other too well not to feel a great hesitation in uttering a word of reproach. Napoleon, however, did not, as was his wont, draw Josephine to his side, and begin to chat with her in a tone of confidential affection instead of this, he approached the fireplace, although no fire burned on the hearth, and, leaning his arm upon the mantel-piece, seemed patiently to wait for Josephine to begin the conversation. She, however, vexed by her husband's apparent coldness, seated herself before her looking-glass in sullen silence, and, turning her head in a direction opposite to that in which he stood, began to lay aside her ornaments. But her heart could not long endure this state of painful constraint· she rose hesitatingly from her seat, and gently gliding to Napoleon's side, she laid her hand timidly on his folded arms, and said, with a beseeching look and a tremulous voice—

"Napoleon, are you angry with me?"

Bonaparte did not answer directly, but continued to look straight before him· his aspect was grave, and almost stern At length he replied, in his usual hasty and almost abrupt tone—

"And have you not given me cause to be so? Have you not committed more follies in Paris than you have lived there days? Have you not written me letters which were full of absolute nonsense? Have you not carried on a confidential intercourse with my enemies? Have you not, I might almost say, intrigued against me?"

Josephine, terrified at this unwonted outbreak of displeasure on the part of her husband, burst into tears, and could not utter a word

Bonaparte continued:—"I must speak my mind plainly, Josephine You have shown a want of common sense, and suffered yourself to be made the instrument of pitiful intrigues People have abused your tenderness of heart, which is apt to degenerate into a false susceptibility they seek to lay traps for me through *you* Barras and his colleagues have betrayed the Republic They allow themselves to be led by women and by intriguers. This De Stael is always at the bottom of some plot or other"

"Why did you leave me behind in Paris?" replied Josephine. "I do not understand all these matters all that I know is, that your position is one of great peril They begin to mistrust you, and would rather deliver up the kingdom to the Bourbons than let it fall into your hands. Men are everywhere saying that you aim at the highest power in the state, and I own that appearances favour the supposition. I know that you are the only one amongst all these men who is worthy to bear the rule. But then I tremble for both your fate and my own Will you not cease to love me when you have attained the summit of your wishes? All these successes, for which you have so earnestly striven, have they not kept you at a distance from me? Have I not cause to be a little jealous of your fame, when I see that it is dearer to your heart than I? You hold our fate in your own hands; you are in a position to treat on vantage-ground. You can secure for yourself a splendid lot, which your enemies will not seek to dispute with you. They wish to be free from you at any price Is it not better to comply with their wishes, in consideration of large concessions on their part, rather than to live in a state of warfare with the whole world? What can you do alone against a world which hates you? Those whom you have conquered detest you; France is suspicious of you. If you do not now seize this propitious moment, the fate of Coriolanus or of Belisarius may be yours. Oh! what would become of me were you to be subdued before your enemies? I could not survive your fall! Oh, Napoleon! it is because I love you so well that I long to see you renounce this inordinate ambition. You would win more glory by re-

jecting a crown which lies within your grasp than by stretching out your hand to seize it."

"You are a child!" replied Bonaparte "You see not the trap which they are seeking to lay for me You speak of a crown; but France is not yet ripe for monarchy I will maintain the Republic What would become of France were I to forsake it? Think you that this dukedom in Milan, or in Venice, offered to me by people who do not possess a single stone in Italy, would be very secure to me, if civil war were again to break out in France? I should, very probably, find nothing to object against the restoration of the Bourbons, were there a single man amongst them who knew how to reign But this is impossible. They would bring back everything to its former state, and foreign powers would make them an instrument of their intrigues I should myself be the first victim of my disgraceful treachery Shall all the blood which has been shed have flowed in vain, and France have gained nothing by all her sufferings? Believe me, Josephine, your mind is not sufficiently powerful to grasp the complicated web of political affairs. These Bourbons, who would stoop to beg from me a crown, would be yet worse tyrants than their predecessors I must free France from them for ever. They have appealed to the whole world for help against their native land. Such good-for-nothing selfishness as this must not be allowed to rule I am ambitious Yes, because I know my own worth *I* would never keep France in check by the arms of strangers. I strive after power because I see that those who have hitherto possessed it have sold France to her enemies. Whatever may be my fate, I will do my duty. Do you wish to unman me by thy tears? What is become of all your exalted thoughts and lofty feelings? What is this happiness after which you are striving? My heart was never formed to enjoy a solitary idyll in a shepherd's cot And you, too, Josephine, you know but little of your own heart, if you deem that you would be less wearied than myself of enacting such a part. Who is to govern the world, if those whose powers fit them for the task shrink back in indolence, and take refuge in the peaceful retirement of domestic life? No, no! that would be contrary to our agreement. I have now told you what I will do—what I *must* do. It remains for you to accommodate yourself to the unavoidable. If Fate

should throw a crown at *my* feet, it will, I doubt not, befit *your* brows"

This explanation was by no means fitted to tranquillize the mind of Josephine. Although she had nothing to reply to what Bonaparte said, yet she could not but feel many an anxious foreboding with regard to the irrevocable determination he had come to Her heart told her that a crown would bring no happiness to her. She resigned herself, however, to her lot

"Whatever may be your path, Bonaparte," she replied, "never will *I* throw any difficulties in your way. Only promise me one thing: let me be your companion for the future, wherever that path may lead you Whilst I am by your side my troubles seem light; but when I am far from you I know not how to bear up under the burden of anxiety and care which your career lays upon my spirit. Something within tells me that I am your good genius. Your nature is too hard; you stand in need of me to soften your spirit and awaken your heart to gentler emotions."

Bonaparte continued for some time longer to explain to his wife the real position of affairs, and to develope to her his future plans; but his mind took too high a flight for that of Josephine, she felt herself incapable of following its lofty aspirations Whilst the reconciled pair thus sat together, confidentially chatting over past occurrences and future hopes, a companion had silently joined Josephine, unobserved by Napoleon, and seemed as though it were listening attentively to every word which Bonaparte uttered. This was Fortuné, Josephine's lapdog: a little English spaniel, which had sprung into her lap, and there established itself most comfortably. When Bonaparte began to speak more earnestly and gesticulate with some degree of vehemence, Fortune now and then assumed a threatening posture, as if he would defend his mistress, and barked loudly at Bonaparte The little animal, altogether, did not seem to have any special leaning towards the conqueror of Italy. He cast upon him many a jealous and angry glance, snarled whenever he approached him, snuffed at his boots with suspicious dissatisfaction, and could only be pacified by a gentle stroke from the soft hand of Josephine At first all these demonstrations escaped the notice of Bonaparte; but when he perceived that Josephine was no longer bestowing upon *him* her undi-

vided attention, he observed with evident annoyance the ill-bred behaviour of his little enemy, and, suddenly breaking off the conversation, said abruptly—

"Ah, my rival! I had almost forgotten him"

"The poor little creature sees that you do not trouble yourself about him. He jumped on you when I first arrived, as though he would greet you, but you did not deign to bestow on him a single glance He is quite mortified and offended by your neglect You must make it up with him."

Bonaparte was on the point of making an irritated reply, but he remembered the weakness of his wife with regard to this spoiled pet, and checked himself in time. Feigning compliance with the wishes of Josephine, he approached the dog, and, patting it on the head, said—truly not, however, in the gentlest tone of voice—

"Come, Fortuné! give me your paw, and let us be friends."

But Fortuné's friendship was not to be so easily purchased Scarcely had Bonaparte's hand touched him than he started up angrily from his mistress's lap, and the conqueror of Italy was obliged to retreat from his anger. Bonaparte contented himself with saying—

"The beast is very malicious."

"You are quite mistaken," said Josephine; "he is the gentlest creature possible; but in one respect he resembles a *man* of generous nature. he is thankful for the smallest kindness, but he despises caresses which are not sincere."

"So I must woo patiently, I suppose, for his favour, before he will believe in my sincerity."

"Yes, certainly; but then you will wonder when you see how grateful he can be."

"You know, my dear child, that the dog is no favourite of mine."

"Then, if so, it is impossible for you to love *men* as much as you *should* love them," said Josephine with a playful smile, which somewhat mitigated the severity of her observation.

"You are a *fool*!" replied Bonaparte: "this is always the way with your eccentric brain. You said, just now, that *my* stubborn being needed to be softened by your gentler nature. This may be all very true; but with still greater truth may I assert, that *your* sentimentality needs

the support of a strong understanding to act as its prop and stay. Your heart is divided between me and a thousand trifles. This dog, for instance, seems to me to possess no small portion of your love."

"And well does he deserve it," replied Josephine, in a somewhat petulant tone; "for what can be more unselfish than Fortuné's devotion to me? He doesn't care either to eat or drink when he can lie in my lap; he gets sick when he is away from me I am fully convinced that he would die were he to be parted from me It is worth something to be loved *thus—even by a dog*"

Bonaparte made no reply, but bit his lips, crossed his hands behind his back, and began to pace backwards and forwards through the room Josephine, who was conscious that she had spoken inconsiderately, now tried to assume a playful tone, and continued—

"Yes, my dear husband, this dog may well serve as an example to those husbands who love a certain goddess Bellona better than their wives; who can only spare three days to their *brides*, and devote months and years to the rude art of war What would you have? This little creature has been my only consolation during your absence He was a much more acceptable companion to me than those cringing sycophants who thronged around me in order to win your favour through me And your indifference for the most faithful, loving, and attractive animal in the whole brute creation, is a great defect in your character, which I should like to correct."

"And suppose I were to require you, instead, to renounce this foolish passion for lapdogs?" said Bonaparte

"I would for once resist your will," said Josephine, "and truly, not without a good reason; for when God has endowed a man with such distinguished genius and power as he has bestowed on you, one cannot desire better for him than that his heart should be as tender as his understanding is keen, so that he may be capable of appreciating the good qualities of an animal which in so many points resembles man, inasmuch as, like man, he seems possessed of heart and understanding. Oh, my dear friend, when a man holds the destinies of so many of his fellow-creatures in his hand, as you do at this moment, how important is it that he should have a kindly heart, and not be indifferent to their sorrows or their joys!"

Bonaparte, who seemed to feel the truth of his wife's words, and was perhaps a little ashamed at his own needless severity, began playfully to stroke her little favourite, offered him biscuits, and called him by divers pet names. Josephine, delighted at this *rapprochement*, did all in her power to reconcile the two enemies. By degrees, peace was in some measure established between them. Fortune became more friendly, but at the same time seemed every now and then to shrink instinctively from the deceptive caresses of Bonaparte, who, in his turn, was obliged to muster all his good-humour, in order not to be tempted to free himself by a kick from his troublesome and dangerous rival. Fortuné, after he had passed a few moments near Bonaparte, would always slink back fearfully, and crouch at the feet of Josephine.

"Behold!" she exclaimed, "he fears you! Do you not think, Bonaparte, that it would be a good school for those who desire to win the affections of their fellow-creatures, if they were to seek to gain that of a mistrustful and stubborn dog? What instructive lessons might they not learn from it! Look you, my love, this is my *state-policy* kindness. This it is which will attach both dog and man a sincere, undissembled good-will towards them. Am not I in the right?"

"Yes, if only there were no such things as *unthankful* dogs," said Napoleon.

"I deny that there are any such beings in existence. Even men, who are less disposed to gratitude than dogs, may be *made* thankful, if only we do not grow weary of showing them kindness."

"And in the mean time, one may ruin one's self."

"That may possibly be the case, now and then; but even so, better to die unthanked than thankless."

"That is a matter of taste," replied Bonaparte, shrugging his shoulders. "For my part, I feel no analogy between *my* character and that of the dog. The feeling of thankfulness which belongs to it *I* know nothing about; but I *do* know that feeling which is the peculiar property of the lion: that of magnanimity."

"You would then place yourself *above* men in general?"

"Yes."

"But are you not in danger of losing by this means the standard of what is purely human?"

"Let us quit this subject: it is one on which we can never hope to come to an understanding."

The conversation thus terminated, they prepared, in tolerably good humour, to retire to rest. Fortune had already, however, established himself on the bed, and, on seeing the *great man* approach, flew at him in a rage and bit his hand. Bonaparte angrily seized the animal, and flung it to the ground Most probably it was hurt in the fall; for, howling most pitifully, it sought refuge near Josephine, who, angry with Bonaparte for his ill-treatment of her pet, overwhelmed it with caresses and expressions of compassion. Fortuné only continued his elegy so much the more lustily. Without even saying "Good night," Bonaparte buried his head in his pillow, and Josephine cried herself to sleep

The *first discordant chord* had been struck in the general's married life. Josephine thought anxiously of the future. Bonaparte understood not that the sorrow which overwhelmed this sensitive spirit was not so much caused by Fortuné's misfortune as by painful forebodings concerning the heart of him whom she so tenderly loved

THE DREAM.

JOSEPHINE at length fell asleep, but it was with a heavy heart The sorrowful images and painful association of ideas which had occupied her mind, ere sleep had closed her eyes, still presented themselves before her in her dreams In order fully to comprehend the excitement which a few random words had produced in her mind, it is necessary to remember that Bonaparte was now only twenty-eight years of age, whilst Josephine had already a grown-up daughter, whose blooming charms were already beginning to eclipse those of her mother. It was this disparity of age between Josephine and her husband which was in a great degree the cause of her after misery. The calculating self-will of Napoleon annoyed her doubly, because she fancied to herself that, were she still in the prime of youthful beauty, he would not thus resist her will. This

rendered her at times still more capricious, and disturbed their domestic peace. The disparity of age, which at first was comparatively unimportant, made itself increasingly felt as Josephine advanced in years, whilst Bonaparte was yet in the prime of youthful vigour. The consciousness of this unsuitability it was which haunted Josephine like an evil genius, marred her happiness, and cast a gloom across her fancy. She sought to compensate for her fading charms by external splendour, and affected a coquetry which was not natural to her. This did not escape Bonaparte's observant eye It annoyed him, without at the same time producing any particular disturbance in his usually imperturbable mind. The heart of a woman was to him a matter of far too secondary importance for him to waste on it any unnecessary thoughts Indeed, the younger and more light-minded amongst his companions in arms harboured some suspicions that his absence from Josephine was a part of his victorious career which was not unwelcome to him But this malicious insinuation was entirely refuted by his after conduct; and nothing more plainly proved that Bonaparte loved Josephine with a tenderness which he felt for no other human being in the world, than that very separation from her. He always showed the greatest anxiety to alleviate her distress at parting from him; and if his attempts at comfort did not prove very successful, the fault was not in his want of will, but in the unconquerable coldness of his nature, whose whole electricity was concentrated on the one point—that of attaining to the summit of earthly power and fame. It was, therefore, by no means with an indifferent or careless eye that he observed the restlessness and apparent disturbance of mind of Josephine. Whilst she slept he watched her anxiously. She seemed agitated by feverish dreams, such as might have been expected to ensue from the state of nervous excitement which the events of the last day had produced in her mind. The fears which Josephine had expressed occupied her husband's thoughts; he felt only too deeply the truth of many of her observations. Her delirious dream recalled to his mind the prophetic inspirations of the Pythoness of olden times; and, though in general of a sober and unimaginative mind, yet he was by no means inaccessible to that superstition which has been shared by many of the greatest and most power-

ful minds, and which has ever been wont to exercise the greatest influence on those who feel that, whilst holding in their hands the fate of millions, they are powerless as concerns their own. When Bonaparte saw his wife's countenance become gradually clouded, and bitter tears coursing each other down her cheeks, his first impulse was to wake her, but he was prevented from doing so by a very childish reason. He remembered having heard in his youth, that, if one lays his hand upon the breast of a sleeper, the latter is compelled to prophesy the fate of the bold prier into the secrets of the future. He could not resist making the attempt to lift the forbidden veil which mercifully conceals our future lot from our sight. No sooner did the dreaming Josephine feel the touch of his well-known hand than she seized it and clasped it, tightly within her own. She did not, however, awake; but it seemed as if a fresh set of images presented themselves to her fancy. A night-lamp which cast its rays upon her countenance permitted Bonaparte to watch every variation of expression which passed across it. It seemed to him as though she were about to pronounce his fate. Oh! there was *one* question which he would have given worlds to hear answered! Should the fairest crown of Europe, that of France—"*la belle France*"—ever rest upon his brow? Oh! how his heart beat at that thought! How every lesser consideration, how all human feelings, vanished before it! What was even this woman, whom he in reality loved, in comparison with the possession of a power by means of which he might subdue the world to his sway? He felt that he could sacrifice even her, without a pang! What would it import to break a single human heart, if by so doing he could more surely win the dominion over millions? How many hearts should he not then be able to comfort and to rejoice! how many corrupt ones render powerless to do evil! how many virtues might he reward! how many vices punish and extirpate! Not for the value of his life would he have awakened his wife from her restless dream! She at first smiled as if a friendly vision passed before her. Her countenance brightened, her cheeks glowed, her lips moved gently, and, although her eyes were closed, yet her physiognomy expressed an emotion of joyous pride. Then followed the expression of *listening*, and what she heard seemed to fill her heart with joy. But her bliss was of

brief duration Suddenly a change seemed to come over the spirit of her dream. Gloom overshadowed her countenance, and sobs burst from her heaving breast; a sigh so deep escaped her lips, that it seemed as though she were breathing out her very soul Then followed a few moments of tranquil sleep, but it was not long before a new vision seemed to engage her attention Terror and dismay were depicted in her countenance, she started wildly from her pillow, and casting from her Bonaparte's hand, which had till now been clasped within her own, she uttered a loud and agonizing shriek

Fortune bounded forward, barking furiously, and Bonaparte, who was seeking to support and re-assure his wife, was so severely bitten by the little animal that he was obliged to desist

The waiting-woman, who had heard Josephine's cry for help, rushed into the room, and a scene of confusion ensued, during which Bonaparte found it no easy task to persuade Josephine that she had only been frightened by a *dream*. Comical as was the conclusion of the scene, it was long before she could recover from her agitation. At length, after some hesitation, in answer to her husband's anxious inquiries, she related to him, as follows, the subject of her dream:—

"At first, I dreamt of Fortuné. We had quarrelled; you were upbraiding me most bitterly I wept, then you were still more enraged, and sought to plunge a dagger into my bosom, but Fortuné defended me and received in my place the death-blow. Then suddenly I found myself reconciled with you, and in your company, following through paradise the steps of a seraph, who with a sword of sunbeams was driving forth the evil spirits who thronged around. We climbed a sunny height, on whose summit stood a golden temple. The angel led us within the sanctuary; we knelt upon the steps of the altar; and the seraph placed crowns upon our heads. The temple disappeared; joyful acclamations burst from a thousand lips. We were in the midst of Paris; the people thronged around us; they kissed our hands, our feet, the very hem of our garments. A splendid cavalcade approached and greeted us with reverence. I saw your friends, Berthier and Murat, in brilliant costumes; the latter with a crown upon his head;

but he dismounted and bent his knee before us. *I* was intoxicated with delight, but you were gloomy and silent Scarcely did you vouchsafe to your friends a single glance, but spoke to them in the accents of command. And now there once more gathered thick around us those evil spirits whom the seraph had before driven away, and, in place of the smiling face of the seraph, the hated countenance of Fouché seemed to grin upon me as if in mockery The evil spirits began to attack and to persecute you, your friends forsook you. Suddenly a thick darkness came on, a fearful storm arose, and swept away the splendid pageantry. We were parted, and in the darkness I could not find you again. I ran weeping through the streets in my queenly mantle, with the crown upon my head, and the people scoffed at me. They called me a fool, and threw mud and stones at me. I ran to the Tuileries to seek you, but the sentinels repelled me with their bayonets I called your name aloud, and at last you appeared before me on a balcony, with a young and handsome woman leaning on your arm. She wore on her head a triple crown, but *you* were *uncrowned*. When you observed me you turned pale with rage, and cried, "Take away that madwoman!" and the soldiers seized me and cast me into a dungeon Here it seemed to me as if I were dying. all around me was dark. I neither heard nor saw anything, I felt as if a century had passed over my head. At last a funeral chant fell upon my ear. I looked, and saw you living, yet borne upon a bier, and that beautiful woman by your side. They carried you to the burial vaults of St. Cloud. The people mourned; many blessed, and many cursed you. Cossacks galloped about the streets, and I went weeping through the great city. Ah! what a sight presented itself to my view! Thousands of men sank dying to the ground; all the people were covered with rags; every one cried for bread, but a number of armed men paraded the streets, and struck to the ground every one who dared to stir. On the Place de Grève ten scaffolds were erected, and there fell hundreds of heads—of men, women, and children! Over all waved an enormous standard with a blood-red crescent and a horse's tail. Terrified, I fled through another street towards the Boulevards. On my way I encountered a party of horsemen armed with lances, and on the point of every lance there was stuck a severed head. I turned away in

horror and hastened towards the Place de la Concorde Here I found a beggar who wore fragments of the French uniform I asked him 'Where is Bonaparte?' He answered, 'There is no Bonaparte!' I asked him 'Who then bore rule over the French?' He replied, 'There are no Frenchmen more I asked him, 'whether the kings had conquered France?' He replied There are no kings any more!' I asked him, 'what then there was yet remaining?' and he replied, 'Nothing but murderers and the murdered!' I asked him then what *age* it was' and he replied, The age of the world's destruction!' My knees smote together, my reason seemed to forsake me But quickly another vision floated before my spirit I was carried by two men in black garments into a large hall, which was hung with black cloth A round table stood in the middle, and several men sat around it in scarlet robes I asked tremblingly upon whom they were about here to pronounce judgment They answered, 'On the proud' And soon there entered one in a purple mantle and with a kingly crown, and they pronounced over him the fatal sentence, 'Guilty,' and he was handed over to the armed men, and they took from him his crown and beheaded him And then followed many others, diverse were their garbs and various was their appearance, but all alike were slain But at last there appeared a man in a green uniform with white facing He wore upon his head a small cocked hat I recognized *you* I sought to cast myself on your bosom, but they held me back. The judge pronounced over you the word 'Guilty!' they led you away, they knocked your hat from off your head, they threw you to the ground Already was the sword suspended over your head I cried for help, and in my anguish I awoke.

Bonaparte had listened to the relation of this dream in silence, with his head resting upon his hand Its horrors had made quite a different impression upon him from what Josephine had expected He did not seem either surprised or alarmed, and the only thought which occupied him at the close of the recital was, "And for all these horrid fancies I have to thank that spiteful little beast Fortune" He however satisfied himself with saying to Josephine, as he returned to his couch—

"Well, thank God, it is all over now your blood must

have been heated by the journey; you should take a glass of cream-of-tartar water. I hope your flattering fancies will not pay you a second visit."

Josephine smiled, drank the glass of water, and fell asleep. She did not awaken until the morning was already far advanced

Two hours before her *lever*, Bonaparte repaired to the gardens of the palace to take an early walk He there met Le Gros, his cook, who was amusing himself with a large English bloodhound Bonaparte looked at the dog with evident satisfaction, and said to himself, "That is the man for me!"

He directly called Le Gros to his side.

"Your dog is well trained?"

"Yes, general."

"He will run down man or beast?"

"Yes, general that is to say, at the word of command"

"Well, then, do you choose to gain twenty louis-d'ors by his means?"

"Very gladly would I do so, if I were not required to do anything against my honour or my conscience."

"I have a mortal enemy, who persecutes me, annoys me, causes disputes between my wife and myself, and may very likely kill me some of these days"

"And why do you not bring him to trial, general? He ought to be shot."

"That would not do, for he happens to be a favourite of my wife's."

"So much the worse; so much the worse," said Le Gros, thoughtfully; "but, general, I would advise you to be on your guard. Your wife is, as it seems to me, a very honourable lady Perhaps your suspicions of her may be unjust: it is the devil's delight when he can make people jealous."

"You are mistaken: this enemy of mine is no lover," said Bonaparte, smiling: "he is a snappish little lapdog belonging to Madame la Générale, and his name is Fortuné."

"Ah! that pretty little creature Fortuné!" said Le Gros, compassionately.

"Are you also, then, in conspiracy with him against me?'

"Heaven forbid, general! I own that I am fond of the dog; but my general is dearer to me than any one in the world"

"Were Josephine of the same opinion, the dog need not die'

"Die? But would it not do to give him a few kicks when he is troublesome?"

"My wife will not suffer it You cannot tell what an annoyance that beast is to me See here how he has bitten me! What shall I do to get rid of him?'

"I understand you, general your commands shall be obeyed.'

"But, remember you must be as silent as the grave."

"You need have no fears on that head"

An hour after this conversation, the little Fortune was coursing merrily upon the grass The waiting-woman had taken him out for the benefit of air and exercise. The large bulldog rose to play with him, whilst Le Gros stood by looking on Fortune, yelping, disengaged himself from this rough bear's play, and the bulldog was about, as usual, magnanimously to retreat, and leave the field to his diminutive opponent

"Call away your dog, Le Gros!" cried the waiting-woman.

"Directly, madame," he replied, at the same moment making a sign to the animal The next instant, a faint, shrill cry was heard! Fortuné had ceased to exist Josephine rushed out, accompanied by Hortense and Eugène. She burst into tears. The little favourite was wrapped in a cambric pocket-handkerchief, sprinkled with eau-de-Cologne, but all in vain: *the dog was dead.*

THE PLOT.

A CHAMBER council was directly summoned to investigate this terrible mishap according to all the rules of justice It consisted of the weeping mistress of Fortuné, of Hortense, who appeared to be almost equally distressed, and of Eugene Beauharnois, who affected much concern on the occasion, although, at the bottom of his heart, he was delighted beyond measure at the catastrophe. There were also present two waiting-women of Josephine's, who were all the time secretly blessing their stars that they were at last delivered from a plague which had often placed them in a ridiculous point of view; for they had been compelled to pay continual attention to every caprice of the spoiled favourite, and never to allow him out of their sight. The witnesses were examined, the *corpus delicti* was investigated by an army surgeon, and the whole case duly inquired into. As accused, appeared the dog named Le Coq, the property of the cook Le Gros: an animal which was in general well known for his perfect good-nature. It was an acknowledged fact, that Le Coq had never been known to hurt even a fowl; that he had often allowed Fortuné to tease and to bite him, without chastising him for his temerity; that all the children were suffered with impunity to pull him by the ear, and that even the cats had been seen mounted on his back. How, notwithstanding all this, Le Coq should suddenly have taken it into his head to turn a bloodthirsty tyrant, and murder the little Fortuné so relentlessly—this was a psychological mystery which the regimental surgeon was called on to explain. He declared Josephine's suggestion, that Le Coq had perhaps suddenly been seized with a fit of madness, as quite untenable, and pronounced that he was in full possession of his senses at the time when he committed so heinous an act; so that he could not be exculpated on the ground of an *absentia mentis*. This, however, only increased the probability that he had been instigated to act the part of an assassin, and was only an instrument to execute the commands of a higher will. The waiting-woman, however, took Le Gros under her protection, and defended him against such injurious suspicions, assuring

her mistress that she had herself heard him call off the dog. Still it was certainly remarkable that Le Coq had been seen at first sporting good-naturedly with Fortune; and there was also the strong presumptive evidence that Le Gros had often been known to dismiss Fortuné with a kick, when the little intruder had invaded the kitchen and attempted to pilfer some savoury tartlet or fricassee, but, on the other hand, he had been frequently seen to caress and to feed him, and had only punished him for his misdemeanours. All inquiries ended, the court, which was composed of none but lenient and kind-hearted judges, pronounced a sentence of "not guilty" on all the accused parties. But, although Josephine fully signified her assent to this judgment, yet it was with a degree of vexation at being compelled to do so, which made her quickly look about for a scapegoat on whom she might vent her displeasure She was not long at a loss as to whom she should select as a victim. She had a *husband*, and was enough of a daughter of Eve to be quite ready to lay upon him the blame of all the vexations which other people caused her The conqueror of Italy was not one whit better off in this respect than any other husband in the world, for Josephine, like a good Frenchwoman, seemed fully resolved to make him suffer for every offence of which there was the most distant possibility that he *might* be guilty. She accordingly seemed determined to revenge on him the death of Fortuné; and began her work by turning the whole house upside down, and altering all its internal arrangements, although there was every reason to suppose that they would not long continue to inhabit it. She changed, without more ado, her husband's apartments; and he was not a little surprised, one day, when he returned from a tour of inspection and entered his bureau, to find his sentinels replaced by a waiting-woman, who was seated amidst a shoal of band boxes, &c. and who announced to him, with a curtsey, that the office of the commander-in-chief had been transferred to the other side of the palace, in the left-hand court, door No. 7, which had formerly been the servants' waiting-room.

The second project of Josephine, having in view the annoyance of her husband, was to send out invitations for balls and soirées to all the most distinguished ladies Milan, whilst the commander-in-chief had not himself most distant idea of what was going on.

The third was, that she put in requisition all the milliners, *friseurs*, &c. in Milan, and gave them orders on the military chest in payment of their claims. And, as though all this were not sufficient to arouse the phlegmatic nature of her husband and throw him off his equilibrium, she resolved on a still more desperate step, and one which directly invaded his *own* province She laid strict injunctions on her attendants to admit no officer to her apartments, with the exception of her husband, who had not, contrary to all the rules and regulations of the army, divested himself of the republican queue and hair-powder. This command produced a decided split in the army, for all the young officers, who well knew Bonaparte's affection for his wife, now rebelled openly against his commands in this matter, cut off their queues, and introduced so much confusion into the costume of the army, that the matter became one of serious consideration The old "moustaches" grumbled at the introduction of royalist habits in the army; some young hot-brains quarrelled with the older officers on the subject; and Josephine's thoughtlessness was on the verge of causing very serious disturbances in the army.

Bowaparte was so angry at the whole affair, that for two whole days he altogether avoided seeing Josephine He retired late to rest and rose with the lark; thus giving his wife no time to enter into explanations. She, on her part, feeling that she must abandon the hope of ever being able to rule her husband or to influence his career, fell into that disposition of mind which is frequent with ladies whose plans are crossed, and who therefore take refuge in amusement and dissipation to indemnify themselves for their disappointment. She gave herself up to the most extravagant habits; devoted herself to dress with the same earnestness as though it had been a matter of state importance; and did everything that pleased her in the household which she ruled over with an absolute sway. She received the Italian ladies in queenly state, sought to excel them all in splendour, and thus excited the jealousy of the Italian aristocracy, behaving towards them with the most insufferable *hauteur*. Complaint upon complaint reached the ears of Bonaparte. The general shrugged his shoulders, and said he would not long answer for the favourable dispositions of the Milanese, if Josephine continued much longer thus to wound the vanity of the women and the pride of the

men. He resolved at length to make serious representations to her on the subject. But he found the entrance to her saloon barricaded by a useless bevy of waiting-women, who bore some resemblance to a little court. He was obliged to have his visit announced in due form; was kept waiting for some time, because Josephine had visitors; and, moreover, she declined receiving him alone. This excited his impatience to the highest degree. At length, however, the doors were thrown open; Josephine hastened with open arms to receive her husband, appeared in the most perfect good-humour, and overwhelmed him with marks of her affection and tenderness.

"Ah! my little tyrant!" she exclaimed; "how have I longed for you! These ladies can bear me witness that I have been talking of you continually; but we were deliberating whether I ought to receive you or not. My heart, however, would not suffer me to refuse you admittance, only you must be taught, *mon ange*, that *I* am ruler here, and that my household laws cannot be broken with impunity: all rebels must meet with their merited chastisement. *Allons, mesdames!* you must do your duty."

In a moment the general found himself surrounded by a group of laughing ladies; Madame Bonaparte seized his queue without ceremony; he felt a huge pair of scissors pass through his hair; the queue fell to the ground. They treated him as they had done Murat; brushed the powder from his hair, which was duly combed and frizzed; and laughed so unmercifully at his enraged aspect, that they did not leave him time to say a word, and he was finally compelled to join in the laugh against himself. Josephine had at last gained her point: the queue was vanquished! The scene ended good-humouredly. Bonaparte forgot his vexation, and only punished his self-willed wife by bestowing upon her a double portion of kisses. She, however, would not let him have any peace until he had signed an order of the day, in which he solemnly decreed the total abolition of the objectionable queues. The order ran as follows, and was written under the direction of Josephine herself:—

SOLDIERS!—Being ever careful to promote your well-being and comfort, I desire to free you from every burden which is not indispensable to the fulfilment of your duties. Amongst the number of these useless burdens, which have been productive of much needless

trouble, may be reckoned the custom which has hitherto prevailed of powdering the hair and plaiting it into a queue. Often you have barely an hour left you for repose, and many nights has this short slumber been curtailed by the necessity of arranging this inconvenient and tasteless head-dress I therefore hereby issue my commands, that for the future every soldier, whether officer or private, shall wear his hair in its natural state, and expect that this arrangement, of which I myself shall set the example, will meet with your prompt obedience.

BONAPARTE

When Josephine had received this long-desired signature, she hastened to send the order to Murat, who quickly made it known throughout the army. After she had thus accomplished her object, she readily accorded her husband a *tête-a-tête*. She was once more all humility and submission, and Bonaparte could no longer find it in his heart to speak to her in the severe tone of reproof and admonition. Josephine sought, by her winning and playful caresses, to turn away the storm which she had seen gathering in the distance; and the following brief colloquy ensued between her and the vanquished general.—

"I am much dissatisfied with you, Josephine."

"Ah! I am yet more so with myself.'

"You have turned the whole house upside down."

"But you know, Bonaparte, what a misfortune befel me. I was obliged to seek some diversion for my thoughts."

"You are a fool; your profusion is ridiculous."

"*Apropos*—are you aware that Fortuné——"

"You have in forty-eight hours expended six thousand francs in hats and caps, laces and veils."

"Is it not right that I should make an appearance worthy of your position? But listen now: Fortuné——"

"A single dress of yours cost a hundred ducats. You have excited the jealousy of all the ladies in Milan."

"Ah! this envious aristocracy! Will you not humble their pride?"

"Yes, but not in a manner which would be unworthy of me"

"But, listen to me for a moment: my good, darling little Fortuné——"

"You have made arrangements for festivities which are contrary to my wishes."

"Yes; but I forgot to tell you I had issued invitations. I was so lonely and unhappy. The poor little Fortuné——"

"He is dead, I hear," said Bonaparte, hastily, as if he were anxious not to betray by his manner that he knew anything about the murder of the favourite.

"Yes, he is dead," replied Josephine, as the tears started to her eyes; "and in what a cruel way he was killed!—actually torn to pieces!"

"A melancholy thing; the poor little creature!" said Bonaparte, with affected sympathy.

"Ah! I knew you would be sorry for him, in spite of all his misdemeanours," said Josephine

"He was a pretty little creature. we must have him stuffed," said Bonaparte.

"No, no," said Josephine; "the remembrance of his terrible end would distress me too much, if I saw him always before my eyes I must rather try to forget him, and I think I have found out the means of doing so"

"How so?" said Bonaparte: "the loss is, I fear, irreparable."

"Irreparable? yes, that is very true; but, if you will only promise to be kind to my dogs, I think the loss might perhaps be repaired"

"I doubt that it would be possible to find in this country an animal of the same breed," said Bonaparte, in a somewhat anxious tone

"Would you then grant me the indulgence of keeping one?" asked Josephine

"Why should I not, if only you can find one of the same race?" replied Bonaparte, breathing more freely, for he remembered that he had not, in all Milan, seen a single animal of the same breed.

"Now, then—rejoice at my good fortune!" cried Josephine; "come here and only look!" Thus saying, she drew the unfortunate dog-hater towards a small cabinet inside her room, and opened the door. A low yelping was heard; Bonaparte shuddered. In an elegant little basket lay two very small dogs, of the same species as Fortuné, surrounded by a litter of about half-a-dozen little pups, which were uttering the most discordant and plaintive cries. Bonaparte seemed petrified with dismay

"See here! the lovely little creatures!" said Josephine, as she handed three of the little pups to her husband.

"Yes, indeed!" faltered out Bonaparte

"Are you not rejoiced at my good fortune?"

"Most assuredly," replied Bonaparte; "I think we had better establish a traffic in dogs."

"No, no," said Josephine, laughing: "I would not give up *one* of the darling little creatures."

"Are they all to sleep in your bed?" asked Bonaparte, with a sigh.

"When they are bigger, they shall, of course"

"Eight dogs!" exclaimed Bonaparte, casting up his eyes in unutterable despair.

"I will make you a present of three of them."

"Oh! I would not rob you of them for the world."

"But you have not yet seen all, my friend: I have received another valuable present."

As Josephine said this, she opened another cabinet, and cried, "Diana! Diana! Diana!" An enormous Angorra cat, of a bright golden hue, now made its appearance. When Bonaparte saw this new addition to his wife's menagerie, his first impression was one of dismay; but the next moment a ray of hope shot across his mind, for he perceived that she gazed at the little brood of dogs with sparkling and eager eyes.

"What a splendid animal! is it not?" cried Josephine; "and the most wonderful thing of all is, that she is so fond of the dogs, and plays with the little ones, caressing them just as if they were her own."

BOOK V.

THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN

THE SHEIKH.

The French army had commenced its march towards Cairo. Bonaparte, seated upon the back of a dromedary, rode at its head, surrounded by several generals, who were similarly mounted. Behind him followed a cavalry regiment, also on dromedaries, and who looked not a little singular, mounted on these "ships of the desert," in their French uniforms, which, moreover, being in many cases formed of oriental materials, presented rather a grotesque appearance.

This scene has been a thousand times represented in paintings and described in books; every one knows how the army lived in Egypt; what part was played in this eventful expedition by the *savans* with their patient asses; and how glad many of the infantry were that there *were* so many asses in the country, inasmuch as, though they laughed at them at first, they were not sorry to get a lift on them afterwards. We will not enter into all these details, which would be well entitled to a whole book to themselves.

It was a cool evening. The march had been a severe one; and after the scorching heat of the day, all seemed disposed to indulge in that quiet, loitering pace which denotes rather a pleasure-ride than a warlike march. The wearied army drank in the refreshing breeze, and gazed with delight on the splendour of the evening sky, of whose

gorgeous hues and burning glow a European cannot form the most remote conception The men refreshed themselves, as they passed along, with the sweet fruit of the palm-tree, and with the cooling oranges and citrons which abounded on every side, whilst they chatted together over the events of the day, and the habits and manners of the people by whom they were surrounded By the side of Napoleon rode a young sheikh, who had been sent by his tribe to offer the olive-branch of peace to the Sultan Kebir —so was Napoleon named amongst the Turks—in token of their allegiance Napoleon was in a cheerful mood, and treated the young sheikh, whose downy beard barely shaded his upper lip, with an air of patronising kindness, whilst the latter seemed to consider Napoleon as a well-known friend. The lively imaginations of these children of the East had been inflamed more than those of any other people by all they had heard of the conquering hero of Marengo and of Austerlitz.

"Sultan Kebir," said the sheikh, in broken French, which he had learnt in his intercourse with foreign merchants, "I will give you a piece of advice, which you would do well to follow when you arrive in Cairo"

"Let me hear it, my son," replied Bonaparte: "if your counsel be good, I will gladly follow it"

"Well, this is what I would do, were I in your place· as soon as I entered the town I would send for the most wealthy slave-merchants in the place."

"For what purpose, my son?"

"For what purpose! By the beard of the Prophet! I should have thought that was simple enough. Do you not know that the slave-merchants are always in possession of the fairest Circassian slaves? I would buy twenty of them at once, if I were you"

"But what should I do with them?" replied Bonaparte, amused at this *naive* suggestion. "I am already provided with a wife."

"And where is she, then?"

"In France."

"In *France!*" rejoined the sheikh, laughing· "then, if so, you might as well be without one."

"But our customs do not permit of our having more than one wife."

"That is strange," replied the sheikh. "But you, who

can do everything you please, why should you not have more than one, if you like it? What can you find so attractive in our country, if you are a despiser of beautiful women?"

"I am not come here to rob you of your houris; I have nobler motives than that, my son But is this all the advice you have to give?"

"No, Sultan Kebir there is yet another thing I would do in your place"

"And what is that?'

"I would send for the richest jeweller, and take his finest jewels for myself."

"But, my friend, were it not more noble to leave every one in possession of his own?"

"Wherefore, then, have you come amongst us?"

"Not for purposes of *plunder*, my son."

"But you must have *some* end in view; and if you have no objection to tell me what it is, I should much like to know"

Bonaparte could not forbear from smiling at so indiscreet a question; and yet it was asked in so *naive* and innocent a manner, that he could not avoid making some reply. He therefore said—

"The whole question is a very complicated one, my son Who knows whether, if I were to give you an answer, you would be able to understand me?'

"Why should I *not* understand you?" replied the young man, with a look of surprise.

"Because an important point of state policy is involved in my reply."

"And wherefore should I not be capable of understanding politics? Do you imagine our understanding to be so limited that we cannot tell what is for our own advantage?"

"That is not quite what I mean by policy."

"Perhaps you are obliged to consider what is for the advantage of some one yet greater than yourself?"

"Not exactly that either. It is a great *cause* for which I fight."

"And what is this cause?"

"That of Freedom, my son."

"Freedom?" replied the sheikh: "you are doubtless speaking but *en badinage*."

"By no means."

"What then do you mean?" exclaimed the young man, astonished beyond measure. "You are fighting in the cause of *freedom*, and yet you are seeking to bring us under subjection to your yoke."

"Are you not the slaves of tyrants and of Mamelukes?"

"That is true; but—you will not think me impertinent—it is mere curiosity which makes me ask the question: how does that happen to concern you?"

"It concerns us much, my son The strong should ever interest themselves in the weak."

"But shall we then be free, when we must obey *you!* Shall we not merely change masters? and what advantage will that be to us?"

"A very great one, my son. You will be free: that is, you will be protected in your properties and in your persons, and allowed to do everything which the law of God permits to be done"

"But tell me, Sultan Kebir," replied the youth, with ever-increasing surprise, "how is it possible to be free, when one is not the stronger?"

"It is very possible, when those who *are* the stronger are magnanimous; but this your tyrants are not."

"Well," replied the sheikh, with some energy of manner, "I must own that I understand nothing of this freedom which you speak of. You might be a better master than those we have, but yet you would still be our *master*."

"Not your *master*," replied Bonaparte, "but your *father*.'

"That comes to the same point," replied the Turk: "a father is lord over his children."

"It is quite another thing, nevertheless," said Bonaparte, somewhat impatiently. The sheikh, remarking his dissatisfaction, bowed in reverential silence, as if in token of submission to his superior wisdom. But his curiosity quickly got the better of his reverence, and with some degree of timidity he resumed the conversation, saying—

"If you will forgive my temerity, Sultan Kebir, there is nothing which I so much desire as to receive instruction from your lips. Tell me, then, for what purpose are you carrying on this war against us?"

"I have told you already," replied Bonaparte.

The young man shook his head doubtfully, and said, after a moment's silence—

"Ah! I can well see, Sultan Kebir, that you consider

me too much of a boy to deign to give me an answer. You are concealing your intentions from me'

Napoleon smiled, but was by no means ill-pleased at the continuance of a conversation which might serve to spread amongst the people some clearer views as to the object of his expedition, and might also in some degree further the end he had in view He therefore replied—

"By no means I will fully declare to you my intentions, and you shall see how upright they are You may tell your tribe all that I say, and you and everybody else shall know what has brought me hither I will not enter upon the discussion of wherein freedom chiefly consists. that is a matter of opinion Perhaps, however, you will not quite understand what I mean when I speak of a whole people being altogether free and independent of every other nation'

"Yes, I do perfectly, replied the sheikh "Freedom consists in this that a free people are not bound to follow the laws of other nations, or to act in obedience to their commands'

"That is true, my son, but in Europe there are many nations who will not permit this Such a people are the English

"That may be, Sultan Kebir, but wherefore do you carry on a war against this nation on our soil? This much I know, that the English say the very same of you that you have just said of them. Forgive the boldness of my speech I am only seeking for instruction"

"I am fighting against the English *here*, because I desire by this means to strike at the very root of their power For know, my son, that these English rule by *gold*, even as I rule by *arms* And who can hope to have more gold at their command than *they*, who have the commerce of the whole world in their hands?'

"Truly, sultan, there is a deep wisdom in your words, but—forgive me—if you were to say, 'I will become richer and mightier than the English, I will stop up the fountains of their wealth, and dash them to the ground by the power of my sword,' then would I own your might, and say you were in the right He to whom strength is given by God, *he* shall be our lord This is my faith, which has been handed down to us from our fathers"

"But why will not you agree with me that my rule is the best you can desire?"

"Because, sultan," replied the sheikh, "you *tell* us that it is the best. How can I be expected to understand that you wish to free us from English rule, when I see that the English leave us in peace, and that you seek to subjugate us? If I may honestly speak my mind, I would ask your forgiveness, and say to you—If you are indeed a prophet, and wish only to accomplish the will of God, then you should first go and conquer the English in their own land. We would wish to obey you rather than others, because you are a great man, a hero; but if the question be one of justice and of equity, then it seems to me that it is not with arms in their hands that men come to offer freedom to their neighbours'

Napoleon was silent In truth, he knew not what to say Fortunately for him, however, an accident relieved him from his embarrassment. A troop of French horsemen rode up at this moment, and informed him that a body of Arabians, who made common cause with the French, had forced their way into a neighbouring village, killed a fellah, and plundered the inhabitants. Napoleon, with marks of extreme displeasure, commanded that these Arabians should be driven into the desert, and if possible extirpated. One of the sheikhs, who had accompanied the squadron, smiled scornfully when he heard the order. Napoleon commanded him to approach, which he did with an air of deep respect, and thus addressed the general:—

"I think, my lord sultan, you do not well in thus seeking to destroy these Arabs. They are your friends now; but if you injure them, they may do you a thousand-fold more harm than you can ever do them. And wherefore should you make so much ado about the life of a fellah? Was he your cousin or your brother?"

"He was yet more to me than that," replied Napoleon: "all those over whom I am called to rule are my *children*. Power is only committed to me for this end; namely, that I may increase their happiness and their security."

When the aged sheikh heard these words, he bowed his head in lowly reverence, and said, "Sultan Kebir, forgive: you speak even as the Prophet."

The younger sheikh had been a silent spectator of this

scene. When the cavalcade was once more in motion, Napoleon himself turned towards his youthful companion, and resumed the interrupted conversation, by saying—

"Now, my son, need I reply any further to your questions?"

"No," replied the young sheikh, reverentially. "I see, Sultan Kebir, that you are a great man: you are wiser than wisdom itself"

Napoleon made no reply, but his manner proved that the boldness of the young man had not been displeasing to him. He looked with interest at the intelligent countenance of his companion, and after a long pause said—

"Although I cannot follow your good counsels, my son, perhaps I might be able in some way to forward your interests. Have you no wishes?"

"Oh, yes, indeed I have," replied the young sheikh, sorrowfully

"Can I do anything to help you towards their attainment?" inquired Napoleon.

This question appeared suddenly to electrify the young man

"Ah!" he exclaimed with a sigh, "were I only ten minutes in your place, I might be happy indeed"

"You would send for the jeweller and the slave-merchant?" asked Napoleon

"No, for neither· I have no wish to have twenty wives, and should not know how to provide for them; but there is *one* with whom I would gladly share my home."

As the sheikh said this, he sighed, and tears started to his eyes

"Do you love a maiden in Cairo?" asked Bonaparte.

"Yes, my lord sultan; and truly I know not how it is, but she has bewitched me by her charms. None other could ever compensate me for the loss of her to whom my whole heart belongs. I think that, were *she* mine, I never should wish to possess another."

"And since you love her so well, how comes she to be in any other hands than yours? Are you not rich enough to obtain her from her father?"

"Ah!" replied the sheikh, with a sigh, "she is a slave!"

"So much the better for you; you can the more easily purchase her according to the customs of this land."

"That is not to be done so easily, Sultan Kebir; but

you have only to wink with your eyelid, and my wish will be accomplished. If I may dare to own to the truth, it was this hope alone which led me to your feet. I will relate to you my history, if you will deign to listen to it; and you shall be the judge between me and your own people."

"Have my soldiers robbed you of her whom you love?"

"Not that exactly; but had it not been for their intervention, I should have been able to purchase her for myself."

"How is that? tell me your history."

"Ah! my lord sultan, it is a long one: I fear that it will weary you."

"Not so, my son. Am not I the father of all those who place themselves under my protection? Narrate to me all that has occurred, and if injustice has been done you, satisfaction shall speedily be afforded you."

"Hear then, my lord, since it is your will that I should speak. It was towards the close of the last year, when business first led me to the dwelling of the aged Sebtaba. He is the wealthiest man in Cairo, and is the owner of several large merchant-vessels, which carry the productions of our native land to the European shores. He is an honest-minded and upright, but a severe man, and a strict observer of the laws of the Prophet When I entered his house, it so happened that the door leading to the apartments of the women was at that moment open. Unacquainted with the internal arrangements of the house, I entered by mistake, and here saw for the first time the daughter of Sebtaba. My eyes were dazzled: she was fair as the moon; her aspect was proud and queenlike; her eyes were like stars, and her skin was white as the lily. She gazed at me in surprise, but not in anger. I covered my eyes with my hand and said, 'Forgive me that I fled not from your presence; your beauty has left me powerless to fly. You are fairer than the wife of the Prophet. You have only to speak the word, and I am ready to die at your feet.' Dilara blushed and fled away; but I felt my mind bewildered by her charms, and when I found myself in the presence of the aged Sebtaba, I cast myself at his feet, told him what had happened, and asked him to bestow upon me his daughter to be my wife. The venerable old man took me by the hand, and, raising me up, said gravely, but not angrily, 'My son, you are but a child; you have but

seen Dilara, and you think you love her. Banish this thought quickly from your mind; for know that Dilara is already betrothed to Sidi Selim.' I sorrowfully resigned myself to my fate; for Sidi Selim is a powerful sheikh, and I knew that I had no chance of succeeding if I engaged in a conflict against him. I sought to forget that moment, but it was ever present to my soul, I sought to speak with Dilara, that I might learn her wishes, and had recourse for this purpose to a negro woman who was in her service, and whom I persuaded to bring a nosegay to her young mistress. The meaning which the flowers that I sent to her was intended to convey was this: 'I am dying from my love to thee. Tell me, dost thou love thy betrothed? I hate him because he is to possess thee.' The negro woman quickly brought me the reply of Dilara; it was as follows 'I have no hope. Thine enemy is also mine. I love thee, but must forget thee.' This sufficed to exalt my love into an ungovernable passion At this time thine army landed in Egypt, and I was obliged to take up arms and follow my father to the war; but as soon as an opportunity offered, I hastened back to Cairo, and sought out the negro servant, in order to consult with her what was best to be done under these circumstances. She had, however, in the meanwhile disappeared, and another slave related to me what had occurred during my absence. Soon after my departure, Sidi Selim had urged Sebtaba not to defer any longer the conclusion of the marriage. There was no reason to be assigned for declining to comply with his wishes; and Dilara, who offered a strenuous resistance to the fulfilment of the engagement, was compelled unwillingly to follow Sidi Selim to his house. Vain were her tears and her entreaties; the aged Sebtaba had never yet been known to draw back from his promise; and he placed a sort of pride in remaining faithful to his word when it cost him most to do so. An attempt which Dilara made to escape was discovered, and she was only the more closely watched. She now sank into a state of the deepest despair, and resolved to die. In a moment of madness she rushed unveiled from the house, and escaped from her watchful guards; but soon the alarm was given, and she heard herself pursued. Certain of now falling once more into the hands of her enemy, she cast herself into the arms of a Jew who crossed her path, knowing that this was a crime which would entail upon her the

punishment of death, for which she longed as her only deliverance. Sidi Selim at this moment approached, and, full of rage, seized her by the arm, whilst with curses and execrations he dragged her towards the house. Then did the despairing Dilara seize a dagger and wound Sidi Selim in his arm. She knew that by this double crime she had most assuredly forfeited her life. She was led into the presence of the aged Sebtaba. Sidi Selim approached the unhappy father, and asked him to say what punishment his daughter merited. The old man turned away in horror from his guilty child, and pronounced over her the sentence of death according to the laws of the Koran. Dilara was then handed over to Sidi Selim, whose right it was to proceed against her; but turning to Sebtaba, he said, 'Her *desire* is to die; she must not attain her end. As she has despised the lot which awaited her as my wife, she shall be sold to a slave-merchant.' Sebtaba signified his consent to this proposal, but stipulated that Dilara should be sent to a distance from Cairo. She was accordingly carried away with many other slaves, in company with a large caravan. This caravan was, however, stopped on its way by your soldiers. One of the generals spoke to the leader of the caravan, and seized the dromedaries for the use of the army. Dilara cried to him for help, and the general, struck by her beauty, caused her request to be interpreted to him. When he heard the state of the case, he declared that he would take this maiden under his protection, and led her away with him. What further may have become of her I know not; but I own that I tremble for her lot. Now, if you Sultan Kebir, will only interest yourself in my behalf, I know that she may even yet be delivered. It will cost you but a wink, and you can make me happy."

"Have you been able to ascertain the name of the general?"

"He is called Abdallah Menou: I am not likely to forget him."

Whilst they thus spoke, the army had entered Cairo.

ABDALLAH MENOU.

Amongst the officers in the French army who showed a decided leaning towards Oriental habits and modes of life, General Menou prominently distinguished himself

It was shortly after the conversation recorded in our last chapter that Napoleon surprised the general by an unexpected visit to his quarters. The admirer of the Turks was seated, much at his ease, upon a divan, a cup of coffee stood by his side, and a black slave was engaged in filling and lighting a pipe, which he then handed to his master The costume of the latter was that of a Mussulman, and even the way in which he sat on the divan showed that he sought to imitate the customs of the land, even in the most trifling particular. He was deeply absorbed in the perusal of the Koran, of which he had procured a French translation; and as he read he often testified the pleasure he took in its contents by an approving nod of his head, which was enveloped in an enormous turban. When Bonaparte on his entrance perceived the general in this Oriental attire, he could hardly suppress a smile; but he soon resumed his habitual gravity, and, without leaving the discomfited general any time for apologies, exclaimed—

"It seems to me, general, that you are far more devoted to the Prophet than you are to me. What is the sense of all these pranks? You are trampling my orders beneath your feet. I have told you that I wished the customs of the land should be *respected;* but never that they should be *imitated*, or that the wives of these Mussulmans should be carried off by main force."

"I really am not aware," stammered out Menou, "in what point I have transgressed your orders."

"Have you not robbed a slave-merchant of a young maiden of the name of Dilara?"

"*Robbed* him of her? By no means, general. You lie under a mistake: I only took her under my protection."

"Under *your* protection! That comes pretty nearly to the same point. Do you not carry about a whole seraglio with you? What have you to say in justification of your conduct?"

"I own," replied Menou, "that I like to enjoy myself: but, if I do my duty to the nation, I do not see why I should be blamed for that. As for this Dilara, I only rescued her from the hands of a villanous slave-merchant, who was carrying her away, heaven knows whither."

"And who, may I ask, has given you leave to lay hold on other people's property?"

"*Property!* in a human being!" exclaimed the general, in surprise.

"Even so," replied Bonaparte. "However, the short and the long of the matter is, that this maiden must be restored to her father."

"But these barbarians will murder her."

"For that *you* will not have to answer. The laws must be respected to the utmost. If by the laws of the land she have deserved death, she must die. You may safely, however, leave me to see that justice is done to all parties. I will myself conduct her to her father."

"Of course it shall be as you desire, sir," replied Menou: "it is yours to command, mine to obey."

"Where is Dilara?"

Menou directly gave orders to his servants that the prisoner should be brought in; and in the course of a few moments she made her appearance, under the guard of two fusiliers.

"So it is your habit to treat those who are under your protection like prisoners of war?" said Bonaparte in a tone of displeasure.

"I surrounded her with guards, in order to protect her from the populace."

Bonaparte now cast a glance upon Dilara, who stood by with an aspect of proud defiance. But when she was told that she was in the presence of the commander-in-chief, and that he spoke Italian, with which language she was acquainted, she crossed her arms upon her bosom, and bent her knee in token of reverence; and looking at him with childlike confidence, exclaimed—

"Sultan Kebir, may Allah preserve you! Take the innocent under your protection."

Bonaparte looked at the poor girl with mingled pity and curiosity. She was truly of surpassing beauty. He assumed, however, a severe tone, and said—

"You are not innocent; you have sought to take away

the life of another. Murder is as severely punished by our laws as by yours. No injustice has been done you. I must deliver you up to your father."

"It must be even as you will, Sultan Kebir," replied the maiden in a moderate tone "I repent me not of what I did; and if your heart is a stranger to pity, I shall know how to suffer death without a murmur. It was death which I desired; only in order to obtain it the more securely did I seek to kill him, who is more hateful to me than death itself."

This answer was not one calculated to be displeasing to Napoleon. He replied—

"I will do for you all I can and dare to do. I will beseech your father and Sidi Selim to pardon you"

At the name of Sidi Selim the maiden trembled violently.

"What have you against Sidi Selim?" inquired Bonaparte.

Dilara was silent.

"You love another?" continued Bonaparte.

Dilara only answered by a deep sigh and an imploring look, as she folded her hands upon her heart.

"If I were to beg of your father to pardon you and to unite you to your beloved, do you think there is any hope that he would listen to my prayer?"

At this question Dilara cast herself at Napoleon's feet, clasped his knees with her arms, and burst into a flood of tears.

"Well," said Napoleon, "I will see what I can do;" and turning to Menou, he added—

"Come, general, you must accompany us, in order to excuse yourself to the father of this maiden for having trenched upon his rights; and you, Dilara, must also follow us."

In vain did Menou protest against complying with this unwelcome command, whilst he alleged as a pretext the necessity of changing his attire before he could be seen in company with the commander-in-chief.

"Remain as you are, general," said Bonaparte with a look of scorn: "you will procure us the more respect in the presence of these Mussulmans."

The party accordingly set out directly, and Menou had barely time to cast away his turban and resume his cocked hat. The trembling Dilara, led by an adjutant, followed her promised intercessor. The grotesque appearance of

Abdallah Menou excited no small amusement amongst both the Europeans and the Mussulmans whom he encountered, and upon whom he in return cast many an indignant glance. The commander-in-chief, however, took no notice of the matter. General Menou was not one of those on whose military talents Bonaparte placed any very great reliance: he had, therefore, less indulgence for him than for many of his other generals. A crowd of people followed the "Sultan Kebir" with loud acclamations to the quarter of the town in which was situated the dwelling of Sebtaba, to whom his purposed visit had already been announced. The aged Mussulman received the general at the threshold of his house, and led him into the inner court, without appearing to notice his trembling daughter. Here were assembled the most influential citizens of Cairo, in compliance with the express wishes of Bonaparte, who was desirous that they should witness the respect and veneration which he was so openly about to testify for the laws of the Prophet. Bonaparte, seizing the terrified Dilara by the hand, advanced towards Sebtaba, who trembled and turned pale as his eye rested upon his once-loved, but now doomed child.

"Father Sebtaba, I deliver back to you your daughter Dilara, whom one of my generals thoughtlessly abducted by force from the hands of him to whom you, in your paternal justice, had delivered her. I am not come to this land with the intention of violating your laws, insulting your religion, or obstructing the course of justice. If, therefore, I now stand forth to plead to you in behalf of an offender, I do it in the name of your own Prophet, who says, 'The righteous man is ever ready to forgive the sinner, and rather would he suffer wrong himself than do wrong to another.'" Then turning towards Sidi Selim, who was present, the general continued: "And you, Sidi Selim, do I also, in the name of the same Prophet, beseech to forgive this offender. True it is that she has sinned, but who can boast of being free from guilt? Better were it for you to show mercy, rather than, by exercising your right, to compel a woman to belong to you contrary to her inclinations, and then to slay her whom you have brought to despair; for your Prophet says, 'The righteous man is clothed with generosity as with a garment, and he loveth to show mercy and kindness.'"

Having thus spoken to the father and the betrothed of Dilara, he turned to the assembled company, and said—

"Mussulmans! evil-disposed men have led you to believe that I have come hither to bring you under subjection to my yoke, to trample on your laws, to rob you of your wives, your children, your possessions. Believe them not. Your Prophet and his laws are alike sacred to me. Never will I do aught which is contrary to your customs. But if so be that you deem this maiden may be forgiven without offending against these laws; if you believe that the Prophet permits the forgiveness of a sinner and the heaping of coals of fire upon her head; then unite your prayers with mine to move the hearts of these men to the pardon of Dilara; and ask them to bestow her hand upon him who has so bewitched her heart as to work frenzy in her brain. I know him, and believe him to be not unworthy of a union with the daughter of Sebtaba."

A murmur of approbation was heard on every side.

"He speaks like the Prophet!"

"He *is* a prophet."

"Allah is great! this is a hero, a saint, whom he has sent to us."

"We will obey his words."

"Sebtaba, be favourable to our petitions; receive once more thy child"

"Sidi Selim, forgive her: Sultan Kebir wills it."

Already was Sebtaba on his knees before Napoleon. Although too firm to yield to his *own* wishes, he was yet rejoiced in his inmost soul to see himself *compelled* to forgive his child. His paternal heart had long since yearned towards her, but his lips had not dared to own it. Sidi Selim, however, who had entertained considerable fears that Bonaparte was come to Egypt with the intention of strangling all the rich men in the land and taking possession of their treasures, was so rejoiced at discovering his mistake, that, eager to please the sultan, he exclaimed—

"You see, Sultan Kebir, the heart of the father has melted; and I too repent me of my severity, and thank you that you have averted its consequences. Dilara is free, and may herself choose the man to whom she will belong. May our readiness to comply with your wishes render us worthy to find protection at your hands!"

Napoleon raised from the ground the aged Sebtaba, who

was silent from the excess of his emotions; and calling Dilara to his side, laid her upon her father's breast. Not an eye but was dimmed with tears, as the aged man and his child wept upon one another's necks, and stood folded in each other's arms; whilst so long was the embrace that it might almost have been thought they had been turned into statues. Even Abdallah Menou was moved; and Bonaparte gazed upon the scene with a calm, collected satisfaction, which attracted the special admiration of the Mussulmans, who looked at him with silent reverence.

The aged Sebtaba at length disengaged himself from his daughter's embrace, and told her to express her grateful thanks to Sultan Kebir on her bended knees. Dilara obeyed, and with touching grace and simplicity thanked her deliverer; after which she retired with her father into the inner apartments which were devoted to the use of the women Bonaparte took his seat, cross-legged, according to the manner of the country, amongst the remaining Mussulmans, and began to make known his wishes to these, the chief men of Cairo. His demands were so promptly and joyfully acceded to, that he soon had nothing further to wish for on that head. He accordingly had leisure to commence a conversation, with the aid of the interpreter who was present, on the subject of the Mahommedan religion.

"Mussulmans!" said he, "you are in error if you suppose that our faith is in any respect essentially different from yours. All the rules of our religion which were opposed to the ordinances of the Prophet have been done away with by the Revolution. We, like you, believe in one God; we deem it no crime to have a plurality of wives, although it is our custom to have but one; we believe in a future paradise, although we may perhaps differ slightly from you as to the nature of its joys. There is, in fact, no reason why our laws and customs should not melt into one another, and we live together as brethren, each honouring our own Prophet. As far as I am concerned, no one can be a greater admirer of Mahommed than I am. I hold him to be not only a great hero and statesman, but a messenger sent from God. The Koran is to me a holy book, and I look upon every man who lives according to its precepts as my brother. I will seek in all things to resemble your Prophet, and pray God to enable me to do so."

Abdallah Menou listened with much apparent devotion to this effusion, whilst the other generals looked at each other in more or less astonishment. The impression which Bonaparte's words made on the Mahommedans who were present was very favourable. The conversation was carried on for some time longer in the same spirit, and all departed with the full persuasion that Bonaparte was a *sincere Mussulman*. As to Abdallah Menou, he was more fully persuaded of it than any Mussulman amongst them all, and proved his satisfaction at discovering the close coincidence between his own opinions and those of his commander-in-chief by implicitly obeying his command to make an humble apology to the father of Dilara. The same evening Napoleon gave a supper, to which Abdallah Menou was invited in common with several of the other generals of the army The renegade general burst forth in enthusiastic praises of the commander-in-chief's morning speech, and even ventured to suggest that he thought Eastern manners and laws might be introduced with much advantage into France.

"I doubt not that they are much to your taste, at all events," said Bonaparte, who treated the whole matter as a joke.

"Most certainly they are," replied Menou; "and I am of opinion that we, who have come here to teach these supposed barbarians manners, might learn much better ones from them than we ourselves possess. They, at all events, act in accordance with their faith, whilst we do a hundred things which we allow to be wrong."

"You are a fool, general!" replied Bonaparte. "Even suppose you were in the right, must not one respect the prejudices which prevail in Europe as well as those which rule throughout the East?"

"But, general," exclaimed Menou, "how is this? Are not you yourself a good Mahommedan? Did you not speak this morning like a dervish?"

"Certainly," replied Bonaparte as he rose from the table; "but that was to *Mahommedans*. Do not forget that."

General Menou did not clearly understand this inconsistent act on the part of his commander until the ensuing day, when it was proclaimed in the mosques of Cairo, that "as the *Sultan Bonaparte was a good Mahommedan, it was lawful for all men to obey him*"!

THE DERVISH.

THE next day Napoleon rode to a neighbouring village, in company with his staff of general officers, and with the young and now happy sheikh.

"Well," said he to the young man, "your most ardent wishes have now been gratified. I trust that you are fully satisfied with what I have done for you."

"So entirely," replied the sheikh, with some emotion, "that I would gladly render you a great service in return."

"You will remain faithful to my cause; you will tell your tribe how Sultan Kebir is wont to act; you will remain my friend amongst the sheikhs and great ones of the land."

"I will do yet more than all this," replied the sheikh, whilst his countenance betrayed the deep agitation of his mind: "I will warn you of the great misfortunes which threaten *you* and *yours*."

"What misfortunes do you mean, my son?" inquired Bonaparte, with a look of surprise.

"Those which our wisest men prophesy concerning you, and which I cannot but foresee are, indeed, likely to befall you. My lord sultan, I will deal uprightly and truly by you."

"And have not you done so hitherto?" inquired Bonaparte.

"No!" replied the sheikh, in a fearless and decided tone.

Bonaparte's keen eye rested for a moment on this daring young man, and then he abruptly said—

"Go on: I am listening to what you have to say."

"Know you what is said of you here throughout the land?"

"Not perfectly," replied Napoleon.

"It is prophesied that, before a year has passed over your head, you and the troops under your command will have perished and come to nought."

"And on what ground, may I ask, do men form conjectures such as this?"

"Their grounds, my lord sultan, are valid ones. Our oldest warriors reason thus. 'Sultan Kebir is a brave man—a hero. He and his troops are superior to us in the art of war; but in this art lies the whole of their might. By nature, we are the stronger. Look at these children of the West, and see their stunted forms! Take from them their weapons, their warlike arts, and a Mameluke could overpower five Frenchmen. Their spirits and their frames are both feeble. Their courage is a flame which quickly kindles, but may also quickly be extinguished. They are not so capable of supporting the climate as we are; the heat and the cold are alike destructive to them. If we affect submission, and suffer the war to be prolonged, gradually they will melt away like the snow before the burning sun They are not disposed to obedience: they will soon murmur against their leaders. The length of the war will weary their minds and exhaust their bodies. See! if the Prophet but send the wind of the desert to blow against this mighty army, death will come upon its wings. They are, moreover, accustomed to a mode of life which here is destructive to them. If Sultan Kebir does not abandon this war, not a man of this mighty army will again see his native soil.' Besides all this, our heroes say, 'What will the invader gain? The desert will be his grave. We fly before him, and entice him onwards into that treacherous sea whose waves are drifting sand. Our place of refuge knows no bounds. He may conquer tribe after tribe, and yet nothing be accomplished. How will he be able to maintain his conquests, seeing that they know no limits? If he march towards the south, then will our tribes take refuge in the north; if he go to the north, then will they flee to the south. He must perish in the pathless waste; and the vultures will devour the carcases of his fallen warriors. Time and place—these are his foes; foes too mighty for the arm of man ever to subdue.'"

The sheikh ceased to speak. Bonaparte appeared absorbed in deep reflection, but no outward gesture betrayed his inmost thoughts. They rode in silence for a brief space, and then Napoleon was the first to speak.

"Your prophets are liars. My armies are mightier than those of the Prophet. I have countless multitudes at my command. Woe to them who doubt my power to

subdue! Tell this to your friends, and exhort them to submit themselves; for if they dare to oppose me in my course, I will sweep over them like the relentless simoom, and destroy them from off the face of the earth!"

"Sultan, you are great!" was the sheikh's sole reply, as he bent his head before the conqueror, and once more was silent.

Bonaparte now turned the conversation to other subjects, and made some inquiries from the young sheikh with regard to the customs and superstitions of the land. The latter dwelt with special eagerness upon the power which some of their holy men possessed of reading the book of Fate and foretelling the destinies of men. He spoke of one dervish in particular whose prophecies had seldom failed of their accomplishment. Bonaparte, despite his implicit belief in the superiority of his own star over the vicissitudes of fate and fortune, had yet an insatiable craving to read the secrets of futurity; and, moreover, the gloomy forebodings of the young sheikh had, insensibly to himself, cast their shadow over his mind. He therefore entered into the subject with more than ordinary animation, and inquired, with some degree of interest—

"Is this dervish of whom you speak one of your prophets? Is he one of those birds of ill-omen who forbode me ill?"

"He is so, my lord sultan; and the word which he has spoken has never failed to come to pass."

"Let him be sent for, then," said Bonaparte with a smile. "From his lips will I learn my fate." So saying, he put spurs to his horse, and, leaving the rest of the party far behind, was the first to re-enter the walls of Cairo.

The next day stood the dervish, one of the most renowned story-tellers in Cairo, in the presence of General Napoleon Bonaparte.

"Salaam Aleikam, Sultan Kebir!" said the old man: "the sun of thy greatness is dazzling in mine eyes. Be

so gracious as to turn from me the fire of thy radiant glance, lest it obscure my vision."

Napoleon could not refrain a smile at this exaggerated praise; but yet he did not feel altogether pleased on perceiving that his generals were disposed to laugh He was already beginning to expect from them an unwonted degree of reverence; already was it always his custom to ride a few paces in advance of his suite; and he spurred his steed onwards if any ventured to ride by his side. The reverential manner in which the Moslems addressed him was evidently by no means displeasing to his taste He turned to his generals, and requested them to leave him alone with the prophet When they had retired, he assumed a totally different manner towards Sidi Mahmoud. Folding his arms across his breast, and fixing on the old man a penetrating glance, he said in a severe and commanding tone—

"You come, in compliance truly with my wishes, but yet only to deceive me. Do you know that I am an unbeliever?"

The old man bowed himself to the ground, as if crushed by the might of that voice of thunder. He was silent for a while, and his countenance betrayed the agitation which pervaded his whole being. At length, mastering his feelings, he calmly said—

"*I know it.* Let not my lord be angry with his servant."

"You can therefore have no hope that I will believe your words?"

"Yes, I hope it."

"And wherefore?"

"Because the words that I shall speak will be words of truth."

"How can you foretel that which is yet hidden in the womb of time?"

"I will only tell you that which your own spirit might foresee."

"Of what avail then can your predictions be to me?"

"They may avail you much. The powerful see and believe not, whilst the weak believe though they see not."

"And wherefore should I believe you? Do you then deem that your hocus-pocus can dazzle me, or your hypo-

critical reverence deceive me? or that your flattery can mislead me?"

"My lord sultan," replied the dervish in a voice tremulous with emotion, "I will not deceive you, for you have dealt well with my tribe I know you are a falcon, and therefore I *could* not deceive you; you are a lion, and therefore I could not hope to escape you; but there are two witnesses whom you will not disbelieve: they are *here*, and *here!*" As the dervish thus spoke, he boldly raised his venerable head, and pointed first to his white and flowing beard, and then to the clear blue eye with which he gazed calmly on the conqueror, as if he had no thought to conceal, no hidden plot to veil.

This pantomime was not displeasing to Bonaparte. He rose hastily from the divan, and returned the dervish's glance with an unflinching gaze. The looks they had exchanged were such as form the freemasonry of intelligent men, whereby they know and recognise one another Bonaparte, after a moment's silence, resumed his seat, and thus addressed Sidi Mahmoud —

"Well, I am ready to give credence to your witnesses Speak! what is the destiny which awaits me? I will hold your words in honour."

"What can *I* know, my lord?" said the dervish, half-boldly, half-reverently "Can I read your inmost soul? Can I guess the thoughts of your heart? Who can fathom that which is unfathomable? You know it well, Sultan Kebir, I am no magician."

Bonaparte felt ashamed of his own question, when he remembered that he had set out by expressing his disbelief in the prophetic powers of the old man. With some degree of confusion in his manner, therefore, he only replied—

"You have then nothing to say to me?"

"Oh, not so, my lord! else would I not have dared to meet your searching gaze. I will relate to you a tale."

"Tales! to me?" exclaimed Bonaparte "Nevertheless," he continued, after a moment's reflection, "proceed: I will listen to your tale, provided it be not long; and also that it be instructive."

"It is short, my lord: whether it be rich in teaching, how can I tell? The teacher requires a learner."

"Well! *I* am ready to learn!"

"Listen, then, Sultan Kebir, to my parable.

"In the land of Herath there dwelt a mighty magician, who had an only son. This enchanter had the power to transform every creature into whatever form he pleased. His son, who had an adventurous spirit, and was often consumed with *ennui*, besought him one day to transform him into a lion, as this animal appeared to him the noblest and most beautiful in the whole creation. 'What a happiness!' said he to the magician, 'it must be to be feared by all, to be able to do ever what one will, to see all the beasts of the forest subject to one's sway, and all its treasures at one's command!' 'Were I in your place,' replied the enchanter, 'I would prefer the serpent's lot. It is not, indeed, so noble an animal as the lion, but it is exposed to far less danger.' The son of the enchanter assumed however, the form of the lion, and caused the forests to resound with his mighty roar. The bear, the wolf, the tiger, and other beasts of prey, quickly gathered around him, and offered themselves as his vassals. The lion chose amongst them the strongest and the bravest, and said, 'Come on with me, all the beasts of the forest must become my subjects!' He led them against many a defenceless flock of wild gazelles and roes, against the cattle which roamed at large, and the quiet sheep that grazed in their tranquil pasture, and the whole country round about trembled before the lion and his coadjutors. By degrees, however, the supplies in the forest began to fail, ever wider and wider spread the circle of destruction, until it reached even to the barren waste. Then began the companions of the lion to murmur against their ruler. 'What avails it to us to have this animal, who has become great through our means, for our prince?' said they. 'He can no longer be of any use to us: the whole land is wasted and laid bare. The beasts of the neighbouring lands are desirous of peace and rest. They have promised us great rewards and high dignities, if we will only free them from the lion. Let us betray him, and slay him!'"

Bonaparte had hitherto listened in silence, but at this point he hastily interrupted the narrator, exclaiming—

"I thank you for your good-will; I understand your fable, but you may rest assured that I know well the right time to be either a lion or a serpent."

"Well will it be for you," replied the prophet, "if you abide true to your intention; but forget not that human power and wisdom ever have their limits. You are not powerful through your *own* might alone, my lord; for no one is so but through the favour of Him who is his lord."

"And who is my lord?"

"He who has made you great."

"The *nation* has exalted me to power"

"If it be indeed the nation which hath raised you up, then may it also cast you down; and if you have no better stay, unstable is your dominion: a populace is as capricious as the Sultan Achmed himself."

"Who was this Sultan Achmed?"

"Listen to me, my lord, and you shall hear. I know nothing of your nation; but all that I have heard of it reminds me of the character of this man. Achmed, a mighty pacha, a truly good and benevolent ruler, became suddenly liable to attacks of the most intolerable *ennui*, although he was well skilled in the discovery of new modes of entertainment and diversion. For instance, he had caused many thousands of nightingales and other birds to be instructed in artificial song, and at a given signal the sweetest harmony would burst from the assembled choristers. Daily did the Ottoman court assemble in a gallery to listen to these feathered songsters, and often, for hours together, did they listen to their melodious notes. But even this amusement soon became wearisome to him. Neither the charms of pleasure nor the graver cares of state had power to fill the void which existed in Achmed's soul. One day, the pacha, oppressed with gloom, slowly paced the alleys of his garden. His favourite, Mahommed, vainly strove to enliven him by cheerful conversation or lively sallies. his brow still continued overshadowed with care, and even the favourite, abandoning his vain attempts to dissipate his master's gloom, himself sank into that same state of silent and morose reserve. *Ennui* is contagious. Achmed suddenly paused at the edge of a terrace which commanded a view of all the surrounding gardens. He stood for some moments in a sort of dreamy silence, watching a slave who was engaged at a distance in trimming a shrub of jasmine whose luxuriant branches floated in the breeze. At length he turned to Mahommed, and said, 'Bring me the head of this slave!' Although the favourite was not a little sur-

prised at the unexpected command, which was but little accordant with the ordinary character of the pacha, and could only have had its source in a fit of mortal *ennui*, he yet hesitated not to obey. Achmed, with careless eye, followed the movements of his favourite, as he hastened down the steps leading towards the garden. He was obliged, however, to traverse some considerable space before he could attain the destined victim, who was a strongly built, fine-looking man. Mahommed advanced towards him with rapid strides, and said, 'What is your name?' 'Markopoli.' 'Of what land are you a native?' 'Morea' 'Well, turn your eyes towards yonder terrace. Know you him who stands there with his eye fixed upon us?' 'It is the pacha.' 'I come to you charged with a commission from him. 'What are his commands?' 'That I should bring to him your head' 'What crime have I committed, then?' 'Slave' you forget that the pacha is not bound to render to any man an account of his actions. The pacha is burdened with *ennui*, and wishes to find some diversion to relieve his monotonous existence by the sight of your severed head Be silent, therefore, and bare your neck to my sword.' As Mahommed said this, he drew his sabre from its sheath; but even before its glittering blade had caught the rays of the morning sun, Markopoli, swift as the wind, had wrested it from his hand. 'You did wrong, Mahommed,' said the slave, drily, to charge yourself with such a commission as this; 'for, see! we have changed places. An executioner and a victim were both needed here. I am in possession of the sabre: it is, therefore, now your turn to present your neck to its blows' Mahommed sought to flee, but Markopoli seized him with his powerful hand, and swinging his sabre high in the air, cried in a voice of thunder to the trembling favourite whom he held firmly in his relentless grasp, 'No human power can now deliver you from my hands. We are alone here, and all help must come too late. Power and space are both in my favour: bid farewell to life, for you are a lost man!' These were the last words which met the ear of the unhappy Mahommed. With a single blow the slave severed his head from his body; and, lifting the bloody trophy from the ground, he took it under his arm, and calmly advanced towards the terrace, where the astonished pacha stood contemplating the scene. Achmed was no longer troubled with *ennui*. 'Most glorious and

exalted luminary, whose brightness exceedeth that of the sun!" exclaimed Markopoli, as he laid the head of Mahommed at the feet of the pacha, 'I bend beneath your feet as a slave, for a slave I am, but not as an offender; for, instead of committing a crime, I have by this deed done you a weighty service.' 'Ha! what strange boldness!" exclaimed the pacha; 'think you, miserable slave! contemptible murderer! thus to excuse your hateful act?' 'Nothing can be easier for me than to excuse myself, if you will only permit me an explanation.' 'Speak, then, but quickly!" 'I will be brief Your highness, suffering from *ennui*, was pleased to command a man's head to be struck off for your diversion. I gave you this great spectacle; but I did more than this; for the unexpectedness of the act, and the importance of the catastrophe, lent a fresh interest to the scene. One can never do too much in order to gratify a pacha You desired a head here is one already laid at your feet. And you have been yet better served than you expected; for, instead of the head of a slave, which would have afforded you but a passing diversion, I have brought you that of your favourite, and, through the greatness of the surprise, have altogether dispelled the tedium which oppressed you You may now cause me also to be put to death, if it be your royal will I have, at all events, been of use to you for a single half-hour of my existence, and before my death I will impart to you an important piece of information' '*You!* what can *you* have to impart to *me?* Slave, I command you speak!" 'It is this: that no favourite dare be permitted long to remain so Those who are placed in offices of high trust ever, in the end, become dangerous. It was with this view that I felt I was but fulfilling a duty when I slew this Mahommed, and happy shall I esteem myself if I have thereby done you a service. I am persuaded that you will one day own that I am in the right.' These words, and the calm self-possession of Markopoli, made a lively impression on Achmed. He said, turning to the slave, 'If you are in the right, then shall no man dare to punish you. Eight days will be sufficient for me to learn to estimate your deed at its rightful value. Return to your work: when the right time comes I will send for you and adjudge to you the punishment or the reward which may prove to be your due.'

"Strict search was now made amongst Mahommed's pri

vate papers, and it was proved that he had been engaged in a treacherous correspondence with the enemies of the state even engaging to deliver up some of the pacha's territories into their hands Markopoli was summoned to the divan, and Achmed presented him to his councillors as the deliverer of the state He was in the first place appointed Aga of the Janissaries His rise was rapid, and he soon occupied the post of the favourite After he had spent two years in fulfilling the duties of his high office, and displayed very remarkable talents, Markopoli besought the pacha for his dismissal in the following terms — 'That which is true with regard to others remains true as concerns myself Remember my words a favourite dare not long remain so For two years I have enjoyed this honour Satisfied with this, I now retire, in compliance with a maxim which your highness would do well to observe as an unchanging rule' Loaded with honours, the sagacious Markopoli retired to a distant province, and when, in future days, Achmed retained his favourites more than two years, he proved the truth of the wise man's words, and if seized with a fit of *ennui*, it was not the head of a *slave* which he caused to fall beneath the sword of the executioner Not in the East alone, my lord, is *ennui* the enemy of every noble feeling This ulcer of human nature and of society is widely spread, and exercises its influence in every land and amongst all classes Wealth, domestic happiness, greatness—nothing exempts us from this tribute Therefore it is that I say to you, my lord, Be on your guard against the caprices of the French nation All that I have heard of them and remarked amongst your own people leads me to believe, that in many things they resemble the Pacha Achmed So long as they are employed, they are kindly, amicable, and easily governed, but if once they are allowed to remain unoccupied, suddenly they will become unmanageable and despotic They will praise you and idolise you so long as you know how to amuse and to engage their fancy, but when your greatness assumes an aspect of uniformity—when you have ceased to lead them in search of new adventures—then will they begin to feel the tedium of *ennui*, and charge you, as the Pacha Achmed did *his* favourite, to bring them the head of some offending neighbour—a neighbour, it may be, who shall prove too powerful for you, and bring your own head into peril Now, then, I leave

you to draw the moral from my fable—even this: that no wise man will too long be disposed to bask in the sunshine of his fortune, but will seek in good time a shelter from the storm which may be gathering in silence around his head; and that he will learn to know the right moment at which to renounce the favour of his master, be that master a despotic sovereign or a yet more capricious populace; for the fear of being under a master's displeasure may make a traitor even of the most faithful servant."

The story-teller ceased to speak. Napoleon, sunk in profound thought, turned away in silence from the wise man. But he heeded not this warning-voice.

In the years 1806, 1810, and 1814, often did he think of the Prophet of Cairo

BOOK VI.

THE CONSCRIPT'S WIFE.

YEARS pregnant with great events had passed over our hero's head since the dervish of Cairo had foretold to him that the fickle multitude who then almost worshipped the victorious general would be ready to hail his downfal with triumphant joy That day had now arrived It was the last day of March, 1814, and the cry of "*Vive le Roi! Mort au tyrant!*" resounded throughout the southern provinces of France, and were uttered with a wild and exulting joy, which more resembled the delirium of revenge than the enthusiastic joy of loyal hearts

The inhabitants of the little town of Orgon, on the road between Avignon and Marseilles, participated in this state of the public feeling, and were exulting in the downfal of the tyrant, when suddenly the announcement reached them that Bonaparte himself was about to pass through their town, and this unexpected intelligence worked them up into a state of frenzy which might have been productive of very serious consequences, had it not been for a singular and unforeseen circumstance, which will cause the name of the town of Orgon, insignificant in itself, to be long remembered with interest in the annals of Provence The town is situated on a fertile plateau, covered with vineyards and orchards, and commanding a view of the rich and fruitful plain of Cavaillon, watered by the Durance The remains of the old walls which surround the town, and of the fort which formerly commanded it, bespeak its feudal

origin Just outside these walls, and on the road leading from Avignon to Marseilles, there is a house encircled by walls which appear to have belonged to a more ancient and considerable edifice, probably a monastery. This house, which somewhat resembles a hostelry of Old Castile, was in those days the "post-house" of Orgon. The main body of the building is partly concealed by a high wall, which forms one of the sides of the street in which this hôtel is situated, and can only be entered by two side doors, which lead through a porch into the large interior court, lying between the wall and the building This peculiarity of construction, common to many of the old inns of Provence, furnished to the "hero of a hundred fights" the means of escaping from a danger more imminent than any he had yet encountered

There was, at this period, in the post-house of Orgon a young girl who had been in service there for about a year, and who had often attracted the attention of travellers, not only by her striking beauty, but by her modest and retiring manners, and a certain air of chastened melancholy, which, however, by no means interfered with her prompt and intelligent fulfilment of every duty which her station required. The master and mistress of the house evidently knew her history, and treated her with the utmost kindness and consideration; but they never revealed her secret to curious passers-by Her fellow-servants respected her, and not one of them ever ventured to take the slightest liberty with Laure, though she never affected to be in any respect superior in condition to themselves Her dress was simple and unpretending. She wore neither the gold cross, the chain, nor the earrings which are the favourite ornaments of the women of Provence Her gown was of dark stuff, and the ribbon which was passed around her Provençal cap, and concealed her long and luxuriant hair, was black. None of the travellers who frequented the house knew for whom she wore this token of mourning; but all respected her silent, tranquil grief.

Laure had borne no part in the joyous festivities which celebrated the restoration of the king On the contrary, her melancholy seemed only to increase amidst the universal joy; and, notwithstanding the obscurity of her social position, there were not wanting those who ascribed the apparent indifference of the young Laure to a secret disaf-

fection to the royal cause Her conduct on this occasion was marked by one singular feature which added strength to the suspicions of which she had become the unconscious object Whilst the soldiers of Napoleon's army, on their return to their domestic hearths imbued with enthusiastic admiration for the "Petit Caporal were but too often received with a cold indifference which the violent party spirit of the day alone could have inspired they were always sure of meeting with a cordial welcome at the post house When the young Laure, standing with a dejected air at the door of the hostelry saw one of these brave men pass by she never failed to ask him in to rest and then, begging to be allowed to offer him some refreshment, she would anxiously inquire from him to what regiment he belonged, and in what battles he had fought

Suddenly there appeared in Orgon some of those sinister and designing men who seem ever to take advantage of internal dissensions, as readily as the bird of prey hastens to the slaughter-field These men came, on the present occasion with the design of instigating an ignorant and excitable populace to perform a deed that would have stamped the name of Orgon with infamy One of the party, who bore the title of count, and was treated with special deference by the inhabitants of the town, took up his quarters at the post house Monsieur le Comte was a middle aged man, of ordinary height, but with a countenance expressive of the most violent passions He distributed gold with open hands, spoke of the Bourbons with enthusiastic devotion, and said he had been one of the loyal band who had so long and so fruitlessly struggled in La Vendee for the cause of the altar and the throne The people looked at him with wondering admiration, and many amongst them would gladly have kissed the very ground on which he trod The presence of this mysterious personage seemed, however, in no degree to affect the tranquil Laure Soon after his arrival, she was seated, in the evening, in the chimney-corner, when he entered the apartment, surrounded by a great number of persons, whilst loud cries burst from the crowd who were assembled outside the door

"I thank you, gentlemen, for the reception you have given me, said the count, in the tone of one who only wished to allow people to form some uncertain conjectures

as to the rank he occupied, and the degree of authority entrusted to him. "The king shall certainly know how many faithful subjects he possesses in this town."

"All! all!" they exclaimed. "*Vive le Roi!*"

"I am the more delighted by the loyal spirit which I find existing amongst you," proceeded the count, "because the most outrageous calumnies have been circulated with regard to this faithful town It has been said that here, as in revolutionary Dauphiny, the usurper was likely to meet with a reception due only to the legitimate prince."

"It is a lie! a base lie! Down with the usurper! *Vive le Roi!*" was re-echoed by the crowd

"Bravo! bravo! long live the best of kings!" cried the stranger, waving above his head a hat ornamented with a white plume "It rests with you, gentlemen," he continued, "to prove your real sentiments. To-morrow Napoleon will pass through this town!"

A suppressed murmur of rage and indignation burst from the lips of the assembled group; and the agent of discord was proceeding with his declamation, when suddenly a young girl darted into the midst of the excited circle, and abruptly laid her hand on the arm of the stranger. It was Laure. The usual pallor of her countenance had been succeeded by a vivid glow; her eyes sparkled with excitement; and there was something so energetic and imposing in her whole aspect, that the noble spy, agitated by a vague feeling of terror, could not utter a single word.

"What is that you say?" she exclaimed. "Are you not deceiving us? Napoleon will be here to-morrow?—here, in the very spot where you are now standing? Is it *possible?*"

A mournful and bitter smile passed across her countenance, her whole frame trembled violently, and she looked with eager and inquiring eyes upon the stranger, who could not conceal the agitation produced in his mind by the evident agitation of the young girl.

"What matters it to you, my child?" he replied, hesitatingly, "whether he comes here or not? Things of this sort only concern *men.*"

"Yes," she replied, with a disdainful smile; "you are in the habit of despising women. But women love and hate with more energy, more passion, than yourselves. Tell us

then, sir, and do not *dare* to deceive us—this man—the emperor—will he *dare* to come here?"

"Is it as a good royalist that you make these inquiries, *ma jolie fille?*"

"I know nothing about all that I only know that I hate this man, and that to him I am indebted for all the miseries of my life."

"There is something extraordinary in the enthusiasm of this woman, gentlemen, said the stranger "Yes," he continued, "the fact is certain. to-morrow Napoleon will pass through Orgon."

"He shall never leave it!" exclaimed Laure, as her eyes flashed with wild enthusiasm "No, he shall *never* leave it! And yet he must not find a tomb here, amongst the ashes of our fathers No, no! the waters of the Durance —— Leave me! leave me!' Thus saying, she hastened from the room, leaving all present in a state of bewilderment

"She is mad!" "Where is she going?" "Let us follow her, exclaimed several persons in the assembled group

Laure had directed her steps towards the square, where for some days past the assembled crowd had abandoned themselves to the intoxication of a clamorous and excited joy. The houses were hung with white flags, and ornamented with garlands of olive leaves, intertwined with flowers It was night, but thousands of torches supplied the light of day. No cloud veiled the deep azure of the tranquil sky, which offered a striking contrast to the wild and stormy passions that were raging in the human hearts assembled together beneath its majestic canopy.

"What have *you* got to say to our women, *belle déclaigneuse?*' cried a rough voice from amidst the crowd; and, at the same time, a man advanced towards Laure, with his sleeves rolled up on his bare arms, and stained with blood "Do not listen to her; she is not a royalist. *Vive le Roi!*" he added, as if in defiance of the new comer. "*Vive le Roi!*"

"And do *you* leave us to ourselves, Vincent le Boucher?" (the Butcher), replied one of the women. "she is a better royalist than yourself"

"Only look at that *sans-culotte* of former days," cried another, "with his sleeves rolled up! Could not we fancy that he was just returned from the massacre of the priests in Avignon in '93?"

"Shame on him! shame on him! Down with Vincent le Boucher!" resounded from all sides.

"Whoever has dared to say that told a lie!" exclaimed the butcher, furiously

"Peace!" cried Laure, stretching out her hand as if to impose silence on the crowd "In the name of St François Regis, leave this man alone Wives and daughters of Orgon! will you listen to me?"

"Yes, yes, let us listen

"Yes," she replied, "listen to me Who is there amongst you who, during the reign of the tyrant, has not lost a son, a brother, a husband, a friend? Do you remember those fearful times when these brigands scoured our province? If an unfortunate young man hid himself in the woods, in order that he might not be led forth to certain death, but remain to be the support of an aged parent or a youthful bride, he was relentlessly torn from his place of concealment, and often dragged away bound to the tail of the gens d'armes horses, whilst his weeping mother was brutally repelled at the point of the bayonet. Oh, vengeance! vengeance! He at whose command all these horrors were perpetrated is to pass to-morrow through our town; and if there be not here a single *man* who dares to lay hands upon the tyrant, I will dare it myself! He must die!"

"Yes, yes! let him die! Down with the tyrant! *Vive le Roi!*"

"Thou hast spoken well, Laure," said an old woman who leant upon a knotted stick. "This monster of a Bonaparte!—my poor boy! my Charles! He deserted that he might return to his mother; he feared that she might suffer want when he was not there to work for her They had him shot!"

"Good mother!" exclaimed Laure, "every one of your tears is worth a drop of his blood. We will have no pity on him. Let him die by the hand of those whose hearts he has broken! Let him suffer as we have suffered!"

"Death to the tyrant! *Vive le Roi!*"

The words of Laure acted upon the assembled multitude with the rapidity of an electric shock; cries of rage burst from the crowd; and in a single moment Laure seemed to have acquired an almost unbounded influence over their minds. She availed herself of it to impose silence upon them anew, and then said—

'He must know, on his arrival, the fate which awaits him He will stop at the post-house. Let us begin by destroying his effigy Women of Orgon! follow me!"

This proposal was met with acclamations; and this excitable populace, which passed in a moment from a state of indifference, or even dislike, to one of passionate admiration hastily formed a canopy of branches, on which they placed the young heroine, crowned with flowers The young men then bore her in triumph before the crowd who, with shouts of exultation, followed this queen of an hour The stranger whom we before named had mingled amongst the throng, and sought to increase their exasperation, but they did not understand him as well as Laure He spoke of the principle of legitimacy and of the rights of the Bourbons, she recalled the *conscription* to their minds, and thus worked upon feelings which agitated every breast. When they arrived at the post-house, they found, prepared before the door, as if by enchantment, a little *mannequin* in the well-known costume of the emperor A cord was suspended to the wall, and this effigy of him before whom kings had trembled, and who had married a daughter of the Kaisers, was subjected to the indignity of a mock execution, and dragged through the mud of a petty town of Provence!

Napoleon, in the mean while, was continuing his sad and unwilling journey through the south-eastern provinces of France The people of Lyons came to welcome him as in the days of his prosperity, and throughout Dauphine the population testified an attachment to his person and a regret at his discomfiture which often brought tears to the eyes of the fallen hero, and which, perhaps, suggested to his mind the wonderful enterprise which he attempted in the ensuing year But Montélemart, a small town on the borders of Provence, was the last place upon his route where he was destined to meet with even that shadow of respect which was due to his misfortune.

On the morning of the 25th of April, a post-chaise entered the court of the hostelry of Orgon. Two persons stepped out of the carriage, and called for some refreshments whilst the horses were being changed. The one was of middle height; his complexion was sunburnt, his eye penetrating and restless. He wore a blue frock-coat, and at his breast was suspended the ribbon of the Legion of Honour. The other was tall and thin, his hair tinged

with gray, and his form already bent, although apparently more by the hardships and fatigues of war than by the hand of Time He was dressed in the uniform of an English general-officer As he stepped from the carriage, he took off his hat, and walked with an air of respect, and, at the same time, of circumspection, at a little distance from his companion, whose manners appeared more easy and unconcerned

The carriage in which these strangers had arrived bore the imperial arms The crowd, who had been on the look-out since the preceding evening, gathered around in anxious expectation

The news quickly spread through the town of Orgon, that the carriage bore the arms of Napoleon; and although it was hardly to be supposed that the emperor would be allowed to travel thus without an escort, and with only a single attendant, the report was eagerly credited, and the mob hastened to the inn, uttering frightful imprecations. The gate of the yard had been closed, but the armed populace began to dance beneath the effigy of Napoleon, which hung before the door; and some of the more daring even placed ladders against the wall, with the intention of scaling it By a singular chance, Laure, in the absence of the host and hostess, this day filled their place, and received the travellers in the parlour, where, the preceding evening, she had so unexpectedly revealed the long-pent-up feelings of her heart.

"Young woman," said the first of the two personages we have just described, "are you the mistress of the hôtel?"

"No, sir; but you can give me your orders as if I were," replied Laure, directing, at the same time, a glance of anxious curiosity at the speaker. "What is it you want?"

"Horses!" *brusquely* replied the traveller.

"And for whom, if you please?"

"For *us*, apparently."

"That is not enough. Where do you come from? Do you belong to the suite of Bonaparte? There are no horses here for him; he will not need them."

The traveller started, but so slightly that the movement was barely perceptible He cast a rapid and piercing glance at the young servant, and exchanged a look of intelligence with his companion.

"We can conscientiously affirm," he replied, "that we

do not form part of the suite of the person you have just named Let the horses be got ready for us, and procure us some refreshments "

There was something grave and imposing in the aspect and in the very voice of the stranger which astonished and attracted Laure. She felt his ascendancy and hastened to obey him. The travellers took their seats at the table; but he who had been the spokesman only took a glass of water, folded his arms across his breast, and seemed absorbed in meditation Suddenly the cries of the infuriated populace were heard with redoubled force, and the discharge of fire-arms attracted the attention of the travellers Laure entered the apartment with a hatchet in her hand, and her eyes sparkling with joy

"Stop, young woman" said the stranger, calmly "what is the cause of all this clamour, and where are you yourself going?"

"It is nothing, nothing at all,' replied Laure; "only that Bonaparte may perhaps be approaching, and I will not be the last to strike him "

"What!" exclaimed the stranger, with an air of painful astonishment, "is it against *Napoleon* that this conspiracy has been formed? These people have been misled. Doubtless, agitators have been amongst them, and profited by the present excited state of their feelings I know the Provençaux they are hasty and enthusiastic, they will recover from their error But you," continued he, turning towards Laure, "you, so young and so handsome, what can Napoleon have done to *you* to inspire you with this feeling of hatred? Will you dare to raise your hand against him who has been your emperor, and who was crowned by the pope himself?"

"Say, rather, our oppressor," exclaimed Laure. And yet the look and the voice of this man caused her an indescribable emotion. She dropped her hatchet, and timidly cast her eyes upon the ground. One would have thought she felt ashamed of the enthusiasm she had betrayed.

"Well," resumed the stranger, "do not be afraid of me; but tell me what deep wound has this Bonaparte inflicted upon you that you should thus hate him and thirst for his blood."

"I do not know who you may be," said Laure; "but I feel the need of justifying myself in your eyes. Napoleon!

oh, what grief that man has caused me! I was an orphan; I had, however, a brother who took care of me We dwelt together in the house where we had closed our parents' eyes, and where *their* parents, too, had lived and died I was happy with my brother, with my dear Joseph, who knew every thought of my heart ——"

A tear started to the eyes of Laure, and rolled down her cheek

"Go on, my child," said the traveller in a kind tone of voice; "I feel the deepest interest in your history."

"Alas, sir!" resumed Laure, "my brother was much older than I. He had been a soldier whilst I was yet a child, and he got his discharge how I cannot tell But Joseph knew how much I loved—oh! why should I not own it?—yes, how much I loved Eugène Robert, the son of a poor old woman in the neighbourhood! We formed so many plans for the future, he was so good, so handsome, and he had never loved any one but me. The conscription came; and oh, sir—would you believe it?—Joseph insisted upon going in place of my Eugène! Yes; notwithstanding my tears and the entreaties of my lover, he had himself enlisted in his place He died three months afterwards in that terrible campaign in Russia. Oh, my Joseph! may God bless thee! never a man was mourned for as thou wast!"

"Young woman," said the stranger, as he seized the trembling hand of Laure, with an emotion which his companion seemed to share, "the bones of one hundred thousand brave Frenchmen repose on the desert plains of Russia; and I, who have served in their ranks, thank you from my heart for the tears you have shed over their fate. For ever sacred be their memory!"

Thus saying, he uncovered his head, as if in token of respect and pious remembrance of the dead.

"And do *you* also weep for them?" exclaimed Laure. "Oh! may Saint François le Régis protect you, sir! But, would you believe it possible? After the departure of my brother, my Eugène fulfilled his promise, and I became his wife. One day the gens-d'armes surrounded our cottage; they came, in the name of the emperor, to tear my husband from my arms You tremble! Yes, in the name of the emperor they did their terrible deed. I cast myself into my husband's arms and cried for mercy. He wept—

he cast himself at their feet, but in vain They put a heavy chain round his neck *I saw it* I sought to burst those cruel bonds. I fell bathed in my blood I had received a sabre-cut on my breast from one of the gensdarmes Eugene Robert was killed at the battle of Lutzen —here is his last letter to me, and a lock of his black hair I always wear them near my heart Oh! I *must* help to shed the blood of the ambitious tyrant who robbed me of my husband—of my brother! I sold my father's house, and took the situation of servant at an inn, in order that my Eugene's aged mother might never know want The poor mother! she weeps every day, and every day she talks of her son, who was so good and so handsome Whenever *her* hour comes, *I* shall soon follow her to the grave!

Thus saying, she lifted her hatchet from the ground, and turned away in silence from the strangers As she was about to leave the room, however, the younger traveller again addressed her thus—

"Stop!" he exclaimed, "you are thirsting for the blood of Napoleon Your grief has led you astray, but your sorrows have been very great There, sir," said he, turning to his companion, "this is the way in which the agents of a government execute its laws Listen to me, young woman You are not formed to mingle amongst this vile populace whose cries now fill the air *I am the emperor*"

"Ah, sire!" exclaimed the English general, casting himself between Laure and Napoleon, "What are you about?"

"Sir," replied Bonaparte, "it is not in our power to retard for a single moment the hour of our death perhaps I may only have been spared on so many battle-fields in order that I might fall here by the hand of this obscure girl, whose misfortunes I compassionate."

It would be difficult to describe the effect which this unforeseen circumstance had upon Laure. She shuddered: a convulsive tremor shook her whole frame; Napoleon stood before her; but the hatred of this young Provençal was only another form of exalted sensibility. Deeply wounded as her heart had been, it was yet full of generosity and kindliness. When she saw before her this illustrious man, whose *name* alone had so long inspired her heart with the thirst of vengeance, it was no longer *hatred* which filled her breast, but an undefinable sensation of mingled respect and awe; and she involuntarily sank upon

her knees, as if to offer her willing homage to his fallen greatness.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, in a voice interrupted by her sobs, "wherefore, sire, have I seen you? Wherefore was I permitted to speak to you without knowing you? Why did you not enter our town of Orgon surrounded with soldiers? I should have sought you out in the very midst of your army Yes, I should have done it, for I had *sworn* it! But you are a fugitive, an exile, and unfortunate Tell me, in the name of God and of the holy father who anointed your royal brow, tell me, did you command all the evil which has been done in your name?"

"Madame," he gravely replied, "the Emperor Napoleon cannot stoop to justify himself in the eyes of one of his subjects. He deeply feels for your sorrows, and pardon you for your intended crime No, no," he continued, interrupting himself with deep emotion, "let us forget the past I would rather speak the language of a father than that of a sovereign No, I have never commanded the cruelties which have been perpetrated in my name· had I known them, they should have been severely punished. In leaving the soil of France, I shall carry away a bitter regret at the thought that it is not in my power to remedy your misfortune, or even to alleviate it Yes, these tears of a soldier's widow make me regret my crown"

"Sire," interrupted the English general, "this noise outside the walls of the inn is assuming an alarming character. It is necessary to take some steps to assure your majesty's safety, since the magistrates of this town are, it is said, powerless to check the fury of this enraged populace. You appear to me," he added, turning towards Laure, "to be a woman endowed with much presence of mind and resolution. If I may trust the respectful emotion which you have betrayed on finding yourself in the presence of the Emperor Napoleon, I should imagine that you must now look upon him with far different eyes from those with which you have hitherto viewed him."

"I hardly know what is passing in my own heart," exclaimed Laure, as she folded her arms across her bosom and gazed at Napoleon with mingled sadness and respect. "How shall I save him now? I? There are none but I!"

"If everything be ready," said the emperor, briskly, "let us set off at once: these cries annoy me. Farewell ma-

dame! you are the widow of a Frenchman who fell in defending his country, but the victim alas! of one of those acts of oppression which a sovereign, unfortunately, has no power to prevent I shall not forget you

'Laure! Laure!' cried a postilion, as he struck the smooth parquet with the heel of his heavy boot "the horses are ready harnessed, but, *tron de l'air!* here they all are! the whole crowd, coming into the court they want to cut the traces, they say Bonaparte is here

Follow me, gentlemen if you please,' said Laure, resolutely, as she stepped forward still armed with the hatchet.

"Here they are! here they are! Death to the tyrant! Down with the usurper! *Vive le Roi!*

"In the name of the king and of the law I command all loyal subjects to withdraw!' exclaimed a personage wearing a white scarf, and who bore the appearance of being a municipal magistrate

'No! no! down with Nicholas!'* Down with the tyrant! *Vive le Roi!*

"Where is he! the wretch!' said Vincent le Boucher, armed with a long cutlass 'is that he'

Chance had guided but too well the arm of the assassin, his weapon was pointed towards the bosom of the emperor, who at this critical moment preserved his usual composure and self command The English general grasped the hilt of his sword, but suddenly Laure precipitated herself against the butcher, with so violent an impetus, that, overwhelmed by the unexpected shock, he fell backwards on the ground She placed her foot upon his body, and raised the hatchet above his head

"Stop!" she exclaimed, with an energy which imposed upon this tumultuous crowd "Bonaparte is not here These gentlemen are his majesty's commissaries, charged with the mission of watching over the embarkation of the tyrant Get into the carriage, gentlemen Drive on, postilion Gentlemen, may God protect you!

"The commissaries of his majesty! Long live the Bourbons! long live the commissaries of the king! Down with Nicholas!'

* Napoleon was designated by this name in 1814 15 *why* is not well known, but it was considered a term of reproach

And the exasperated crowd themselves threw open the *porte-cochere* to facilitate the passage of the chariot, whilst Napoleon waved his hand to his deliverer, with a farewell glance of gratitude Laure sank upon her knees and fainted away upon the threshold

Some time after this event, which has been narrated in a variety of ways, the English general stopped at the old post-house of Orgon He asked anxiously after Laure, he had been charged, it is said, by Napoleon, to present her with a pledge of his grateful remembrance. But the mother of Eugene Robert was dead, and the CONSCRIPT'S WIFE had also followed her husband to the tomb

BOOK VII.

TALLEYRAND

"THIS Talleyrand" (casually wrote, in 1804, the Baron Von Schlabrendorf to his friends in Germany) "is a dried-up mummy, without either heart or soul His dull glassy eyes dart sharp, restless glances on every side, and yet they have none of the warmth or vigour of life. his emaciated frame seems hardly able to drag itself along; his whole being bespeaks an entire moral atrophy" It is not a little remarkable, that such a man as this should have lived to the year 1838 a striking example of how long a worn-out body may retain a worn-out soul. All men of his class—Mazarin, Richelieu—amidst the wildest revolutionary storms and the most remarkable vicissitudes of fortune, have ever attained to extreme old age. The thankless multitude envy these "happy ones." let us see wherein consists the happiness of these living corpses

Napoleon had returned from Egypt. He had left behind him the illusions of that campaign; he had forgotten the prophetic warnings of the dervish of Cairo; he was on the point of climbing to the very summit of earthly greatness, borne to the dizzy height on the shoulders of admiring multitudes His desire to win universal applause, to hasten forward on the stream of time like a robust and practised swimmer, to leave far behind him all competitors in the race of glory, had carried him much farther than he had ever contemplated in his original plans He saw himself suddenly elevated by the enthusiasm of the populace to the throne of the Cæsars, he hesitated not to ascend it, and with avaricious hands to seize the dazzling

prize which the goddess of Fortune seemed to cast in his very lap out of her overflowing horn of wealth and glory.

Only one person viewed his rapid elevation with a sorrowful heart, and that was, unfortunately, his good genius, Josephine, the wife of the First Consul; soon *Empress* of France, a title which only bestowed upon her more splendid misery. Although many of Napoleon's flatterers have exalted to the very skies the tender affection which united this royal couple, and would have us believe that Bonaparte was a most tender husband, yet the most trustworthy witnesses testify, that Bonaparte neither felt *himself* happy in his union with Josephine, nor did he make *her* so. The ardour of Josephine's attachment to him, as she advanced in life, became nearly importunate to him, and, at times, he betrayed his repugnance almost openly. This deprived her counsel of that irresistible grace which youth and beauty never fail to bestow on a beloved adviser. Thence it arose that, during the divers occurrences which were daily brought about by the changes that were going on, there were frequent repetitions of scenes of matrimonial discord, especially at the time when Bonaparte, excited by the secret machinations of his enemies, and embittered by the manifold tokens of change in the minds of the populace, was gradually changing his despotic public spiritedness into a hypocritical Machiavelian ambition. Instead of accomplishing the destiny to which he seemed especially called, and leading the social and political revolutions of France and of Europe to a glorious end, even though his own power should have been annihilated in the progress of that great work, he sought only to establish his own might, and to gather around him for that end all those persons who, by reason either of their capacity or of their dislike to his power, might become perilous to his government. Amongst this number was Talleyrand, the man with the brazen forehead, who, with unchanging, shameless hardihood, played with the most sacred oaths; swearing fidelity alternately to the Catholic church, to the Republic, the Consulate, the Emperor, Louis XVIII. Charles X. and Louis Philippe; and, from his youth up, betraying all whom he professed to serve. Bonaparte sought his alliance and concluded a bargain with him; he made himself his slave and his victim, when he raised him to the post of the first servant of the crown.

'alleyrand left to his master the burdensome part of the onnexion, and kept for himself all its *agrémens*—affluence, nd even fame, for the short-sighted multitude, accus- omed to view all things superficially, considered his delity to the cause of France amidst so many changes as oble and praiseworthy One of the chief means for the onsolidation of his power appeared to Napoleon to be the estoration of the family bond—the marriage bond, and in onnection with this, of all the ordinances of the church, hich he sought to re establish once more, having pre iously concluded, to this end, a formal contract with the ope These reforms and restraints on the freedom of ie consciences of men were, however, received with ue applause amongst those higher classes of society who ad hitherto indulged in the most unlimited freedom both f thought and action Amongst the number of these tter was the ex bishop Talleyrand, the consecrated priest, ho, notwithstanding his vows of celibacy, had formed an nconsecrated union with Madame le Grand

Bonaparte suddenly forbade this connection to his mi ister, being desirous, above all things, to naturalize once ore at his court allt he "prejudices of the olden time, order to win the sympathies of the ancient aristocracy e sought out the ladies who were to compose the court the empress amongst the oldest and most distinguished milies in the kingdom, and would not allow one who ood in so doubtful a relationship to his prime minister afford a subject of scandal to this aristocratic society, to recal to their minds that "age of freedom," the xity of whose morals had become notorious, and had en made a subject of reproach even to Josephine.

Talleyrand, upon whose head Bonaparte had heaped nours without end, well satisfied with his post as the ost influential favourite of the First Consul, and one hom he knew he would never dare to dismiss, was by means dissatisfied with the imperial mandate, which fered to him an agreeable opportunity of freeing himself om bonds which had long been unpalatable to him He erefore reconciled himself with hypocritical sorrow to e 'unavoidable," and announced to her who was his fe, unsanctioned by the church, the imperial will But adame le Grand was too sincerely attached to him, orthless as he was, to give him up without a struggle

she burst into a flood of tears, and, without saying a word to Talleyrand, hastened to Josephine, threw himself at her feet, and besought her intercession with the emperor, or rather with the First Consul; which titles, however, were at that time almost one and the same Madame Bonaparte, touched by the ardour of her attachment, and by her vehement and tearful protestations that she could not live without her "husband," advised her (as she could not *herself* venture to be her spokeswoman) to station herself in a corner of the saloon and await the entrance of Bonaparte. Madame le Grand followed this advice, and carried it out so heroically that she waited six hours for the First Consul, who was not a little surprised by her unexpected appearance Madame le Grand urged her cause with such passionate ardour, and pressed it so vehemently, that Napoleon at last replied impetuously, "Well, Madame le Grand, if you cannot live without him, then you must just marry him!" Madame le Grand took this expression on its favourable side, reported to Talleyrand the imperial order that he "was to marry her," and the bewildered companion of her life could think of no good reason for refusing to obey the command. Madame le Grand hastened all the preparations for the wedding, so that in twenty days she was duly presented at court as the legitimate wife of Talleyrand The First Consul received her with the ungracious words, "I hope, Madame le Grand, that Madame Talleyrand will cause Madame le Grand to be forgotten."

Such was the mode in which Bonaparte carried out his plans for the restoration of family ties. The marriages which were then brought about were certainly anything but edifying; and though they served to cast a veil of morality over the external state of society, this flimsy covering but ill concealed the rottenness which lay at its core. It was one of the first steps in Talleyrand's career of treachery, that he used all his arts to accomplish this plan, and to strengthen Bonaparte in his resolve, whilst he well knew it would at a future time be one of the most effectual means for bringing about the downfall of his patron.

The clear understanding and simple mind of Josephine alone ventured to oppose this rash trifling with that holy symbol which at this period began to be considered a mere fashionable ceremony. She ventured also to reproach her

husband with the bold dissimulation which he employed in the carrying out of his ambitious plans for the restoration of all the regulations of the monarchic times, in order to accomplish the usurpation of a throne which had lost its halo even in the eyes of its former friends. Napoleon pacified her on this subject, as well as on that of his nepotism, which she mightily censured, inasmuch as he allowed his kindred to plunder the national treasury and acquire immense fortunes, by flattering her feminine vanity with a gift of the famed jewel-casquet of Marie Antoinette, and by having the brilliant diadem of the unhappy queen reset for her use. Talleyrand, as might be expected, enjoyed but little happiness in his married life. Chained to a commonplace woman, whom he had never esteemed, he lived after his marriage, as he had done before, simply for his own selfish ends, which were destitute of every noble element. Incapable of fidelity or probity, he never learnt to know the happiness enjoyed by those who are blessed in a union of mutual love. The pure joys of the father of a family were not for him. Entangled in the web of his intrigues, he dragged on his long existence like the spider, which feeds on the blood of its victims, and is looked upon by all with horror and disgust. This mock restoration of the Christian family was the flower-covered abyss into which he precipitated his friend and patron. From this reform onwards began the long train of Talleyrand's treacheries; his eye took in the long chain of consequences which grew out of every event, far more promptly than that of his master. From that period began Talleyrand's secret connection with the enemies of Napoleon; from that period began the weaving of those toils which finally ensnared that lion-spirit, doomed to fall in the fearful struggle. Now once more were untruth and fraud made the chief elements of state policy, and Machiavelism was once more constituted the soul of the French state. Now once more the secret police began to exercise its fiendish arts; Fouché and Talleyrand organized once more the dark chamber, in order, through forged handwritings and intercepted letters, in the leading-strings of deception, to plunge Napoleon into a fatal abyss of falsehood. The daring farce of Jesuitry and priestcraft, which had long ceased to be holy to the multitude, again recommenced, and could not fail

to entail destruction on those who had restored them for their own worldly ends.

That a spirit of so noble a temper as that of Bonaparte became so utterly corrupted was chiefly effected by the poisonous cunning of Talleyrand. The working of this poison was rapidly visible throughout the whole community. The heroes of the Republic, who had hitherto served her with so much devotedness, became greedy of honours, and, like the courtiers of Louis XVI required rewards in return for their slightest services The *employes* of the government were accessible to bribery and disposed to treachery, the priesthood strove to regain their former power, and conspired with the foreigners The whole framework of society seemed rotten; its moral stay was gone; and the nation rapidly sank back into a state of immorality which was even worse than the revolutionary freedom

The life of Talleyrand is well known. Despite of all his cunning and his extraordinary genius, he could never bring the world to look upon him with any other eyes than those of the very deepest contempt; no heart beat with love towards him; Friendship turned away from him with an uneasy glance; Honour never stretched forth to him a hand of welcome, although his traitor breast was decorated with every order upon the face of the earth

His end, on which it is well worth our while to bestow a glance, in order to see the difference between the deaths of a just man and a traitor, was like his life. It excites no emotion beyond that of curiosity, and the following report of the scene, by his physician, is so much the more deserving of attention, as it flows from the pen of one who had been a sincere admirer of the prince, and who could not raise his moral feeling above the impression of the moment. What can be said more condemnatory of the whole life of a man of such genius as Talleyrand's, than that even those very persons whose judgment of him was formed under the influence of personal gratitude could not yet deny that the death of so remarkable a man, of one who had acted so prominent a part on the stage of public life, elicited no deeper sympathy from his contemporaries?

"The clock was striking six on the morning of the 17th May, 1838, when I directed my steps to the old hôtel in the

Rue St Florentin. I approached it with sorrowful forebodings for the state of the illustrious patient, when I left him the preceding evening, left me no hopes of his recovery The faint dawn of the rising day had begun to dispel the morning clouds which hung over the trees in the garden of the Tuileries. A few scattered passers-by alone disturbed the deep stillness of the hour and the perfect silence which prevailed throughout the whole of this quarter of the city The bell, which I pulled with a trembling hand, resounded through the spacious court of the hôtel with a clangour which seemed to me almost unearthly.

"I stopped at the porter's lodge to ask how the prince had passed the night I observed the carriage of his domestic physician at the door, and hastened up those stairs which I had ascended—oh, so often!—with a heart full of very different emotions from those which now agitated my breast At the sight of those two statues of Silence, which, damp with the morning dew, seemed to guard that gigantic portal, I felt a cold shudder pass through my veins. The enormous lions, which have been so often compared to those of Venice, recalled to my mind the mute, motionless watchers which rest on the marble slab of a sarcophagus It seemed to me as though every object around bore the impress of the grave, and as if a death-like atmosphere already pervaded this old and at all times gloomy-looking building The ante-chamber was empty The household were all assembled in an apartment adjoining that of the prince, in order to hear more frequent tidings of the progress of his malady

"When I entered the chamber in which the veteran diplomatist reposed, I found he was lying in a deep sleep, which gave the physician some faint hopes concerning him, although he knew it was almost a necessary consequence of his preceding extreme exhaustion. This sleep, or rather lethargy, lasted for about an hour after my arrival. As time passed on, many apprehensions were expressed by his friends and relations lest this sleep, beneficial as it was, should be prolonged beyond the hour which the king had appointed for his visit When the sick man at length awoke from his heavy slumber, it was with no small difficulty they succeeded in making him understand the importance of the approaching occurrence. Hardly had they succeeded in raising him up in his bed, and supporting

with pillows his drooping head, than his majesty the King of the French was announced, accompanied by Madame Adelaide

"It would have been an interesting study for a moralist or a painter this striking contrast between these two men now seated side by side beneath a canopy of old green tapestry as if they had been placed there on purpose to form a historic *tableau* The king, as etiquette required was the first to break the silence It would be difficult to describe the expression of Louis Philippe's countenance as he cast a parting glance on his setting star

"'I am grieved to see you in so suffering a state prince said the king in a low tone

"'Sire, you are come to witness the last moments of a dying man All those who have any regard for him feel that they can now wish him nothing better than a speedy termination to his sufferings

"These words were uttered in that strong, deep voice which was peculiar to Talleyrand a voice over which age seemed to have no power, and which even the approach of death itself could not weaken

"The royal visit was as brief as possible It was evident that his majesty was deeply and painfully affected After Louis Philippe had spoken a few words of comfort to the sufferer, he rose to take his departure The prince then said, 'Sire, an honour has befallen our house this day, which will ever be remembered by my successors with gratitude and with pride'

'Shortly after the king had retired, the physicians observed the first symptoms of approaching dissolution The various members of the family were quickly apprised of the imminence of the danger, and assembled around the sick man's bed Amongst them was the Duke of P—— To wards noon the fever increased I felt the need of breathing a purer atmosphere than that which pervaded the hermetically-closed apartment, and went into the saloon The spectacle which I then witnessed awakened in me a feeling of painful astonishment I saw myself suddenly transported from the apartment of a dying man to a saloon filled with all the *elite* of the Parisian *noblesse* Never can I forget the impression which the whole scene made upon my mind Several groups of statesmen, with the red ribbon hanging at their breasts, stood around a large fire,

some were bald, some powdered: their earnest conversation though carried on in a suppressed tone, produced a continuous buzz I remarked a few of the old friends of the diplomatist, who had been drawn to the house of death by a sincere attachment to his person, and who bore no part in the eager discussions of the political disputants

"In one corner of the room sat a coterie of ladies, who chatted over trifling follies, which harmonised but little with the solemnity of the occasion. Every now and then a laugh burst from some one or other in the circle, and was checked by a disapproving 'Hush!' from some graver head The young and graceful Duchess of B—— reclined on a sofa near the window, surrounded by a group of youthful beaux, some of whom were seated at her feet on the cushions of the divan

"It seemed to me as if I had been suddenly carried back to the century of Louis Quatorze, and was assisting at the death-bed of Mazarin The eye of an observant looker-on would, doubtless, have perceived there also the same indifference, the same appearance of *ennui*. Amongst all those who were assembled in that saloon, how few had been drawn there by real attachment to the dying statesman! Some came because their station required it, others out of courtesy to the family; others from curiosity; but none amongst them all seemed to consider that a mighty genius was forsaking the world, and that they were assembled there to be present at the death of a great man.

"But now, in one moment, every voice is silent, every noise is hushed: a solemn pause ensues, and every eye is turned towards the door of the sleeping apartment, which is slowly opened. A servant entered, and with downcast eyes and a mournful aspect stepped up to Dr. L——, who, like myself, had entered the saloon in order to obtain a few moments of refreshment. The messenger from the chamber of death whispered a few words in his ear. The doctor hastily rose from his seat and entered the sick room. The whole assembled company followed him. Talleyrand was sitting up in bed, supported by his secretary. Death had already set his stamp only too visibly on that marble brow, and yet the appearance of vital energy which his countenance expressed even in this, the last stage of his existence, filled me with astonishment. One could almost have fancied that at that moment his whole past life had

been concentrated in his brain From time to time he raised his head, threw back the long locks of hair which fell over his forehead, and, casting his eyes around on the assembled throng, a smile of triumph lighted up his emaciated, disfigured countenance; and then his head sank again, exhausted, on his breast."

"In the exercise of my profession, and from its attendant circumstances, I have often found myself compelled to be present at similar scenes, but never have I seen any one maintain more steadfastly the character of his whole life, even up to the fearful hour of dissolution, than Prince Talleyrand When he felt the near approach of death, he seemed to entertain no fear of it, neither did he affect to despise it; but he awaited it as an honourable enemy, as one with whom he had long and bravely struggled, and before whom, now that he was at length conquered, he did not blush to lay down his arms and own himself subdued He died surrounded by as much greatness, and treated with as much reverence, as though he had been a monarch

"Scarcely had those eyes, whose every glance had so long been watched with the most lively interest, been for ever closed in death, than all those who had been present at the solemn scene hastened out of the hôtel, each hoping to be the first to spread the tidings of the prince's death. Before the close of the evening, the apartment which had, all through the day, been full even to overflowing, was left in possession of the hired attendants whose duty it was to watch by the corpse When I entered the chamber in the course of the evening, I found the arm-chair in which I had so often seen the prince seated now occupied by the priest, who was saying the customary prayers for his soul.

"Contrary to the prevailing custom in France, the interment in this case did not take place in forty-eight hours after the decease. The embalming of the corpse delayed this sorrowful ceremony for some days. The body was first conveyed to the Church of the Assumption, where it was allowed to remain until the month of September following, because the tomb which was destined to receive it, and which had already been long begun, had not yet been completed.

"I was induced to accompany the funeral convoy to Valençay, not only on account of the interest I felt in the ceremony, but also from my desire to pay the last mark of

respect in my power to a man who had always treated me with so much kindness and benevolence His brother, the Duke de Talleyrand, had died at the same time as himself, and was borne with him to the grave The mortal remains of the little Jolande, who had been buried two years before, were also taken from their quiet resting place to accompany those of the two princes on their long and mournful journey The carriage which bore this sad burden, and which had been constructed for the special purpose of conveying the remains of the ex Queen of Holland from Switzerland, much resembled in appearance a large powder chest

'The exhumation of the body of the child in the solitary graveyard of Mont Parnasse the laying of her little coffin upon those of the princes, the solemn glare of the torch light, the creaking of the heavy wheels as they passed through the silent streets at the solemn hour of night, the pale beams of the moon, which seemed to cast a yet more mysterious gloom over that which was already gloomy in itself, the striking contrast between the far different fates of those who were now being borne to their last earthly resting place, all combined to make a more powerful impression on my mind

"We reached Valençay three days after our departure from Paris At ten o'clock in the evening the hearse turned into the long alley of chesnut-trees which leads to the castle Every mark of honour which was due to the prince in life was now paid to his lifeless corpse with punctilious exactitude even the most trifling minutiæ of ceremonial were not forgotten The funeral car entered the principal court yard of the castle through the grand entrance All the servants who composed the household of the prince were here assembled with his heir at their head The nephew of the prince himself took his seat upon the box, and drove the ponderous vehicle into the town The servants of the castle and divers armed retainers of the prince followed on foot, bearing torches in their hands, till they reached the church, where the coffin was deposited for the night, the next morning being appointed for the commencement of the funeral festivities

'The next morning, from break of day, all the inhabitants of the little town were in movement Peasants in their holiday garb began to stream in from all the adjacent

villages The windows of every house were filled with gazers The national guard were under arms Had a stranger happened to pass through Valençay on that morning, he would certainly have thought that its people were celebrating the anniversary of some great national festival

"But what a difference was to be observed between the funeral honours paid to the two brothers! For the duke there was neither expense nor pomp a single post chaise drawn by two horses, no useless expenditure, a coffin of ordinary wood, in all respects similar to that of another man And yet *now* one and the same pall covers the two coffins the one rich in embroidered velvet, the other of uncovered wood, one and the same prayer ascends to heaven for the souls of those who rest under the same gorgeous catafalque Both were carried together to the chapel of the Sisters of Saint Andre, which had been built by the prince himself, and in which he had caused his family vault to be prepared His coffin was let down first, then that of the duke, and last of all, that of Jolande The graceful little coffin of this young maiden, richly inlaid with silver, and wrapped in white satin, appeared as if it were destined rather to ornament a large boudoir than to contain a handful of mouldering dust

"The grave was closed, all was over We returned to the castle, where a banquet had been prepared by the present owner for those who had assisted at the funeral ceremonies

"There we first began to cast around us an inquiring glance to see who were those that had come to pay the last token of respect to this great man We looked on every side; the number was small indeed we could discover only people who had been in his employment—grateful servants But of all the great ones of the earth whom *he* had *served*—whom he had helped to render great, powerful, and wealthy—of all these, we saw *not one!*"

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to write the history of a hero, when, in order to do him justice, one must fight his battle against contemporaries who have exercised no small influence upon his fate Therefore it is that, in undertaking the present work, I at once renounced all pretension to writing a book of *history*, properly so called But neither could I attempt to write a work of pure *fiction*, when, at every step, *truth* seemed to cross my path; and my conscience rebelled against such a disfigurement of historic facts as a mark of mere poetic romance would seem to require

The pedants, who have been, for the most part, the historians of the present century, will doubtless declaim against the arrogance of the compiler and of the poet who has thus undertaken to weave together in a mingled web history and romance; whilst the poets of the day will deem that unjust violence has been done to their noble art, by placing her handmaid, Fancy, under the rigid constraint of historic truth "What can Truth avail us," some will say, "when disguised beneath the garb of fancy, and concealed under the shadowy veil of fiction? She gains nothing in bravery, and loses much of her reality."

By no means Men too often will not bear with Truth when she appears before them without a veil They also despise poetry when it is not founded upon truth. Therefore it is that we have adopted this semi-romantic, semi-historical form, in order to convey more vividly to the minds of men some distinct images of that fearful period whose better fruits we are even now reaping. The occurrences of the day have prevented us from carrying our plan into execution to its full extent. We are compelled to pause, and to await patiently the time when it may become possible for us to complete our design. It requires a

cooler head and a more passive spirit than *we* are possessed of to devote our thoughts to either art or literature amidst the scenes of discord and war which surround us on every side. The hand which drew these imperfect sketches trembled beneath the electric influence of a storm-changed atmosphere It sinks powerless on the paper when it would attempt to draw even the feeblest outline of the end of that distinguished man who has been the forerunner of a fearful and universal rebellion

And yet we cannot bid him farewell without regret Whatever may have been his faults in the hour of his prosperity, in his fall we cannot but own him to have been great. What calm dignity and resignation pervade his every act! His career is closed he knows that to attempt a longer struggle would be hopeless With what self-possession does he endure his fate! The act of abdication at Fontainebleau will ever cover with glory his departure from the scene of action But even after that terrible hour his spirit yet retains its watchfulness He discovers the weakness of his enemies, and returns from Elba to Paris And, when once again the whole of Europe, united by a common bond of terror, rises up in arms against him and casts him down once more from the pinnacle of earthly glory, how nobly does he cast himself upon the mercy of his earliest, bitterest, and most powerful enemy Instead of yielding himself up into the hands of the Emperor Francis, he ascends the deck of the "Bellerophon;" England conveys him to St Helena; and he performs the unwilling voyage with the dignified tranquillity of a hero who feels himself ever greater than his fate.

An involuntary feeling of reverence compels his conquerors to treat him with respect. On the rock of St. Helena he composed that remarkable journal, in which there is not a single word of unkindness or of bitterness, not one unjust judgment concerning his fellow-men; not one false statement. What elevation of mind does it not display! What a superiority to all human passions! Truly this journal is the best monument that could have been erected to that greatness and magnanimity of soul, which remained to the last unshaken in this heroic man, whose spirit no misfortune was capable of subduing

Whatever judgment History may ultimately form with regard to Napoleon's character, *one* glory must ever be his·

that of having been the most distinguished being who appeared on the world's stage during an age when all things—men, events, manners, *all*—were remarkable and unexampled. And yet there is something consolatory in the assurance which such a history as that of this giant mind conveys, namely that no one man, however great he may be, can long be the central point of the world's existence. The isolated, secluded state of feeling which at this time was peculiar to every nation in the midst of the storms of the great Napoleonic wars is full of poetic meaning and significance. Whilst Napoleon gained victory after victory, and the whole of central Europe stood aghast at his career, the Spaniards troubled themselves but little about his greatness or his success. The Russians looked upon him as the Antichrist; the Greeks viewed him in the light of an adventurer; and the Turks despised him as an unbeliever.

The great tragedy which occupied all minds, and to which every eye was turned from 1789 to 1815, we must now leave to a future period, and perhaps to an abler pen than ours, to describe. Its termination is well known to all, and few, even amongst his enemies, but must think, with a pang, of that lion-spirit, caught in the toils which had been woven so pitilessly around him. And yet, notwithstanding the many noble points of his character, we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact, that Bonaparte, after the early ardour of his youthful career had passed, unhappily learned to despise humanity, and by his egotism and reckless ambition alienated from himself the hearts of the great mass of the nation. From being the champion of liberty, he became the abettor of despotic power, and thus aroused against himself the feelings of whole nations. Still, perhaps, he might not even then have fallen a victim to the might of his enemies, had not the power of gold been also enlisted against him. It is well known that over all Europe paid agents were employed to undermine his power; and in many hearts where the voice of liberty might have been unheeded, the love of money proved all-powerful. It is, indeed, marvellous how, in these our days of intellectual growth, the love of gold oversways the destinies of individuals as well as the fate of empires. This is a passion which eats into the very vitals of any people who indulge in it; and England, Bonaparte's most powerful

enemy, she who had the glory of seeing the hitherto invincible conqueror prostrate at her feet, has proved that the love of gold, ruling, as it does, throughout that mighty empire, amongst high and low, rich and poor, becomes a canker-worm at the very heart of a people's prosperity.

There are days in which might and influence have too often been acquired, not by violence, not by diligence, not even by *genius;* only by gold—gold, which is often cast into the lap merely by the hand of Fate, and which, save for the prejudices of mankind, would be nothing more than yellow clay.

But this reversal of the laws of nature—this rule of that is in itself base and worthless—cannot long subsist So will the reign of intrigue, of falsehood, of avarice, come to an end; and the nations, now blindly struggling after a good which as yet they are only *feeling* after, will learn, though perhaps after years of bitter experience, that it is not constitutions alone, however good, "social compacts," "rights of men," however fair and promising, which can assure their liberty; that it is the truth, and the truth *alone*, which can make them free

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