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Josephine

SECRET COURT MEMOIRS.

COURT OF THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

CHAPTER I.

Prince Kourakin. — His Portrait. — Present Made by Him to the Celebrated Dubois. — M. de Czernicheff. — Some Details Respecting Him. — The Princes of Saxe-Cobourg, Mecklenburgh-Schwerin, and William of Prussia.—MM. de Bassano, Cadore, Chaptal, and Portalès.

PERCEIVING that my mother and I began to find ourselves too long absent from my father, the Empress gave us one of her carriages to repair to Paris for a month ; she made us promise to return to Navarre at the expiration of that month, and remain there with her until she should proceed to Malmaison, where she requested us to prolong our visit.

We availed ourselves of her kindness, and came to pass the month of February in Paris. We were received everywhere with a more marked attention than usual, and were invited to a very splendid ball.

Having been on a visit for nearly two months with Her Majesty, we were constantly questioned respecting her with a warmth of feeling which clearly proved that all the good she had done, and especially that which she had endeavoured to do, was still fresh in every one's recollection. I felt rather annoyed at being constantly obliged to *answer* when I wanted to *ask* questions. The winter had passed in a round of pleasures; several marriages had taken place during my absence; and yet, instead of my being put in possession of the arrear of news, I had to inform others of what was going on at Navarre. We succeeded, in the course of eight days, in gratifying the curiosity of idlers; and I then freely indulged the gratification of observing, in my turn, in order to entertain the Empress with a narrative of the changes that had occurred in society.

The female part of the community was chiefly engaged in discussing the fêtes given by Prince Kourakin, who was worthy of being a Frenchman, by his gallantry and the good taste he displayed on those occasions. A splendid residence, the choicest furniture, a table served up with unexampled luxury, everything was brilliant about him with the exception of his person; being of a corpulent size and frightfully ugly, his countenance appeared the more forbidding as he was always dressed in a coat of cloth of gold, spangled with diamonds. I never saw him in a

frock coat.* When he appeared in a salon, where he was the only one dressed in this manner, he resembled an actor ready to strut upon the stage for the purpose of performing the part of a silly Turcaret. When the eye was once accustomed to his strange and disagreeable external appearance, he never failed to captivate by his truly playful wit and his accomplished address towards the fair sex, a quality we were not apt to discover in the high nobility of that period. He adopted at his own house the Russian custom, which requires that the master of the house should open the ball with the principal lady of the company. Prince Kourakin generally led the Duchesse de Bassano *for the Polish dance*, a kind of march, which opens every fête at St. Petersburg.

Prince Kourakin was dreadfully burnt at Prince Schwarzenberg's fête. He was trampled under foot, and the severe wounds which he received required during many months the assiduous attentions of our celebrated Dubois, whom he rewarded with his wonted generosity.†

The officers of his embassy were men of agreeable and very courteous manners; but they were all thrown into the shade by the fascinating Count de Czernicheff,

* It was said that he wore, in the early part of the day, when at home, a dimity morning gown, to which were hung all his orders set in diamonds.

† By the gift of a splendid snuff-box, containing a considerable sum in bank-notes.

whose appearance, which was far more singular than pleasing, had procured him a reputation for beauty very ill borne out by his truly Tartar countenance. A flat nose, Chinese eyes, almost closed by constant winking, a large mouth, a sallow brown complexion, could never constitute a handsome face; but the remarkable elegance of his manners, a waist greatly tightened at the lower extremity, a handsome leg, very black hair, which had the appearance of curling naturally; his unrivalled address and finished education, a constant attention to the ladies, and, above all, his character of a foreigner, had rendered him the admiration of every one. He was thought to be exclusively intent upon pleasing, whilst his only object was to serve his Sovereign, to whom he was greatly attached, by endeavouring to discover Napoleon's plans with the view of defeating them. Although he held no rank in the embassy, he was almost feared by Prince Kourakin. He was Alexander's favourite, and was often entrusted with verbal missions from both Emperors, a proof of the confidence which he inspired, notwithstanding his youth.

I have since heard him assert that he had obtained a much greater knowledge of the plans relative to the campaign of Russia in the midst of balls, than in the offices of the war department, and that whilst he was dancing not a word escaped him of the conversations carrying on in the different groups which happened

to be near him. In a waltz he always took care to stop near a personage of note, who, supposing him wholly engaged in the enjoyment of dancing, allowed some words to escape which led him as a guide into the labyrinth from which it behooved him to extricate himself with unsullied honour, in order to justify the opinion which his Court entertained of him. He *feigned love* to none but the wives of Ministers or of high functionaries, in order to derive some intelligence from any indiscreet expression on their part, which he skilfully promoted by flattering their vanity. I believe he was incapable of feeling any other love than that of ambition. He alleged that it was far better to pretend having inspired love to a handsome woman, although there were no truth in the assertion, than to have really excited such a passion without its being known. This affords a full measure of his sensibility of feeling.

He excelled in every gymnastic exercise, and was particularly remarked for his sure aim in firing a pistol, and his manner of dancing the *mazurk*, which was quite the rage during a whole winter.

M. de Czernicheff came to Paris for the first time in 1806; he was then only eighteen years of age, and had been dispatched as a courier to Napoleon. On the day of his arrival, he was brought by M. Demidoff to a magnificent ball given at the St. Joseph's Lodge, which rivalled that of Ste. Caroline. Chance having

left a vacant place near my mother, he very uncere-
moniously took his seat, and opened the conversation
with her in a very singular manner.

“Do you not know me, madame?”

“No, monsieur.”

“My name is Czernicheff; I arrived this morning
from St. Petersburg; I performed the journey in
fourteen days, and the most delightful part of my
story is that I quitted that capital at the moment of
retiring from a fête, and have arrived here just in
time to dance at this party. This is very comical,
but is very little connected with the object of my
journey. Fancy to yourself, madame, that I was
deeply in love at St. Petersburg; my Emperor was
aware of it, though I did not suppose any one was
acquainted with my secret. On my return from the
Marshal’s ball, I found an order desiring me to attend
immediately upon the Emperor. He asked me, the
moment I entered his apartment, whether I was
sufficiently devoted to his service to take my de-
parture, in spite of my tender passion.

“‘Yes, Sire.’

“‘Well, then, my dear Czernicheff, make your
preparations, you are going to Paris, you will see
Napoleon, who will grant you an immediate audience;
you will tell him the contents of the dispatches I
now hand to you, you are to read them with atten-
tion previous to stepping into your carriage, and when

you know their contents by heart, you will destroy them. I have agreed with the Emperor of the French that you shall in future be our intermediate agent. I know your attachment to my person, your wit and discretion, consequently, your fortune is made. Adieu.'

"I returned home, obeyed the instructions of our Emperor, the men were putting the horses to the carriage, and whilst I was perusing those important papers, my valet was packing up my trunks. I took my departure, and travelled night and day. I have just arrived. I am to see Napoleon to-morrow, and am to return immediately, with a verbal answer to my message. You must acknowledge, madame, that I am very quick in my movements."

"Yes," replied my mother, smiling at being unable to edge in a single word, "and especially at a reserve so creditable to a diplomatic agent."

"Oh, you may rest assured, madame, that I will never utter a syllable that may not be calculated to promote the interests of my master."

"I am fully persuaded of it; nevertheless, you are confiding your secret to one who is an utter stranger to you."

"I do so, because you appear to me so truly deserving of my confidence. Pray tell me who is that lively young girl now dancing before us."

"Mdle. G——."

"She has eyes that would melt our Northern ice. And that handsome woman who is in conversation with M. Demidoff?"

"Madame de Graville."

"I greatly admire her, and must beg to be introduced."

Accordingly, he quitted my mother as abruptly as he had accosted her.

The next day he was admitted to the audience of Napoleon, who was so much pleased with his wit that he presented him with a splendid case of pistols, of the Imperial manufactory of Versailles.

This first journey of M. de Czernicheff conveyed the opinion that he was a downright giddy young man; great, however, was the surprise of every one at again seeing him, at a later period, with altered manners and appearance. Some persons ascribe to him the fatal result of the campaign in Russia, for which the Emperor had laid down the most scientific plans; he was under the necessity of quickly changing them when he found that M. de Czernicheff had obtained possession of all his secrets. Hence arose all the calamities we since had to deplore. The Emperor Alexander loaded him with favours, and I believe he has retained all his appointments in the service of the Emperor Nicholas. His ambition must by this time be amply satisfied; but I doubt much whether he does not occasionally reproach himself with having

so ill requited the highly flattering reception he met with in France.*

I was at this ball of the St. Joseph's Lodge, where I saw a crowd of foreign Princes, who courted the honour of a look from Napoleon; amongst the number were the Princes of Saxe-Cobourg, Mecklenburgh-Schwerin, and William of Prussia.

Prince Leopold was then very young, very handsome, and excessively bashful. He had no anticipation of the exalted fortune that awaited him at a later period; but he, perhaps, looked forward to happiness: he has lost it forever! . . . He was of a gentle disposition. As I met him almost every night at the house of a Russian lady of my acquaintance, I had an opportunity of judging of the simplicity of his manners; he exhibited no fascinating quality, nothing that could lead to suppose that he would one day become the chosen partner of the greatest Princess

* M. de Rovigo states in his "Memoirs" that M. de Czernicheff was still in France when the discovery was made of his having obtained possession of important papers; that a telegraphic signal might have conveyed an order for his arrest, but that this precaution was omitted with a view to spare him from a disgraceful exposure. To the best of my recollection, a price was set upon his head, and he had two hours' start of the telegraph. It is highly improbable that a spirit of indulgence was carried so far as to allow of the escape of such a man, who had incurred a heavy guilt, especially when we reflect upon the just but rigid severity displayed towards his accomplice. I believe the plain truth to be that the police were outwitted by M. de Czernicheff, and were behindhand in their measures or too late apprised of his departure. Thus much is certain, that I saw M. de Czernicheff in 1814, when he declared that it required the most extraordinary activity on his part to save him from his impending fate.

in Europe. He seemed to possess the qualities of a private gentleman, rather than those of a man destined to rule over his fellow creatures.

The dignity and pride of the family appeared to centre in his brother, the reigning Prince; his handsome countenance displayed a cold, proud dignity, and indicated a habit of command; I preferred the soft expression of Prince Leopold's countenance.

They have exhibited a striking contrast to each other in their domestic life. The one made his wife so unhappy that he compelled her to sue for a separation; whilst the other still deplores the irreparable loss he has experienced.

In their intercourse with society, all those petty highnesses were most affable and friendly, much more so than the greater part of the high Court personages, who felt quite bewildered at finding themselves in such good company, and who, in order to conceal their embarrassment, affected with the Princes an air of familiarity nearly akin to impertinence. I must except from the number MM. de Bassano, de Cadore, Chaptal, and Portalès, who might be held up to imitation as models of wit and good address.

CHAPTER II.

Return to Navarre. — Departure for Malmaison. — Present Made by Her Majesty of Contraband Goods. — Description of the Palace of Malmaison. — The Emperor's Apartment. — Details Respecting His Private Study.

ON my return to Paris I felt much astonished at seeing no longer around me that state of sumptuousness to which I had become accustomed. I am very ready to make this admission ; at that time, however, as well as at present, I felt all the happiness of being *in my own home*, and experienced no regret when in the company of friends whom I preferred to the pomp and enjoyments of the Court of Navarre. Josephine was my principal attraction there ; she it was whom I most regretted, and I looked forward with pleasure to the moment when I might be restored to her company.

We were punctual in returning to Navarre, agreeably to our promise ; nothing remarkable occurred during the month of our further stay in Normandy.

At last preparations were made for returning to Malmaison ; the Empress, being anxious to avoid receiving addresses from the towns through which she had to pass, apprised us that we should be the first

to proceed in her carriage with some persons of her household, and that she should only take her departure on the following day. We complied with her orders, and found all the municipal authorities in full costumes, with their scarfs and hats and feathers; the troops were under arms; the young girls, clad in white dresses, held nosegays in their hands; everything, in short, was prepared for Her Majesty's reception. Much disappointment was felt at her having passed by *incognito* on the preceding day. (We were directed to make this assertion.) We received in our carriage all the nosegays intended for her. Fortunately for us, as we could not convey to her the intended addresses, we were not called upon to hear them. We repaired to Paris in order to purchase a few articles of dress which we stood in need of, as our toilet must necessarily be more attended to at Malmaison than at Navarre, since Her Majesty admitted to her company every person belonging to the household of Napoleon and of Maria Louisa. We were to be absent eight days in making our preparations, and afterwards to return to meet the Empress.

I again felt alarmed at the mode of life we were going to lead, and was convinced I should often regret the delightful spot we were about to quit. I was very little acquainted with the high dignitaries who would now pass in review before me, and was well satisfied that as I held no situation in Jose-

phine's household I should be closely eyed by every lady who might come on a visit to Malmaison.

I was always at a loss to understand how any one could feel a pleasure in being looked at by indifferent people, who are always ready to lay hold of the faults and mistakes of others. Excessive vanity alone can afford courage to withstand such a scrutiny. There was no possibility of escaping this inquisitorial search, and by way of consolation I bethought myself of doing the same. Accordingly I prepared to act the part of a person watched and watching in return; and in order that the former part might not be too painful to my feelings, I exhausted my humble stock of pin-money in purchasing the most becoming ornaments.

We returned to the Empress on the appointed day, and I felt greatly annoyed at having so hastily expended all the money I had laid by, as we were no sooner installed in the apartment reserved for us, when two footmen entered with muslins and other articles of dress sent to us by the Empress. We went immediately to give her thanks, to which she replied by saying that she could not do less in return for the unpleasantness we had experienced in staying a whole winter in the country, and that she would, moreover, be much pleased at my wearing dresses she could not apply to her own use, since they were *contraband goods*, which she would, however, be very sorry to consign to the flames. Many of them, in

fact, were articles of Indian manufacture. This marked attention on the part of Her Majesty is a proof of her anxiety to be of service to those whom she honoured with her friendship, and to promote their enjoyments.

The Palace of Malmaison was built on a small scale; everything was sacrificed to the ground floor, which, without being very magnificent, is, nevertheless, well adapted for a Prince. Napoleon had occupied a commodious apartment on that floor, and it had, besides, many other rooms well adapted for splendid parties; the hall, the billiard-table, the salon, the dining-room, were delightful, and the gallery presented one of the finest sights imaginable when lined with superb paintings and the admirable statues of Canova.

The Empress, who retained for the Emperor an attachment bordering upon adoration, would never allow even a chair to be removed from its place, and preferred occupying an indifferent apartment above stairs. Everything in the Emperor's cabinet remained in the same state in which he had left it; a book of history was lying on his bureau with the page marked at which he had left off; the pen with which he had been writing retained the ink which, a moment later, might have dictated laws to Europe; a map upon which he had been pointing out to his confidants his projects respecting those countries he

meditated to invade, and which bore marks of his impatience, perhaps occasioned by some silly comment. Josephine had taken upon herself the exclusive care of shaking off the dust that covered what she called "his relics," and she seldom permitted any one to enter this sanctuary.

Napoleon's Roman bed was without curtains; his arms were hung on the walls, and various parts of male dress were scattered over the furniture. It seemed as if he were just about to reënter a place from which he had banished himself forever.

The ground floor was very splendid, and contained numerous mosaic pictures from Florence; dials set in lapis lazuli and agate; bronzes of costly workmanship, and Sèvres porcelain vases, the gifts of the Emperor. The hangings of the salon were the work of the Empress; the ground was of white silk, and the double J entwined with pompon roses; when there was little company, they were covered with draperies of gray silk. Josephine's apartment was extremely simple, and hung with white muslin. It is true that the golden toilet presented by the city distinctly indicated to whom the apartment belonged. Nothing could equal the splendour of this piece of furniture; it formed there a perfect contrast with every other object. Her Majesty often expressed the desire of sending it to the Vice-Queen, but Prince Eugène, in my presence, refused his consent. It was

a personal offering which she had received at the period of the coronation. When the divorce took place, Napoleon sent it to her as well as a gold breakfast service, and many other articles of great value, which she had neglected to take away.

The menagerie was by no means extensive at this period of time ; it would have required a considerable sum of money to keep it up, which Her Majesty preferred economizing for other purposes.

Great stress has been laid upon her extravagant disposition, which she was always said to gratify regardless whether she could do so without running in debt. This may have been the case at the Tuileries, where she was surrounded by servile flatterers, and had no friend who would venture to give her an advice, or even to make the slightest observation to her. It is possible that at that time she may have freely indulged in her taste for everything that was splendid, grand, and expensive ; she was the reigning Empress, and that, which, under any other circumstances, would have been a useless and culpable prodigality, was excusable in a Sovereign in whom it was the more incumbent to encourage the fine arts, as France had for a long time been deprived of their fascinating enjoyment.

The artists, persecuted in common with the nobility and the wealthy, had thought only of their personal safety, and far from seeking to make a

display of their talents (of which they would have been very justly proud at an earlier period, and which at a late one were to contribute towards restoring to our beautiful native land its superiority over every other nation), they hid themselves from view, and were content to study in the solitude of retirement. In order to give them, depressed as they had been by misfortunes, that energy and elevation of mind so indispensable to the production of masterpieces, it was necessary, not only to pay liberally for their works, but to surround them with all the marks of respect due to merit; this was what Josephine did. Proud of her approbation, Gros, Girodet, Godin, again took up their pencils; Spontini, Méhul, Paër, Boieldieu, their lyres, and Fontanes, Arnault, Andrieu, and Lemercier their pens.

When she descended from the throne, she entirely changed her conduct; confiding in the tender affection of various persons who had preferred following her to her retreat rather than remain in the centre of favours and patronage, she listened to their counsels. I have often seen her abandon plans which she had cherished for months, solely on the representation of the heavy expense which would have attended them. Thus she deprived herself of the palace which was to have been built for her at Navarre, the one already existing being much too small. The Emperor had promised to defray half the expense of it,

but as M. Berthaud's estimate amounted to *three millions of francs*, she would no longer allow the subject to be mentioned, and resigned herself to put up with the very indifferent accommodation of the old palace. Passionately fond of flowers, she was desirous of having greenhouses, which might at all times furnish her with rare and handsome ones, and that she might not diminish the sums devoted to charity or to the purchase of presents for her intimate friends, the menagerie was suppressed, and, with the exception of the kangaroos and a few parrots, all the animals were given away.

The park of Malmaison was beautiful, and kept in the greatest order, but it was found impossible to procure a supply of clear water because it was always brought to the spot by artificial means, and kept in a clayey soil. Foreign trees, flowers in every direction, and beautiful green plots, rendered it a charming residence. The Empress had caused a handsome sheepfold to be built near the pond adjoining the Bois de Butard;* and intended to procure some Swiss cows and place them under the care of a family from the neighbourhood of Berne, who were to have found in this place the calm and tranquillity to which they had been utter strangers in their native land. Having too confused a recollection of their story to present a narrative of it, I can only venture to state what has

* St. Cucuphar's Pond.

come under my personal knowledge, or what I have ascertained in a positive manner. Thus much I can say that such an episode would have afforded a fresh proof of Her Majesty's goodness of heart; and I regret the more not having paid sufficient attention to it, as it deprives me of the satisfaction of presenting it in all its details.

CHAPTER III.

Plan of Our Daily Occupations at Malmaison.

ON the very first day of my arrival at Malmaison, I had occasion to regret our having quitted Navarre. It was necessary to be dressed and decked out at nine o'clock in the morning, in order to be at an early hour in the salon, where all the Senators, the Councilors of State, and the persons belonging to the household of the Emperor, of the Empress Maria Louisa, and of the Princesses, evinced the greatest eagerness to pay their court. As they came in full toilet, we were under the necessity of receiving them in the same manner. The men were also in uniform, with the costume of their office; those who were attached to Josephine had resumed the dresses of chamberlain, equerry, etc. This Court etiquette was more particularly irksome to me, as I had never yet been subjected to its unpleasant duties.

We were seated in a circle, and kept up a conversation with our neighbours without being allowed to attend to any occupation. If one had for a neighbour a witty and obliging woman, the conversation did not flag; if, as was oftener the case, one happened to be

placed near a lady full of conceit with her title, her diamonds, and her recently acquired fortune, it was impossible to bear with her. I often returned to my apartment, in order to indulge in some occupation; but a footman generally came for me a quarter of an hour afterwards, by desire of Her Majesty, who had at heart that we should remain with her, in order that her Court might appear the more numerously attended.

Breakfast was served up in the same manner as at Navarre. Ten or twelve visitors were usually invited beforehand, or engaged to remain after the visit, which they had purposely paid at an early hour in the morning. On rising from table, the company returned to the salon; the Empress entered into conversation with them for about an hour, whilst walking to and fro in the gallery. It was the practice to stop at every picture, the merits of which had been canvassed on the preceding and on every other former day, to listen to observations already known by heart, and to the opinions of newcomers, whether right or wrong, the critics being often ignorant of the historical features portrayed by our great painters. The next place of resort was the billiard-room, where very little interest was felt in the parties, as the games were, of course, won beforehand by the most distinguished members of the society; the result of the game having been foreseen, it afforded no pleasure to the com-

pany in the gallery, who might make a sure bet by ascertaining the rank of the person who played the game.

Crowds of people came in regular succession to pay visits, and the Empress always found obliging and graceful expressions for every one, which afforded a manifest proof that Her Majesty was still alive to the interests of each. When the weather was fine, the greenhouses were inspected; the same walk was taken every day; on the way to that spot the same subjects were talked over; the conversation generally turned upon botany, upon Her Majesty's taste for that *interesting* science, her wonderful memory, which enabled her to name every plant; in short, the same phrases were generally repeated over and over again and at the same time, circumstances well calculated to render those promenades exceedingly tedious and fatiguing. I no sooner stepped into that delightful walk, which I had so much admired when I first saw it, than I was seized with an immoderate fit of yawning, and could scarcely check myself in order to reply to questions put to me, and to keep up a conversation grown fastidious by its sameness. After examining some stamina of the choicest flowers, we went to admire the black swans, though they were infinitely less handsome than the white ones; the latter, however, have the misfortune of being more common. It was agreed on all hands that those birds, whose

plumage resembles that of the turkey-cock, were beautiful; the chamberlain on duty would then give us on the spot a dissertation respecting the difficulty of naturalizing them; he gravely asserted that they could not exist anywhere but at Malmaison.

After we had returned home, the company who had arrived in the morning received a warning to take leave by the approach of Her Majesty's calashes, which indicated her intention to take a ride. She seldom kept the ladies to accompany her; at Malmaison as well as at Navarre, she named those of her household who were to be of her suite. We stepped into the other carriages, traversed the parks, and surveyed for a couple of hours the *Bois de Butard*; we never took any other road. We then returned to dress in a more elegant costume for dinner, to which meal twelve or fifteen persons were always invited. On rising from table, the Empress sat down to cards; the remainder of the society had music in the gallery or played at billiards. Visitors regularly flocked in from Paris; tea, ices, and cakes were served up at eleven o'clock; Her Majesty retired at midnight, and we all withdrew to our respective apartments. The next and every other day resembled the preceding one, unless any extraordinary event should occur.

Nothing could be more gloomy than this kind of *amphibious* existence, if I may be permitted the expression. We had not sufficient etiquette for a Court,

and were far too much constrained and affected for indulging in social enjoyment. We all kept watch upon each other ; the slightest intimacy was quite out of the question ; being always in a state of ceremonious intercourse, we found not a moment's leisure to converse with those for whom we might feel a partiality ; and instead of that delightful custom we observed at Navarre of reading aloud and conversing without restraint, we had to put up, day after day, with the commonplace conversations so much in vogue in the world, which leave no other feeling behind than a deep regret at having wasted one's time in listening to or joining in them.

CHAPTER IV.

Memoirs of M. de Beausset. — Cardinal Maury. — Saying of That Prelate. — His Gormandizing Appetite. — Mdles. Delieu. — Their Character. — Crescentini. — Madame Rilliet-Hubert. — Military School of Saint-Germain. — Presents Made by the Empress to M. de Turpin. — Catacombs of Paris. — M. de Turpin. — M. de Thury. — M. Emanuel Dupaty.

M. DE BEAUSSET dwells at great length in his “Memoirs” upon the sincere affection he bore to the Empress, and upon her regard for him in return. I cannot say what degree of veracity is due to his assertions, for I have not, like him, made ~~holes~~ holes in doors for the purpose of seeing and hearing what was taking place within; thus much, however, is *certain*, that during the period of six weeks I never saw him *more than once* at Malmaison with his wife — a tall woman, nearly as large as he was corpulent. In order, no doubt, that this couple might harmonize together in everything, the lady wore a velvet dress of the same colour as the scarlet coat of her husband; this is the only circumstance that has brought to my recollection the fact of a visit which had nothing remarkable in it, for a prefect of the palace did not

hold so important an office as to fix the attention of a person accustomed, as I then was, to meet generals, marshals, Dukes, Princes, and Sovereigns at the palace of Malmaison.

M. de Beausset was coldly received by Josephine, who probably found that he had been rather slow in paying his visit (we had already been three weeks at Malmaison). He had the awkwardness to say in the course of conversation that the Emperor asked him if he had been to pay his respects.

“I am probably indebted to that question,” said the Empress with great reserve, “for the advantage of seeing you.”

She neither invited him to dinner nor to breakfast for any of the succeeding days, as she was wont to do when any one came to visit her. He was, perhaps, more fortunate after my departure, and he may have succeeded in recovering the good graces of the Empress, which it must have been so painful for him to have lost.

Cardinal Maury was one of the most assiduous of her visitors. I felt a great desire to become acquainted with a man who had acquired so much celebrity especially for his energetic conduct at a time when it was dangerous to manifest the opinions he entertained. I fancied that his countenance could not fail to be impressive, and his conversation to possess great attraction. I was again disappointed, for the hundredth



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time in the course of my life, and saw in him nothing more than a corpulent man devoid of dignity and completely spoiled by the weight of a reputation upon which he had, nevertheless, to a certain extent made considerable inroads.

He generally paid very little attention to what was passing around him, and conversed with the Empress, at such times as she spoke to him, upon insignificant trifles; he no longer presented the slightest indication of that Abbé Maury who replied, with so much composure, to those who were clamorous for his being hung up to the lamp-post:

“When you shall have hung me, do you expect to see the better for it?”

Wrapped up in projects of ambition, which the Cardinal's cap was inadequate to gratify, he revived from the kind of reverie in which he was plunged only to devour (the expression is correct) a quantity of small cakes, and to swallow several glasses of punch and ices. Her Majesty laughed at his immoderate and unseemly voracity. When it was known that he was to come at night the servants prepared a double collation. My curiosity respecting the Cardinal was never gratified by any further details. It is far more advantageous for us not to come too much into contact with the objects of our admiration; by becoming better acquainted with them we incur the risk that the enthusiasm inspired by a noble action

should make way for a feeling of painful regret, by our acquiring the melancholy certainty that a splendid reputation conferred upon true merit is nevertheless seldom unalloyed.

The Empress summoned to Malmaison two young ladies who had inspired a deep interest in their fate by their undeserved misfortunes and their wonderful talent for music. Mdlles. Delieu, the daughters of a banker who had failed (at Rouen, to the best of my recollection), found in the kind attentions of Josephine an affecting consolation for their bitter sorrows. Having been informed of the truly painful position of this family, which she had met on her way through Normandy, she took upon herself the education of the eldest sister, and of the second also at a later period. They were provided with the best masters, and so far profited by the instructions given to them as to prove their gratitude to their august benefactress by their amiable conduct in after life.

It is impossible to hear a sweeter or a more chaste and powerful voice than that of Mdle. Annette; a perfect method combined with that natural gift rendered her one of the most fascinating singers in Paris.*

*Crescentini assisted her with his advice. This celebrated man always displayed the utmost readiness to oblige a fellow creature. His numerous friends found every amiable quality combined in his character. He never availed himself of his influence with the Emperor except in their behalf, and often obtained favours which would have been denied to every one else. In a word, his splendid talent was not the only thing in him that excited admiration.

The second sister had not so fine a voice, but as it was an excellent contralto she ably seconded her sister in a duet which they sung with great effect. Those ladies were both living in the palace. They did not dine with Her Majesty, but were attended in their own apartment, and only came down when they were summoned to perform. On their first arrival they were so mild, so unassuming, and so deeply afflicted, that I took a great liking to them, the more so as the other ladies treated them with an *air of protection* which I conceived to be humiliating to their feelings. My mother and I were the only persons who bestowed any attention to them in the intervals between the songs; we had no great merit in so doing; but they ought, perhaps, to have evinced a just sense of our having treated them with more attention than the rest of the company. They did so at first; but, having been subsequently treated with more consideration, invited to take tea with Her Majesty, and honoured with presents from the Viceroy, they assumed by degrees an air of reserve towards us, it being out of our power to do more than shew them civility, and were lavish in their attentions to the ladies attached to Her Majesty, from whom they had scarcely received a friendly look on their first arrival. Our early intimacy dropped, and towards the close of our visit at Malmaison we never spoke together except upon subjects connected with music. They were

always treated very differently from Mdle. de Castellane and myself. We frequently received from the Viceroy and his mother presents of no intrinsic value, whilst valuable jewels and diamonds were given to those ladies. This was paying the price of their talents.

Being deprived of every resource at the death of Josephine they repaired to England, where they obtained great success by giving concerts in private saloons lent to them by distinguished ladies who called themselves *their patronesses*; this is tantamount to an engagement to exert every means for promoting the success of the persons thus patronized. It is said that Mdles. Delieu amassed a considerable sum of money. They returned to France, and were very advantageously married. They were worthy of the fortune which they acquired, by the attention they bestowed upon the family to whom they devoted the fruits of their exertions. Their goodness of heart was duly appreciated by their mother and other sisters. Their trifling wrongs towards us ought not to prevent me from doing justice to their praiseworthy conduct towards every individual of their family.

During her stay at Geneva, the Empress had often met Madame Rilliet-Hubert, whose name I have already had occasion to mention. Aware of her deep concern at the departure of one of her sons, who insisted upon adopting the military profession (the

only one for which he was calculated), Her Majesty promised to recommend him in the strongest manner to the general officer commanding the military school of cavalry established at Saint-Germain. As soon as she arrived at Malmaison, she requested we would call upon M. Rilliet and inquire how he enjoyed himself at the military school. Being intimately acquainted with his worthy mother, we felt great pleasure in having an opportunity of rendering her a service, and proving our gratitude for the friendly reception she had given to us at Geneva. We repaired to Saint-Germain in one of Her Majesty's carriages, a mode of travelling which removed every difficulty in the way of admission. It was the custom to search every person entering the precincts of the school, in order to prevent the pupils from receiving anything from out-of-doors. As we came on the part of Josephine, whose name was respected and cherished everywhere, we were excused from that unpleasant ceremony, very fortunately for M. Alfred Rilliet, to whom we brought some provisions which were sent to him by the Empress. His warlike ardour was still unchanged, but he would have preferred being a common soldier rather than a pupil at this school in which the accommodations were of the very worst kind; the palace, having long remained uninhabited, was so damp that water fell from the blankets whenever they were wrung; the food was

wretched, and the ammunition bread worse in quality than what was provided for the army. We promised to give Josephine an account of everything, and left him indulging the hope that Her Majesty's goodness would find some means of softening the hardships of this painful novitiate of glory. M. Rilliet would have found some consolation in being allowed to stand fire and to run into danger; but fighting was going on without him; this was his greatest mortification.

We mentioned to Her Majesty the bad accommodations of the school; she immediately wrote to the general to request he would grant M. Rilliet one day's leave of absence every week.

"I cannot procure any alteration in his diet," she said to us; "he must learn to eat tough meat before he can have the happiness of exposing himself to the loss of a limb; but, at all events, he shall eat to his heart's content twelve hours in every week; this will give him a stock of patience."

He, accordingly, came regularly to Malmaison. The heads of the establishment, perceiving the uniform interest shewn to him by the Empress, mitigated, to a certain extent, his insipid mode of existence; for example, they occasionally invited him to dine with them. He proved himself worthy of the protection of the best of women by his uniform good conduct in the service.

M. de Turpin usually paid his visits to Malmaison in an ugly, weather-beaten cabriolet; the Empress was informed of it, and, without intimating to him her intentions, she ordered a handsome one to be purchased, as well as a very fine horse. One morning, as he was directing his servant to get his modest equipage in readiness for returning to Paris, he saw the cabriolet approaching which Her Majesty had intended for him. He could not be mistaken as to its owner, since his arms were painted on the panels, and were stamped in brass upon the harness. Josephine was not satisfied with giving what was most likely to be of service; she, moreover, accompanied her presents with those graceful expressions which were so characteristic of her benevolent disposition.

She ordered, from M. de Turpin, a picture representing a Swiss view, of which he had made the sketch in her presence. This splendid landscape was brought to the Empress, who was delighted with it. After pointing it out to the admiration of every visitor, she came up to the painter, and leading him to a window,—

“This is for you,” she said, placing bank-notes in his hands to the amount agreed on between them, “and this is for your excellent mother. But if I have been mistaken in her taste, do not fail to tell her that I shall not be offended at her changing this trifling pledge of my friendship for whatever may be more

acceptable to her. She will discover in it my anxiety to prove to her the sincere gratification which the painting of her son has afforded me." The present she was thus offering was a diamond of the value of 6,000 francs.

Nothing can be more noble than this manner of making a present to a man who had no other resource than what he derived from his talent and from his office of chamberlain, a much more honourable than a lucrative one. Such a mode of rewarding cannot fail to secure an affectionate and devoted attachment, which money alone is not calculated to create.

I repaired one day to Paris for the purpose of visiting the Catacombs. The party had been arranged with several ladies of my acquaintance, and I imagined that such an underground journey would impart to me the sensations felt on reading the description of the Catacombs of Rome by Delille or M. de Châteaubriand. My ideas had been for a week wrapped up in anticipations of the sight I was about to witness. When I reached, with my companions, that abode of death, which my imagination had pictured to me as solemn and religious in its aspect, I was quite surprised at not experiencing any throb nor any other sensation than astonishment at such absence of all emotions. The regularity of those walls of human bones, arranged with such symmetry, and lighted by our lanterns, appeared to my mind as a contradiction

to nature. I saw nothing more in it than a melodramatic decoration — a kind of phantasmagoria. It was, no doubt, highly laudable to collect those remains which had been so dreadfully profaned, but the arrangement seems to be a complete failure. A sight of the Catacombs creates no emotion ; those pillars of Death's heads are revolting to the eye and nothing more. In a word, disgust is the only sensation felt on visiting this place. Would not M. de Thury have acted far more judiciously if he had enclosed in plain and noble monuments the mortal remains which he succeeded in wresting from the brutal fury of the Revolution ? Affecting inscriptions derived from our poets, religious proverbs, and fragments of Psalms, would have been suitable to the occasion. I think they ought to have been translated into French, as better adapted to the comprehension of all classes, and of both sexes. Death indiscriminately assails the most powerful men and the weakest women, the learned and the ignorant. Should not an endeavour have been made to place within the reach of every understanding those sentiments which are calculated to mitigate its horror ?

My attention in the Catacombs was most attracted by the fort of Port-Mahon, sculptured by a disabled soldier, who obtained permission to remain in the vaults as a commutation for a severer punishment, and whose only instrument was his knife ; he was thus

engaged during a period of twenty-two years in representing the spot which had witnessed one of his gallant achievements. Thus it happened that this unfortunate man, who had been disgraced by an ignominious sentence, and, as it were, buried alive, still retained the recollection of his glory, and had no comfort in his dreadful position except what he derived from bestowing his undivided attention to the above work. That shapeless work is said to be of the greatest accuracy in its details.

We had in our company M. Emanuel Dupaty, who always exhibits a playful wit; he remained unchanged notwithstanding the distressing objects by which we were surrounded, and spontaneously composed the following verses with inconceivable rapidity. I carefully copied them, and am delighted at having it in my power to afford the public a fresh proof of the ease and elegance of one of our most fascinating poets :

A peine aux portes de la vie,
Pourquoi descendez-vous au séjour de la mort ?
La route des plaisirs, que vous offre le sort,
Au printemps de vos jours, doit seule être suivie !
Du flambeau sépulchral, les lugubres reflets,
Ne répandent sur vous qu'une faible lumière ;
Vos charmes sont perdus au séjour funéraire ;
Et les morts n'ont point d'yeux pour contempler vos traits !
Ils ne pourront louer ce qu'en vous on admire :
On devient insensible aussitôt le trépas ;

La beauté sur les morts a perdu son empire,
Et quand vous paraîtrez, leurs cœurs ne battront pas !
Si la mort peut offrir par ses métamorphoses,
Une leçon utile, attendez quelque temps :
Vos pieds sont encore faits pour marcher sur des roses,
Et non pour se heurter sur de froids ossemens.
Croyez-moi, remontez pour toujours sur la terre ;
Et s'il faut renoncer à la clarté du jour,
 Ne perdez jamais la lumière,
Qu'en mettant sur vos yeux le bandeau de l'amour.

CHAPTER V.

Return to Malmaison.—Visit from the Emperor.—Reception Given to Him by the Empress.—The Grand Duke of Wurtzburg.—His Taste for Singing.—Wager Laid with the Viceroy.—A Ride to Longchamps.—The Viceroy Meets with an Accident.—M. de Cazes.—The King of Naples.

ON my return to Malmaison, I was greatly disappointed at finding that the Emperor had been there in the morning. The whole palace was set in motion by such an unexpected visit, which afforded to Josephine the highest satisfaction. From a sense of delicacy well worthy of her, she received His Majesty in the garden. They sat down on a circular bench placed before the window of the salon, though at a sufficient distance to prevent any one from overhearing a single word of their conversation, which must have been highly interesting. The ladies were concealed behind the window curtains, and endeavoured to guess by Josephine's expressive countenance, and by Napoleon's gestures, what was the subject which engaged their attention. Two hours elapsed in this manner; at last the Emperor took the Empress's hand, kissed it, and stepped into his calash, which

stood waiting in front of the park gate. Josephine accompanied him, and it was easy to perceive, from her contented looks during the remainder of the day, that she was well pleased with the purport of his conversation. She repeated several times that she had never known the Emperor more amiable than on this occasion, and that she experienced a bitter regret at being deprived of the power of doing anything for that *favoured mortal* (such was her expression). A few months later, the epithet no longer applied to Napoleon! . . . fortune had betrayed him; nothing was left to him but his glory! . . .

The Empress announced to us the approaching arrival of the Grand Duke of Wurtzburg, uncle to Maria Louisa.

"He is an excellent musician, mademoiselle," said Josephine, addressing herself to me; "you must sing with him."

"Do you think it possible, madame," observed the Viceroy, "that mademoiselle can go through a piece of music with him, knowing as you do how apt she is to laugh? I doubt it."

"I laugh, monseigneur, in going through a piece of music with the Emperor of Austria's brother! Your Imperial Highness cannot think it possible that I should be so far wanting in respect to his rank."

"I am certain you will laugh."

"Indeed, I am quite sure of the contrary."

“Well then, mademoiselle; let us bet a *breloque*.”*

“Agreed, monseigneur; all the better for my collection.”

“Patience; we shall see.”

Two days afterwards the whole palace was decorated with flowers; the covering of the furniture was removed; the garden walks were swept, etc., in expectation of the Grand Duke’s visit; he was to spend the whole day with Her Majesty, who, being well aware of his partiality for Italian singing, had given orders for a few actors to be sent to her in the evening from the Opera Buffa of Paris.

We had paid particular attention to our toilets, and were all in the salon an hour before the time, in order to receive his Imperial Highness, who had promised to arrive at ten o’clock in the morning; he was punctual to the hour, and made his appearance in a white uniform turned up with red, the Austrian full Court dress. We beheld a tall thin man, of a pale and grave countenance, who moved like an automaton; that dry, ugly, and disagreeable countenance appeared to me so unlikely to set my risible propensities in motion that I rejoiced beforehand at having won my wager.

* A jewel much in fashion at Malmaison. The Empress and the Viceroy frequently made presents of very handsome ones. I had a collection of them which I greatly prized; it was stolen from me, together with many other presents for which I was indebted to Her Majesty’s kindness.

The day passed off in walks to the greenhouse, and in drives in a calash; the Grand Duke always remained near the Empress, replied by monosyllables, and exhibited nothing in his manners that ridicule could lay hold of. He sat in an armchair at breakfast and dinner, on Her Majesty's right hand; ate and drank freely, and spoke little; I continued under the impression that there was nothing comical in His Highness, and that I should have no difficulty in preventing myself from laughing. This is a true picture of young people, who always doubt the correctness of what they are told, and form too high an estimate of their own strength. I paid dearly for that confidence in the control which I fancied I could exercise over myself.

At eight o'clock the Empress introduced the Grand Duke into the gallery, saying that as she knew he was very fond of music she had provided a small concert for his entertainment. "Madame is very kind; I am indeed *mad* after music," he replied, with the utmost composure; "it quite enraptures me." The complete German accent which I now heard for the first time, this being the only well-articulated phrase uttered by His Highness, and the composure which formed so striking a contrast with his Imperial Highness's words, made me smile; nevertheless, as I always had my *breloque* in view, I was careful to keep my countenance.

The company took their seats in the gallery; the pianoforte was opened, and Porto sang with Tacchi-nardi a splendid duet in their usual style. Madame Gazani and I performed a piece of music from "Azioli," and the Empress afterwards requested that the Grand Duke would condescend to name any other he might desire me to sing with him. He pointed out the "Pandolfetto" of Paësiello. It was quite familiar to me, and I was delighted with the choice, conceiving that I stood less in danger of failing in it than in any other with which I might be less acquainted. We were proceeding towards the pianoforte; and just as I was about to begin my solo, the Grand Duke stopped me, saying, with the most courteous politeness:

"Pardon me, mademoiselle, you have been calculating upon singing the female part?"

"Undoubtedly, monseigneur."

"Oh! that is quite impossible, for it is the very one I reserve for myself. Will you have the kindness to take the man's part?"

Feeling quite astonished at the proposal, I stammered a reply. The Viceroy took upon himself to answer, and said that I was sufficiently versed in music to feel perfectly indifferent at the change; his mother expressed the same opinion, and I now found myself compelled, whether I would or not, to sing the counter-tenor.

My wounded self-love had put me so much out of humour that I felt certain of winning the wager; I would no doubt at this moment have preferred the contrary. The fatal duet began, but we had scarcely executed the first bar when my angry mood disappeared, and my laughing propensity gained upon me with alarming rapidity. Let the reader fancy to himself a shrill falsetto proceeding from the long body of the Grand Duke, eyes constantly raised to heaven, enticing and coquettish looks darting from a naturally unmeaning face, a strongly marked sentimental expression, and, above all, that German accent which gives to Italian all the harshness of the Hungarian language, and it will be easy to account for the sudden revolution thus operated in my temper. For the space of a minute I made successful efforts to check myself; but at the word *gracioso* His Highness put on so ludicrous a countenance, that I felt I could no longer hold out, and, precipitately quitting the piano-forte, feigned a violent bleeding of the nose, and ran to the billiard-room in order to give a free vent to my propensity to laugh.

The Viceroy followed me in order to claim his debt, and said I had adopted the same course that another lady, whose name I do not recollect, had once before resorted to. On a former visit of the Grand Duke, she had been thrown into a similar perplexity, and had extricated herself by pretending the like complaint.

After I had indulged in a hearty laugh, it became necessary that I should return to the gallery. At every step I moved towards it, I pictured to myself the countenance of His Imperial Highness, and was forced to delay my return. At last I made my appearance, and the Prince inquired after my health with the utmost marked politeness, adding :

“ Her Majesty has probably caused her gallery to be overheated, for I have frequently witnessed the like accidents.”

His good nature would have made me repent the laugh at his expense, if it had depended upon me to check myself ; but I really was unable to prove the Viceroy wrong in his prediction.

The time for Longchamps was drawing near. Josephine asked Mdles. de Castellane, de Mackau, and myself, if we felt any desire to go there. With youthful sincerity we replied in the affirmative. She ordered M. de Monaco to give directions for the finest calash to be in readiness for that gay occasion, with a view to our going to Longchamps in a becoming style. She presented us with elegant white hats and feathers, and we started off in a carriage with four horses led *à la d' Aumont* by jockeys wearing the Emperor's livery. Two outriders preceded our carriage, and two followed it. On reaching the Bois de Boulogne we attracted general notice, as much from the elegance of our equipage and dress, as from the curi-

osity created by the appearance of one of Josephine's carriages in public ; it was descried at a great distance by the enormous white silk umbrella, which rose from the centre of the calash, and served as a covering to it. Mdlles. de Mackau and Castellane were very handsome, and Madame Gazani could not fail to attract notice ; we were therefore greatly admired. I was delighted at our not being compelled to follow the line of carriages, and at our driving with great rapidity through the Bois de Boulogne, in the midst of the walk which was exclusively reserved for the Princesses and the Ambassadors. All the young horsemen followed us, probably in the expectation of seeing Her Majesty.

The Viceroy, who was on horseback, rode up to speak to us ; he kept with us for a long time, leaning with his hand upon the carriage, in order that we might hear his conversation. The Prince's saddle was probably loose, for we suddenly saw him fall to the ground. We were greatly alarmed ; fortunately, however, he was not hurt, and was the first to laugh at the accident, which he said was not attended with any personal inconvenience to him, since at the moment of his fall there was none but paltry hackney coaches near us, and he could not possibly be acquainted with any one in them. "Formerly," he added, "I should have deemed myself fortunate in receiving a bow from a person sufficiently favoured

by fortune to be driven in such a vehicle, modest as it is, because I was too poor to hire one ; this is a proof, ladies, that one should never despair of anything." Like Josephine, he always spoke of the days of his poverty with the utmost candour ; he was thereby thought more entitled to the splendid fortune to which he had been raised.

We returned to Malmaison quite delighted with our triumphal ride. Her Majesty seemed pleased at the anxiety of the people to crowd round her carriage, in the hope of seeing her. " It thus appears that I am not altogether forgotten !" she said ; " this is but just ; for I love the French, and have done all in my power to prove it to them ; had I possessed greater influence I should have done still more !" In fact, she never omitted an opportunity of relieving the unfortunate, of pleading their cause, of obtaining the pardon of condemned criminals, of procuring situations for men of real merit.

One day, just as we were about to step into a landau, and take our usual ride to the Bois du Butard, a letter from the *Empress-mother* was handed to Her Majesty.

" Who was the bearer of this letter ? "

" M. de Cazes, madame ; he awaits Your Majesty's orders."

" I shall give them on my return."

M. de Cazes waited, accordingly, in the porter's

hall. He was at this time the private secretary of the Empress-mother, a situation which did not entitle him to the privilege of entering Her Majesty's salon; she spoke of him in the carriage, as I was told by my mother who accompanied her, adverted to his witty turn of mind, and said that he could not fail to attain the highest rank. He has proved the truth of this horoscope.

The King of Naples came one morning to Malmaison. The Empress had frequently been visited by every member of the Imperial family except himself; she therefore did not expect to see him.

"By what chance, sire?" were her first words to him.

"Madame, I was afraid of calling upon Your Majesty, through an apprehension that the Emperor might disapprove of my visit. I lamented the restraint I thus imposed upon myself, for you cannot entertain a doubt of my respectful attachment to Your Majesty." She made no reply. "Being at St. Cloud," he continued, "and as my carriage was in readiness to take me back to Paris, the Emperor saw it, and said that I was no doubt going to Malmaison. Delighted to take advantage of what I considered in the light of a permission, I immediately stepped into my carriage, and hastened to pay my respects to Your Majesty."

"Sire, I am truly grateful to the Emperor for his

kindness, and I request you will do me the favour to tell him so."

Josephine instantly changed the conversation. She behaved towards the King of Naples with great coldness and circumspection.

After he had left Malmaison, the Empress told us that she was not partial to him. "He is too *servile* in his deportment towards the Emperor to be sincerely devoted to his person. Should he ever find an opportunity of betraying him, he will not let it escape." She lived long enough to witness the fulfilment of her presentiments in respect to him. Her mind was gifted with that quick perception which enabled her to form an immediate, and generally a correct, judgment respecting those whose characters she took any pains to study. She had, no doubt, to lament many acts of ingratitude towards her, because no sooner was any person unfortunate than she laid aside all attempt to penetrate his disposition; but she was never the dupe of false demonstrations of attachment or of assumed good qualities. The persons who composed her society ever since her divorce afforded a proof of her discrimination *in selecting*, when she was at liberty to do so. With the exception of one or two individuals who were forced upon her, the most endearing qualities were to be found in those who were admitted into the intimacy of her domestic circle.

CHAPTER VI.

Feelings of Envy Amongst the Ladies Attached to the Empress. — M. Pierlot; His Unsuccessful Speculations. — Hard-heartedness of M. de Monaco. — Conduct of Madame Pierlot. — M. Le Roi, the Milliner. — M. de Montlivault Appointed Receiver-General to Her Majesty. — Jewels of the Empress; an Old Pair of Shoes.

MY protracted residence at Malmaison only tended to heighten my dislike of the place. As the number of those who called to pay their court went on increasing, I was under the necessity of beholding new countenances every day, of submitting to their inquisitive looks, witnessing the most abject adulation, listening to silly and unconnected conversations, and enduring the stale compliments paid to my humble vocal talents, which I was reluctantly compelled to exhibit every evening at the palace. This never-ending etiquette was irksome beyond measure to me; and, were it not for the pleasure of approaching the Empress, and of receiving repeated proofs of her affection, a pleasure which on each occasion was as vivid as if it had possessed the charm of novelty, I should have felt it impossible to submit to a mode of living which formed so absolute a contrast with

all my habits and inclinations. I was, moreover, debarred of the assistance of those masters whose instructions I was not yet competent to dispense with; and I very seldom saw my father, whose absence I deplored as the greatest of all losses; I was, therefore, extremely anxious to return to Paris. Whenever we mentioned the subject, Josephine opposed our wishes, and we consented to prolong our stay.

The enjoyment of so much favour with Her Majesty was beginning to indispose those ladies towards us, who, in virtue of their station, deemed themselves entitled to the exclusive possession of her good graces. They still kept up the outward appearances of kindness, owing, no doubt, to their not having as yet matured the plan by which they meditated to procure our removal; but they no sooner fancied themselves beyond the reach of being remarked than their countenances assumed an expression of anger which could not escape my penetration. I mentioned the circumstance to my mother, who replied that I was wrong in supposing there existed any altered feelings towards us; she discovered no change of conduct in our regard, and was satisfied that my uneasiness was, as usual, the offspring of my own fancy.

I was already haunted at that period with the presentiment that the deepest sorrows would disturb the progress of my existence. My parents had been so long familiar with misfortunes that I conceived myself

born to a life of sufferings. The sacrifice of parting forever from Her Majesty seemed to me a trial far beyond my strength ; from that moment my imagination fancied its approach ; I no longer felt unalloyed delight at her repeated marks of kindness, and often withdrew to my apartment to bewail, with bitter tears, that state of apprehension which baffled my attempts to control it.

M. Pierlot experienced at this time a series of misfortunes which compelled him to suspend his payments, and to submit to an act of bankruptcy in which the Empress was found to be included for a considerable sum. Madame d'Arberg, who was inflexible in whatever concerned Her Majesty's interests, represented to her that she could not relinquish her claim, as it was her intention to do ; M. Pierlot was her Receiver-General, and it was inexcusable in him to have risked her property as he had done. The observations of the Lady of Honour were reëchoed by M. de Monaco in a tone of extreme harshness ; he went even further, and warned the Empress that Madame Pierlot, who was aware of Her Majesty's humane disposition, would no doubt come to intercede for her husband ; but that she should refuse to see her.

“ Nevertheless, monsieur, I am greatly attached to her ; her irreproachable conduct as a wife and a mother plead strongly in her favour, and I am at

a loss to conceive your motive for wishing me to act otherwise towards her than I am wont to do towards every one else."

"Your Majesty is no doubt perfectly free to act as you think proper; but a man who is unfaithful to his trust has no claim to pity; he deserves, on the contrary, a severe punishment, as an example to those who might otherwise be tempted to tread in his footsteps."

"Well, then, let no more be said about it," rejoined Josephine, in a tone of displeasure; "since a Sovereign is not at liberty to follow her inclinations, I shall not see Madame Pierlot. She is indeed to be pitied!"

An order was accordingly given that she should not be admitted. Having at all times met with a kind reception from the Empress, who frequently invited her to join her private circle, it was natural that, in the unmerited misfortune that oppressed her, she should reckon upon the benevolence of disposition which it was her intention to appeal to; but every door was closed against her. She displayed, however, a perseverance in perfect keeping with those other qualities which had secured for her the esteem of all; she repaired to M. Le Roi, the milliner, and succeeded so far in securing his good wishes that he consented to take her with him to Malmaison in the disguise of one of his female apprentices. On arriving at the palace, where she had so often met a welcome recep-

tion, she proceeded in search of Mdlle. Avrillon, who, being at all times disposed to do an act of kindness, introduced her veiled into the apartment of the Empress, by which means her countenance was hidden from observation. She followed M. Le Roi with a bandbox in her hand, which she hastily laid aside, and threw herself at the feet of Her Majesty, who was deeply affected at seeing her reduced to the necessity of having recourse to such a stratagem in order to gain access to her presence. Madame Pierlot related the misfortunes of her husband with great warmth, in an eloquence of language which burst from her overflowing heart; she described the horrors of his situation, in the event of the Empress persisting in discarding him, and beseeched her to retain him in his situation.

“What you ask of me,” replied Josephine, with emotion, “is unfortunately impossible; I am no longer at liberty to keep him; he had powerful enemies in this place, they hastened to give information to the Emperor, who has just had it intimated to me that M. de Montlivault was appointed to be my Receiver-General. I deeply regret the hurried manner in which this affair has been settled. Believe me, madame, when I assure you that I have had no hand in it. I had great confidence in M. Pierlot, feel much interest in the welfare of your children, and entertain a very sincere affection for you. I wish it

had been in my power to prove my sincerity in a more effectual manner than mere words, but what would you have me do? *I am tied down*; I promise you, however, that I shall allow M. Pierlot whatever time he may require for reimbursing the deficiency in my private funds. Call upon me from time to time without having recourse to this disguise. I am thankful to Le Roi for suggesting it, and to the worthy Avrillon for not refusing you admittance; this is the way in which Princes may be effectually served. I always feel beholden to those who place it in my power to avoid the very appearance of unfeelingness."

M. Pierlot was in fact replaced by M. Casimir de Montlivault, with whom I have only been slightly acquainted; I disliked his consequential air of protection; his tone of self-sufficiency excited my aversion, and no less so his evident delight at hearing himself talk; this was the more ridiculous, as he never uttered anything beyond commonplace observations, owing to a constant apprehension of committing himself. This is certainly no more than the private opinion of a very young person, who expresses her sentiments at random; it may, perhaps, be quite at variance with the true character of that functionary, who is no doubt a man of great talent, since he succeeded at all times, and under various Governments, in holding distinguished employments. I abstain, therefore, from insisting upon

the correctness of my opinion, I merely state my impressions.

It happened to us on one occasion to request the Empress so shew us her diamonds, which were locked up in a concealed cellar, the key of which was generally confided to Madame Gazani and M. Pierlot. She yielded with the most willing compliance to the wishes of such giddy girls as we were, ordered an immense table to be brought into the salon, upon which several of her maids in waiting laid a countless number of caskets of every form and shape. They were spread upon that spacious table, which was absolutely covered with them. On the opening of the caskets we were perfectly dazzled with the brilliancy, the size, and the quantity of jewels composing the different sets. The most remarkable, after those which consisted of white diamonds, were in the shape of pears formed of pearls, perfectly regular and of the finest colour; opals, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds were encircled with large diamonds, which were, nevertheless, considered as mere *mountings*, and never taken into account in the estimation made of those jewels; they formed altogether a collection which I believe to be unique in Europe, since they consisted of the most valuable objects of that description that could be found in the towns conquered by our armies. Napoleon was never under the necessity of seizing upon objects, which there was always evinced the ut-

most anxiety to offer to his wife; the garlands and bouquets formed of such a countless number of precious stones had the effect of verifying the truth of the descriptions hitherto so fanciful which are to be met with in the fairy tales. None but those who have seen this splendid collection can form an adequate idea of it.

The Empress seldom wore any other than fancy jewels; the sight, therefore, of this *exhibition* of casquets excited the wonder of most of the beholders. Her Majesty greatly enjoyed our silent admiration. After having permitted us to touch and examine everything at our leisure, —

“I had no other motive,” she kindly said to us, “in ordering my jewels to be opened before you than to spoil your fancy for such ornaments. After having seen such splendid sets you can never feel a wish for inferior ones, the less so when you reflect how unhappy I have been, although with so rare a collection at my command. During the first dawn of my extraordinary elevation I delighted in these trifles, many of which were presented to me in Italy. I grew by degrees so tired of them that I no longer wear any, except when I am in some respects compelled to do so by my new rank in the world! A thousand accidents may, besides, contribute to deprive me of those brilliant though useless objects. Do I not possess the pendants of Queen Marie

Antoinette? * and yet am I quite sure of retaining them? Trust to me, ladies, and do not envy a splendour which does not constitute happiness. I shall not fail to surprise you when I relate that I felt more pleasure at receiving an old pair of shoes than at being presented with all the diamonds which are now spread before you."

We could not help smiling at this observation, persuaded as we were that Josephine was not in earnest; but she repeated her assertions in so serious a manner that we felt the utmost curiosity to hear the story of this *wonderful pair of shoes*.

"I repeat it, ladies," said Her Majesty, "it is strictly true that the present which of all others has afforded me most pleasure is a pair of *old shoes of the coarsest leather*; you will readily believe it when you shall have heard my story.

"I had set sail with Hortense from Martinique on board a ship in which we received such marked attentions that they are indelibly impressed on my memory. Being separated from my first husband, my pecuniary resources were not very flourishing; the expense of my return to France, which the state of

* Josephine often spoke of the unhappy Marie Antoinette; and always with the respect so eminently due to misfortunes borne with such exalted courage! The pendants in question are pearls of a single diamond, without any mounting. To the best of my recollection, they have been redeemed by the Dauphine. Their value was estimated at 300,000 francs.

my affairs rendered necessary, had nearly drained me of everything, and I found great difficulty in making the purchases which were indispensably requisite for the voyage. Hortense, who was a smart, lively child, sang negro songs and performed negro dances with admirable accuracy ; she was the delight of the sailors, and in return for their fondness she had made them her favourite company. I no sooner fell asleep than she slipped upon deck and rehearsed her various little exercises to the renewed delight and admiration of all on board. An old mate was particularly fond of her, and whenever he found a moment's leisure from his daily occupations he devoted it to *his little friend*, who was also exceedingly attached to him. My daughter's shoes were soon worn out with her constant dancing and skipping. Knowing as she did that I had no other pair for her, and fearing lest I should prevent her going upon deck if I should discover the plight of those she was fast wearing away, she concealed the trifling accident from my knowledge. I saw her once returning with bleeding feet, and asked her, in the utmost alarm, if she had hurt herself.

“ ‘No, mamma.’

“ ‘But your feet are bleeding.’

“ ‘It is really nothing.’

“I insisted upon ascertaining what ailed her, and discovered that her shoes were all in tatters, and that her flesh was dreadfully torn by a nail.

“We had as yet only performed half the voyage; a long time would necessarily elapse before I could procure a fresh pair of shoes, and I was mortified at the bare anticipation of the distress my poor Hortense would now feel at being compelled to remain confined in my wretched little cabin, and of the injury her health might experience from the want of exercise. At the moment when I was wrapped up in sorrow and giving free vent to my tears, our friend the mate made his appearance, and inquired with his honest bluntness what was the cause of our *whimperings*. Hortense replied in a sobbing voice that she could no longer go upon deck because she had torn her shoes and I had no others to give her.

“‘Is that all? I have an old pair in my trunk; let me go for them. You, madame, will cut them up, and I shall sew them over again to the best of my power. Everything on board ship should be turned to account; this is not the place for being too nice or particular; we have our most important wants gratified when we have the needful.’

“He did not wait for our reply, but went in quest of his old shoes, which he brought to us with an air of exultation, and offered them to Hortense, who received the gift with every demonstration of delight.

“We set to work with the greatest alacrity, and my daughter was enabled, towards the close of day, to enjoy the pleasure of again amusing the ship’s

company. I repeat that no present was ever received by me with more sincere gratitude. I greatly reproached myself for having neglected to make inquiries after the worthy seaman, who was only known on board by the name of James. I should have felt a sincere satisfaction in rendering him some service, since it was afterwards in my power to do so."

We felt much interest in this story, which was related with the most charming simplicity of manner, and created the liveliest emotions.

CHAPTER VII.

Princesse d'Eckmühl. — Some Particulars Respecting Her Marriage. — Her Brother, Général Leclerc. — Madame Leclerc (afterwards Princesse Borghèse). — Expression of Mdlle. Duchesnois. — M. Jules de Canouville. — Blunder of M. Bousquet, the Dentist. — Moderation of the Viceroy. — Present Made by Princesse Pauline to M. de Canouville. — Death of the Latter. — Portrait Found upon His Person. — M. Ernest de Canouville.

I RENEWED acquaintance at Malmaison with a person with whom, previously to her marriage, I had been on terms of intimacy, the remembrance of which I had never ceased to cherish. This was Mdlle. Aimée Leclerc, who had become Princesse d'Eckmühl. The elevated rank she had attained had not, it was said, operated the least change in her amiable disposition. She was no less remarkable for her exquisite beauty, than for her gentle, modest, and unassuming deportment. These qualities, which endeared her to all in times when lowliness and poverty were her lot, still predominated in her when raised to that elevation in society which was considered by every one as the reward bestowed by a just Providence upon her virtues.

The Empress was particularly attached to this lady, and treated her with every demonstration of sincere esteem. As soon as she left the palace, Her Majesty was lavish of encomiums upon her, which might have been deemed exaggerated were it not for Josephine's well-known frankness of character. She told us in what manner the marriage of Mdle. Leclerc with Maréchal Davoust had been brought about. These details are sufficiently remarkable to claim some notice in this place, and clearly indicate how the most unbending and untractable dispositions were forced to yield to the wishes of Napoleon, even at a time when he held only the consular sway.

At the period of the expedition to St. Domingo, Bonaparte determined to confide the command of the troops to his brother-in-law, Général Leclerc, who had married Pauline Bonaparte. He summoned that officer to his closet, and declared to him his intentions.

"I should be happy to render fresh services to France, but I must inform you, general, that a sacred duty binds me to this country."

"Your affection for Paulette? She will follow you, and I approve of her doing so. The air of Paris does not agree with her; it is only calculated for coquettes. Such a character ill becomes her, and she must accompany you; this is well understood."

"I should no doubt be distressed at parting from

her, but this reason would not be sufficient to prevent my assuming an honourable command. My wife would remain surrounded by a family which is greatly attached to her. I should not, therefore, entertain any uncasiness on her account. The concern I feel for the fate of my kind sister alone compels me to refuse an employment which, under any other circumstances, would be the object of my dearest ambition. She is young and handsome; her education is not yet completed; I have no marriage portion to give her; how can I leave her unprotected when my absence may be immeasurably prolonged, when, perhaps, I may never return? My brothers are not here; it behooves me, therefore, to remain. I need only appeal to your own heart, knowing as I do your attachment to your family; I ask you, general, how can I possibly act otherwise?"

"Certainly you cannot; you should procure a match for her immediately . . . to-morrow, for instance, and then take your departure."

"I repeat that I have no fortune, and —"

"What of that? may you not command me? I desire you, my dear Leclerc, to make immediate preparations for departure; your sister shall be married to-morrow; I cannot yet say to whom, but that is of no consequence; she shall be married, and advantageously so."

"But —"

“Have I not spoken in plain language to you? Say no more, then, on the subject.”

Général Leclerc was accustomed, like every other general, to consider as his master the individual who had so recently been his equal, and withdrew without uttering any further reply.

Général Davoust entered the First Consul’s apartment a few moments afterwards, and said that he came to inform him of his intended marriage.

“With Mdlle. Leclerc? I find it a very suitable match.”

“No, general, with Madame —”

“With Mdlle. Leclerc,” rejoined Napoleon, laying particular stress upon the name. “I not only find it a very suitable match, but I *insist* upon it taking place immediately.”

“I have long felt an attachment for Madame —; she is now at liberty to marry, and nothing shall induce me to renounce her.”

“Nothing but my will,” replied the First Consul, fixing his eagle eye upon him. “You must repair immediately to Madame Campan’s establishment at Saint-Germain; on your arrival, you are to call for your intended bride, to whom you will be presented by her brother, Général Leclerc, who is now with my wife, and will accompany you. Mdlle. Aimée shall come to Paris this very night. You must bespeak the wedding gifts, which must be of the most costly

description, since I am to act as the young lady's father on the occasion; I take upon myself to provide the marriage portion and the bridal dress, and the nuptials shall be celebrated as soon as the requisite legal formalities shall have been complied with; no unnecessary delay shall interfere. You have now been made acquainted with my wishes, *and have only to obey.*"

Napoleon had no sooner spoken these words, which he hurried over without the slightest pause, and in that tone of command so peculiar to him, than he rang the bell and ordered Général Leclerc to be sent for.

"Well, was I wrong?" said the First Consul to him when he made his appearance. "Here is your sister's husband; proceed together to Saint-Germain, and let me not see either of you until everything shall have been arranged; I hate all discussions of pecuniary concern."

Both generals were mute with astonishment, and withdrew to *obey* the Consul's bidding. Notwithstanding the bluntness of his very unamiable disposition, Général Davoust humbly submitted to his master's will. On arriving at Madame Campan's establishment, he was presented to Mdlle. Leclerc, whom he found by no means to his liking, probably because she had been offered without his being allowed the option of refusing her. It will readily be

believed that cheerfulness did not preside at the interview; nevertheless, every preliminary arrangement was at last agreed upon, and the nuptials took place a very few days afterwards.

Général Davoust did not, in the first instance, appreciate the merits of his charming wife. It is said that she was subjected to most painful scenes, and to reproaches entirely groundless, since she was quite innocent of the constraint which had alone compelled her to submit to so severe a yoke; she abstained from complaining, and bore the wrongs inflicted upon her with uniform patience and mildness. She never appeared at the Court of the Tuileries, of which she was one of the principal ornaments, except when compelled to do so; she preferred the retirement of a private life where she was wholly wrapped up in the husband who embittered her existence, and in her children upon whom she doted; she has since had to lament the loss of many of them. This accumulation of cares never created any change in her amiable serenity of temper. Her exalted qualities had at last the effect of softening the disposition of a man who was no doubt possessed of splendid warlike talents, but had none of those which form the charm of a domestic life. He repented of his indifference towards a woman who was the admiration of every one, and repaid her at last by the sincerest affection and the most unbounded confidence.

I have had no intercourse with the Princesse d'Eckmühl for the last twenty years; what I have just related cannot, therefore, spring from any other motive than a desire of enhancing the merit of a lady whose modesty is only equalled by her merit; I have done no more than repeat what was told to us by the Empress, and I feel the sincerest pleasure in exhibiting to public admiration a lady who reflects so much credit upon our sex.

I have a perfect recollection of Général Leclerc, with whom I resided for some time in the country during my earliest infancy. He was of short stature; his physiognomy was expressive of gentleness, and he justly enjoyed the reputation of being a kind and benevolent man. He doted upon his wife, and bore with the utmost composure the capriciousness of her violent and uneven temper. She tormented him upon every subject, and constantly told him that he was very fortunate in having married a person of her rank, and in having become the Consul's brother-in-law. This latter title, according to every appearance, was the very cause of the melancholy turn of his mind in a situation seemingly so brilliant for him. He was naturally of a very independent character, and would have preferred being indebted to his own merit for his advancement and his elevated rank. At the period of his marriage, the family of Bonaparte was the reverse of being affluent, and nothing had

afforded any presage of the glory it has since attained. Général Leclerc, who was passionately fond of Pauline, sought nothing more than the possession of her hand; no sordid calculation ever dictated his choice.

He came to take leave of one of my relatives on the occasion of his departure for St. Domingo. I recollect his replying in the following words to the compliments addressed to him respecting the results of his expedition:

“Madame,” said he, “they cannot be otherwise than unpleasant as respects myself; if I succeed, it will be said that every movement on my part was enjoined to me by my brother-in-law; if I fail in the attempt, my memory will not be spared from reproaches. The Consul’s flatterers will assert that there was no fault to be found with the plan of the campaign, and that my incapacity had alone occasioned the failure of the views which he meditated. I take my departure with a heavy heart; now, however, we must, one and all, *be prepared to yield implicit obedience; we have found a master in him to whom we looked up for a protector.*”

These expressions were canvassed at great lengths in my presence, and the impression which they made upon my memory was, no doubt, owing to the surfeit I felt at the subject having been discussed during a whole evening. Nothing can be more fatiguing than

to be compelled to listen, at twelve years of age, to political discussions; I even felt more reluctance for such conversations at that time than I do at the present day. I was reared up under the exclusive care of an aunt of a superior turn of mind, who wished to break my attachment to the frivolous occupations which befitted my youthful years; she insisted upon my remaining in her salon, a perfect magic lantern, in which the whole of Paris passed under review, and, in order to satisfy herself that I had listened to the conversation, she invariably questioned me the next morning on every topic which had been discussed on the preceding night. My aunt condescendingly explained to me what exceeded my comprehension; she corrected my errors in judgment, and impressed upon me the necessity of bestowing my thoughts upon subjects foreign from those of mere amusement, which too often leave the mind a prey to weariness and regret; her injunctions, however, did not prevent my preferring a ball or a theatrical performance to those social conversations, in which I was condemned to remain silent without daring to stir from my seat.

The advices then bestowed upon me have, perhaps, tended to check my excessive giddiness of disposition, but they had not the effect of wholly removing it. Throughout my existence, I have, unfortunately, acted with little or no reflection, and have been led

by first impulses ; I have, accordingly, often had to repent many an inconsiderate act ; nevertheless, I acquired the habit of passing each night in review everything I had done or heard in the course of the day. To this circumstance, I am no doubt indebted for the facility I have acquired of arranging my recollections, and for having it in my power, by noting them down, to enhance, if possible, the feelings of affection so generally entertained for the Empress Josephine. Thus far, therefore, the advices of my respectable aunt have not been wholly lost upon me ; I owe her this tribute of praise.

Madame Leclerc was unquestionably the prettiest woman I ever saw. Neither jealousy nor envy, which are so quick at discovering a fault in whatever claims general admiration, has ever succeeded in discovering the slightest blemish in that beautiful countenance, which was combined in the same person with the most elegant, the most perfect shape, and the most captivating gracefulness of manners. It was quite impossible to criticise her outward appearance ; all were forced to be silent, or to join in the praises which her incomparable beauty never failed to call forth. Happily for women of grovelling minds who are envious of the admiration paid to others of their sex, they had an ample field for revenge in descanting upon the mental defects, the temper and conduct of Madame Leclerc.

She possessed no advantage of education, and her conversation was as unmeaning and tedious as her countenance was fascinating. Unable to speak of anything else but her toilet, which formed the chief occupation of her existence, she could not bear the discussion of any other topic in her presence. The only way to win her esteem was to speak of ladies' hats, of dresses, etc.; if any one had the misfortune to allude to music, painting, or history, she conceived an aversion for that person, because her ignorance of such subjects compelled her to remove, with evident displeasure, to a retired corner of the room in order to conceal her incapacity to understand them. Such, at least, she appeared to me when I was in the habit of meeting her. Having since become Princess Borghèse, and resided in that splendid and classic land of Italy, the very atmosphere of which appears calculated to instil into every mind an admiration for the fine arts, she may have acquired some notions upon subjects of which she had formerly been utterly ignorant. I merely state what has come under my observation and what was a matter of notoriety. Flattery may, at a later period, have stooped to the most degrading adulation, and succeeded in conveying the impression that a sister of the great Napoleon must necessarily be a woman gifted with every quality, but at the period I speak of, her unrivalled personal attractions were alone the subject of

enthusiastic praise. This was no more than justice, and whatever could be said of her beauty fell short of the truth.

Without pretending to enter into the details of her private life, it cannot but be acknowledged that her morals were exceedingly dissolute. It is no more than proper that *contemporary memoirs* should afford some insight into the character of those whom they exhibit to public view; but my feelings would recoil at following her in her progress, and I doubt that any woman would consent to sully her pen by the recital of such repeated failings. A just sense of what is due to the modesty of our sex enjoins us not to dwell too much upon certain delicate subjects.

Madame Leclerc allowed her favourites to acquire a powerful ascendancy over her, and felt a kind of pride in making a public avowal of her choice. So long as she retained an affection for the man who was the object of her preference, he might make the most extravagant demands upon her, but she pursued with the most unrelenting animosity those who had the misfortune to be no longer in her good graces, or who grew tired of thus exposing themselves to the envy of other men, and to the anger of Napoleon, who bitterly lamented the scandal which his sister's levity of conduct could not fail to provoke.

When she took her departure for St. Domingo, she entertained so undisguised an affection for Lafon, an

actor of the Théâtre Français, that Mdlle. Duchesnois, on learning that Général Leclerc was to take his wife along with him, exclaimed, in the giddiest manner, before a numerous company :

“I am really very sorry for it ; Lafon is so fond of her that the separation may kill him !”

In vain was it hinted to her by signs that she should avoid such a topic ; she persisted for several minutes in pitying the sad fate of her brother-actor.

Madame Leclerc did not act with more circumspection at a later period ; she gave as free a loose to her transient affections when surrounded with the gorgeous pomp of the most splendid Court. I will instance a few proofs of the little pains she took to conceal them.

M. Jules de Canouville had been for some months the favoured object of the affections of the Princess ; he was remarked for a handsome countenance, a graceful deportment, an excellent heart, and the most tried courage. Having entered the service as a mere private of dragoons, he had attained the rank of a colonel at a time when protection might succeed in procuring any favour except those special rewards which were reserved for a crowd of meritorious officers and soldiers, who were daily exposing their lives in sanguinary conflicts ; the only difficulty in dispensing them was to make the selection, for it was in the power of all to prove the justice of their claims to

the rewards thus received. Nothing, therefore, but sheer merit could ever procure any special mark of distinction from the Emperor, and many such were bestowed upon M. de Canouville.

These brilliant advantages were somewhat tarnished, in the eyes of sensible men, by great foppery and indiscretion; we must acknowledge, however, that these defects were considered by our sex as additional claims to their regard. They had the weakness to forgive him a conduct which seriously committed them; and were delighted at his readiness to go any lengths to obey their commands. Those ladies were so simple as to ascribe to passionate attachment the violence of a defect which was inherent in M. de Canouville's character; and the very circumstance which would have excited the aversion of any sensible woman was the cause of his succeeding with the Princess. Feeling proud of his success, he urged her to afford him some signal proof of his triumph; the greater readiness she evinced in bestowing favours upon him, the more he demanded of her; this connection at last acquired a deplorable notoriety, occasioned by the indiscreet conduct of both.

M. Bousquet, a celebrated dentist, was sent for to Neuilly (the residence of Princesse Pauline), for the purpose of examining the teeth of Her Imperial Highness and of cleaning them. Being introduced into her presence, he prepared to commence operations.

“Monsieur,” said a handsome young man, in a morning gown, who was carelessly stretched upon a couch, “I request you to pay great attention to what you are about. I am extremely careful of the teeth of my Paulette; and you shall be answerable to me for any accident.”

“Be not uneasy, Prince; I can assure Your Imperial Highness that there is not the slightest danger.”

During the whole time that M. Bousquet was engaged in cleaning this handsome set of teeth, the injunctions were unceasing; when at last he had completed his work, he withdrew to the attendance-room where the ladies of the palace, the chamberlains, etc., were in waiting, expecting the moment when they might repair to the presence of the Princess. Every one made the most anxious inquiries of M. Bousquet, to which he replied in these words:

“Her Imperial Highness is quite well, and must be delighted at the tender affection of her august consort, who has just given her in my presence the most affecting proofs of his attachment. Nothing could exceed his anxiety, and I had the utmost difficulty in calming the uneasiness he felt at the possible consequences of what was a very simple operation. Wherever I may go I shall take especial care to relate what I have seen. It is truly delightful to be able to record such proofs of conjugal tenderness in so elevated a rank. It has made a deep impression upon my mind.”

No one attempted to check the worthy M. Bousquet in his enthusiastic expressions, nor to utter a single word, for fear of indulging in a laugh at his mistake ; and he took his departure under the conviction that the Prince and the Princess Borghèse were models of conjugal felicity. The Prince, however, was in Italy, and M. de Canouville was the handsome young man he had seen !

Similar topics for scandal were but too often renewed ; the attendants upon this Court were not only compelled to submit to the necessity of suppressing the feelings of disgust which such scenes could not fail to inspire, but even to praise the woman who was the guilty occasion of them. None would have dared to praise the charms of a virtuous life in her presence ; such praise would have been the bitterest reflection upon her conduct. At present, however, any one who should be bold enough to pretend admiration for that Court would justly incur the charge of adulation !

Princess Borghèse gave a magnificent ball, which was attended by all the Imperial family. The Viceroy was to dance with the Queen of Naples ; he had already taken his place, when M. de Canouville rushed towards the orchestra, and called out to Julien, the leader of the band :

“ Strike up a waltz.”

“ A country dance, sir, has been called.”

“ I insist upon a waltz.”

The Viceroy had come up in the interval, and he observed that in attention to the order previously laid down a country dance ought to be played.

"Very possibly, monseigneur," impetuously exclaimed M. de Canouville; "but as I am to waltz with Princess Borghèse I repeat that I must have a waltz. Come, Julien, obey instantly."

"And I, sir," said the Viceroy to Julien, in a mild tone of voice, "*I request you will have the goodness to play the country dance.*"

The Prince's wish was obeyed, several persons having got round M. de Canouville, and expostulated with him on his unbecoming conduct.

The extraordinary moderation of the Viceroy was soon reported all over Paris, and tended to increase the affection so generally entertained for him, as it proved that he possessed the amiable qualities of a private life in as eminent a degree as acknowledged valour on the field of battle. He was satisfied with opposing a calm deportment to an unaccountable act of folly, when a single word from him would have ruined the man who thus presumed to oppose his wish. It is, in fact, by such distinguished traits of character that Princes should be revenged on insults offered to them.

Napoleon was presented by the Emperor of Russia with a very valuable furred robe, lined with ermine. Madame Borghèse burst out into so many exclama-

tions at the happiness of her brother in possessing such beautiful fur, that he resigned the present to her, which she accepted with rapturous delight. On arriving at the Élysée her whole conversation turned upon the subject of the furred robe. Feeling annoyed at seeing the attention of the society wholly engrossed by it, M. de Canouville shewed symptoms of displeasure, and was loud in his complaints. In spite of every explanation, he persisted in saying that the present was preferred to every other object. The Princess immediately gave way, by requesting he would take it home and have it made into a Turkish dress for himself, and a lining for a hussar jacket.

Without reflecting upon the possible displeasure of the Emperor, M. de Canouville applied to his own use this magnificent piece of fur, and repaired to the parade in an elegant hussar uniform. He was mounted on a rather fiery horse, which he was at first unable to master, and created some confusion in the ranks; Napoleon instantly rode up at full speed to inquire what could obstruct the evolutions of a squadron of cavalry, the manœuvres of which were in general so correct; he no sooner cast his eyes upon M. de Canouville than he beheld the present he had given to his sister a few days before. "M. de Canouville," he exclaimed, in the violence of his anger, "your horse is too fiery for a parade; you must train him by going to Russia, where you will command a

regiment with more credit to yourself than you can reap here ; and I trust that both you and your horse will return in a quieter mood."

M. De Canouville accordingly took his departure, leaving the Princess a prey to the deepest sorrow. His conduct was beyond all praise ; he won the affection of every person under his orders and of his brother officers, as well as the esteem of his chiefs ; he was unfortunately killed at the close of a brilliant engagement by the shot of a cannon which the soldiers were firing at random ; he was regretted by the whole army.

There was found upon his person a very striking portrait of the Princess, set in diamonds ; it was immediately brought to the King of Naples, who had it conveyed to his sister-in-law. The latter never failed sending every fortnight a courier to Russia, who was directed to see and speak to M. de Canouville, as she was not satisfied at merely receiving a letter from him.

M. Ernest de Canouville, comptroller of the Emperor's household, was brother of the officer to whom I have just alluded ; he was remarked for nothing more than a perfect knowledge of dancing, which enabled him to rival the first *figurante* of the opera ; whilst he was engaged in that occupation, his brother was fighting like a hero in defence of his country. The talent of M. Ernest de Canouville was not in

keeping with his phlegmatic and austere countenance any more than with his pedantic character ; he was at sixteen years of age what he is no doubt at the present day, very grave in his appearance, fully satisfied of his own merit (which every one else failed to discover), and of as *economical* a disposition as his brother was lavish and generous. I am not aware what has become of him ; but for his sake I think it a great pity that fashion should require a man to walk a dance ; he must now be much at a loss how to pass his time in society.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ball at the Prince de Neufchâtel's. — Madame Foy. — I Lose My Mother in the Crowd. — I am Spoken to by Queen Hortense, and by the Emperor. — My Bluntness. — Details Respecting Madame Foy. — Colonel Lamotte-Houdard. — Marriage of Général Foy.

THE Prince de Neufchâtel gave the most splendid fêtes at this period. He inhabited the hôtel now occupied by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and had caused to be added to it the wing which runs along the garden and formed an immense gallery connected with the apartments reserved for dancing on the ground floor. Supper was laid out on the first floor; the tables were of twelve covers each, with the exception of the Princess's table, at which the members of the Imperial family sat down, as well as the foreign Princes who came to pay their court to Napoleon, and a few high dignitaries of the Empire.

We were invited to one of those balls given on the occasion of the birth of the King of Rome; the Empress allowed us to return to Paris for a few days that we might prepare for the ball, which was to be a masked one, and recruit our strength after the fatigue

of it. A handsome costume would have entailed a very heavy expense upon us; my mother, Madame Foy, another lady and myself, all agreed to go there in dominos, a costume which was allowed. Being unused to this species of pleasure, I was delighted at the opportunity of being enabled to enjoy an amusement which I did not think it possible I could ever be tired of. Madame Foy, to whom those crowded assemblies, which fashion has agreed to call delightful, were extremely familiar, foretold to me that I should not be a single hour in the crowd without regretting my having gone there; I could not venture to utter a word from under the mask I was to assume; the evening would, therefore, appear an age, and were she not married it would have as little charms for her, since she would be unable as a single woman to carry on any intrigue. Notwithstanding my reliance upon her judgment, I persisted in maintaining that I could not fail to enjoy the giddy scene.

I lost no time in preparing; and had my hair dressed with a wreath of flowers, according to the prevailing custom, in order not to present too repulsive an appearance when it would become necessary to unmask for supper. After having hurried the other ladies with unwarrantable impatience, I stepped into the carriage with a delight bordering upon folly. We started from the Rue Royale, and, upon reaching the boulevard, fell into the line of carriages, and my im-

patience exceeded all bounds when I found that for every two paces we advanced, we retrograded three. What with letting down the glass in front, urging the coachman to gain upon the other equipages, and looking out of the carriage window to ascertain if we were in sight of the hôtel, I worked myself into a state of useless agitation, and began to discover that Court balls were not scenes of unalloyed enjoyment. Madame Foy smiled at my distress, but was too kind-hearted to laugh at or increase it by the detail of what would presently happen to me. After the delay of an hour and a half, which appeared an age to my impatient feelings, we reached the busy scene with the utmost difficulty, and nearly crushed to death, when I soon became convinced of the correctness of my amiable friend's observations. The more we advanced towards the elegant ballroom, the greater was our dilemma; and it was only after extraordinary exertions that we succeeded in finding a few vacant places on a bench; by this time I was quite overpowered with fatigue. I was passionately fond of dancing; finding, however, that the dominos cut a very sorry appearance near the beautiful costumes of the crowd of handsome young ladies who were figuring away before me, I determined not to stir. Being completely disguised by my mask, not a word was addressed to me; my mother was heartily tired of the scene, this was also the case with myself; unwilling, however, to acknowl-

edge it, I set about contemplating the splendour that surrounded me, by way of diversion to my disappointed feelings.

The female part of the company vied with each other in the choice of their toilets, which were all equally elegant, each lady having selected the most becoming attire. Gold and diamonds were seen glittering in every direction; those brilliant pictures were reflected by mirrors illumined with a profuse quantity of wax lights; and several boxes of flowers tastefully arranged between pillars spread the most delightful fragrance. I really fancied myself transported by magic into one of the enchanted palaces of the Arabian tales, and I could not withhold from my mother the expression of my delight. All on a sudden, as I lifted up my head, I broke out into so loud a laugh that my neighbours inquired the cause of a mirth so unusual in such an assembly, where the risible propensities are as subject to etiquette as every motion or salute. I was unable to reply, or contain myself; my mother scolded me in an undertone of voice, saying that I was exposing myself to the public gaze, and nothing more could be more out of keeping with good taste. This advice was lost upon me; at last, I pointed with my finger to a tribune where the musicians were standing; they were all obliged to wear dominos, and their singular countenances would have afforded subjects for the

lively pencil of a Martel, a Vigneron, or a Charlet. Julien, the negro, wrapped up in a rose-coloured Capuchin dress with a handsome lining, cut the most extraordinary figure I ever saw; another violin player, powdered up to his ears, had a no less strange appearance under a sky-blue cowl; I was quite astonished at the stern gravity of every one to whom I pointed out those caricatures which seemed to me so ludicrous; long habit had robbed them of the merit of novelty, and the so-fantastically dressed orchestra was less a subject of mirth to myself than my amazement was to the company.

Anxious that I should escape the illiberal remarks of my neighbours on my want of knowledge of the world, my mother proposed that we should move to another apartment. I instantly agreed, and we proceeded to that in which the quadrille of the Princesses was said to be going on. On reaching a door that was beset with company going in or out, I was on a sudden separated from my mother, and carried to some distance from her without having it in my power to join her again. I was quite beside myself, and unconscious of what I was doing; I took off my mask and searched for her in every corner of the apartment which I had found so much difficulty in reaching; unable to restrain my agitated feelings, I questioned every one I met, and called out, "Where is my mamma? have you seen my mamma?" The

gazing multitude laughed at my distress, and, as I was a perfect stranger in the place, every one passed me without uttering a word; at last, after a few moments of indescribable anguish, I met M. Gazani, who, with his usual kindness, offered his arm to assist me in finding out a mother who was the object of my anxious inquiries. Never was a more opportune service rendered in a more obliging manner.

We went over various apartments, and, whilst I was seeking in every corner for the object of my inquiries, two black dominos came up to me. One of them said that I had, no doubt, a coquettish motive for taking off my mask, since it was usual for those who wore that unpretending costume to preserve it the whole evening.

“Coquettishness, indeed! Would that I were far from here, for I can assure you that I have not the smallest desire of making a conquest in this place.”

“Is it possible you do not enjoy the scene; you, mademoiselle, who are so lively, and so fond of dancing?” rejoined the little mask, laying hold of my arm.

“Not I, indeed! Have I not told you that I have had a surfeit of it? I am seeking for my mother, and your questions have no other effect than to heighten my distaste for this fatiguing ball. I meet with nothing to-day but annoyance from every one.”

"Nevertheless, I am determined not to part with you so soon. Are you going to-morrow to the concert of Queen Hortense?"

"I am, indeed, to my sorrow; if that party should be as entertaining and agreeable as this one has been to me, I shall have passed a very pleasant week!"

I uttered the last words with increased peevishness, and forcing myself away from the domino, who seemed to have at heart to torment me, I dragged M. Gazani along to another part of the salon, where I at last found my mother. M. Gazani, after bestowing a few moments to the recital of my unlucky adventure, told me that he believed I had made an egregious mistake by the harsh replies I had just given.

"How is this?" I hastily asked; "I do not believe I have been guilty of any mistake."

"I really suspect, mademoiselle, that the domino you have so roughly treated is the Queen of Holland."

"That, indeed, would give the finishing stroke to my misadventures."

"I am confident that it was the Queen's voice and address."

I wished to persuade myself that he was wrong; but that ill-disguised tone of voice resounded in my ears, and I was unable to dispel a feeling of uneasiness which I vainly attempted to combat, and which increased my anxiety to withdraw from the place

where so many unpleasant circumstances had, with unerring fatality, assailed me.

We were unable to overtake Madame Foy, whose habit of appearing at masked balls, together with her graceful and lively wit, enabled her to take a prominent part in the scene, and to intrigue with any one upon whom she condescended to bestow attention. We therefore took our departure without waiting for her.

Previously to entering into any details respecting the concert of Queen Hortense; to which we were invited for the ensuing day, I cannot avoid saying a few words respecting the charming woman of whom I have just spoken; she has inspired me with a friendship too ardent to be ever obliterated by absence. Circumstances have separated us from each other, but the time when she treated me like a sister was one of such unalloyed happiness to me that I wish to dwell, however briefly, upon it; it will be the means of reviving some of the pleasantest illusions of my youth.

The wife of one of our most celebrated orators and most distinguished generals could not fail to interest all France, which has sympathized in her well-founded grief; it almost becomes a duty for me to relate what I know of her, as it will prove to my fellow countrymen that Général Foy could not fail to enjoy domestic happiness; unfortunately, the hand of death brought his existence to too early a close.

Général Baraguay d'Hilliers married from affection Madame Daniel, the widow of an officer. This lady had been left with two children, who were adopted by her second husband, and treated by him with a tenderness which never experienced any change. The eldest, Mdle. Lise d'Hilliers, was remarkable for her beauty, her wit, and a singular facility for learning whatever she undertook; her buoyancy of spirits, added to her uniform gentleness of temper, rendered her a valuable and delightful acquaintance. Having been brought up by her mother, a lady of sterling qualities, she combined solid knowledge with those talents which contribute to embellish it.

She was betrothed to Colonel Lamotte-Houdard, one of the most gallant officers in the army; everything was preparing for the marriage, which was to be celebrated at the estate of Général d'Hilliers; the bridal dress was ready, and the wedding gift presented; the wreaths of flowers that were to ornament the chapel were prepared, the neighbours invited to attend the ceremony, which was to secure the happiness of the young lady who was the object of general homage and admiration. A courier arrived with an order for M. Lamotte to join the grand army without delay. He was aware that, with Napoleon, a single hour was often sufficient to secure an imperishable renown; he would not, therefore, devote a single

moment to love, notwithstanding the urgent entreaties made to induce him to accelerate the celebration of the marriage; he tore himself away from a family which already cherished him as a son.

“In a few days, perhaps,” exclaimed the colonel, “there will remain of me nothing more than a name to add to the list of those men who have died fighting for their country. I have had an anticipation of the happiness that awaited me! That is something! Farewell.”

He took his departure, and hastened to join the chief who had already so often led him on the road to victory. The joy that lately beamed on every countenance was turned into sorrow, and a mournful truth verified on this occasion those cruel presentiments by which lovers are so often disappointed, persuaded as they are that everything must be fatal to them from the moment they are compelled to separate. Colonel Lamotte, after fighting many engagements in a manner worthy of his splendid military renown, was killed, I believe, at the battle of Austerlitz.

The mental energy of Mdlle. d’ Hilliers made her deeply sensible of the loss she had experienced. Her health was even so much affected by it as to create some uneasiness. The faculty were of the opinion that a change of residence could alone cure her of that tendency to decline which began to shew itself.

She therefore accompanied her father into Italy, where he held a command; it was there that she became acquainted with Général Foy, whose attentions she at first received with perfect indifference. By degrees, she was unable to resist the effect of those distinguished qualities, which were but the forerunner of the future elevation of the man whom they adorned; urged by her family, and attracted by the irresistible ascendancy of an officer of such universal merit, she consented to a union which was too soon torn asunder.

I can well recollect seeing her, in her exultation at the choice she had made of a husband, reading with undissembled pride the letters full of eloquence and tenderness which he addressed to her from Portugal. We have altogether lost sight of each other, our connections in society being totally different. Attempts have since been made to bring such reports to me respecting her as would have compelled me to alter my opinion of her character. I feel pleasure in having always refused to credit them, and believe that a party spirit could alone have dictated such calumnious imputations. If she should chance to read my "Memoirs," she will find in them the assurance that I am unchanged, and she will share in the satisfaction I have felt in recalling to mind an early acquaintance.

CHAPTER IX.

Party Given by Queen Hortense. — M. de Flahault Sings. — Witty Reply Made by Him. — His Mother, Madame de Souza. — Mdlle. de Bourgoing. — The Comtesse de Brocq. — The Duchesses Augereau, de Montebello and de Basano. — Anecdote at Fontainebleau.

WE reached the residence of Queen Hortense at a late hour, our humble equipage having found some difficulty in making its way through the elegant carriages which choked up the street. Proud of the livery which was a badge of their dependence, the coachmen, exultingly holding the reins which checked the fiery ardour of a handsome pair of horses, were lavish of their jokes and antechamber wit, the character of which was far too sublime to be understood by the modest driver of wretched hacks that had become worn out in the service of the public. The repeated lashes aimed at them by the proud carriage drivers were insufficient to extricate us from our embarrassment. We were upwards of an hour in reaching the gateway, where it became necessary for us to alight. Fortunately, however, the weather was very fine, and we reached the hall without encountering the accident I so much dreaded on account of

my white shoes. We were, indeed, stared at by the porter and footmen with a slight emotion of contempt which brought the colour to my cheeks; but this wound to my self-love was so soon over that I had already recovered from it before we reached the top of the staircase.

The salons were full of company, and the piano-forte was in the apartment where the Queen had stationed herself. The apartment could be reached only by passing through several others, by elbowing men loaded with decorations, and ladies glittering in the splendour of their attire. I trod upon some, got entangled with the handsome fringes of others, curtsying all the while to those I had met at Malmaison. I felt that I was behaving awkwardly, and experienced the utmost embarrassment and uneasiness, which greatly increased as I approached the Queen; I became at last completely disconcerted. What she told me was assuredly not calculated to restore my self-possession, as the reader will now have an opportunity of judging.

“Good evening, mademoiselle; are you in better temper than yesterday? I must tell you that you do not shine at a masked ball. You will ask how that happened? Well, then, I went up to speak to you, and you replied in a tone of harshness and ill humour, which is certainly foreign from your usual manners.”

“Madame, I was at a loss to find my mother, and I acknowledge —”

“Yes, I know it; nevertheless, that was not a motive for treating me as you did.”

“I was unconscious that Your Majesty had condescended —”

“Unquestionably you could not guess who I was; it is an excellent lesson for the future, which will, I trust, induce you to be always obliging to every one; I am distressed at yesterday’s occurrence; I only came up for the purpose of countenancing you, and it must be owned you cannot be accused of having met me half-way. But to the fact. The gentleman who attended me was anxious to become acquainted with you; he knows my mother’s partiality for you, and wished to discover how far her taste was correct. He could only do so by ascertaining your mental qualities, by forming some notion of your manners, and, in short, by not being satisfied with beholding a pretty face. You did not, however, set off those qualities to advantage. You may judge of my mortification at the tone you assumed, for this domino, whose curiosity was so much excited, was no other than — the Emperor.”

I was overpowered at these words, for I must own I could not disguise from myself that I had never been so disagreeable as on the occasion of the ball of the preceding night; nevertheless, at no other time

could I have been more ambitious of shining, in order to justify the attentions that were shewn to me. To have failed in proving myself worthy of the protection of the Empress, appeared to me a mark of ingratitude, as heinous on my part as if it had been intentional. The Emperor must have felt surprised that so much kindness should be bestowed upon a person who could only appear in his sight an ill-mannered girl.

When the Queen found that my countenance began to assume a character of most painful emotion, she addressed a few kind words to me with her accustomed gracefulness of manner, and assured me that she had said to the Emperor whatever was calculated to soften down the unfavourable impression occasioned by my ill-timed roughness of behaviour. He had greatly enjoyed an openness of manner to which he was no longer accustomed, and of which all trace was obliterated, except in the camp, where his soldiers retained it in their intercourse with him; he was far from finding fault with it.

I was not much flattered at the circumstance that the camp alone afforded a parallel to my case; but endeavoured to recover my usual serenity of countenance, and to thank the Queen for condescending to console me; I own that my habitual levity of disposition soon obliterated that unpleasant scene from my mind, and I proceeded to enjoy the pleasure I most

delighted in, that of watching the company who surrounded me.

Never had I a freer scope for indulging my favourite passion, for the loveliest woman was found coupled with the most forbidding; the graceful countenance of the Duchesse de Conegliano was seen close to the affected Madame Thib——; at no great distance from the elegant Duchesse de Montebello the heavy Maréchale S—— displayed her large person and ridiculous toilet; that numerous assembly, in short, presented nothing but striking contrasts.

I met at this party M. de Flahault, with whom I had been in some measure brought up during the emigration, and whose amiable mother, an intimate acquaintance of mine, was unchanged in her disposition, notwithstanding the brilliant fortune she had acquired by marrying M. de Souza, the Portuguese Minister. She received us at all times in the kindest manner, and rendered us many important services, which evidently proved that she had not far to go for a model when describing a noble and elevated character in her charming literary productions.

M. de Flahault possessed a cheerful countenance, most accomplished manners, together with a graceful wit and a gentle turn of mind, which afforded no indication of that firmness of character he displayed at a later period. He sang remarkably well for the period to which I allude, and that talent was greatly

enhanced by his obliging disposition. The Queen requested him to sit down to the piano, a request he obeyed with that becoming simplicity which amateurs are apt to fancy themselves privileged to depart from ; they generally impose a heavy penalty upon the company by the dreadful annoyance to which the latter are subjected of soliciting them over and over again, for that which they burn with impatience to do of their own accord, but refuse in conformity to custom. It is high time that such affected airs of excessive self-love should be forever discarded ; that persons of second-rate talents, instead of being urged to come forward, should, on the contrary, be compelled to solicit notice ; this conduct on both sides would be far more candid and natural.

M. de Flahault displayed all that giddiness which is becoming in a young man, when it does not degenerate into foppery or excessive freedom. His mother was scolding him one day respecting some frivolous act which maternal severity deemed it proper to rebuke.

“ I really think, madame,” he replied, “ that you would wish my beard to grow white.”

This witty reply put an end to the sermon she was beginning to preach to him.

Garat, who was of the party, was also requested to sing ; and as he had given me a few lessons he determined to play me a trick, and announced to the Queen

his intention of requesting me to sing with him the duet of *Crudel perché fin ora* ; I really think I could have struck him in pure spite ; to be compelled to sing before so numerous an assembly, in which I had but few acquaintances, and only one friend, whom I shall presently name, seemed to me a most serious misfortune ; wishing, however, to avoid being any longer subjected to the gaze of every one, I determined to get through the part as soon as possible, and, trembling like a leaf, I accompanied Garat and my mother to the pianoforte. I may venture to say that no one could have been tired of my performance ; for my voice was so much impeded by fear that I was unable to articulate a sound ; the duet was a mere solo, which fell altogether to Garat's lot.

On returning to my seat, I found myself near Mdlle. de Bourgoing, who was afterwards married to Maréchal Macdonald, and was torn by a premature death from a family that idolized her, and from a circle of friends to whom she had set by her conduct so bright an example for imitation. Her character retained to the last its wonted amiability ; she also displayed an obliging and gentle disposition, which formed the groundwork of that character. United in our earliest infancy, we were for a long time absent from each other. Her immense fortune, the honours by which she was surrounded, could not but remove her still further from me, as I had remained from choice in a state of

obscurity, and should have felt wearied and annoyed at never finding myself alone, and at liberty to enjoy a friend's society; the delightful sentiment of friendship must fail to spread its enchantment over the moments which are dedicated to it, if there exist too great a difference in the relative positions of those who are united in its gentle bands; the contrast destroys all sympathy; a variety of emotions, which ought to be common to both friends, or of sensations which should be simultaneously felt, can only find access in one heart! As soon as Mdle. de Bourgoing became a Duchess and the wife of a French Marshal, it was a necessary consequence that we should cease to meet, though, perhaps, not that we should be perfect strangers to each other.

Feeling persuaded of the impossibility of keeping up any mutual intimacy, where the respective stations in society are no longer the same, I have always given up my friends as soon as a brilliant marriage threw them into a new sphere in which I was unable to follow them; divested of all ambition, I avoided them as soon as they became possessed of advantages which did not appear to me to constitute happiness, though they drew around them a crowd of unmeaning acquaintances. I always felt an interest in them, inwardly participated in their good fortune, sympathized in their sorrows, but invariably kept aloof from their society.

The Duchess of Tarentum afforded me a clear proof that I had correctly estimated her sentiments, when I judged of them by consulting my own heart. Apprised of the loss of my father, she wrote me on that occasion a kind and amiable letter, which greatly affected me. At a later period she afforded me another proof that our early friendship was still fresh in her recollection.

I applied to her to solicit the Marshal's protection for a poor orphan, the daughter of a serjeant who had received a decoration of honour, and had fallen on the field of battle. My object was to procure the girl's admission into St. Denis. I could not fail to interest the Duchess by describing to her the unfortunate situation of this child, who had remained under the care of a grandmother, though the latter was reduced to the necessity of working for her livelihood. A few days after my request I received the warrant which secured an honourable asylum and a good education to the poor orphan. She was admitted into that establishment, where the daughters of so many gallant men received the affecting reward secured to them by the glory which their parents had acquired.*

How melancholy is the reflection that my gratitude for a service rendered in so obliging a manner

* The Baroness de Bourgoing, who superintends the royal establishment at St. Denis, is the mother of the Duchess of Tarentum.

should be directed to the mere shadow of a parting friend! . . .

My attention was attracted to a lady near Queen Hortense, whose elegant toilet and somewhat bold demeanour indicated pretensions which formed a strange contrast with a long and ungraceful figure, and with a countenance whose strongly marked features possessed nothing to recommend them. I was informed that this was Mdle. Cochelet, a reader, who had risen from an inferior situation to become the Queen's favourite. It was said that nothing took place in Her Majesty's household without her being previously consulted. I wondered at the extraordinary favour she enjoyed, though my astonishment was grounded upon nothing else than the aversion which her appearance had excited in my mind. My usual giddiness again led me to form a rash judgment on this occasion. Her fidelity and devotedness to her Sovereign proved that she was worthy of inspiring a sincere attachment. It is asserted by those who knew her that she is much courted in society for her wit and varied talents. This was one of the many occasions on which my judgment was completely at fault.

Mdle. Cochelet has since been advantageously married, and resides in Switzerland, near her friend, upon whom she continues to bestow the most affectionate attentions.

I met for the first time at this party one of the most lovely women of the Court of Queen Hortense; she has been so universally regretted that to name her is to point out the many qualities which adorned her: this was Madame de Brocq! . . . Though dressed in the plainest style, she appeared to me to eclipse all those who surrounded her, not so much from possessing any extraordinary beauty, or from immediately attracting notice; many women might boast a prettier nose, a lovelier mouth, or a fairer colour; but none could lay claim to finer eyes; they were expressive of wit and gentleness combined; and it was impossible to be noticed by Madame de Brocq without feeling an attachment for her. The kind of carelessness which she displayed in all her movements gave her a peculiar charm which I never discovered in any one else. The interest she inspired by the tender expression of her countenance could not fail to grow into friendship whenever she took the least pains to encourage that sentiment; but she appeared, as it were, anxious to fly from every tender feeling, as if apprehensive of being diverted from the subject of her habitual meditations—the memory of her husband whom she had lost, to the best of my recollection, two years before that period. It would have been very difficult to introduce mirth and cheerfulness in any conversation with her; nevertheless, she was not absolutely plunged in melancholy; she

would even make an effort to join in social conversation. Her smile, however, always appeared constrained; and, so far from its exciting any pleasure, it was almost painful in any one to perceive that they had provoked it; it formed too striking a contrast with a physiognomy which might have served as a model for portraying the figure of Melancholy. Madame de Brocq's countenance exhibited its vacant stare and its attractive appearance.*

Many women famed for beauty were at this party, and attracted the notice of the company under different aspects. The Duchesse de Bassano was, in my opinion, distinguished above the rest by her well-proportioned features and elegant shape. I was acquainted with many affecting traits in her character which tended, perhaps, to enhance the beauty of her physiognomy. It indicated to my fancy every quality which adorns a wife of irreproachable conduct, a most tender mother, a safe and devoted friend; and I looked at her with the greater pleasure, as she had displayed the most considerate kindness to an individual of my family. I have always felt an inward delight in the opportunity of discovering female qual-

* It is well known that this charming woman perished in Switzerland within view of the Queen, who saw her roll down a frightful precipice from which she was drawn up a lifeless and dreadfully mangled corpse! Her Majesty's despair knew no bounds, and her poignant grief was shared by all those who had had an opportunity of appreciating the virtues, the talents, and the character of the Comtesse de Brocq. She was the sister of Madame la Maréchale Ney.

ities, and paying them the tribute of my admiration ; I conceive that those qualities redound to the honour of the whole sex, and that I could not fail to derive my share of the encomium.

Madame de Bassano was too handsome a woman, her husband was too influential, too much loaded with the favours of his Sovereign, for her to have escaped the attacks of calumny ; it is ever ardent in persecuting merit, and is sparing of none but those who fail to excite envious feelings. Madame de Bassano calmly opposed to its bitter shafts the consciousness of a rectitude of conduct, to which the Emperor bore ample testimony on various occasions.

His successful career of intrigue with a great number of ladies who courted his notice inspired him, it is said, with the idea of pleasing Madame de Bassano. He was assiduous in his attentions to her ; but she replied to them with a respectful coldness of deportment which must have satisfied him that, in her case, at least, he would be compelled to acknowledge that he had failed in his guilty views.

He one day met Madame de Bassano in the gallery of the Palace of Fontainebleau, took hold of her arm, and made her the most unequivocal and ardent declaration.

“Sire, were I to apprise my husband of this he never would believe that the Sovereign whom he is

serving with so much attachment could attempt to rob him of his domestic happiness. How can you, Sire, attempt to disturb it? I am now under the necessity of assuring Your Majesty that, if your persecuting attentions do not immediately cease, I shall disclose them to my husband, who will ever remain the exclusive object of my undivided affection. I know enough of him to be satisfied that he would immediately resign all his appointments at Court, and withdraw from it in my company."

"He would not dare to do so, madame."

"Your Majesty is much mistaken; he will dare anything to escape from the mortifying conviction of the ingratitude of a man who possesses his unbounded attachment."

So saying she forced her hand away from Napoleon, who held it within his grasp, and fled in the greatest hurry.

"Calm your agitation, madame," exclaimed Napoleon, transported with anger, "you need not run so fast, you are as silly as you are handsome; I am now cured of my folly."

He maintained for some time a cold and sullen deportment towards Madame de Bassano; but he afterwards redoubled his respectful attentions to her, and quoted her as an example worthy of imitation.

This anecdote was related to me by a person who

vouched for its accuracy. I cannot give it for a fact; but as it is highly honourable to Madame de Bassano's memory, I have deemed it proper to record it in this place. If untrue, the mere fiction is a signal homage paid to virtue.

CHAPTER X.

Masked Ball at the Tuileries.—Elegance of the Quadrilles. — Mesdames de Menou, de Graville, de Villeneuve, Dulauloy. — MM. Perregaux, Desaix, and Flahault. — The Emperor Completely Masked Compels Madame Cr—— to Retire from the Fête. — He Often Changes His Domino. — Absurd Spirit of Economy. — We Return to Malmaison. — M. and Madame Vanberghen. — Increasing Envy amongst the Ladies. — MM. de Rohan, de la Vauguyon.

I AM unable at this distance of time to state on what occasion a masked ball was given at the Tuileries; but I well recollect that there were upwards of a thousand persons invited who had not been presented at Court. They were stationed in the first and second tiers of boxes of the theatre, and were neither at liberty to move from that spot nor to appear in disguise. Every individual composing the Emperor's Court wore a costume in character or a domino; and the pit, which had been raised to a level with the stage, was used as a ballroom. Wreaths of flowers, numerous and splendid lustres, and the brilliant toilets of the ladies, combined to present a *coup d'œil* of unparalleled beauty.

As the hour struck ten, the Empress Maria Louisa made her appearance, followed by a long train of personal attendants and of the Emperor's household. She had adopted the costume of a *cauchoise*, which well became her commanding figure. She no sooner sat down than the Princesses' quadrilles were introduced to the sound of war-like music; that of the Queen of Naples represented every different costume of Italy with the greatest accuracy; the only addition to them was silver embroidery and a multitude of precious stones. It was completely eclipsed by the quadrille of Queen Hortense, which represented the Peruvians repairing to the Temple of the Sun; Mesdames de Menou, de Graville, de Villeneuve, etc., led by MM. Perregaux, Desaix, Flahault, and a crowd of other gentlemen, followed in the train of the Queen, whose elegant figure and beautiful foot appeared to great advantage under a light vestment flounced with feathers.

The high priestess, represented by the handsome Madame Dulauloy, seemed born to command. Her majestic and dignified countenance was peculiarly calculated to inspire that feeling of respect which it was impossible to refuse her. I saw the moment when the whole assembly was on the point of following the example of her subjects, who were allowed the privilege of bending the knee to her. Her unparalleled beauty called forth a general burst of

admiration. As soon as the quadrilles were over, the country dances began, and the attendants upon the Court entered into conversation with the less favoured crowd who occupied the first tier of boxes. It was impossible to distinguish the Emperor. He was lost in a crowd of dominos of all colours, engaged in the sport of perplexing us plebeians, who felt proud at being noticed by them, though intent, however, upon watching the dense crowd in which I could not discover a vacant space. I fancied I saw a gray domino followed by a couple of tall black figures, who seemed to have been placed there for the purpose of keeping watch upon *the master*, and especially upon those who might come too closely into contact with him. From that moment, my whole attention was riveted upon the group, and I acquired the conviction that I was not mistaken.

The gray domino came up to a very handsome lady loaded with diamonds; she was seated at a very short distance from me. His Majesty kept his eyes fixed upon her for some moments with his arms behind his back, and without uttering a single word. She blushed, became greatly agitated, and ended by saying in a tremulous voice to her troublesome observer, that she was not conscious of knowing him. Not a word was uttered in reply by the stranger, who appeared fixed to the spot in front of the disconcerted lady. She suddenly rose from

her seat in the utmost haste, and exclaimed in a terrified voice:

"That look is peculiar to the Emperor! How I repent having come to this place!"

She speedily left the palace, and the rumour spread around us that this lady, who had acquired some celebrity by a notable adventure, which was followed by a divorce, had not been invited; that she had, with unaccountable boldness, obtained admission to the fête by a ticket of one of her friends. Napoleon, whose once ardent attachment for her had degenerated into hatred, compelled her in this manner to quit an assembly to which he had refused her admittance. The Emperor's silence had revealed his meaning to her guilty conscience in as forcible a manner as a peremptory order could have done.

She was generally censured for having thus presumed to brave her Sovereign as well as public opinion, and great praise was bestowed upon the conduct of a man who, having it in his power to command obedience, only resorted to the irresistible ascendancy of a severe and scrutinizing glance.

He disappeared after that singular adventure, which, having soon got into circulation, threw the ballroom into confusion for a moment, by forming the topic of general conversation; dancing, however, was soon resumed, and lasted until the hour of supper; the tables were laid in apartments to which

none were admitted who had not been formally presented at Court; they were forced to retire without having had any refreshment, except ices, which were sent round during the whole evening.

This paltry economy appeared altogether misplaced; it had the effect of disappointing many persons whom His Majesty ought not to have invited to his palace if he intended to starve them. To add to the mortification, it was raining in torrents. The equipages of the Ministers and high dignitaries were placed before our own carriages, which we had every difficulty in finding out, and we were drenched before we could get to them. My mind has always retained an unpleasant recollection of this fête.*

On our return to Malmaison, I found there M. and Madame Vanberghen, whom I forgot to notice whilst passing in review the society of Navarre of which they formed part. They contributed very little to the enjoyment of our social circle; this is, perhaps, the motive of my omission, which I will now repair with the more pleasure, as it will afford me a further

*At another fancy ball which was given at Court, a quadrille of twelve persons entered the ballroom, representing *the hours*. Madame de Cr—, in a black crape dress spangled with silver stars, appeared in the character of *midnight*, which gave rise to a variety of satirical jokes. This lady was far from handsome, and her face was covered with pimples. Some one passing her cried out, "*Midnight gone by.*" This expression was not suffered to drop, and the name remained to Madame de Cr—, whose unamiable disposition made her generally disliked.

opportunity of proving how much the Empress delighted in being useful to her early friends.

M. Vanberghen was possessed of natural wit, but his education had been wholly neglected. I had known him at Geneva, a man of a lively disposition, and extremely entertaining, from the unconnected style of his conversation, consisting of a string of more or less agreeable anecdotes which he related in a peculiar manner. If I recollect rightly, he had been successful in business during the Revolution, at which period he became acquainted with Madame de Beauharnais by meeting her at the house of Madame Tallien, with whom he lived on terms of friendly intimacy. He had the appearance of a Swiss drum-major: was tall, lusty, of a fair complexion, and considered handsome by a few women of fashion; this circumstance accordingly brought him into notice. Being of an obliging and extravagant disposition, he was surrounded by flatterers, who, I believed, advanced their fortunes by helping him to squander a portion of his own, which some unfavourable speculations were the means of finally upsetting. In the days of his prosperity he had rendered some trifling services to Madame de Beauharnais, who was then in indigent circumstances, and often compelled to have recourse to her friends. She met him on her way through Geneva, instantly recalled to mind what he had done for her, perhaps exaggerated to herself the importance

of the services in order to indulge the satisfaction of having a pretext for what she intended to do for him and for his children. Her Majesty appointed him leader of the hunt, allowed him an apartment for himself and his family wherever she might reside, and give him a rendezvous at Navarre. He came on a short visit to that palace; but as he had now more experience, and was intent upon repairing his fortune, he appeared in quite a different character from what I had seen him a few months before. He had acquired a calm, sedate, and pensive turn of mind; his frankness of disposition had disappeared, and his constrained conversation was wholly devoid of interest. With as little candour or openness of mind as professed courtiers, he was often inferior to them by a want of knowledge of the world in the midst of which he was suddenly thrown. The topics of horses, of scandal, or of the toilet, were now discarded from conversation. In his attempt to avoid them, M. Vanberghen fell into the contrary extreme. In a word, ambition made him what so many other persons were already, an undesirable companion.

His wife had pretty features, but they were so devoid of life or expression that one grew tired of looking at them; they indicated a great lack of wit, and, unfortunately, this was close upon the truth.

After a short stay at Navarre, they took their departure for Paris, and did not arrive at Malmaison

until a long time after us. Far from contributing to its social enjoyments, which were indeed but very few, that residence appearing to be wholly devoted to state representation, they only added to the insipidity of the company; their presence was disagreeable to many who were apprehensive of losing the favour they enjoyed, whilst M. Vanberghen seemed at a loss how to turn to account that portion which had fallen to his share, it appearing to him far short of what he was justly entitled to.

It had not escaped the penetration of the Empress that M. Vanberghen was incapable of doing justice to any place which would have required a dignified deportment and a familiarity with Court etiquette; she had appointed him to the very situation for which he was best calculated; it had been created purposely for him in order not to offend the pretensions of others by giving him a rank above them; the duties of it consisted in nothing more than a thorough knowledge of riding and hunting, occupations which perfectly accorded with his taste and education.

The coldness shewn to my mother and myself by every individual about Her Majesty's person excited our astonishment. Josephine alone remained unchanged, but we had no difficulty in suspecting that sooner or later she would be prevailed upon to part with us. I ventured on one occasion to intimate to the Empress my apprehensions on the subject; she

quieted them by the most obliging expressions, and, in order to remove every doubt from my mind, said she would immediately give directions for my being provided with 3,000 francs, as she had no doubt that my little stock of money stood in need of improvement. "I will also give you my portrait, no one will then doubt any longer of the interest I take in your welfare. This fresh gift will prove to you my sincere affection and my desire to keep you near me." I believed everything she said with the simplicity of a girl of eighteen; her attentions were too much in accordance with my wishes to allow of my doubting them, and my mind remained at ease for some time longer.*

M. de Rohan Chabot † came to pay a visit at Malmaison; he held the rank of chamberlain, and had resided a long time at Naples, whence he had just arrived. The Empress addressed a variety of questions to him, and he replied to them in a witty, though a timid manner, which was surprising in a man of his age, who had long resided at Court. Her Majesty kept him to dinner and shewed him the most marked attention.

* That sum of money was never issued to me, notwithstanding that the order for it had been given in a positive manner; neither did I receive the portrait I so anxiously looked for. The latter is what I most regret being deprived of, for nothing remains to me of Josephine except her hair and a small bust of a tolerable likeness which I purchased at a public sale.

† Now Archbishop of Auch.

M. de la Vauguyon, who had come from Naples, had just been appointed a general of brigade under the special protection of Queen Caroline. He came to Malmaison on the same day as M. de Chabot. The Empress received him very coldly, and said at night, when the company had retired, that she was at a loss to account for his rapid fortune.

“He has nothing more to recommend him than a handsome countenance, and is too vain of that perishable advantage ever to become a man of sterling merit. It is, moreover, his misfortune,” added Her Majesty, “to be ill at ease in good company. As soon as he can make his escape, and avoid attending to the duties of his situation, he hastens to relieve himself, in the company of actresses, from the restraint which his ambition has imposed upon him. His manners and deportment savour strongly of those loose habits. He never can converse with any but theatrical women, and is as little familiar with gallantry as with courtesy of behaviour; the freedom and unpolished manners of a coffee-house life or of the green room are alone suitable to his taste; anywhere else he is ill at ease; it is painful to think of it.

“M. de Chabot is a man of a very different stamp; he possesses an innate sense of what is dignified and becoming; he cannot fail to succeed in whatever he may undertake, because he unites to a mind always

soaring towards elevated objects, the sound judgment which promotes a spirit of reflection, and invariably suggests the proper course of conduct which it becomes him to adopt."

At that period, however, nothing denoted that M. de Chabot would devote himself to the ecclesiastical profession, in which he is distinguished by such solid virtues, especially by a charitable disposition which has never been found wanting, and of which I might quote many instances, were I not afraid of offending him by divulging them to the world. The poor and the infirm, whom he so often relieves, will not be silent on the subject, and the truth will be made known ; gratitude will, no doubt, deem it a necessity to publish such acts of benevolence.

CHAPTER XI.

Cambacères Comes to Malmaison.—Josephine's Opinion of Him.—Her Letters to Him.—Contemplated Fishing Party.—It is Prevented by a Courier from the Emperor.—The Viceroy's Regret.—Trouss, a Mameluke.—Noble Trait of Prince Eugène.—The Prince of Asturias Solicits a Wife at the Emperor's Hands.—Opinion of the Empress Respecting Napoleon's Moral Courage.

THE Archchancellor came to breakfast at Malmaison, and the Empress displayed all the charms of her graceful wit in her endeavours to give him a welcome reception. She seemed anxious to persuade him that she was perfectly contented with her fate, felt no regret at the past, and willingly forgave him the share he had taken in bringing about her divorce. He appeared fully sensible of the kind attentions shewn to him, and prolonged his visit in consequence.

"I have a great regard for that man," said Josephine, after he had taken leave, "for he is one of those who have been least lavish of flattery to the Emperor; he has often given me excellent advice, nor was it thrown away; it has, on the contrary, proved of essential service to me."

I have had an opportunity of verifying the correctness of Josephine's assertion. The two following letters were written to him by this Princess, who, if occasionally superficial and frivolous, when seeking to place herself on a level with the young ladies about her person, could as readily assume the language of a statesman, when it behooved her to sustain the dignity of the elevated rank to which she had been raised.

"TO THE ARCHCHANCELLOR.

"MONSIEUR, — To-morrow is the day on which I am to give audience to the Senate, and the several public authorities in the Emperor's absence. Placed in so trying a position, it behooves me, first, to acquaint you with my intention, and secondly, to ask your advice. To whom can I, with more propriety, address myself, than to the illustrious personage who possesses the unbounded confidence of the Emperor, and is justly considered by all Frenchmen as their worthy representative?

"Having received a communication of the several speeches that are to be addressed to me, I naturally send you the replies I think it proper to give to them.

"I remind the Senate that, as the fathers of the country, and the conservators of its institutions, it belongs to them alone to maintain the balance between the several powers without venturing to encroach upon any. The legislative body: that its attributes consist in judging and in voting the laws, especially that of taxation, without interfering in the march of Government, which any pretensions on its part would have the effect of obstructing in its course. The Council of State: that the important duty devolves upon it of

preparing, by preliminary discussions, a permanent system of legislation and solid organic laws. The Ministers : that they neither form a corporation, a legislative commission, an administration, nor a Government ; but that in their capacity of superior agents to the latter, and first assistants to the chief of that Government, they either execute its orders, or give directions to that effect ; the latter being nothing more than the immediate consequence of legislative determinations. The clergy : that they form an integral part of the State, but that the State never is, nor can be, within their domain, which is wholly and exclusively extended over consciences ; and that they are to exercise a control over the latter, for the mere purpose of rearing citizens for our common country, soldiers in defence of its territory, subjects for the Sovereign, and respectable fathers of families. The magisterial bodies : that, whilst applying the laws without any interpretation, with singleness of purpose, and identity in the legislative system, they must evince their sagacity in adhering to the spirit of the law, so long as it combines the happiness of the governed with the respect due to the governors. The learned bodies : that the mild ascendancy of arts, sciences, and literature moderates the harshness of a military life, which is unavoidable in a period of trials and changes. Manufacturing and commercial bodies : that they can have but two objects in view, which may properly be reduced to a single one—the prosperity of our own, the ruin of English produce ; and lastly, I remind agriculturists that the treasures of France lie buried in its bosom, and that the spade and the plough can alone bring them to light. To the gallant men of our military and naval services I can adduce nothing new ; this palace is loaded with their trophies ; I shall be addressing them from under a canopy, formed of standards conquered by their valour and sprinkled with their blood.

“ Tell me with the utmost candour, whether I am sufficiently impressed with the subject upon which I am to address the august assembly to be convened on the occasion.”

“ ANOTHER LETTER TO THE ARCHCHANCELLOR.

“ M. L’ARCHICHANCELIER, — Allow me to claim a right which my duties impose upon me of relieving the unfortunate, and to appeal to that benevolent anxiety you have always shewn to second my wishes in matters of this nature.

“ My object is to obtain a situation in the Emperor’s household for M. Cyrille Desforgues, a man deprived of the advantages of birth, fortune, or protection ; he is unfortunate ! . . . It behooves, therefore, the Archchancellor and me to relieve him.

“ We are both well aware that the advantage of birth is often available to no other purpose than to become a substitute for real merit ; and the Emperor would still be a sub-lieutenant, if it had required nothing more for attaining the rank of a general officer than to prove his right to four quarters in his heraldic escutcheon. I shall say little on the score of fortune, although the Emperor requires the possession of some property in any one who may enter into his household ; the real merit, the education, the talents of M. Desforgues sufficiently recommend him to Your Highness, who will have no hesitation in repairing the neglect of the blind goddess towards him.

“ In the rank in which I am endeavouring to place him, this worthy man cannot fail to encounter more favoured, more intriguing, and more dexterous rivals ; he will not have to fear them ; neither shall I apprehend them for him, if you condescend to direct his steps. I feel sanguine in the expectation that you will consent to patronize him, because he is unfortu-

nate and is well worthy of your protection and of mine. I am presenting you with means of exercising your benevolent disposition; by so doing you will lay me under additional obligations."

I consider the above letters as models of a noble and dignified style. They embrace every sentiment that a Sovereign should entertain who is sincerely desirous of the happiness and prosperity of his kingdom. . . . But is it possible that I should fall upon the topic of politics, I who am perfectly ignorant of the subject? That I should follow the mania of the present age, which sometimes induces our sex to relinquish the playful frivolousness of conversation so becoming to it, and soar to the gravity so unsuited to its pursuits! I hasten to return to the narrative I have broken off, of events to which I have been an eye-witness, of daily scenes, ill calculated, perhaps, for extraordinary displays, though not deficient in interest in so far as they relate to personages whose names will be handed down to posterity. I have not yet recovered from the alarm into which I have been thrown by finding myself on the verge of giving way to that general propensity of the present day (a species of epidemic disorder), of talking nonsense upon subjects which few people are enabled to discuss with sufficient data to enable them to guide the judgment of their fellow creatures.

I shall soon come to those times of disturbances, of misfortunes, of disunion, when every one, more or less, was called upon to act a part or to entertain a fixed opinion. As my way of thinking was like that of most women, purely sentimental, in alluding to those fatal years which have brought about the peaceful days we now enjoy after so many storms, I will speak of them not as an austere censor or a profound politician, but as one who has deeply felt the afflictions entailed upon her country. I will relate what I have seen in language expressive of my feelings; I have treasured up the memory of some actions worthy of being placed upon record, which it will be a consolation for me to make known to the world, and I venture to believe that the truth of my narrative will never be called in question. I now return to Malmaison, previously to taking an everlasting farewell of it.

The Viceroy had made up a fishing party, which was to take place on the following day. Here, as well as at Navarre, various fanciful jewels of no intrinsic value were to be the reward of the *conqueror*, and, according to the old rule, the gentlemen were excluded from this trial of skill. There is no feminine gender for the word *conqueror*, a clear proof that our glory should be limited to the softer duties which nature has imposed upon us; let us be contented with that portion, it is enough to gratify our ambition since it secures the happiness of every object around us.

We were rejoiced beyond measure at the approaching renewal of an amusement we had been for a long time deprived of. Awnings were laid over the boats, and we agreed to rise at the early hour of six o'clock in order to secure a sufficient number of fish to present a dish of them for the breakfast of Her Majesty, whose kindness always prompted her to appear gratified at witnessing the enjoyments of others.

We were all assembled in the salon between the hours of five and six, in costumes suited to the occasion, with our fishing-rods in hand, and all sanguine in our expectations of success (for the self-love of women often extends to mere trifles). We were waiting with impatience the arrival of the General, who was to direct our operations, and forming fanciful schemes, when the Viceroy made his appearance in a travelling dress, and holding a packet of papers in his hand.

"Ladies," he said, "I am truly distressed at having made you rise at so early an hour. I enjoyed the idea of amusing myself in carrying on the war against my mother's fish, instead of which I must instantly depart for Paris, where I am summoned by the Emperor, and from thence, in all probability, for Italy, where matters of the utmost importance require my presence. An order just received compels me to take leave of the Empress this very moment. How cruel is that fate which constantly prevents us from following our in-

clinations! In a few hours hence I shall be on the road to Milan; I shall not even have the happiness of remaining with the Vice-Queen and my children, as I can only enjoy their company for a day. I am merely to take with me the Duc de Litta, and the faithful Trouss who never leaves me. I have no time to prepare for my departure; on this occasion, however, I shall have the consolation when I leave you of travelling as a private individual, of *burning* all addresses, and of enjoying the pleasure to dwell upon every recollection that is dear to me. The palace of Malmaison will not be forgotten.”

This Trouss, who was always mentioned by the Prince with lively emotion, had saved his life in Egypt; in consequence of one of those events which are of such frequent occurrence in a camp life, the service was soon after repaid by the individual to whom it had been rendered. During a very hot action the gallant Trouss, in his endeavours to parry every blow aimed at his master, was exposed to the most imminent danger. The Viceroy, whose composure never forsook him, perceived the peril to which his faithful servant was exposed, and, heedless of the numbers of the enemy he had to contend with, he put spurs to his horse, which darted off with the rapidity of lightning, and carried the Viceroy into the centre of the group of Austrians that surrounded the poor Trouss, already covered with wounds and on the point of being killed.

This unexpected relief revived his drooping strength, and, by dint of unparalleled efforts, they compelled the Austrians to retreat, the Prince's aides-de-camp having come up in the meanwhile with the determination of defending him or of falling by his side. Regardless of his wounds, Trouss fell upon his knees before his generous deliverer, who pressed him to his heart, saying: "*We are now quits, my friend.*"

This trait was related to me by an eye-witness who took part in the noble deed. His modesty claimed as a condition for telling it that I should not mention his name. I cannot say whether he is still alive, for he has ever since followed the fortunes of his Prince, and has, I believe, remained absent from France. In this uncertainty I keep my promise of concealing the name of an officer who could not have achieved greater glory than that which such an action secured to him, but who is, nevertheless, entitled to the respect which is at all times due to so noble a character.

The Empress often spoke with regret of the war in Spain. She deplored an enterprise, the result of which was likely to be fatal to France. She entertained an indifferent opinion of the Prince of Asturias, in consequence of his having addressed letters to the Emperor which bespoke a total absence of the dignity becoming to misfortune. She assured us of his having solicited of Napoleon that he would select a wife for him amongst the members

of his family, a request which provoked the Emperor's anger.

"Is it possible that any man should so debase himself? I marry him to any one belonging to me! Why, madame, I would refuse him your *femme de chambre*, for I am convinced that she possesses sentiments of far too elevated a nature for such a husband. No Princess would have him for a partner; let him amuse himself playing at proverbs at Talleyrand's residence at Valençay; I will give his people a Sovereign who will know how to reign over them." *

We were told by the Empress that Napoleon entertained the strongest conviction of his being destined to conquer every nation of the globe.

* Madame de Talleyrand did all in her power to render the residence of Valençay agreeable to the Spanish Princes. She succeeded in her endeavours; as a proof of which, their Royal Highnesses were so perfectly regardless of the dreadful condition of their unhappy country, a prey to all the evils entailed upon it by a Revolution and the horrors of civil war, the greatest calamity that can afflict a nation, that they passed their whole time in a round of pleasures and festivities. Such conduct on their part completely paralyzed the interest felt in their misfortunes. Nothing could be more artful than the policy of thus leading them to adopt a course of conduct in direct opposition to what the peculiarity of their situation required of them. Madame de Talleyrand was not to be blamed for this; she followed the dictates of her excellent heart in endeavouring to soften down the misfortunes that oppressed them, and I believe that in so doing she went beyond the wishes of those who surrounded her. An order from Napoleon compelled the Princess de Talleyrand to quit Valençay. She was deeply regretted by her illustrious captives, who, anxious to prove their gratitude, besought her to accept of what was most valuable to them, their prayer-books. King Ferdinand has since transmitted to her from Spain the order of the Queen, accompanied with a highly flattering letter.

“He relies so much upon his lucky star that if he were deserted to-morrow by his family and his allies, and became a proscribed wanderer, he would still cling to life, under the impression that he should triumph over every obstacle, and accomplish his destiny by realizing his boundless projects. Fortunately,” added the Empress with a smile, “we shall never have an opportunity of ascertaining whether my opinion be correct; rest assured, however, that Napoleon’s strength of mind far exceeds his physical courage. No one knows his character so thoroughly as I do; he fancies himself a predestined being, and would bear the frowns of fortune with as much composure as he has exhibited temerity in braving the dangers of a field of battle.”

What I have just related will perhaps be deemed the offspring of my own fancy; nevertheless I can vouch for the *strict accuracy* of the above paragraph. Many persons are still in existence who were present at Josephine’s social conversations, and can join me in declaring that she viewed Napoleon in the light in which he could not fail to be considered, and had foreseen his conduct at the time of the occurrence of events which appeared beyond the reach of human probability, when in the zenith of his power he issued his mandates to the Sovereigns he had called into existence, as well as those whom he had consented to leave in the possession of their thrones.

CHAPTER XII.

Affection of the Empress for Her Grandchildren. — Anecdote Respecting the Young Napoleon of Holland. — Particulars Concerning His Death. — Despair of Queen Hortense on the Occasion. — Corvisart. — M. Horeau. — M. et Madame de Semonville. — Anecdotes Relating to Them. — The Duc de Richelieu. — M. de Montholon. — Mesdames Joubert. — M. de Sparre.

THE Empress was gifted with every feeling of maternal tenderness, and her unbounded affection was naturally extended to her grandchildren. A week seldom elapsed without her making numerous purchases of playthings, the packing up of which was superintended by herself. The cases were sent off to Italy, after every object had been carefully examined. She felt the liveliest delight at contemplating the pleasure they would occasion. Oftentimes have I seen the salon of the Palace of Malmaison bearing a resemblance to the warehouse in the Rue du Coq, and the ladies endeavouring to court Her Majesty's favour by appearing seriously engaged with dolls and a variety of playthings, the men, by examining the small guns, muskets, etc. For my part, I must acknowledge that I amused myself to my heart's

content whenever I felt at liberty to follow my own inclination; the wooden dolls were far more entertaining to me than the animated ones with whom I was every day expected to converse.

Her Majesty related to us that Queen Hortense whilst at the Hague received from her mother, as a New Year's gift, an immense case full of the choicest playthings that the ingenuity of Grancher and Giroux could invent. This collection was destined for young Napoleon, whose premature death drove some members of the Imperial Family into a state bordering upon despair, and may have given rise to all the occurrences which took place subsequently to that event.

The child was seated near the window, looking towards the park, and appeared to view with indifference the crowd of presents that were spread before him; his looks were constantly directed towards the grand avenue in front of the palace. Feeling impatient at his appearing less delighted than she expected, the Queen asked him if he was not grateful for his grandmamma's attention in procuring every object that might contribute to his amusement?

"Indeed I am, mamma; but I am not surprised at her kindness; she is always so good to me that I am quite accustomed to it."

"Do you find no enjoyment in those pretty toys?"

"Yes, mamma, but —"

“What then?”

“I am very anxious for something else.”

“Mention it, my child; depend upon my giving it to you.”

“Oh! mamma, you will refuse me.”

“Is it money for the poor?”

“Papa gave me some this morning; it is already distributed; what I want is —”

“Tell me, my dearest child; you know how I love you; rest assured, then, that I wish to begin the year by doing whatever may be most agreeable to you; what is your wish?”

“My dear mamma, I want you to permit me to walk in *the heap of mud* in that avenue; this will amuse me more than anything else.”

It will readily be supposed that the Queen did not indulge her son in this extraordinary fancy, and the refusal was a source of bitter disappointment to the young Prince, who was constantly lamenting in the course of the day that New Year's Day was very dull; that he was at a loss how to occupy his time, and he could not be happy so long as he was not allowed to run about in the rain like other little boys. A frost came very seasonably to harden *the heap of mud* and dry the Prince's tears.

This child shewed every indication of a determined character as well as a decided predilection for a military life. He was very intelligent, and evinced

great aptitude at learning whatever required mental exertion; no wonder should be felt, therefore, at the partiality shewn to him by Napoleon, who delighted in the idea of the child's succeeding him at some future day.

He was suddenly seized with a violent complaint; the greatest attentions were paid to him by M. Latour, first physician to King Louis, but they were unavailing. In a few hours, the Prince was torn from the affectionate endearments of his mother, who did not leave him for a moment; it was found necessary to force her away from the apartment of mourning, where her sorrow had reached its height. In her attempt to remain, she passed her arms through the armchair on which she was seated, and offered so much resistance, that it became impossible to raise her from it, and at last she was carried away in the chair to her own apartment; she fell into a state of insensibility; her vacant eyes, from which the tears refused to flow, and her difficulty in breathing, gave the greatest uncasiness as to the consequences of her inconsolable grief; she was incessantly reminded of the loss she had suffered with the view of creating a flow of tears, which would have afforded her the best relief. All was in vain; she remained in the same state, and fears were entertained of her soon following to the tomb the child she so tenderly loved. After every means had been adopted of

relieving her, it occurred to a chamberlain, whose name has escaped my recollection, to bring in the Prince's corpse and lay it across the knees of its afflicted mother who, restored by this harrowing sight to the sense of her maternal sorrow, uttered a piercing shriek ; her arms, hitherto stiffened by a nervous contraction, resumed their former suppleness to press those dear remains, and an abundance of burning tears fell upon the cold and pale cheeks of young Napoleon, which, a few hours back, were in the full bloom and freshness of youth.

The Queen was out of danger from the moment that nature had opened the source of those tears which were thenceforward to flow so copiously ; exhausted, however, by her recent powerful emotion, she fainted ; advantage was taken of this circumstance to carry off the remains of her child, who was forever torn from her affections.

Corvisart had been written to as soon as the young Prince was taken ill ; the answer of that celebrated physician arrived too late ! The remedies proscribed should have been immediately resorted to ; the complaint of the croup, which was hitherto unknown, requires to be treated in time ; for if a moment is lost, there remains no chance of subduing it.

Corvisart is the first man who has inquired into the origin of this complaint, which commits ravages upon children with frightful rapidity ; and his claim

on this ground to the gratitude of every family would be sufficient to cover his memory with honour, if he had not reaped an ample harvest of glory which has immortalized his name.

No less benevolent than well informed, he never refused his advice to the unfortunate patients who came to him for relief, and he often paid the price of the remedies which he recommended to them; the poor loaded him with blessings, and his numerous friends can attest that he combined with a solid knowledge of his art the virtues that adorn it and the qualities which embellish society.

His merit was duly appreciated by Napoleon, who entertained the sincerest regard for him: he obtained a multitude of favours for those who incessantly applied to him, very often without any previous acquaintance. In short, he was generally regretted.

M. Horeau was the favourite pupil of Corvisart, who seems to have bequeathed his talent to him. I have already had occasion to allude to him, and he will again come under my notice in these Memoirs.

M. and Madame de Semonville often paid visits to Malmaison. The lady's reputation for wit, the brilliant employments held by her husband, were motives that induced me to watch their conduct with particular attention, and I felt convinced of the truth of what was reported of them.

They had at all times been in the enjoyment of Court favour; and ever since the period to which I am alluding, they have afforded abundant proof of the facility with which places may be obtained under every form of government, when the suitors for them are possessed of wit, of fortune, and especially of a suppleness which enables them to change their opinions as soon as this prudential course is recommended by occurring events.

Madame de Semonville was a little brunette who did not appear to me to have ever had any claims to beauty, but her graceful figure, her handsome though somewhat bold eyes, a physiognomy as varying as her thoughts, rendered her a very piquant woman. She had a loud voice and spoke well, always using the most correct and felicitous expressions, which enabled her to say much in a short space of time. The following anecdote led me into the secret means she resorted to when she had any object to accomplish.

I have already mentioned that I had a very handsome *charivari*, for which I was chiefly indebted to the kindness of the Viceroy and his mother; as the chain was not sufficiently strong, I generally concealed it within my dress to avoid losing any of the *breloques*. Madame de Semonville requested I would allow her to see it; and, after having greatly admired it, and extolled the well-known good taste of Her Majesty,

she observed that it was a pity I should conceal such handsome jewels from sight.

“I am compelled to do so, madame, as my chain is too thin.”

“Well, then, you should procure another.”

“I should ask no better, but am not rich enough.”

“You should manage to have a present made to you of one.”

“I never could ask for anything, madame.”

“I can well understand you; a young lady is timid. It is possible, however, to obtain without asking — by merely throwing out a hint. For instance, the Viceroy, who is constantly making presents, would not hesitate to offer you such an one as you wish, if he thought it would not only be acceptable but useful to you. You should suggest the idea to him. Were I in your place, mademoiselle, I should wear the *charivari* suspended to a broad black riband. The Prince would ask your motive for so doing; you would disclose it quite naturally, and rely upon it that you would have the chain the next day. It is not by keeping aloof with a shyness and reserve at which other people only laugh, who forward their views at your expense, that you can succeed in the world, and still less at Court.”

I could not take upon myself to resort to the means recommended by Madame de Semonville, and I remained without a chain. Although it related to a

very trivial subject, nevertheless it seemed to me to afford so correct a description of the lady who tendered me the advice that it never was erased from my memory. M. de Semonville, a short, corpulent and lively man, endeavoured to conceal under the semblance of good nature an excessive cunning, and that spirit of intrigue for which, I believe, he stands unrivalled. His penetrating eye never failed to stare women out of countenance, and would as readily lay open to view the inward sentiments of placemen, with whom he always stood on terms of the closest intimacy. Those who have any intercourse with M. de Semonville assert that he displays a certain *candor in his duplicity* which has a truly singular effect. He never disguises his anxiety to run to the assistance of any one who stands not in need of his help; he acknowledges with perfect simplicity that he courts favours, and never hesitates at giving the method he always resorts to with a view to maintain a firm footing, persuaded as he is that few people would have the wit and talent to find suitable employments for him.

I have been assured that the Duc de Richelieu was for a moment under the impression that Louis XVIII. would accept the resignation which he had tendered on the preceding day. At seven o'clock in the morning M. de Semonville came to see him, and rushed into his arms with the appearance of being deeply affected.

“I have, of course, been retained, M. le Marquis ? Since I am honoured with your visit, I may venture to hope that His Majesty has condescended to yield to my request, so as to place it in my power to retain the seals of office without sacrificing my honour. Your presence is a proof to me that I may yet be permitted to serve my King and country, both equally dear to my heart.”

“It is as you suppose, M. le Duc ; the King spoke of it last night in a very open manner.”

“I was quite certain of it,” said M. de Richelieu, smiling ; “the sight of you is always a good omen.”

I cannot vouch for the truth of this anecdote, though I readily believe it, as it accords with everything I have heard of the Marquis de Semonville. The qualities of a courtier, which he possesses in the highest degree, are nevertheless combined in him with many others, of which every man would be justly proud. He is the best of husbands, has adopted the children of his wife (formerly Madame de Montholon), reared them with the greatest care, seen them settled in life, and acted towards them with all the tenderness of a father.

The eldest is to succeed to his title of peer of France ; the other, as is well known, followed the Emperor to St. Helena. One is at a loss to explain such devoted attachment, which is the more extraordinary, as Napoleon, irritated beyond measure at M. de

Montholon's marriage with a twice-divorced woman, had strictly forbidden her being presented at Court, and gave so harsh a reception to M. de Montholon that the latter quitted France and repaired, I believe, to Westphalia. The misfortunes of his Sovereign brought M. de Montholon back to him. As soon as the sentence of exile was passed upon the conqueror of so many nations, M. de Montholon thought of nothing but the glory of sharing it. He took his departure, and became the friend of the man who had given him such bitter cause of complaint.

Madame de Semonville had likewise two daughters; the one was second wife of Maréchal Macdonald; she had formerly been married to Général Joubert. I recollect having met her; her charming countenance could not easily be forgotten, and it perfectly coincided with her unblemished character. The second daughter was Comtesse de Sparre.* They both died very young.

* Comte de Sparre was a peer of France, a lieutenant-general, and a gentleman of the King's bedchamber; he was decorated with the grand crosses of various orders. He afterwards married Mdlle. Naldi, whose talents and graceful figure we all have had an opportunity of admiring at the Italian Opera. She has not been presented at Court.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Empress Relates How Readily the Emperor Fell in with the Habits of Supreme Rank. — The Abbé De S——. The Abbé d'Espagnac. — The Duchesse Dowager de Duras. — Book of Court Ceremonies, Printed from Tradition. — The Queen of Spain, Wife of Joseph Bonaparte. — Morfontaine, as It Was and as It Is. — Reflections on Ermenonville. — Colonel Clari.

THE Empress frequently dwelt on the admirable flexibility of the Emperor's mind, which accommodated itself with facility to all the different circumstances in which he happened to be placed. He shone with equal lustre in the camp and in the most difficult situations of his varied life, and his talent seemed to develop itself the more vigorously in proportion as his duties augmented.

“The Emperor's character,” said she, “is perfectly unique. In the camp and in the council he is alike extraordinary, but in the circle of the palace he is still more remarkable. I confess that, notwithstanding all my intercourse with the world and my knowledge of its customs, the Imperial etiquette at first embarrassed me considerably. The Emperor, on the contrary, fell in with it quite naturally; it was a mere matter of

amusement to him, and certainly nobody about the Court understood it better.

“Lannes, in his honest, frank way, used to ridicule what he termed ‘the hypocrisy of political worship.’ But the Emperor, who estimated everything justly, considered Court ceremonies in a higher point of view, and he was of opinion that, in the eyes of the people, they gave to the Sovereign authority the dignity and ascendancy of which many years of anarchy had deprived it. He admitted that their chief influence depended upon the personal qualities of the Sovereign, but he said that pomp and etiquette, without being equivalent to their qualities, nevertheless made some amends for the want of them. In maintaining such a theory the Emperor was wholly disinterested, for nobody stands less than he in need of those illusions which impose upon mankind, over whom he seems born to rule. In support of his opinions he quoted the example of many Sovereigns who have reigned, as it were, sitting or lying, rather than standing; but whose couches, guarded by the barriers of etiquette, were respected and held sacred. Whether these views were true or false I will not pretend to decide. I submitted to them, though I did not entirely approve of them. There was one man who, without taking the Emperor’s enlarged view on the subject, practised the most rigid punctilio and precision in the observance of Court etiquette; this was the Abbé de S——,

who seemed formed to be a master of the ceremonies. His little prim figure looked as though he had just stepped out of a bandbox. In walking he seemed almost to measure his steps, he even used his handkerchief according to some fixed rule, and spoke in the most sententious style imaginable. But the chapel was the place to see him to advantage ; there he was triumphant. It was most amusing to behold him with his great book * in his hand, ordering the movements of the attentive crowd.

“ At first all was a chaos, in which the different elements were mingled together ; but, on the signal of the master of the ceremonies, all these elements became divided and arranged, and order arose out of disorder. The author of these fine manœuvres congratulated himself alike on the genius which inspired them and the docility they produced ; he looked upon it as the very perfection of command. The Emperor used to flatter his vanity by telling him that he had observed in his evolutions things which he might turn to useful account at the proper time.† In his moments

* A sort of clapper in the form of a book, which the master of the ceremonies uses for his signals.

† In my childhood I knew at Brussels a man who would have formed a good pendant to the person described by Josephine ; this was the Abbé d'Espagnac. He was methodical in everything. He curled his hair before he stepped into the post-chaise when he set out on his emigration, and he made a vow that he would not take out the black pins which fastened up the curls until the counter-revolution. In the expectation of that event he continued to wear his singular head-dress for many years.

of good humour, Napoleon liked to flatter the vanity of his servants, however ridiculous and extravagant it might be. He used to say that it was the best way of winning their attachment, and rendering them attentive to their duties."

The Empress used often to smile at the recollection of the blunders committed by several ladies who had not been accustomed to Court ceremonies. Napoleon wished that his Court should be distinguished for all the dignity and elegance which had been lost since the reigns of Louis XV. and Louis XVI.; and he was anxious to seek out some one who could furnish him with correct traditions respecting old customs. Madame de Montesson had already pointed out several, and the Duchesse Dowager de Duras, who was always considered a model of talent and grace, was consulted on several occasions by persons attached to the new Court, which she herself did not attend. Her information was carefully collected, and was, along with some other matter of the same kind, printed in a volume entitled, I believe, "*Les Etiquettes de la Cour de Napoléon.*" Of the title of this work, however, I am not quite sure, but I have read it, and it appears to be a complete record of ceremonies. Many, no doubt, learnt it by heart, for in the course of a few months all the puerile forms attached to the different offices of the Crown were scrupulously and regularly observed. To acquire a thorough acquaintance with the Court

ceremonies was essentially requisite for those who attended the Tuileries, for I knew several women, distinguished for talent and education, who daily devoted several hours to the dull and monotonous perusal of the book above alluded to. Many of the ladies presented at the Tuileries were exceedingly awkward and ungraceful, and seemed to be much embarrassed by their long Court trains; however, the "*Livre des Etiquettes*" enabled them to take the requisite number of steps, and to move their arms and heads with the precision of a recruit at his exercise. This was, at least, some consolation.

The Queen of Spain (wife of Joseph Bonaparte) is described by all her contemporaries as what she really was—an angel of goodness. There was no duty which she did not zealously fulfil. She was devotedly attached to a husband who frequently distressed her by infidelities, many of which were wholly unworthy of his rank and character. She never reproached him, and took her revenge only by giving him proofs of her assiduous attention and boundless affection. She was an exemplary mother, and herself superintended the education of her daughters, a task for which certainly no one could be better qualified, for, with an excellent understanding, she possessed varied and extensive information. That she might pursue her pleasing duties undisturbed, she resided at Morfontaine during a great part of the year, surrounded

by a few chosen friends. She frequently took the *infantas* to visit the poor, for the purpose, as she said, of accustoming them to see and to relieve distress. The more people practise benevolence, the greater is their own happiness. What gratification can be compared to that of rescuing from despair a mother of a starving family, soothing the infirmities of old age, which, among the poor, are aggravated by privation; or saving from misery and remorse the young girl ready to fall a victim to the arts of the seducer. Surely, none can deny themselves these pleasures who have ever tasted them. It is unjust to censure too severely those who, possessing wealth, are so unfortunate as to know no other pleasure save those which luxury and extravagance afford. Never having known want, they can form no idea of the ineffable pleasure of relieving it. We should rather pity them, and pray that they may once be induced to perform an act of real charity; they would augment their own happiness by promoting that of their fellow creatures.

The Queen's health afforded a pretext for the retired life she had adopted, which appeared exceedingly absurd in the eyes of her sisters-in-law. Alas! what must be the state of feeling which prevails in Courts, when it is necessary to invent an excuse for obeying the noblest impulses of the heart! At those times when the Queen of Spain was obliged to

take up her residence in Paris, the Luxembourg was the resort of women distinguished for talent and virtue, celebrated artists, and literary men. Etiquette was banished, but the respect which the character of Her Majesty inspired naturally took place of that which she might have commanded merely on the score of rank. All about her forgot that veneration was due to anything but her own perfection.

I saw Morfontaine when the Queen resided there. Nothing could be more beautiful than it was at that time. The revenue, which, as I was informed, amounted to 200,000 francs, was entirely laid out on the domain. Immense numbers of labourers were employed in keeping up the park and the superb waters, on which nothing like the trace of a weed was to be seen. The walks were regularly swept, and, in short, the work that was performed every day appeared like preparations for the Queen's arrival after a long absence.

Strangers were permitted to view the house and grounds, over which they were conducted by guides who pointed out everything worthy of notice. The Queen frequently sent a collation of fruit to people who visited the house in this way; in short, no one left that magnificent abode without being filled with admiration of all they heard of Her Majesty, and gratified by the prosperous aspect of the village,

whose inhabitants seemed like citizens in easy circumstances, rather than peasantry.

The pleasing recollection I retained of Morfontaine induced me this year to make another visit to it. I must confess that I deeply regretted having seen it on a former occasion, for I could not admire that which can now be regarded only as the beautiful relic of a residence which was once unequalled in France.

The entrance to the grand park is still kept in tolerably good order, but, on advancing a little further, it is mortifying to find the waters, formerly so pure and transparent, overgrown with moss. The walks are choked up with grass, the branches of the trees, projecting out in every direction, threaten the safety of those who venture to indulge in the pleasure of looking about them, and the once beautiful structures which adorned the grounds are reduced to ruins.

The guides, who now wear the livery of the Prince de Condé, are, for the most part, exceedingly uncivil. They do not think it worth their while to attend on visitors of the ordinary class, but send as their deputy a little ragged boy who speaks in such a way as scarcely to be understood. They, however, condescend to make their appearance to receive the *douceur* which is given by the company when they take an excursion on the great lake. Three francs is the sum exacted for what they term *keeping the*

boat. This imposition cannot surely be known to the Prince, and, no doubt, as soon as his attention is called to it, it will be abolished. I can never believe that he would permit his servants to levy a contribution for a trifling expense which ought, in reason, to be defrayed by the proprietor of the place. It would also be well to point out to His Royal Highness the impropriety of allowing the waters to become stagnant and thereby infecting the atmosphere of the surrounding country. The *Archipelago*, as it is termed, which was formerly one of the most agreeable spots in the place, has now become filthy, and the beautiful islands which were planted with odoriferous flowers, are now, in part, concealed by high reeds and are infested by myriads of frogs. The present illustrious owner of Morfontaine will not surely suffer this beautiful portion of his domain to become an unwholesome marsh.

The above observations apply with equal justice to Ermenonville, which is no longer what it was in the time of M. de Girardin. With the exception of the desert, whose chief recommendation is its barrenness and its picturesque situation, all has fallen into decay. France has witnessed the destruction of so many of her valuable relics that amateurs must rejoice when estates, which have become as it were historical monuments, pass into the hands of persons capable of appreciating and preserving them.

I am perfectly aware that a Prince cannot personally direct the works that may be necessary, but the individuals whose business it is to look after such matters unfortunately suffer their master to bear the blame of permitting these celebrated places to decay. Should this negligence continue, we must, a few years hence, renounce many old and interesting recollections. The house in which Rousseau died will probably soon be destroyed, and his tomb concealed by the parasite plants which are so numerous in the Isle of Poplars !

Colonel Clari,* the nephew of the Queen of Spain, and the intimate friend of M. Henri Tascher, generally accompanied the latter in his visits to Malmaison. A regular set of features, though void of expression, joined to a degree of assurance that was warranted neither by information nor talent, had acquired for Colonel Clari the reputation of a man of gallantry, a circumstance at which he was, I believe, himself somewhat astonished. I was but slightly acquainted with him, and all I know of his character is what I learned from the Empress, who very much disapproved of his remaining in Paris while his regiment was in Spain supporting the interest of King Joseph, his uncle. She justly conceived that he had better have been fighting in Spain than lounging on

*Mdlle. Clari, the colonel's sister, married M. de Tascher. Colonel Clari has been raised to the rank of Maréchal de Camp, by Louis XVIII.

the Boulevard de Gand and in the theatres. Everything connected with the family of Napoleon had acquired a certain degree of historical importance, otherwise this brief memorandum of M. Clari would not, perhaps, have found a place here.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Viceroy's Journey to Italy Countermanded. — The Empress's Letter to Her Son. — Her Majesty's Opinion of the Senate. — Its Servile Submission to the Slightest Wish of Napoleon. — The Emperor's Trick upon the Senators. — Necklaces Presented by Her Majesty. — Madame Daru. — We Quit Malmaison. — Pretended Regret. — Madame de Rémusat. — Calumny Propagated against Us.

WHENEVER the Empress was obliged to separate from her children, her tears betrayed her feelings in spite of all her endeavours to conceal them. She was therefore overjoyed to hear that the Viceroy had received a counter-order from the Emperor, and that his journey to Italy was deferred for at least some months.

"I have for a long time been so favoured by fortune," said Josephine, "that I dread some great calamity. The loss of my children is the worst I can anticipate, and it is precisely that of which I am most apprehensive."

Her maternal affection was warmly returned on the part of her children, particularly the Viceroy, whose love for his mother amounted almost to a sort of worship. When separated from her, he wrote to

her frequently, and Josephine's letters to him invariably conveyed all the affectionate advice which she conceived might be useful to him. I subjoin one of her letters, which is a model of grace and feeling.

“TO PRINCE EUGÈNE.

“As your fortunes rise, I need not, my dear son, entreat you to raise your mind to a level with them. However high the destiny that may await you, the sentiments which I know you to possess are loftier still. Such is the advantage of a man whose conduct is uniformly guided by principle. You are thus worthy to be the son of him to whom you bear so close a resemblance in person and in character. When plunged into the abyss of misfortune, your father's courage was supported by the recollection of the unsullied honour he had preserved under happier circumstances. Virtue at once sheds a lustre over our lives, and gives us strength to meet the approach of death. You, my son, are surrounded by all the illusions of exalted rank, but they can never mislead or corrupt you. In the midst of wealth and honours you will recollect Fontainebleau, where you were a poor destitute orphan, and that recollection will prompt you to extend a succouring hand to the distressed. I am gratified to learn that your young wife shares your sentiments; it is a proof that she also shares all your affections. This is a matter in which I am deeply interested, and as a mother, I rejoice at it. I embrace you both, etc.”

The Empress observed that the servile compliance of the Senate with everything that the Emperor

desired was the cause of many measures which would never have been proposed by His Majesty but for the certainty that he would experience no opposition in passing the most absolute laws.

“Had the Senators done their duty,” said she, “Napoleon would have been less ambitious of that glory for which his thirst is insatiable; his attention would have been more directed to his people, by whom he would have been beloved as he was by his soldiers. The base flattery of the first body in the State has persuaded him, or at least warranted him in supposing, that all his projects are just and calculated to benefit France. Nothing can henceforth check his enterprising spirit, which subdues every obstacle to the furtherance of his darling scheme—the aggrandizement of his Empire. But the Senators have gained nothing by their servile submission, for Napoleon neither loves nor esteems them. I have frequently known him to laugh at what he called *the trap* he laid for them. It was this:

“In 1807 he was informed that the Senators possessed the sum of 1,550,000 francs. They came in a body to pay their respects to him, when he sent for the treasurers and inquired what amount there was in the treasury.

“‘Sire, we certainly have funds, but it is impossible to state precisely how much we possess.’

“‘Pooh, nonsense, gentlemen, you are too regular

to be ignorant of a matter of such importance; come, let me know as nearly as you can.'

"'We again declare to Your Majesty that it is impossible.'

"'Well, then, if you are not in the secret I am, and I can tell you what you do not know; I am certain that you have at your disposal 1,550,000 francs, and I doubt not your readiness to apply that sum in the best way possible.'

"'Sire, we destine it for an object, above all others, gratifying to the body devoted to Your Majesty; we propose to erect a monument to your glory.'

"'I am touched by these sentiments, and I entertain no doubt of their sincerity,' said the Emperor, smiling; 'but the monument you propose is useless; my armies can prove and defend my glory, and even augment it. I am much pleased, though not astonished, at the attachment you evince for me; and I will point out to you a useful mode of laying out the sum you possess. The inhabitants of the Faubourg Saint-Germain wish for the reëstablishment of the Salle de l'Odeon. You will gratify the Empress, and consequently me, by restoring that theatre and giving it her name. I see this idea pleases you; and I will immediately mention the business to Her Majesty.'

"The deputation withdrew, and, on the following day, waited upon me to obtain my consent; I granted it, you may be assured, very readily. I suggested that

the works should be immediately commenced, which was accordingly done. I was thus happy enough to render a service to an estimable portion of the population of Paris, and to procure a useful recreation to the youth of the college."

The Empress one morning entered the salon with a number of beautiful necklaces hung over her arm :

" You see, ladies," said she, " I did not know what a stock of ornaments I possessed. This morning Madame d'Arberg persuaded me to take a sort of review of the contents of my cabinets, and, on opening my drawer, I found all these necklaces, which I beg you will have the goodness to accept. The Pope sent me a number of chaplets which he was to consecrate on his arrival. These having been forgotten, I had them set ; since then they have never been out of the drawer. Do, pray, take them from their obscurity and wear them."

We each of us received one, more or less costly. They consisted of large beads of valuable stones, such as lapis lazuli, cornelian, sardonyx, and red jasper — mine was of the latter kind, as was also the one which was presented to Madame Daru, one of the most amiable women of her time. The necklace is still in my possession, and I shall bequeath it to my daughter as an object to which I attach inestimable value.

Some days after the Empress had presented me with this necklace she informed my mother, with evident

embarrassment and I am sure with unfeigned regret, that she was under the necessity of disposing of our apartments, as two of her ladies wished to come and stay some time with her. She was sorry that Malmaison was not more spacious, but as she was unwilling to deprive herself entirely of our company, which she said had been exceedingly agreeable to her, she would send for us three times a week ; she added that she would never cease to feel an interest in my welfare, and that she would prove it by deeds as well as by words.

My mother immediately communicated to me this conversation, which grieved though it did not surprise me. I was not, indeed, sorry to quit a Court with which I became the more dissatisfied on finding that the general kindness which I had at first experienced was sensibly diminished ; but to be separated from the Empress was a subject of deep regret to me. I could not doubt the goodness of her heart or the sincerity of her promises. I was well assured that she had only yielded to urgent importunities for our removal, and I knew that every contrivance which envy could invent would be adopted to banish us from the recollection of Her Majesty, whose only fault was, perhaps, that of suffering herself to be swayed by those about her. When we first arrived at Navarre, our society had the recommendation of novelty, and we consequently experienced a good reception. It was never suspected

that the Empress would become attached to two women who had never lived at Court, and who were, in consequence, supposed to be wholly unworthy of her notice. When, however, it was discovered that Her Majesty liked us, and honoured us with as much attention as any one else, our new friends grew cool; they seemed to suspect that we shared an unusual degree of the Empress's favour, and from that moment the plan for our removal was formed and executed in the manner I have above mentioned.

We held no place in the service of Her Majesty. Consequently, it was natural that we should be sacrificed to those individuals of her household who were offended at seeing us about her person. She for some time repelled the insinuations that were addressed to her, a circumstance for which I shall ever be grateful.

As soon as it was understood that we were to leave Navarre, we experienced renewed proofs of courtly hypocrisy. We heard nothing but expressions of regret for our departure, and protestations of the pleasure which our return would afford. I received this false kindness with the coldness it deserved; what I had observed for the space of five months enabled me to appreciate its value. Among the persons of whom we had cause to complain under these painful circumstances, I must not, however, include the excellent Madame de Rémusat, who has subsequently

proved her sincere regard for me by rendering me a most important service.

When the moment arrived for taking leave of Her Majesty, I could not restrain a torrent of tears. She assured me that I should see her again in a day or two, and that she would never forget her promise of sending a carriage for us three times a week. However, this did not console me; for I was well aware that a thousand reasons would be invented to prevent her carrying her kind intentions into execution, and our circumstances did not enable us frequently to hire a conveyance for the purpose of visiting her whose amiable qualities would have rendered it desirable to seek her society had she been only a private gentlewoman. I say again that I never knew a person possessed of more attractions, and one who was more calculated to inspire attachment.

For some time I believed that the reasons which I have just mentioned were the only ones which rendered us obnoxious to the individuals about Her Majesty; and I imagined that the worst they would do was to shew Josephine their vexation at the favour we enjoyed, and which they supposed was likely to diminish that which was due to themselves. I never dreamed that they would carry their malignity beyond this; but I subsequently discovered that I had formed too favourable an opinion of them; they would have stopped at nothing to rid themselves of those who had the misfortune to be their rivals.

I learned, only three years ago, that Her Majesty had frequently declared her intention of keeping me with her until she brought about an advantageous marriage for me; and that she would never think of sending us away, after having removed my mother from her family and me from my studies.

This determination gave rise to fresh schemes on the part of our enemies, who had recourse to the most odious calumny in order to effect their object. The Empress was informed that her son had conceived an attachment for me, which I had the presumption to return. He practised duets with me, I often accompanied him in his singing; I received presents from him, as did all the other ladies; he placed my mother next to him at table, and therefore, it was affirmed, he must necessarily be in love with me. The Empress at first treated this absurdity with the inattention it deserved; but it was repeated to her over and over again, and at length she began to think that it might one day or other prove true. She therefore determined on sending us away. She mentioned these circumstances to M——, who repeated them to me. He has always been a sincere friend to me, and his honourable character affords no room to doubt the correctness of his statement. In refutation of the vile slander which was directed against me, I here solemnly aver that the Viceroy never addressed one word to me which could by

any possibility be mistaken for gallantry. He was polite to me as he was to all ladies ; but I protest that he never entertained a thought of shewing me a preference over others who were in all respects superior to me. Even supposing he could have entertained so criminal a sentiment, he would, I am sure, have carefully concealed it rather than have endangered the happiness of a young girl in whom his mother took an interest. Such an action would be at variance with the whole conduct of his life, which was free from every reproach of the kind. I was an object of indifference to the Viceroy, and female vanity shall never prompt me to pretend to such a conquest. I admired him, as every one else did ; I gave him a few hints respecting his singing ; it certainly required no small degree of ill nature and envy to discover anything reprehensible in this.

The Queen of Naples was in Italy. I did not see her at Malmaison, though I had frequently met her some years before at Madame de Montesson's. She was pretty, but less so than her sister Pauline, whom, however, she excelled in freshness of complexion. Too great a degree of *embonpoint* spoiled a figure which was said to have been perfectly elegant before her marriage. She was lively and graceful, and her manners were generally much admired at the fêtes which were got up in honour of her. In her own family her temper was said to be unequal and vio-

lent; but of that I had no opportunity of judging, for I saw her only when visiting a lady to whom she sought to render herself agreeable. She was, accordingly, all that was amiable when at Romainville.

I do not recollect either the Princesse Élixa, or the Kings of Spain and Westphalia. I can therefore say nothing about them except what is known to every one. I had no opportunity of being in their presence, and the Empress rarely conversed about them. They were, I believe, not very favourably disposed towards Josephine at the time of the divorce. The Empress was sincerely attached to the Queen of Westphalia, whom she regarded as a model of all that was good and noble.

This opinion was subsequently confirmed by the Queen's admirable conduct during the misfortunes of the family to whom the Princess of Wirtemberg had become allied.

I very much regret never having known the Vice-Queen and the Princess Stephanie of Baden, who were distinguished for every virtue and accomplishment.

Madame Mère is another individual I did not see at Malmaison; but I saw a good deal of her in the country at the time of Napoleon's return from Egypt. She then appeared what might be called an unpretending, *good sort* of woman. In her dress she was more than plain; for she brought with her only one cotton gown for a visit of ten days. Madame Leclerc

used to rally her on this point, when she would say, in her homely and familiar manner :

“Hold your tongue, you extravagant gipsy. I must lay something by for your brothers ; they are not all settled in the world. Your head runs on nothing but pleasure, but I have something more serious to think about. Bonaparte (for such was the only name by which she designated the Consul) shall not have to say that we eat up everything he has. You would not impose upon his goodness.”

She readily joined any party of pleasure that was proposed, seemed pleased with everything, and cheerfully postponed her dinner-hour whenever we returned late from any amusing excursion, of which she eagerly inquired all the particulars. The true way to please her was to speak of her children. She loved to hear them praised, and her countenance, which was usually cold, became exceedingly animated when speaking of those who were dear to her.

I never saw her after she received the title of Imperial Highness.

CHAPTER XV.

Our Visits to Malmaison.— M. de Monaco Succeeds M. Portalès.— The Latter Conceives an Attachment for Mdle. de Castellane.— He Marries Her.— Absurd Story on This Subject.— Awkward Allusions of M. de Barral, Archbishop of Tours.— The Empress's Presents to Mdle. de Castellane.— Mdle. de Mackau Marries Général Wathier de St. Alphonse.— M. de Mackau Made Rear-Admiral.— The Marquise de Soucy, Sub-Governess to the Dauphine.

For the space of several months, the Empress sent for us regularly, as she had promised. We used to set out early and arrive at Malmaison in time for breakfast. The Empress always received us with marked kindness. I now enjoyed my father's society without being entirely banished from the presence of the Empress; I regularly took my lessons on the days on which I remained in Paris; in short, I was perfectly happy, and I began to prefer my present mode of life to that which I had led when I resided constantly at Navarre. I had nothing to wish for; my parents were indulgent, Her Majesty kind, and all her ladies, satisfied with having effected our removal, resumed that agreeable deportment towards us which

was at first so flattering to me, but which was so short in its duration.

About a month had elapsed in this agreeable way, when one day, on my arrival at Malmaison, I learned that an important change had taken place in Her Majesty's household. M. de Monaco, who had been so severe towards others, found no one to intercede in his behalf, when, for reasons with which I am not sufficiently acquainted, he received orders to consign his functions to M. Portalès, who from that moment discharged all the duties of first equerry without bearing that title.

Every one rejoiced at this change, for M. de Monaco, whose manner was haughty, harsh, and unpolished, was not at all liked, while the amiable M. Portalès was beloved by his inferiors and esteemed by his equals. The Empress, with her usual kind-heartedness, expressed her sorrow that the Emperor should have interfered in an affair which was attended by such unpleasant results to one of her old servants. She submitted to his will with regret, and she obtained the concession that his dismissal should not be publicly announced. M. de Monaco, I believe, received orders to join his regiment, but of this I am not certain.

I also learned that the charms of Mdlle. de Castellane had made an impression on the heart of M. Portalès. That gentleman, tired of the unsettled

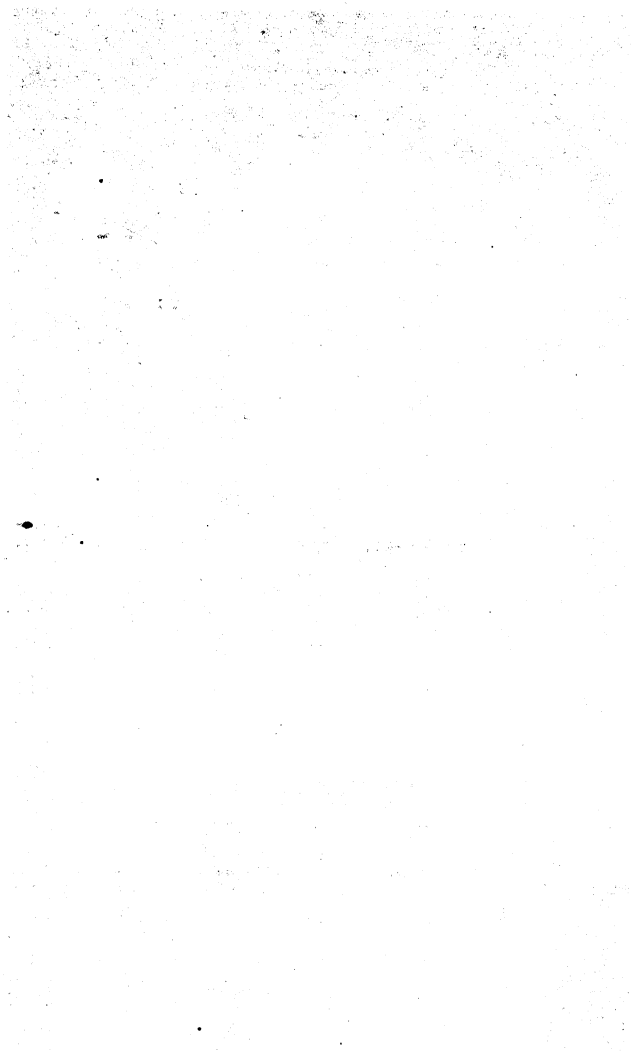
life he had for some time led, at length determined to enjoy his vast fortune by sharing it with a beautiful and accomplished woman. He accordingly asked the Empress's consent to a union which was exceedingly agreeable to the wishes of Her Majesty. The marriage was shortly to be celebrated, and the Empress was to give the bride a portion of 100,000 francs and her wedding dresses.

This event was quite unexpected, for M. Portalès had long entertained an attachment in another quarter which was supposed still to exist. The marriage was then generally talked of, but not quite so generally approved. Mothers who have marriageable daughters of their own appear to feel themselves personally injured whenever they hear of the happy union of any young lady of their acquaintance. They seem to expect that a preference should always be shewn to the objects of their affection. Whenever they hear that a brilliant match is about to take place, they launch into all sorts of ill-natured attacks upon the character, the family, and the person of the intended bride. The respect naturally inspired by maternal love forces us to pardon that which under any other circumstances would never be excused. Such base and envious feeling would otherwise be intolerable, and we should hate the woman who could be capable of regretting the happiness of her daughter's friend.

A thousand absurd stories were circulated respecting the manner in which the marriage of M. Portalès has been brought about, and great pains were taken to discover reasons for that which was, after all, exceeding natural, for Mdle. de Castellane was distinguished for beauty and intelligence, and was a particular favourite of the Empress. It was asserted that M. Portalès had been entrapped in the *unlucky affair* by a series of intrigues, while the real truth was that he, like many others, had been captivated by the charms of the fair lady on whom he fixed his choice. Even Her Majesty's name was mingled up with these stories; the most accredited were as follows:

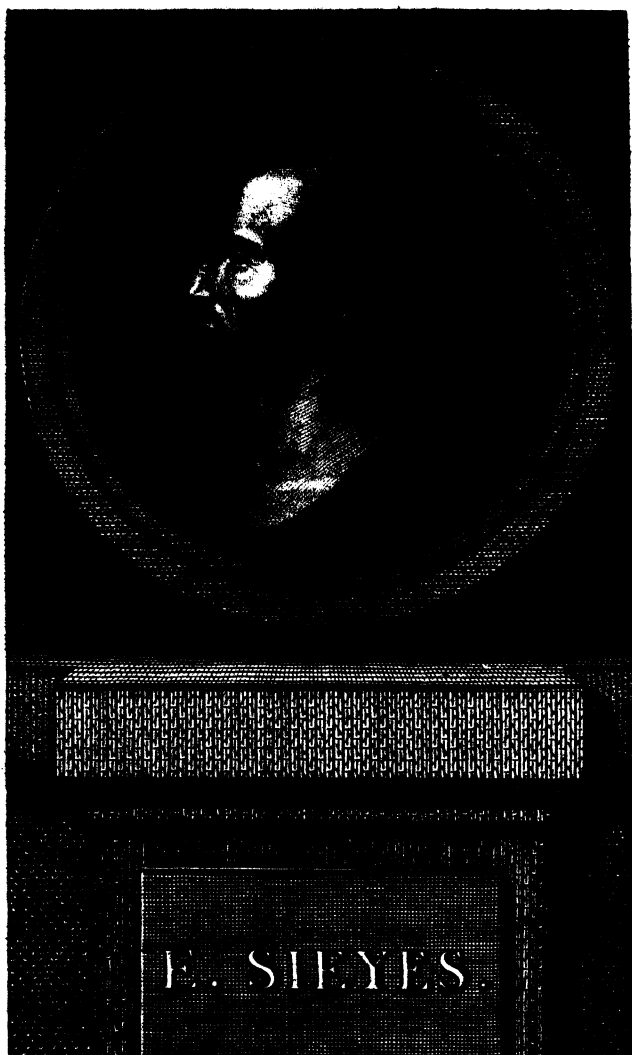
“M. Portalès, weary of a long connection with a frivolous and coquettish woman, was said to have transferred his affections to Madame Vanberghen, at whose feet he was surprised by Her Majesty in the very act of making a passionate declaration, which seemed not likely to be rejected. The Empress immediately interrupted him by observing that she was aware of the nature of his ardent appeal, and that she knew M. Portalès was entreating Madame Vanberghen to use her influence in his behalf with her friend, Mdle. de Castellane; that she perfectly approved of his suit, and that the marriage would meet with her entire concurrence.”

This improbable story, which was merely a stupid



Sieyès.

Photo-etching after painting by Brea.



mutation of the calumny formerly directed against Madame de Montesson, was circulated in Paris. The idle and ill-natured lost no time in reporting it about, while they themselves affected to disbelieve it.

I know not by whom the romance was invented, but it was equally false and infamous. No woman could conduct herself with more correctness than Madame Vanberghen, and her reputation was unsullied. This, perhaps, sufficiently explains why she was singled out as the object of the attack alluded to. She was, however, avenged by increased regard on the part of the Empress, and by the esteem of all whose good opinion was of any value. All who were acquainted with Mdlle. de Castellane well knew that she needed not the recommendation of fortune; and it is impossible to imagine that Josephine was obliged to resort to artifice to effect a scheme which feelings of gratitude and duty would lead M. Portalès readily to accede to, even though his heart had been at variance with Her Majesty's wishes.

The Archbishop of Tours (M. de Barral), first almoner to the Empress, pronounced the nuptial benediction in the little chapel of Malmaison. He delivered an address which was characterized by his usual talent. By a singular inadvertency in a man distinguished by infinite tact, he observed that M. Portalès could not but esteem himself supremely happy in obtaining the hand of a young lady of high

birth, since his own origin was by no means illustrious; then, addressing Mdle. de Castellane, he congratulated her on her union with a man who was disinterested enough to set aside all considerations of fortune. He thus offended the families of both bride and bridegroom, and gave great displeasure to the Empress, who did not fail to let him know it.

Her Majesty ordered for Mdle. de Castellane a collection of wedding dresses fit for a Princess. She also presented her with several splendid shawls and sets of jewels. In short, the Empress more than fulfilled her promise to the young lady's dying mother, which was to act the part of a parent towards her.

No writer who has touched upon the character of the Empress Josephine has dwelt sufficiently on the inexhaustible liberality and benevolence of that inestimable woman who now seems almost forgotten. In all the memoirs which have appeared since her death, a few words have been deemed sufficient for her panegyric. This injustice to the memory of a Princess who made it the chief business of her life to seek out and relieve distress, may, I conceive, be accounted for by the rank and situation of the writers who have attempted to portray her.* Statesmen

*Madame Durand, in her "Memoirs," which I lately perused, states that Maria Louisa expended a great deal more money in charity than the Empress Josephine. Gratitude naturally prompts Madame Durand to laud the merits of a mistress from whom she received boundless favours; but the virtues of another should not on that account be depreciated.

must naturally feel interested in elucidating every important fact connected with the extraordinary events of the last twenty years; political considerations engross their whole attention, and they scarcely think it necessary to notice a woman, whose noblest title in their estimation was having been the wife of a hero. The virtues natural to our sex, and the exquisite sensibility which they cannot comprehend, are passed over unobserved, while their eyes are fixed

Josephine's manners, which were decidedly French, no doubt rendered her more fascinating than her rival in a Court where grace and elegance were duly estimated. But to relieve the distress of the unfortunate, something more was necessary than fine words and engaging smiles. Now the fact is that charity was the brightest trait in the character of the dethroned Empress. Madame Durand asserts that she gave only 5,000 francs per month to the poor. It is possible that that sum might have been charged on the list of her expenses, but it did not certainly include the money that was profusely distributed on the recommendation of her ladies, or that which was given to the numerous petitioners who appealed to the benevolence of Josephine. At Navarre, where the Empress no longer occupied a throne, the venerable Bishop of Evreux assured me that he annually received from her upwards of a hundred thousand for the use of the poor of that town, a sum greatly exceeding that mentioned by Madame Durand, and which was, no doubt, much more considerable when Josephine was reigning Empress. I never remarked that she was *solely intent on producing effect*, and still less that she was *not beloved by those about her*; for the truth is, that when she was divested of power none of her household wished to leave her. This fact, which is highly honourable to those whom it concerns, is the best proof of the boundless attachment cherished for Her Majesty. I say again that gratitude may naturally have led Madame Durand into inaccuracy in drawing a parallel between the two wives of Napoleon; and I trust that the same sentiment on my part will sufficiently apologize for the length to which this note has extended. Madame Durand, whose heart retains so warm a recollection of the benefits conferred on her, will, I am sure, be the first to excuse me.

exclusively on the great and sanguinary scenes of our modern history.

I, on the contrary, not feeling an equal interest in such matters, have endeavoured to describe only that which comes within the reach of my understanding. My heart cherishes for the Empress Josephine the degree of attachment requisite in one who undertook to portray her character; and having received from her no favours calculated to compromise my sincerity, I feel myself peculiarly qualified to raise a monument to the memory of the many engaging qualities that adorned her. The prevailing taste for memoirs of celebrated individuals will probably secure a considerable circulation for this little work, by which means Her Majesty's character will become known, and consequently admired. I now rejoice at having undertaken a task which is for many reasons so gratifying to my feelings.

The Empress was much attached to Mdlle. de Mackau, whom she had in some measure deprived of a sister by removing her from the service of Princess Stephanie of Baden, with whom she was a particular favourite. She was anxious to provide for her as well as the Princess would have done, from whose protection she had withdrawn her. She consequently determined to arrange an advantageous match for Mdlle. de Mackau as she had already done for Mdlle. de Castellane.

Général Wathier de St. Alphonse was the person on whom she proposed to confer the hand of a young lady whose only fault was an excessive timidity, which often paralysed the gifts with which nature had liberally endowed her. The happiness which attended this union proved how correctly the Empress estimated the characters of two persons who, in truth, seemed formed for each other. To a pretty and interesting person Mdlle. de Mackau added virtues and talents far above the ordinary standard. She was an exemplary daughter and sister, and as a wife her conduct is irreproachable.*

M. Portalès, with the view of economizing the expenses of the Empress's establishment, made some changes and suppressions, in consequence of which some difficulty arose in sending the carriage for our conveyance to Malmaison. By degrees it became less and less frequently, and at length we were entirely deprived of it.

For some time we made great sacrifices to defray the expense of continuing our visits to Malmaison, hoping that the accommodation we had hitherto enjoyed would be again conceded to us. At length, finding that no new arrangement was made, we were forced to relinquish our agreeable journeys altogether.

* She is the sister of Rear-Admiral Mackau, whose rapid advancement in the navy might appear extraordinary, but that his noble conduct and brilliant courage sufficiently account for it. The Marquise de Soucy, who was formerly sub-governess to the Dauphine, was their aunt.

We wrote to acquaint the Empress with our reasons for so doing; but to this letter no answer was returned. This was so utterly at variance with the general conduct of the Empress that I feel persuaded she must have given some orders which were never transmitted to us. I am the more warranted in suspecting this negligence, to call it nothing worse, on the part of some person about Her Majesty, as I know that on another occasion her orders were disobeyed when she intended to confer a favour on us.

Perhaps she thought we were not sufficiently grateful for all she had done for us! This reflection has often added bitterness to the many tears I have shed to her memory.

I have now nothing more to say of Malmaison from my own personal observation; but I have carefully collected a number of authentic facts which will be hereafter stated. In the meanwhile, until I arrive at the events of 1814, I will relate some particulars concerning celebrated individuals, especially eminent artists with whom I have been on terms of intimacy. France is justly proud of the prosperity to which she has raised the fine arts, and for that reason the details which I am about to submit to the reader will not, I trust, be deemed uninteresting.

National glory, under whatever point of view it may present itself, is always gratifying to my country-

men. Besides, the best proof I can adduce of my love for the country that gave me birth is to relate all I know of the men who, by talent, acquirements, and high character, have added lustre to the French name.

CHAPTER XVI.

Steibelt. — Clementi, Dussek, and Cramer. — MM. Czerny, Pixis, Rhein, Herz, etc. — Steibelt's Eccentricity. — Madame de B——. — Cherubini. — M. de la Rochefoucauld.

To divert the regret I felt in being thus banished from Her Majesty, I applied myself to music, some persons having offered to assist me in the prosecution of my studies. Steibelt's fame was at that time general throughout Europe; his only rivals in celebrity were Cramer, Clementi, and Dussek. The pianoforte compositions of these four eminent masters were almost the only pieces performed by amateurs of real taste; and together with the beautiful sonatas of Mozart and Haydn they formed the complete catalogue of all who conceived they possessed considerable skill on an instrument which is now played in a degree of perfection calculated to discourage those who have not great leisure to devote to it. Pleyel was played by beginners; and though a great portion of his works are in some measure forgotten, yet it cannot be denied that they possess merit of a high order for the period at which they were composed. Only a few years before his time the insufferable

harpichord resounded with the *classic compositions* which had been in vogue for fifty years. There was, consequently, no small degree of merit in composing expressive and agreeable melodies, and departing from the routine that had been long established.

The solid, scientific compositions of Clementi, Dussek, and Cramer are still seen on every pianoforte, with the more brilliant productions of Czerny, Kalkbrenner, Rhein, Herz, etc. But Steibelt, who created a style of his own, graceful, beautiful, and always original, seems to be unjustly neglected. To form a correct judgment of his works, it was indeed necessary to hear them performed by himself; he imparted to them the fire of his own genius, and all must have been charmed who heard them so executed. A friend of mine, very competent to pronounce an opinion on the subject, since she was Steibelt's best pupil, so frequently spoke to me of his very extraordinary talent on the pianoforte that I felt a restless curiosity to hear him. Steibelt, who was exceedingly capricious and eccentric, had promised twenty times to go to evening parties which were arranged expressly for him, and, according to custom, he had on all these occasions broken his word. At length, Madame Scherer, the wife of the banker with whom my mother was intimately acquainted, sent him a very urgent invitation to dinner to meet a small party, and to have a little music in the evening. He accepted

the invitation, and gave a list of the persons whom he condescended to admit to the solemnity. When the appointed day arrived he kept his engagement, which for him was a most extraordinary circumstance.

During the whole time of dinner Steibelt was cheerful and agreeable, and talked of the pleasure he should have in playing to Madame Scherer and her friends. However, just as he was about to take his seat at the piano, Madame de B—— was announced. She was a tall, upright, elderly lady, who in her youth had enjoyed an established reputation for beauty, a circumstance which might be readily suspected from her dignified air, which she no doubt imagined to be a convincing proof of her acknowledged superiority. Her face exhibited one complete daub of white, touched on the cheeks with rouge. She was dressed in deep mourning, which served to heighten the lustre of her artificial complexion. This majestic personage, whose every motion displayed the most studied formality, seated herself in an armchair by the fire; and on learning that Steibelt was going to play, she prepared to listen with due attention. Steibelt had by this time withdrawn from the piano, and the cloud that overspread his countenance sufficiently denoted that his good temper had forsaken him. M. Scherer, seeing that he had taken offence at something, stepped forward and requested him to resume the seat which no one else was so competent to fill.

"I cannot, monsieur," was the reply.

"But why? You said just now that you were exactly in the right humour for playing."

"So I was, but I am not in the habit of playing for family pictures. While she is here" (pointing to Madame de B——) "my fingers are motionless. Stay till the *black lady* goes away" (alluding to Madame de B——'s mourning dress) "and I will do anything you wish."

"Now really, Steibelt," resumed M. Scherer, "this vexes me exceedingly. The *black lady*, as you call her, is, I assure you, a very estimable woman, my wife's friend. She has merely dropped in by chance; but having been informed that you are going to play she will certainly stay."

"So much the worse for her and for us, and I say again I will not play till she is gone."

Nothing could induce him to alter his determination. The ladies exerted their persuasive powers one after another, but in vain. Madame de B——, though she asked no questions, soon perceived that there was some confusion in the company; but she was informed that Steibelt was ill, and she believed it. Some of the party seemed consoled by the expectation that she would set out on her usual round of evening visits; but, alas! she had dismissed her carriage, and had ordered it not to return until midnight. It was a hopeless case. At length Madame de B—— con-

sented to take a hand at whist. Macedoine was proposed, in the hope that the gaiety of the young people would restore Steibelt's good humour and render him more tractable. All was vain. He laughed, played at vingt-et-un, makao, etc., but he continued obstinate.

About half-past eleven o'clock Madame de B——'s carriage was announced. The rubber was just finished. The lady slowly wrapped her shawl round her, made a formal courtesy, kissed the forehead of M. Scherer's daughter, and made her exit with all the solemnity with which she entered. Before she had passed through the antechamber Steibelt was running over a prelude on the instrument. He continued playing for several hours, and three o'clock struck before the company thought of retiring.

It appears to me that Steibelt's talent cannot be compared with that of any other. When seated at the piano his style of playing changed as rapidly as his ideas, and his extraordinary versatility produced an effect which it is impossible to describe. All the wildness of his fanciful brain seemed to be communicated to his fingers. He would instantaneously banish the impression created by a few bars of soft and soothing melody by launching into passages of rapid and difficult execution. While his auditors regretted the shortness of a pathetic phrase, he consoled them by some stroke of bold originality; in a word, Steibelt was himself alone. No performer ever possessed

greater versatility. Other pianists may exceed him in mere brilliancy of execution, others may make the instrument sing more powerfully than he did; but Steibelt's peculiarity was the combination of every style, forming altogether a whole which will, perhaps, never again be equalled.

He composed only one opera, which contained many pieces of remarkable beauty. On its first representation it was thought too learned; the old amateurs, accustomed to the simple accompaniments of early composers, disapproved of the intricacy of orchestral arrangements which they could not understand. They declaimed loudly against the *bad taste* which threatened to overthrow their favourite system; but in spite of all this, "Romeo and Juliet" was attended by long and brilliant success. The opera if revived in good style would, I am certain, prove exceedingly attractive. The same may be said of many of the works of Cherubini, whose beautiful scores are in every musical library, though but seldom performed where they would, no doubt, be duly appreciated. But for his sacred compositions Cherubini's reputation would, by people in general, be thought exceedingly exaggerated, since they have little opportunity of estimating the claims on which it is founded. M. de la Rochefoucauld one day observed to Cherubini that with his admirable talent he should *try* to compose for the theatre. Certainly, if our director of the

fine arts had not heard of such masterpieces as "Medea," "Mount St. Bernard," and "Lodoiska," the ignorance of young amateurs on such subjects may be readily pardoned.

The errors of Steibelt's life are too well known to be here alluded to. It is always painful to dwell on the dark side of the picture of a man of genius. Being obliged to expatriate himself, he went to Russia. I have heard that he was exiled to Siberia; but for the truth of the report I cannot vouch. Unfortunately his previous conduct warrants one in attaching some degree of credit to it. He died at St. Petersburg.

Steibelt was a bad teacher; his natural irritability made him lose sight of that coolness and patience which a master should observe towards his pupils. Instead of making them practise over and over, in his presence, the passages in which they were imperfect, he used to take his seat at the piano and play them himself; in a few minutes, forgetting the object for which he sat down, he would begin to improvise. No one dared interrupt him; and sometimes several hours elapsed before he again thought of his pupils, who were, no doubt, much better pleased to hear him play than to study their lessons. Steibelt was so remarkable for breaking his appointments that those who employed him as a teacher used to give him only twenty francs at each lesson instead of his full pay-

ment. As he was always pressed for money, this plan afforded some chance of securing the regularity of his attendance.

How different is the conduct of our young professors of the present day who, with eminent talent and zeal for their art, combine irreproachable manners and rigid punctuality in all their engagements. MM. Herz, Rhein, and Pixis, whose masterly playing is not less admired than their compositions, in which the difficult and the pleasing are happily blended together, also excel in the difficult art of teaching.* When the pupil feels that respect for his master which honourable conduct is calculated to inspire, his progress is speedy and certain. We can never scrutinize too closely the characters of those to whom any portion of youthful education is entrusted.

* MM. Pixis and Rhein, after making several successful tours, have returned to Paris, where their brilliant talents meet with the admiration they deserve.

CHAPTER XVII.

Kindness of Queen Hortense to M. Drouet. — A Circumstance Little Creditable to Him. — Evening Party at M. Brongniat's, the Architect. — My Singing. — Martin Offers to Instruct Me. — My Vanity Mortified. — Nicolo, Ciceri, Isabey, Duport, Carle and Horace Vernet. — Anecdote of Carle. — An Adventure of the Great Vernet. — Horace Vernet. — His Marriage. — Général Rabusson. — His Clever Reply to the Emperor.

WHEN our visits to the Empress ceased, we had neglected paying our respects to Queen Hortense, for we were attracted to Malmaison, not so much by the charms of power and greatness as by the happiness of seeing a mother and daughter both elevated to the highest rank without having lost any of those graces which rendered them so engaging in a more humble sphere, while both possessed, even in an eminent degree, the virtues most essential in individuals destined to rule over others, viz.: charity and generosity. Confident, therefore, in the Queen's goodness, we determined to pay her a visit. The following circumstance afforded us an opportunity for so doing :

A young man named Drouet, a native of Holland, had at this time just come to Paris. He played on

the flute with superior skill, but experienced a thousand obstacles in making himself known; and, though in straitened circumstances, he was said to be the only support of his father and sister. He was introduced to us. We felt interested in him, and determined to use our endeavours to obtain for him the patronage of Her Majesty, always accessible when appealed to in behalf of the unfortunate. M. Drouet was well worthy of her notice, for with a talent of the highest order he could barely procure a livelihood for himself and family.

We solicited an audience of the Queen, which was instantly granted. After offering some apologies for having so long neglected to pay our respects to her, we mentioned M. Drouet, and we soon contrived to excite her interest in his behalf. She assured us he should be introduced to her; that she would hear him play, and do something to improve his circumstances. In the meanwhile she signified her wish that he would announce a concert, for which she would take eighty tickets. She performed all she promised, and to her M. Drouet is indebted for the rapid reputation he acquired in Paris and afterwards in every city in Europe. The handsome fortune which he now possesses he owes entirely to the Queen's favour; M. Drouet may have forgotten this, like many others to whom she extended her assistance. I always feel happy in recording traits of goodness in any one con-

nected with Josephine, and I congratulate myself on calling such matters to the remembrance of those who happen to forget them.

I afterwards learned M. Drouet was far from being so meritorious as we imagined ; he indeed lived with his father and sister ; but the one acted the part of his servant, while the other was his cook. An acquaintance of mine calling once upon him, surprised him at dinner with his sister waiting upon him at the back of his chair and his old father brushing his boots in the antechamber. On hearing this I was sorry at what we had done for him ; but, after all, it is better to be the dupe of a good heart than to suffer suspicion to check every generous impulse. I can never regret the credulity which, though it may often have subjected me to odious imposition, has more often proved to me a source of gratification.

We went to an evening party given by M. Brongniart, the celebrated architect, of whom I have before spoken ; there we found a great number of distinguished artists assembled to celebrate the birthday of their excellent host. M. Brongniart's friend, Martin, was among the company. When Martin first appeared on the stage my father had been of service to him, and they now met on this occasion with mutual satisfaction. Before the Revolution, the one was a man of rank and wealth, a patron of the arts, for which he possessed a *genuine* taste ; but he was

now nothing more than an admirer of talent. The other, from an unpractised actor and singer, had risen to be one of the most brilliant ornaments of the stage, and enjoyed a fresh triumph from each new character in which he appeared. However, the wheel of fortune had turned in different ways for each, and it was now my father's turn to be the obliged party.

I was asked to sing, which I did with a conviction, I confess, that I should as usual meet with approbation. Indeed almost all the company, indifferent as to any false notions I might entertain respecting my own talent, paid me high compliments, which I received as nothing more than my due. How great, therefore, was my astonishment when Martin, stepping up to my father, said :

“Your daughter has a good voice, and her style of singing is not much amiss ; but she accents the French very badly. You should get her a master.”

“That's very easily said,” replied my father, “but I can't afford it, and am forced to economize even in matters of more importance — in her education.”

“Well, then, my dear sir,” resumed Martin, “allow me to give her some lessons, and I venture to assure you that you will soon find her much improved.”

My father wished to decline this offer, but Martin pressed it with so much delicacy that it was agreed he should come every two days and hear me sing for an hour. I was at first not much pleased with a sort

of discipline in study to which I was wholly unaccustomed. But my master's patience and indulgence, joined to his exquisite talent, soon reconciled me to it; and my transient dissatisfaction was succeeded by feelings of the sincerest gratitude. Martin continued for six months the fatiguing task he had undertaken, and should these Memoirs meet his eye he will see that I cherish a recollection of his kindness which time can never efface.

The little I have profited by his instruction must be attributed to that excessive indolence which has always been a part of my character. Instead of practising when Martin left me, I thought it sufficient to recollect his advice. His excellent lessons were worthy of a better scholar. His mode of teaching was admirable.

I feel it a gratifying duty to devote, in the course of these Memoirs, a few lines to those who have shewn kindness to me during a life marked by cruel vicissitudes. Those who have sought to injure me, or have deserted me in misfortune, are more numerous than my friends; of them I shall not speak. I pity the feelings of those who are ever anxious to disclose what is calculated to injure persons who were once dear to them, but from whom they may have experienced unkindness. In such cases the only proper revenge, especially for a woman, is to return good for evil. I may deplore ingratitude, but I will not talk

of it, nor by dwelling on the subject add to the distress it has already cost me.

At M. Brongniart's party I met two men of eminent talent, Nicolo and Ciceri. The early death of the former was an event deeply deplored by every lover of the delightful art of which he was so bright an ornament. The latter still pursues his successful career, and his name is always associated with those of our greatest masters.

Nicolo was corpulent and rather vulgar in appearance. His dress, which was a degree below negligence, was not calculated to conceal his personal disadvantages. His countenance could scarcely be said to exhibit any traces of his brilliant talent. He that evening favoured us with a buffo-quartette of his composition, all the parts of which he executed himself in the most amusing way imaginable; I never heard anything more droll.

Ciceri, besides his just celebrity as a painter, was a very pleasing singer without pretension, or any of the bad taste of superfluity of ornament. He mimicked in the most perfect style all the favourite singers and actors of the day. This talent, joined to considerable wit and gaiety, rendered his company extremely agreeable. His equal and placid temper never failed him, even when suffering from a severe accident which confined him to his bed for six months in a state of distressing suspense, for it was for some time

doubtful whether it would be necessary to amputate his leg. His numerous friends were constantly about him, diverting his mind by music, conversation, or acting proverbs. His protracted illness afforded the best evidence of his excellent disposition. He readily entered into any amusement that was prepared for him, and never suffered a murmur to escape his lips. Thanks to the skill of Dubois, his recovery was complete. The retired life I now lead affords me no opportunity of seeing him, but I shall always recollect with pleasure the moments I have spent in his company.

Isabey, Ciceri's father-in-law, contributed not a little to the enjoyment of these meetings by the inexhaustible gaiety and his fund of interesting anecdotes. When he told a story he accompanied it by such expressive gestures that his hearers might almost imagine themselves in the presence of the persons of whom he was speaking. These parties at Ciceri's were attended by the most distinguished artists, musicians, etc. All serious discussions were forbidden, and this rule was never transgressed. Even those who could only enjoy without contributing to the amusements of the company were received with the same welcome as the rest. This general good humour and cordiality were the more agreeable to me, who had just quitted a Court where, in spite of the kindness and affability of the Empress, all was

stiffness and formality, and where praise was never sincerely or willingly bestowed. When good qualities were so striking and undeniable as to force out an expression of approval, the commendation was sure to be accompanied by a remark on some defect which counterbalanced the merit. At Ciceri's, on the contrary, no one ever alluded to the faults of another. The pleasure I enjoyed in this society has, however, had an unfortunate influence over the rest of my life. I have since paid dearly for the pleasures I then tasted.

At Ciceri's, I heard the celebrated bass player, Duport, who was again forced to exercise his talent in consequence of the loss of a fortune acquired during a life of long labour. He was received with enthusiasm on his return to his native country after an absence of many years. The pure tones which he drew from his instrument were unequalled by any other performer. He first appeared at the *concert spirituel*, at the Odéon, and he had performed at that theatre for fifty-one years. He had been admired and applauded by three generations.

He was a man of mild and agreeable manners. He always called his instrument *Madame Duport*, for it had been his companion in all the vicissitudes of his life; he took the most scrupulous care of it, and when he entered a house always inquired where he might deposit it in safety. I have since heard MM. Bohrer,

Romberg, and Baudiot, but none of them, in my opinion, equalled their venerable predecessor.

MM. Carle and Horace Vernet were also frequent visitors at Ciceri's. Carle's original talent and droll manner of telling a story rendered him exceedingly amusing when he did not indulge in the wretched *calembourgs* of which he was so fond. I heard him tell the following anecdote :

As early as six years of age, he discovered extraordinary talent in the art in which he afterwards excelled, and he was frequently invited to the houses of people who wished to see him make sketches. He one day went with his father, the *great Vernet*, to pay a visit to the Prince de Conti. The Prince, taking him on his knee, gave him a slate and pencil, and asked him to draw a horse. The boy immediately sketched one in very fine style, and proudly presented his slate to the Prince, who examined the little *chef-d'œuvre* with astonishment.

"This is an admirable horse, indeed, my little friend," said the Prince, "but he wants some essential things, that is to say, feet; you miscalculated the size of your slate, and have not left yourself room."

"Oh! no," exclaimed Carle, immediately sketching some water; "you see, monseigneur, his feet are in the river."

This stratagem pleased the Prince, who paid the young artist many compliments, gave him a present,

and what, perhaps, he liked best of all, a quantity of sweetmeats.

He used to relate the following curious adventure which occurred to his father. He was travelling from Marseilles by what was called the *voiturin*, a clumsy vehicle, so very slow in its motions that I believe the journey to Paris took twenty-two days. Among the passengers, who were closely packed together, Vernet observed a fat, red-faced man, who seemed to be as dull in intellect as he was heavy in person. With the view of amusing himself a little at the expense of this comical figure, he began to address him in a strain of polite compliment, to which the other replied with awkward good nature. The travellers alighted to walk up a steep hill in order to relieve the horses. On their way, they encountered a ditch of some width, and Vernet, who was a famous leaper, wagered that he would jump clean over it.

"You jump over it?" exclaimed the stout gentleman, with astonishment.

"Certainly, it is narrow enough."

"Narrow as it is, I should like to see you do it."

"Here I go, then," said Vernet, as he bounded lightly over the ditch.

"That's well done, indeed," said the person whom Vernet had singled out as his victim, "but it strikes me that I could do it myself; your example has wound up my courage, and I'll try."

"You!" exclaimed the painter, bursting into a fit of laughter, "I should like, indeed, to see you do it; I wager a dinner you will fall into the water."

"Don't frighten me beforehand. Let us see, a dinner. How much will that cost?"

"About a crown, I suppose."

"That's a good deal, but no matter, I'll try my luck."

After a thousand wry faces, the fat gentleman leaped, and fell like a heavy load about a foot beyond the point which Vernet had reached.

"I will have my revenge," said the latter, a little piqued; "you will not refuse me that, I hope."

"Oh! certainly not. What has happened by chance may not, perhaps, happen again, and to-morrow we will decide who shall pay the dinner."

Accordingly, next day they had a new trial of agility. The fat gentleman was again the winner, and he congratulated himself on the good fortune that favoured him. Vernet, who was deeply mortified at the triumph of his adversary, repeatedly renewed the wager, and always lost it. At length they reached the last relay, and the *pataud*, as Vernet jeeringly called him, said:

"Monsieur, I return a thousand thanks for the handsome way in which you have paid for my dinners almost all the way from Marseilles. I am anxious to offer some little proof of my gratitude. If a few

tickets for Nicolet's would be acceptable, I shall feel much pleasure in offering them. I am engaged there as clown, and am to make my first appearance in a day or two. This, perhaps, may console you for having lost your wagers. You are a good leaper; but had you leaped fifty times better, you would still have lost, for I have a strong reserve of talent, which I should have called into exercise had I found it necessary, and thus have realized the proverb, which you have no doubt heard, 'Better and better, as at Nicolet's.' "

Vernet used to be very fond of telling this story. My father had it from his own mouth.

When I first knew Horace Vernet he was just married. His wife, who was young and handsome, had been well brought up; but she was portionless, and her husband's fortune was yet to be made; for by some unlucky fatality his father and grandfather had squandered away immense sums of money. The reputation of the descendant of those great painters was, as yet, scarcely begun. He lodged in a fourth story, and I have often heard Madame Vernet regret expending 300 francs per month, because Horace did not gain as much. He has since, however, made amends for his former straitened circumstances, and now that he is enabled to keep an establishment equal to that of any gentleman of fortune, he should try to augment his reputation, or rather, to found it upon

some important composition, so that when the fashion of easel-pictures passes away, he may be prepared for that which is to succeed. This will require laborious study, but Horace Vernet is one of those persons who succeed in everything to which they apply themselves. Let us hope, therefore, for his own interest and that of the arts, that he will not always confine himself to the representation of history in miniature. All the great pictures he has hitherto produced have been far from perfect, but surrounded as he will shortly be with the masterpieces of the Italian school, he cannot but be inspired with the noble emulation of imitating them, and France will then possess another painter worthy to vie with Gérard and Girodet. We may be permitted to hope for better than what we have, though that is very good.

Horace Vernet well deserves the fortune he has acquired, and of which he makes an excellent use, for he has frequently assisted different individuals of his family. His goodness of heart compensates for some errors of understanding, which age will no doubt correct. Perhaps the crowd of enthusiastic admirers by whom he is surrounded ought to be accused of having led him into the little absurdities to which I allude. He has probably been persuaded — I do not know why — that he was fitted to be one of the leaders of the discontented, and he has accordingly broached extravagant opinions with which his conduct has not

always been consistent; for he has accepted and worn the cross of the Legion of Honour presented to him by Louis XVIII., and subsequently received the insignia of an officer of the same order. He was aide-de-camp to Marshal Oudinot, in the National Guard, he has painted pictures bespoke and handsomely paid for by the Government which he censured, and, finally, he has just set out for Rome where the King has appointed him to an excellent post, a circumstance which must convince him that His Majesty attaches more value to his talent than to his opinions. He will prove himself worthy of the favour he has received by devoting his attention to the arts rather than to politics, and he will, doubtless, prove his gratitude to the King by advancing the prosperity of the French school of painting, and sending to Paris works worthy of his own reputation.

M. Rabusson, the brother-in-law of Horace Vernet, owed, it is said, to a happy instance of presence of mind, the advancement which he obtained in the army.

He held the rank of second lieutenant, in what particular corps I do not know. During a review the Emperor let his hat fall near M. Rabusson, who immediately picked it up.

"Thank you, captain," said Napoleon, not having observed the rank of the officer to whom he addressed himself.

“In what regiment, Sire?” inquired Rabusson.

“Oh! . . . in my guard,” replied the Emperor, smiling at his own mistake and the coolness of his interlocutor.

He asked his name, and learned that he was a brave officer, who by several gallant actions had merited the cross. From that time the Emperor kept an eye upon him, gave him opportunities of honourably distinguishing himself, and successively conferred upon him various rewards.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Our Visit to Madame Dubrosseron in Picardy. — We Meet M. de Saint-Aulaire. — His Marriage with Mdle. de Soyecourt. — Mdle. Duroure, His Second Wife. — Madame and Mdle. Duroure. — MM. Joseph d'Estourmel, Casimir Baecker, and de Castéja. — Madame Delarue, Daughter of de Beaumarchais. — Her Talent for the Piano. — Some Particulars Respecting Her and Her Father. — Madame de Beaumarchais. — Amateur Theatricals at Sorel. — Excursion to the Château of Manicamp, the Residence of M. de Brancas. — The Tower of Coucy. — The Duc de Lauraguais. — Curious Anecdote.

THE summer put an end to the delightful parties of which I gave some account in my last chapter, and we set out for Sorel, a beautiful estate in Picardy. It belonged to my mother's friend, Madame Dubrosseron, a charming woman, whose death proved a severe loss to the poor of her neighbourhood, to whom she was a liberal benefactress. A vast fortune afforded her the means of exercising her benevolence in the fullest extent. It was no unusual thing for people to come from the distance of several leagues round to consult her in cases of family dissension. She was respected and revered, and her advice was

invariably adopted. In a thousand instances she effected reconciliation between children and parents, or brothers and sisters, who happened to be divided by affairs of interest, which she settled by drawing upon her own purse. She possessed beauty without coquetry, and talent without pretension, and her piety did not render her intolerant and severe like those who cannot discriminate between bigotry and devotion.

In her spacious château she received and entertained the numerous friends who gladly devoted to her all the time they had at their command. Her excellent understanding enabled her to select judiciously those who were most worthy to enjoy her society, and her circle always presented a combination of every kind of talent.

M. de Saint-Aulaire, who has since become one of the most distinguished speakers of the Chamber of Deputies, at that time confined his ambition to the improvement of a beautiful residence which he occupied at the distance of three leagues from Sorel, and the education of his two daughters by his first wife. He was married a second time, and he lived with his young wife on terms of uninterrupted happiness, while he enjoyed the society of M. Joseph d'Estourmel, for whom he cherished a warm friendship of several years' standing.

M. de Saint-Aulaire had suffered by the disasters of

the Revolution in which he lost all his fortune. By his proficiency on the guitar, however, he procured a competent livelihood, and contributed to the comforts of his respectable family. The fortitude with which he bore his misfortunes, joined to his talent and meritorious conduct, made a deep impression on the heart of one of his pupils, Mdle. de Soyecourt (a relation of the Princesse de Nassau), who was possessed of a considerable fortune. She declared her intention to marry no other than M. de Saint-Aulaire, and, disregarding all the remonstrances of her friends, she gave her hand to the man of her choice. A few years after this union, she died of a pulmonary disorder, deeply regretted by her husband, who cherished for her the most devoted attachment. It was long ere M. de Saint-Aulaire recovered from this stroke of fate. The caresses of his children augmented rather than diminished his sorrow; for they bore so striking a resemblance to their mother that he could scarcely endure to look at them; time, however, had its usual effect in alleviating the grief which nothing else could soothe. M. de Saint-Aulaire consented again to see his friends, from whose society he had entirely withdrawn himself, and he began to turn his attention to the education of his daughters. He declared that, should he ever marry a second time, he would choose a wife without fortune, so that he might in his turn enjoy the happiness of enriching the object

of his affections. He fixed his choice upon Mdle. Duroure, who, to exquisite beauty and an amiable disposition, joined talents and accomplishments of no ordinary kind. He solicited and obtained her hand, and he found in her excellent mother and sisters all that such a man as Saint-Aulaire could wish his relatives to be. He lived chiefly on his estate surrounded by his beloved family. He seemed to wish for nothing more, and to be devoid of all ambition.

He frequently came to Sorel, where his presence always diffused cheerfulness. He made up parties, arranged excursions, and our evenings were generally concluded by telling ghost stories. We used to extinguish the candles, and place a large faggot on the fire, the blaze of which, gradually dying away, augmented the interest of our terrific tales. I dare say that M. de Saint-Aulaire, amidst the many important occupations which now engage his attention, sometimes thinks of the circles which used to assemble round the Gothic fireplace of Sorel, and perhaps regrets the time when his eloquence was employed only to excite those terrors which on the succeeding morning he would playfully ridicule. Then his words were eagerly listened to, as they now are ; but they stirred up no dissensions, and a frightful dream was the worst effect they produced. But for the conviction that he is now labouring for the welfare of his country, he would, I am convinced, prefer the agreeable chit-chat

of Sorel to the discussions of the Chamber, which are too frequently attended by irritation and disorder.

M. Joseph d' Estourmel, who was on terms of close intimacy with M. de Saint-Aulaire, was almost always with him. He had but little fortune; but it is said his generous friend allowed him to want for none of the enjoyments of life. I could never understand what sort of sympathy could exist between two men so different from each other, and I can now only presume that they were united by the link which attaches the benefactor to the object of his beneficence.

M. de Saint-Aulaire, who was a man elevated infinitely above the common standard both with respect to fortune and talent, was devoid of all pretension; while M. d' Estourmel, who merely attempted a little of everything, fancied himself a superior being. He seldom condescended to converse aloud, because, I suppose, he thought what fell from him was too good for common ears. In the drawing-room he would single out one individual whom he thought superior to the rest of the company, and to whom he addressed all sorts of commonplaces. He was said to be well informed; I was then too young to appreciate the information which he deigned to communicate only to a chosen few; but I could judge of his singing, which was not agreeable, and his drawings, which deserved no higher praise. There was a studied and insinuating politeness about him which displeased me, because

I think that sort of manner incompatible with candour. I prefer a thousand times a little want of polish, which I am sure can never deceive me. M. de Saint-Aulaire avoided either of these two extremes; his politeness was perfectly finished without being artificial.

M. d'Estourmel was, however, very young at the period to which I allude. It is probable that he may since have improved.* Filling, as he now does, several honourable posts, and having contracted a brilliant marriage, he has, perhaps, adopted as his model the man whom he will do well to imitate. The more he resembles his friend the better he will be.

* M. Alexandre d'Estourmel, who was elected a deputy, for what reason nobody can well guess, was long an officer in the old army. He did not join his regiment during the whole of the sanguinary Spanish war of 1808 and 1809; he was taking the waters at Saint-Amand. He fought a duel, I do not know on what occasion, and was severely wounded, his adversary's ball having entered his abdomen. Some one having mentioned the circumstance to the witty Marquise de Coigny, she exclaimed: "What! a ball in his abdomen? How did it get there? I suppose he swallowed it!" She, of course, thought it unbecoming in an officer to be absent from his regiment at such a moment. The same Alexandre d'Estourmel composed the music of a little comic opera entitled "*Le Procès*," which was performed without being hissed at the Théâtre Feydeau. After it had been represented for a few nights the performers refused to play it any longer, because it brought no money to the theatre. M. d'Estourmel was very indignant at this, and he said in my hearing, "Would you believe that these blockheads actually refuse to play my piece? It has been performed only ten nights. *Nobody has seen it*, and yet they insist on laying it on the shelf." It is said that the performers in the orchestra, wishing to ascertain whether the music was really the production of Comte d'Estourmel, altered all the accompaniments at a general rehearsal; a circumstance which passed off quite unobserved by the Count.

M. de Saint-Aulaire's youngest daughter * was, when I saw her at Sorel, only four years of age. She was a singularly intelligent child ; she knew by heart large portions of the works of our great poets, and she repeated them, not as children generally do, like a parrot, but with that correctness of intonation which proved that she perfectly understood and felt what she uttered ; her action was also exceedingly correct and graceful. I shall never forget how interesting she was when reciting the parts of Cleopatra and Roxana in complete theatrical costume.

M. Casimir Baecker, who was educated by Madame de Genlis, was also a visitor at Sorel. His incomparable talent, together with that of Madame Delarue de Beaumarchais, was the charm of our afternoons. M. Casimir is a perfect master of his instrument, and it is difficult to conceive anything superior to his performance. His talent, which is too generally known to require description, has obtained for him the most brilliant reputation in London, Paris and Vienna. But I must say a few words of Madame Delarue, whose extreme diffidence withheld her from frequently appearing in public. Dussek, her master, declared that she and Madame de Mongeroult taught him to play adagios ; this compliment may afford some idea of her abilities. Baillot has often accompanied her,

* Now the Duchesse Decaze.

and since he thought her worthy of that honour, Dussek's praise was certainly not unfounded.

To portray Madame Delarue it is sufficient to say that in company she was the most agreeable, and at home the most estimable, of women. She possessed every quality calculated to please in society, and to render her beloved in her domestic circle. In shrewdness of mind she strongly resembled her father, to whom she was devotedly attached. She cherished the tenderest veneration for his memory, and shewed a marked regard for every person whom he had known and liked. To this filial piety I was indebted for the intimacy with which she honoured me, for my father was the friend of hers. My father and she talked over the *Thursday dinners* at which De Beaumarchais used to assemble all the talent of Paris, and in return for these gratifying recollections Madame Delarue loaded me with the kindest attention. She told us that, whenever any remarkable sally of wit came out at these dinners, De Beaumarchais used to rise and say :

“That is a very clever thing; will you give it me?”

“Certainly.”

“No, but without joking, will you permit me to make use of it, as though it were my own?”

“To be sure I will.”

“You will never lay claim to it?”

“Never.”

“Well, you will meet with it again some time or other.”

Many of the witty remarks, which on these and other occasions happened to please the author, who had always so vast a fund of his own wit at command, were introduced in the “*Mariage de Figaro*” and the “*Barbier de Seville*.” Beaumarchais was an affectionate father, and a kind, though not always a faithful husband. I knew his wife, who was a clever and amiable woman, but unfortunately subject to violent rheumatic attacks.

After the period to which I here allude, Madame Delarue went alone to America to endeavour to recover a considerable property which had been bequeathed to her father. Her health, which was always delicate, suffered considerably by the voyage; but the satisfaction she must feel in having promoted the welfare of her children will, I trust, restore her. With a mind like hers, it is in moral remedies alone the invalid must seek relief.

In the course of this chapter I have mentioned the name of M. Casimir Baecker. For some time past this gentleman has been the object of so many calumnious attacks that I think it right to state all I know respecting him and his adoption by Madame de Genlis. To state honourable truths is to me always a gratifying task; and I observe silence only when by speaking out I must convey censure.

Madame de Genlis has long been the victim of malignity and bad faith, and it is now time that justice and gratitude should take up her cause. I have already defended her, and will do so again, though I should expose myself to the animosity of her detractors. The consciousness of doing what is right will console me for that malevolence which I should deserve if I did not fulfil my duty towards a lady who always evinced an affectionate regard for me, and has been useful to me on several occasions. Her enemies will, perhaps, become mine; that is an inheritance which I shall willingly receive, and for which I shall have nothing to reproach myself. One must not fear to avow one's friends when they are falsely accused; we could do no more if they were really guilty of what may happen to be imputed to them.

During her emigration, Madame de Genlis by the exercise of her talents and industry not only provided for her own support, but helped to relieve the wants of her destitute countrymen, and aided other unfortunate persons who appealed to her benevolence. Being exceeding fond of children, and seeking no other amusement than that which their society afforded, she requested that her grandson, M. Anatole de la Woëstine, might be sent to her; offering to bring him up and educate him. The cultivation of his youthful mind would have been to her a source of



the highest pleasure, but it was refused her. She then suggested a wish to have her niece, Mdle. Georgette Ducrest; but the child's parents could not make up their minds to part with her, and Madame de Genlis, in her solitary exile, had no consolation but that of thinking of the beings who were dear to her.

Casimir Baecker, then a boy, lived in the house in which Madame de Genlis lodged at Berlin. Whenever he was punished by his stepfather, he flew to Madame de Genlis until the storm should subside, and the consolations and caresses he received from her soon made him forget his little grievances.

When Madame de Genlis was about to quit Prussia, the poor boy seemed so disconsolate that she requested his family to give him up entirely to her charge, promising to see him provided for. Her request was granted, and the boy came to France with his benefactress. His intelligence and taste for the arts enabled him to make rapid progress in the various studies to which his attention was directed. Madame de Genlis was his only instructress, and his second mother. Her attachment for her adopted child increased in proportion as advancing years developed his talents and amiable feelings. One of the qualities which most endeared him to Madame de Genlis was his invariable candour; he never offered a false caress or uttered an untruth. Like most young men

possessed of lively imagination, and surrounded by the attractions of gay society, he was led into some irregularities which, however, he speedily relinquished and repented.

The sincere and profound piety which then took possession of his mind was pronounced to be hypocrisy by those who, fearing the punishment of a just but severe God, affect scepticism with the view of leading others into their own fatal errors. Madame de Genlis was said to be the dupe of a second Tартuffe, who assumed the mask of piety in order to obtain from his adopted mother money, manuscripts, etc. M. Casimir's enemies did not take the trouble to inquire whether his conduct corresponded with his professions; whether at the hazard of his life he rescued old people and children from the flames, and whether he conveyed relief to the wretched inmates of pestilential prisons. He attended Mass, heard sermons, and undertook missions; therefore, in the opinion of certain persons, he was an odious hypocrite, respecting whom it was fair to invent and circulate all sorts of false and infamous reports.

Madame de Genlis, who had taken M. Casimir from his mother and family, and withdrawn him from that humble sphere in life in which he might have gained a comfortable subsistence by following his stepfather's business, thought it time to do something towards providing for him; with this view, she sold

him her manuscripts at a very low price. She conceived herself authorized to dispose of them, for during her long emigration she had never received any assistance from her family, and she had resigned her dowry to her daughter, together with anything that might accrue to her from the Government. The act of sale was drawn up in the regular form before a notary; M. Casimir was therefore the lawful possessor of this property, and also of the profits which might arise from the republication of Madame de Genlis's works, for which he had already received very advantageous offers.

Fearing to injure the heirs of Madame de Genlis by keeping that which certainly could not be regarded as their patrimony, he two years ago renounced formally and by a legal act all that his benefactress had conferred upon him. He restored the whole to Madame de Genlis, conceiving that to be the most delicate mode of proceeding; but he obtained her promise of bequeathing the property to Madame de Valence and M. Anatole de la Woëstine. Madame de Genlis mentioned this arrangement to Madame de Valence, who acceded to it without hesitation. M. de la Woëstine, however, would not hear of a restitution to which he said he had no sort of claim.

This fact will not astonish those who know the elevated sentiments of M. de la Woëstine, of whom I shall hereafter speak more fully.

The disinterestedness of M. Casimir Baecker deserves to be made known, for this one trait is sufficient to overthrow all the silly reports which have been circulated about him. He is now the father of three children, whose maintenance depends solely on the exercise of his talents.

Among the company at Sorel was M. de Castéja, an agreeable man, fond of good cheer and of amusement of every kind. He was always happy whenever he could get good dinners and act plays, or, at least, proverbs. He was very tall and exceedingly corpulent. To enable us to judge of his talent for acting, of which he himself entertained a very high idea, he proposed that we should get up a play. We had no dresses, no actresses, and very few who even had the pretensions of being actors, but M. de Castéja urged his proposition so earnestly that we were at length prevailed on to attempt the representation of the "*Gageure Imprévue*," "*Défiance et Malice*" and the "*Dépit Amoureux*." Several parts were assigned to me. Madame Marlet, the wife of the painter, good-naturedly accepted some other characters, and my mother consented to make herself a sort of actress of all work. The party at the château were now fully engaged in studying their parts, rehearsing, etc. M. de Saint-Aulaire was an excellent lover, M. de Castéja was an indifferent valet, and I was as bad as could be in a heroine. We were applauded by the peas-

antry and criticised by the visitors at the château, and, in short, the whole went off as amateur theatricals generally do.

M. Buffile de Brancas, though what one might be inclined to call rather a stupid fellow, nevertheless proposed a very interesting excursion, which was that the whole party should go and spend a night at his beautiful Château of Manicamp, about four leagues from Sorel, and a short distance from the Château of Fayel and the Tower of Coucy, which we were also to visit. We set out, some on horseback, some in carriages, and others riding on asses, so that the grotesque appearance of our calvacade put us all in good-humour. A few falls, unattended by any disastrous results, served to augment our mirth, and we arrived at Manicamp, highly pleased with our journey, though much fatigued and exceedingly hungry. We were all prepared to do full honour to the excellent supper which we expected to find ready for us, according to the promise of the châtelain, who, being very rich, could easily fulfil such a promise in the handsomest way. However, we soon found that we were deceived, for the servants, unaccustomed to prepare for the reception of so much company, had neglected a thousand things that had been ordered; such, at least, was the apology offered. We sat down to a very humble repast, scarcely sufficient to satisfy our appetites. The gentlemen were exceed-

ingly indignant at this ridiculous parsimony, the more especially as the visit was the result of repeated and urgent invitations. They proposed sending to Noyon to procure provisions for next morning's breakfast; they offered to assist the cook, and, in short, they quizzed our poor Amphytrion so severely, that he determined to make all possible amends for our inhospitable reception, and next day the table was spread with an abundance which banished all recollection of our scanty supper. We were heartily amused at the ill-disguised uneasiness of poor M. de Brancas, when he saw dish after dish rapidly devoured, and bottles, which had been for years buried in his cellars, drained without mercy. I have no doubt many of the gentlemen suffered from the efforts they made to prevent a morsel being carried from table.

The Château de Manicamp formerly belonged to the Duc de Lauraguais, celebrated for his adventures, his wit, his shattered fortune, and his singular and extravagant *Anglomania*. He expended vast sums in laying out his park in the English style, and he succeeded in making it exceedingly beautiful, though it must be admitted that the magnificent waters with which it was adorned had no small share in heightening its picturesque effects.

The drawbridges, the large old-fashioned fireplaces, the figured tapestries, the Venetian mirrors, the old family portraits, formed a singular contrast with the

modern style of the park and grounds. On the outside of the château, everything was in the taste of the present day, while, in the inside, one might have fancied oneself living in the age of Henri IV. This incongruity, of course, produced a very singular effect. Manicamp, when we saw it, was in very bad order; the parsimony of its owner was obvious at every step, but its most painful effects were observable in the ragged and half-starved inhabitants of the village, whose squalid features bore evidence of the deepest misery. Had these poor creatures been set to work on the estate, they would have had the means of supporting their families, while the property would have been improved. As it was, its value was degenerating, and its owner denied himself the happiness of doing good, from which he would have derived infinitely more pleasure than he could enjoy in hoarding up money to be applied to no useful purpose.

M. de Brancas possessed a good library, containing some valuable books and manuscripts, and a number of autograph letters of Louis XIV., MM. de Louvois, de Lyonne, Rabutin, Mesdames de Sévigné, de Maintenon, des Ursins, and other celebrated characters of the *beau siècle*.

We found a great deal of difficulty in obtaining even mattresses to sleep on, and we were obliged to put cloaks, pelisses, and shawls under contribution

for covering. In short, our night's lodging in this once magnificent retreat was a complete bivouac.

Next day we rose early to pay our intended visit to the Tower of Coucy and the Château of Fayel, the property of M. de Castéja, who did the honours with his accustomed complaisance. His accomplished lady was in Paris, but a *déjeuner* was served which could scarcely have been better managed had the mistress of the house herself presided at its arrangement.

The vaults of Fayel were partly walled up during the Revolution by the people of the country, with the view of destroying the prison of a woman who had been arbitrarily held in captivity. It would seem that the good people of Picardy felt deeply for injuries which were rather remote from them, but they were mistaken in supposing that they had demolished the sad prison of Gabrielle de Vergy, who, it is affirmed, was confined in the Château d'Autrey, and not, according to the common tradition, at Fayel.

The tower of Coucy is a beautiful ruin, and nothing more; all that now remains of it are some lofty and very thick walls overgrown with ivy and apparently ready to fall. These antique remains possess the interest which belongs to everything connected with a story of ill-fated love. While viewing them, the ladies of our party uttered a great number of commonplaces, to which the gentlemen replied by

little pleasantries, some of which were not in the best taste. We returned to Manicamp less satisfied than we had expected; some vexed at not having produced a sensation by their sentimental reflections, and others disappointed at the ill success of their jokes upon constancy, jealousy, etc. I had no share in this discontent, though I was unable to conceive how any but feelings of a painful kind can be excited by the contemplation of monuments of ancient glory, almost swept from the earth by the destroying hand of time. So many of these monuments have disappeared within the space of a few years that in all probability our soil will soon be bereft of its greatest ornaments. Why should we hope that two or three centuries hence our posterity will cherish a due respect for the memorials of our late brilliant victories?

My father, who was well acquainted with the Duc de Lauraguais, once the owner of Manicamp, used to relate many curious anecdotes of that nobleman, who took pleasure only in the lowest society, and boasted of his taste.

My father met him one day quite in a fit of despair, exclaiming that he was a dishonoured and ruined man.

“What is the matter? What has happened?”

“Oh! a frightful, a dreadful affair!”

“You have lost a large sum at play.”

“Oh! I am used to that, but this is worse; a most awful calamity!”

“You alarm me! I know not what to think; for I know that affairs of the heart never grieve you. . . .”

“Oh! if it were only the death of a mistress, that would be nothing; but it is a thousand times worse. You shall hear. For the last twenty years I have been doing all I could to ruin myself. About eighteen months ago I made a very respectable little bankruptcy, which was the talk of all Paris. Now, would you believe it? that rascal Guéméné has taken it into his head to become bankrupt for fourteen millions! I am outdone; I shall no longer be noticed; and thought no more of than a paltry tradesman of the Rue Saint Denis. Was ever anything so unfortunate?”

What must have been the morals of an age in which a Duke and peer hesitated not to profess such principles!

This same Duc de Lauraguais lost a wife to whom he was tenderly attached. She died of consumption. Her remains were not interred, but were by some chemical process reduced to a sort of small stone, which was set in a ring which the Duke always wore on his finger. After this, who will say that the eighteenth century was not a romantic age? •

CHAPTER XIX.

Matrimonial Scheme, of Which I Am the Object. — Vice-Admiral Sércey. — His Coolness in the Midst of Danger. — His Son Eolus Discovers an Island. — Prince of That Island. — Pride Displayed by His Highness. — His Skill in Archery. — Madame Catalani. — Her Singular Mistake Respecting the Celebrated Goëthe. — Madame Grassini. — She is Attacked by Banditti on Her Way to Naples. — Girodet. — His Taste for Music. — His Style of Painting. — M. Paër.

WE prolonged for some time longer our visit to Madame Dubrosseron, and afterwards returned to Paris. A marriage was planned for me, but feeling the utmost aversion for it I mentioned my objections to my parents, who, with their customary indulgence, allowed me to decline the intended match.

Had it, however, been concluded, I should have avoided many weighty misfortunes; but as I entertained an abhorrence for the man who was proposed to me, I never could have consented to marry him for the exclusive object of sharing his fortune and his rank in the world, which far exceeded anything I could aspire to possess. I held, in common with all young people, very exaggerated and false notions as

to the necessity of being in love with my husband ; and, regardless of consequences, I obstinately refused one who was no less distinguished by his talents than by his honourable character. I shortly afterwards contracted a marriage which was calculated, as I thought, to secure my happiness. This illusion has been dispelled by the most fatal occurrences, and I have had to bewail my unhappy lot with tears of bitterness. My misfortunes must necessarily be uninteresting to my readers ; I abstain, therefore, from entering into the detail of sorrows which it is to be hoped are without a parallel. Nevertheless, I take this opportunity of declaring that I have forgiven the past, and of tendering the expression of my gratitude to the few friends who have remained true to me, in spite of afflictions so severe that my fondness for my daughter was insufficient to attach me to life, and merely had the effect of checking my anxious desire for its termination.

Since time, however, has softened the most poignant grief, that child has become a consolation to me ; makes me bless the present moment, and even look forward to future happiness ; this is unquestionably one of those extraordinary changes which maternal tenderness is found to effect.

I renewed acquaintance with one of our best naval officers, whose coolness and bravery were the means of preserving the Isle of France to the French Repub-

lic, in the attainment of which object he sacrificed his fortune. Vice-Admiral de Sercey had been exceedingly kind to me in my youthful days. Having heard so much praise bestowed upon his meritorious conduct in moments of emergency, when so many persons were driven, as it were, to act in opposition to their wishes, I felt greatly flattered by his attentions. Though he was of a grave, serious, and perhaps repulsive countenance, he had nevertheless a happy manner of relating a humorous story. He has maintained through life an honourable and spotless character. The following trait will illustrate his presence of mind in the height of danger :

At an early age, and in the dawn of that career in which he has since acquired celebrity, he was bathing in the sea, his ship being at anchor a short distance from land ; on a sudden he beheld the whole crew falling upon their knees on the quarter-deck, and heard them crying out to him, "*Sercey, a shark!*" Turning in the direction pointed out by the alarming signs made to him by his comrades, he perceived the monster, which was but a short distance off, and was making towards him. Being accustomed to try soundings when the ship was at anchor, he knew that, within a few yards of the spot where he was bathing, the water was more shallow in consequence of sand-banks ; he was also aware that a shark swims by springs, and always seeks deep water. He reflected

that his only chance of escape was to proceed towards the land instead of swimming to the frigate, from whence ropes had been thrown out to him. He exerted all his strength; the shark followed, but having soon reached the shoals, its progress was checked at every fresh effort, by which delay M. de Sercy was enabled to gain upon the monster; he redoubled his exertions, reached the shore in safety, and fainted in the arms of the men who had hastened to his assistance, and whose unavailing efforts were necessarily confined to heartfelt wishes for his safety. Had he not been thoroughly acquainted with the coast, and had he swum to the ropes thrown out to him, he would infallibly have been devoured, as the shark would then have found sufficient depth of water to swim without any obstruction. This man, who is so perfectly composed in whatever relates to himself, is open to the tenderest emotions when his children are concerned.

His eldest son, Eolus de Sercey, desirous of perpetuating the glory which his name had acquired in the navy, determined to follow that career in which he could not fail to succeed if he trod in his father's footsteps. M. de Sercy was still in the Isle of France; and, with the view of communicating to him the projects he had formed, his son embarked on board a French ship of war about to proceed to that colony. The ship was attacked on the voyage by an English

frigate, and it became necessary to come to an engagement, the result of which was for a long time doubtful. Both parties fought with desperate valour; many of the combatants were wounded and forced to quit the decks; the French gunners in particular suffered severely in the contest. The young Eolus having watched the manœuvres, and, perceiving that for want of men the guns were not well served, undertook to perform the duty, and actually succeeded, unassisted, in rapidly loading many of the guns. After prodigies of valour, the frigate was captured, and the conquering ship entered, in company with its prize, the port in which M. de Sercey resided; the latter, hoping to receive news of his son, came on board to make inquiries of the captain, who detailed to him the dangers they had encountered. "The victory," he added, "is partly owing to a daring young fellow who assisted us with extraordinary coolness and bravery. He is called *Eolus*, a name which at sea is auspicious of success." M. de Sercey was quite ignorant of his son's intention to proceed to the Isle of France; but a sudden presentiment rushed upon the mind of the delighted parent, who, in a tremulous tone of voice, inquired the family name of the gallant youth. The answer afforded him a conviction that his heart did not misgive him, and he welcomed his son with the more pleasure, as he found him treading in his father's footsteps at an age which,

generally speaking, merely admits of the indulgence of hope for the future.

M. Eolus de Sercey has since obtained a promotion to which his uniform good conduct so justly entitled him; he has discovered an island in the Indian seas, and brought to Paris its *hereditary prince*, who formed the warmest attachment for him. I have met **that** highness at M. de Sercey's, whose reception of him was of so friendly a nature as to induce his submitting to the petty inconveniences entailed on him by the unaccountable pride of this mulatto chieftain, who, for instance, would never consent to take his meals with the respectable family by which he was treated as one of their own children. He said in a harsh and unpleasant language, with which M. Eolus was familiar, that a Sovereign should never demean himself so far as to eat in the company of his inferiors. Anxious, therefore, to humour him, M. de Sercey had given orders that he should be served in his own apartment.

He was a copper-coloured Indian, with features somewhat more prominent than those of negroes in general; his long hair was black and greasy, he was short in stature, but well built. His sharp and penetrating eyes assumed a very mild expression when resting upon any one for whom he felt an attachment. He readily understood what his young friend explained to him, and expressed the utmost curiosity

and eagerness to acquire knowledge ; he was particularly anxious to be instructed in the Catholic religion, which was the theme of his admiration from what he had heard of the virtues it enjoins. The forgiveness of injuries appeared to him the most difficult and the most admirable of its precepts.

His skill was remarkable. Being desirous of indulging in the amusement of archery, and not finding to his taste any of the bows which are sold in Paris, he had made one for himself, which never missed its aim, however great the distance ; there was no surer way of pleasing him than by expressing admiration for that art which in his country had precedence of every other. Eolus was to take him back to *the Queen*, his mother, after the lapse of a few years, in order that he might resume the reins of his empire, the population of which consisted of *six hundred souls*. I am unable to say whether the project has been carried into effect.

Madame Catalani came at this time to Paris, and created a general enthusiasm in her favour, in which I did not altogether participate. Her voice is unquestionably the finest instrument that nature has ever tuned, but in the science of music she appears to me to fall far short of Mesdames Pasta, Malibran, and Pisaroni. The chief merit of a singer does not, in my opinion, consist in the difficulty of her performance, and yet, in this circumstance alone, Madame

Catalani appears to claim unrivalled superiority. She astonishes, but fails to charm her audience; I doubt much whether this is the true object of music.

Madame Catalani's noble countenance and elegant figure render her a splendid actress; by her kindness and benevolence, she ranks amongst the most estimable of her sex. Many actions are related of her which cannot fail to secure to her universal esteem, independently of her personal character, which has always been free from the slightest blemish.

She is said to be rather deficient in wit, and several traits are related of her in support of this assertion. I have been told that during her stay at Berlin she was invited to dine with the distinguished and venerable Goëthe. She inquired on what instrument he played.

"He plays upon none, madame," was the reply, "but he is a very celebrated author; he has written elegant works, 'Werther,' amongst the rest."

"I am well acquainted with it; it has afforded me very great pleasure. I shall be delighted to see M. Goëthe, and to express to him my admiration of his work."

The apartment began to fill with the company invited, and at last the celebrated writer was announced. The host, a distinguished Prussian nobleman, hastened to receive and place him near Madame Catalani. He paid her the most flattering compli-

ments, adding, that from all he had heard of her extraordinary talent, he felt the utmost desire to hear her. Anxious not to be behindhand in courtesy towards a distinguished character, she immediately spoke to him of the impression which the *incomparable* "Werther" had created upon her mind.

"I cannot adequately express to you, monsieur, the interest I felt for him, and I much regret that you never saw the part performed by *Potier*, the worthy interpreter of your sentiments."

This extraordinary compliment was followed by a general burst of laughter; Goëthe was at a loss to understand her meaning, being probably unconscious of any attempts having been made to parody the *sentimentality* of his favourite romance. I do not pretend to vouch for the correctness of this anecdote.

I met Mesdames Grassini and Catalani together, in the same society, and must acknowledge that the expressive countenance of the former was much more to my fancy than the more regular, perhaps, though certainly less agreeable expression of her rival in fame. I also preferred her bewitching voice to those powerful bursts displayed by Madame Catalani, which left no sentiment after them beyond astonishment that human lungs should be formed to resist such incredible exertions.

Madame Grassini shines by her wit, and displays much gracefulness in her truly original manner of

speaking French. Her Italian accent adds an indescribable charm to whatever she relates, and every one would regret her speaking French otherwise than she does.

Having been stopped near Naples by banditti, who proceeded to plunder her, she at first attempted an appeal to their humanity; finding that all was in vain, and that they continued to search every corner of her carriage, "My dear robbers," she said to them, "you may take everything I possess, but do not deprive me, I beseech you, of one thing which I value more than you possibly can; I mean the portrait of our dear *Government*. I care not for the diamonds, but pray leave me the portrait."

They accordingly broke off the mounting of Napoleon's portrait, and restored to her that beloved picture; she related this occurrence, in her foreign accent, as a remarkable anecdote.

I also frequently met Girodet, whose talent was so soon lost to his native country, to which he was no less an honour by his unblemished character, his lively and sparkling wit, and his accomplished education. Having had the good fortune to see him at my own house on terms of the most friendly intimacy, I can attest that I never heard him utter a single word in disparagement of his rivals. He did justice to every one, and discussed their respective merits with perfect impartiality. He dwelt little upon self, still

less upon his own paintings ; but, on the other hand, he delighted to speak of his skill as a violin player. Being passionately fond of music, he had performances at home every Sunday, and acknowledged that nothing could be compared to those concerts in which he pretended to excel every one else.

“ Give me your company some evening,” he said to me with a smile, “ and if you have the courage to remain until the close of the first quartetto, I shall pronounce you to be the most intrepid woman of the age.”

I was told, in fact, that nothing could be more unpleasant than the noise which was kept up for five hours in his study, filled as it was with the valuable paintings of this first-rate violin player. I preferred retaining the character of a coward, and refused to enter Girodet’s residence for any other purpose than that of admiring his productions.

He explained to us to what cause were to be ascribed the very proper criticisms passed upon the dark green colouring of some of his finest paintings. Being seldom pleased with his work, he was constantly intent upon the means of improving it. Being suddenly seized in the dead of the night with the inspiration of genius, he arose, ordered the lustres to be lighted which were suspended from the ceiling of his study, placed upon his head an enormous hat covered with wax candles, and painted for hours together in this

extraordinary costume. This singular fancy should not be censured, when it is recollected that "The Deluge" and "Endymion" were painted in this manner. This diffidence of self which he carried to extremes has exposed him to very serious mortifications, which contributed, it is said, to undermine his health. He never could credit his having reached that degree of perfection which every one discovered in his immortal works, and his life was embittered by the regret he felt at not succeeding to his wishes. What a lesson for painters of second-rate talents, who at every exhibition force upon an unwilling public their wretched productions.

I often met Paër, the celebrated composer, who was at that time the theme of enthusiastic admiration, owing to his talent for composition, his skill in accompanying, and that fund of good nature which always led him to perform unsolicited, though his readiness to please often subjected him to the indiscreet requests of others.

Paër told me that he still continued his visits to the Palace of Malmaison, as the Empress Josephine had requested him to give a series of lessons to the Demoiselles Delieu,* and that their aptitude to learn made the task an entertaining one; he attended them for three hours every Wednesday, and he trusted that

* One of them is now Madame Dubignon, whose talent is universally admired. She is wholly indebted for it to Paër's instructions.

his pupils would soon become as celebrated for their style of singing as for the perfection of their voices.

He deemed it an extraordinary incident in his existence that he had given lessons to the mother of Maria Louisa, had been director of music to the reigning Empress, and still remained the friend of Josephine, who treated him with the most friendly attentions. On leaving St. Cloud he proceeded to Malmaison ; his suavity of manners and witty turn of mind ensured him an equally favourable reception from both Sovereigns. He gave me many details of what was taking place in the household of the Sovereign whose absence I regretted, and I felt sincere pleasure in hearing her praises from the lips of one who could justly appreciate her numerous qualities. Our conversations on the subject were always too soon broken off for our wishes ; it was a source of so much delight to me to speak of Her Majesty that I always took every opportunity of meeting Paër and renewing the conversation. He could perfectly understand my warm attachment, as he entertained the same feeling, and never varied in his conduct towards a Princess no longer in the enjoyment of power, though he was well aware that by such conduct he was not likely to ingratiate himself in Maria Louisa's favour.

There exists no better buffo singer than Paër ; he never fails to set off to advantage those amateurs who

execute with him the compositions of the first-rate masters, for whom he entertains the warmest admiration. A composer is very seldom found thus to promote the works of others, without confining himself to his own compositions. I have always noticed this feature in the character of Paër, who did full justice to the talents of his rivals. He had therefore a just claim to the same liberality from others; instead of which, however, he has constantly been an object of envy; and now the admirers of his original genius, of his melodious songs, are compelled to rest satisfied with having them performed in private societies; for the Italian theatre, which might vary its collection with considerable advantage, by representing "Agnes," "Camilla," "Achilles," etc., persists in only performing those operas which have for the last eight years been exclusively allowed to be represented before a public assembly, often wearied of applauding first-rate singers when repeating airs that have lost the charm of novelty.

Rossini can have no share in those green-room vexations, which are, no doubt, promoted by private feelings of revenge, entertained by persons in subaltern employments. It would be well worthy of him to afford a proof of his being a total stranger to such base intrigues, by exerting his influence in procuring the representation of the operas of Paër, Carafa, Paccini, etc., and enabling the public to form a just

estimate of his character at the same time that they are applauding his splendid musical compositions. Men of inferior talents alone can envy the success of others. This circumstance affords the best pledge that the *gran maestro* will pay some deference to an advice dictated by a predilection for the science which he cultivates with such unrivalled success.*

* M. Paër has composed a grand French opera of which he has hitherto failed to procure a representation, notwithstanding its excellent music. The performance of the principal passages on the occasion of the King dining in public has afforded an opportunity of estimating its merits. It must, however, be acknowledged that an accompaniment of plates, knives and forks is not much calculated to set off so elegant a composition to advantage; and it is painful for the lovers of music to see a man so justly celebrated as M. Paër compelled to resort to such means of drawing public notice to his compositions.

CHAPTER XX.

Piquet of National Guards. — Music of the Staff. — The 30th March, 1814. — Want of Humanity Shewn by the Suburbs towards the Unfortunate French Soldiers. — Honourable Trait of a Surgeon. — Letter Which I Receive. — Entrance of the Allies into Paris. — Cossacks at My Door. — Cruelty of a Russian Officer.

THE intelligence received from the North had the effect of interrupting our social meetings. Scarcely had the rejoicings subsided, which were occasioned by the advance of our armies through an uninterrupted series of successes into the very heart of Moscow, when the dreadful report of the conflagration of that city was confirmed. It was easy to foretell the cruel sufferings to which our soldiers would be exposed; that unexpected disaster compelled those heroes to retreat, who were astonished at meeting with any obstacles to their progress. In Paris every one was in a state of apprehension concerning the fate of some beloved individual who had taken part in the campaign in Russia. Bulletins followed each other in regular succession without calming the general uneasiness; from that moment all amusements were at an end, and the Parisians were plunged in a kind

of stupor; the Ministers and the persons attached to the Court continued to give parties in order to assume an air of confidence which their inward sentiments belied, and to deceive the mass of the people whose attention was turned to the depositaries of public authority; but in spite of all their efforts the fatal truth was communicated by private letters, and numberless families in mourning sufficiently attested the losses we had now to deplore.

The year 1813 recalls to my memory an uninterrupted series of personal afflictions and sorrows, of which I shall spare my readers the narrative. I bring them at once to the disastrous period of time when France, overwhelmed by the mass of troops poured in upon her by foreign powers, was subdued after the achievement of so many victories.

I resided at that period in a very distant quarter of Paris. A *piquet* of National Guards had been stationed opposite the door of my house, and it chiefly consisted of men who appeared very ill calculated to repel any attack upon our capital if, as there was reason to apprehend, they should be called upon to defend it against the allied armies. These good people were carousing, drinking, and singing with the greatest cheerfulness, and went their rounds with a zeal for which they certainly deserved praise, since they checked every appearance of commotion in Paris, which was at that time nearly destitute of regular

troops ; but their arms were in such wretched condition that, a chimney having caught fire, there was found the greatest difficulty in procuring a musket that could be fired into the pipe.*

The nearer the allies approached the capital the greater was our uneasiness, in spite of the assurances repeatedly given in the newspapers, with a view of satisfying the inhabitants that measures were taken to repel the enemy. The National Guards daily protested their readiness to die, or achieve the liberation of their country, and we accordingly felt convinced that the Emperor had taken measures for rushing upon the enemy at the very moment they should deem themselves confident of victory. We had for so many years been habituated to Napoleon's success that a doubt on the present occasion would almost have partaken of ingratitude.

We were awakened on the 30th of March by the dreadful reports of cannon roaring near the heights of

* With a view to avoid being called upon to mount guard, the most celebrated musicians of the capital enlisted in the band of the staff, in which Méhul, Cherubini, Berton, and Paër held the rank of captains. Nicolo was the clarionet, Boyeldieu the Turkish crescent, Nadermann the long drum, Tulou the fife, etc. These highly talented men seemed to vie with each other in beating or blowing their instruments, and kept up a most dreadful uproar. Any one hearing those discordant sounds could never have supposed that the different parts were confided to the first-rate musical talents. It was a source of enjoyment to them to be called upon to do duty. I have heard them rehearsing on the *serpent* with indefatigable zeal. This gave me an absolute horror of that instrument, which, moreover, recalls to mind one of the most disastrous periods of French history.

St. Chaumont, at a short distance from the house in which I resided. Unable to contain myself, I grasped in my arms my son, who was fast asleep in his cradle, and in great agitation of mind rushed into the street to inquire the news. The inhabitants, with pale and dejected countenances, questioned the National Guards, who were supposed to be better informed, and who still maintained their wonted composure.

“King Joseph is at Montmartre; he has just sent us word that everything was going on well; the Cossacks had been driven back by the troops which occupied the height. The pupils of the Polytechnic School have offered to serve the artillery; their ardour will stimulate our soldiers to fresh exertions, and this defence will afford Napoleon time to come to our relief. As soon as he makes his appearance we will be saved, consequently, you need be under no apprehension.” These words were followed by loud cries of “Long live the Emperor!”

Some hours afterwards a few howitzers fell into the street; the National Guards hastened to quit their post. They even threw their sentry-box into a well and fled to their respective homes for the purpose of calming the fears of their families and protecting their property from plunder.

Frightened beyond measure at being so near the scene of action, I determined to solicit an asylum from some of our friends in the Faubourg Saint-

Germain. I cautioned the servant not to refuse anything to the enemy, who would, no doubt, commence their measures of violence by the suburbs. I left the keys of every place after me, being satisfied that the less resistance was offered to them, the less mischief they would attempt, and I started off on foot with a heavy heart, dressed in a nightgown and nightcap, and without reflecting that I was going to cross the whole of Paris in this trim, with a child in my arms, who appeared delighted at the perpetual motion around him. In taking leave of a spot where I had enjoyed some happiness, and which I expected to find on my return a complete scene of desolation, I wept bitterly. My child attempted to wipe away my tears with his little hands. Finding his efforts were in vain, he joined his sobs to mine, and exclaimed :

“Mamma, God is just; He will kill the wicked, and our good soldiers will beat those mischievous Cosacks who *eat little children*.” *

Just as he was finishing the phrase, we reached the Rue de Rochechouard, where a most appalling spectacle met our sight. Our ill-fated army was reëntering Paris. The venerable countenances of the veteran soldiers bore the stamp of deepest despair. Wounded and exhausted with fatigue, they dropped from their horses and implored a morsel of bread

* Those words were to be found in many proclamations of that period.

and a glass of water. Will it be believed that some women were found to refuse them that trifling relief, and to close their doors upon them? These heroes, who were just betrayed by fortune, failed to awaken the common feelings of humanity, and their very countrymen were instrumental in heightening the bitterness of their defeat.

I now regretted, for the first time, having left home with so much precipitancy; a few pieces of coin would have then appeared to me a perfect treasure, but I had only tears to offer to misfortune; at all events, I was unsparing of them. A poor cavalry soldier lay exhausted upon the ground owing to the loss of blood which was flowing in torrents from a deep wound; his white cloak was covered with gore. Hitherto, my excessive weakness of nerves made it impossible for me to bear the sight of a wound without fainting. At this moment, on the contrary, I felt animated with unusual strength; I knelt down near the wounded man, removed the handkerchief from my son's neck in order to prepare a bandage; I desired the poor child, who was trembling like a leaf, to hold up the soldier's bare arm, which was cut open in many places, and I was on the point of dressing the wound to the best of my power, when a man of a certain age laid hold of the handkerchief I was about to use, saying, in a rough tone of voice, "You do not go about it properly; I shall do it better.

This is my province." He immediately cut off the sleeve, laid a bandage over the wounds, made my *protégé* swallow a few drops of spirituous liquor, thrust a piece of gold into his pocket, and disappeared as quickly as he had accosted us, with the intention, no doubt, of bestowing his welcome assistance in another quarter. The dragoon opened his eyes, thanked me with a look for the compassion I had shewn to him, and was placed by an officer's orders in a cart which was to convey him to the hospital.

I regret not having it in my power to give a clearer description of the surgeon I have just mentioned. I was too much agitated to ask him his name, and from the abrupt manner in which he left us, when his assistance was no longer necessary, I am confident that he would have refused to give his name. He was satisfied with doing good without seeking to reap the reward of a meritorious action. His example operated a change in the conduct of many of the inhabitants who witnessed his compassionate benevolence, and previously to quitting such a scene of horror, I had the consolation to find that relief and attention had already been bestowed to several soldiers.

I was scarcely able to support myself through fatigue and emotion; fortunately, I met a cabriolet which took me to my friends; I arrived there in a

condition which it would be impossible to describe, and so much frightened that I did not notice the calm that pervaded that part of the metropolis. I was as little struck with the composure of the worthy family of whom I came to solicit an asylum. "What can have happened to you?" asked three of the daughters at once; "you have stains of blood on your petticoat, on your nightgown, on your hands; you are extremely pale; pray tell us what has happened to you?" I listened without hearing what they said, looked without seeing any object, and pressed my child with such violence that they were unable to remove him from my arms. Failing to get any answer from me they asked the infant, who related in a childish but expressive manner the events which had so much terrified his mother. His innocent language informed them that the enemy were at our gates, and a child only three years old announced the bombarding of Paris, the news of which had not yet reached the Rue de Bourbon.

The remainder of my family arrived a few minutes afterwards, and informed us of the prevailing report that a capitulation was about to be signed, that we would, at all events, be provided with details towards the evening, as my servant was to bring me a letter from one of our neighbours, who would positively write to inform me of whatever might transpire.

The whole day was passed in a state of dreadful

uncertainty. Many persons who came to see Madame R—— brought various contradictory reports, each succeeding one more alarming than the first; they only agreed in one point, the defeat of the French; this was quite enough to justify the state of despair into which we were thrown.

I received, at last, about eight o'clock, the following note from my obliging neighbour, which I copy without any alteration:

“There is no probability, madame, that Paris will be given up to plunder; everything is calm around us. It is asserted that the Duc de Raguse has signed an advantageous capitulation with the allied Sovereigns; Montmartre is covered with their troops; we see their fires and hear their *houras*. They have sent to ask for fiddlers, in order that they might enjoy a dance; they pay for everything, and it is said that they are enjoined the most strict discipline, under pain of the severest punishment. There are twenty-five Cossacks stretched on the ground before your door. M. de Fontvanne, who came to-night to inquire after your health, accidentally struck against some of them; they quietly moved out of the way. A cannon has been placed at each end of the street, and pointed towards the city, in order to intimidate the people; the latter are endeavouring to recover from the intense alarm to which they had been a prey. It is also said that forty thousand men are to enter Paris to-morrow morning, with the Emperor Alexander at their head. I repeat to you, madame, that all is quiet; your servants take proper care of your house, which you will find in the same condition in which you left it. Return to-morrow to your friends, who

can well account for your maternal apprehensions, which are now happily unfounded. My wife has already returned, and expects to see you.

"Paris, 30th March, 1814, at night."

This letter calmed our fears, and we accordingly resolved to return to the suburbs on the following morning.

We took leave of the respectable family who still wanted to retain us, and, stepping into a *fiacre*, we proceeded through the Rue Montmartre to the Rue de Rochechouard, now become as quiet as it was animated and bustling from the march of our army on the preceding day. We experienced a very painful emotion in reaching the boulevards, where we saw an irregular Cossack soldier with a frightful countenance coming towards us at the top of his speed, and in an unintelligible language forbidding us to proceed any further. Our coachman, unable to make out his meaning, wanted to continue his journey; but a long lance pointed at his body gave him clearly to understand that he could not be permitted to do so; he accordingly stopped. The Russian army was filing off; it was in excellent condition; every cap was ornamented with a green branch, and each soldier wore a white scarf round his left arm in token of peace. The windows were lined with elegant women, the alleys crowded, and joyful acclamations were heard in places where nothing but lamentations

should have been uttered ; for, in short, the now polished steel of those conquerors, who were applauded with such enthusiasm, had perhaps destroyed the brothers, the husbands, the sons of those admirers of a passing occurrence !

The Emperor Alexander was no doubt entitled to great praise for the character he had displayed, and the protection he had granted to the vanquished ; but a contrary conduct on his part would have tarnished his victory, and that immense population which was following him in so dense a mass might have been driven to revolt by any unkind treatment. It behooved us to applaud in silence the magnanimity of the Sovereign who could check the ardour of his troops so eager after plunder ; but our gratitude towards him should have been confined within doors, and within the bosom of our families, instead of our giving to his entry into the capital of France the character of a triumph of which the people had become the instrument as well as its finest ornament. Distressed at finding the police of our city performed by foreigners, we remained seated in the coach in a state of gloomy silence ; the coachman continued swearing and giving in his energetic language some excellent advice to the Parisians, who rushed like madmen towards the spot they should have been most anxious to avoid.

We saw painters already engaged in effacing the

eagles and bees placed over the shops of the Emperor's tradespeople ; joiners were breaking down with hatchets the signs of a Government which had but recently fallen ; it was not yet known what power was to be worshipped ; but there was no doubt on any one's mind as to the power which was to be destroyed.

The troops had all filed off towards midday ; we were enabled to return home ; several friends were waiting for us, and we learned that the recall of the Bourbons was the general topic of conversation. My parents were very anxious that this report should be confirmed. Twenty years of misfortune gave them some right to look forward to happiness. They would find the reward of their long attachment in again beholding the family for which they had sacrificed everything ; I shared their hopes without venturing to indulge them too freely ; and in the midst of this general confusion, my thoughts were directed to the Empress Josephine. I went in quest of information, and obtained some satisfactory details which will be found in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

Fresh Proof of Benevolence Given by the Empress.— Her Departure from Malmaison for Navarre, towards the End of March, 1814.— Her Carriage Breaks Down.— Her Alarm.— Note from the Emperor.

JOSEPHINE often sought opportunities that might afford her the means of being useful to persons in the greatest distress; delighting to be of service, she afterwards derived enjoyment from the reflection of the happiness she had conferred upon them.

We had now reached the end of March, 1814, a few days previous to her journey to the Palace of Navarre. Happening to be one morning in a pavilion of the Palace of Malmaison, which runs along the road, she saw passing under her window one of those generous women who make a vow to immure themselves in a hospital, for the purpose of consoling the poor and relieving the sick. Josephine beckoned to her to come near.

“Sister, where are you come from at this early hour?”

“From Saint-Germain, madame,” replied the

modest devotee, holding a chaplet of large black beads, which she appeared to be counting with great fervour.

“You have already had a long walk; have you much further to go?”

“I intend to go as far as Paris, though I may possibly stop at Nanterre, because I fear that the step I proposed to take might be unavailing, as I am not acquainted with any one in the direction.”

“What direction? Have you any business to transact with any chief directors?”

“My business relates to our hospital, which is in great want of everything at this moment. I have heard our physicians say that English linens had been seized, and that they were to be distributed amongst the military hospitals by the order of M. Coustard Saint-Lô; I should be very glad to procure a few pieces to convert into sheets for our hospital; our sick are unprovided with any.”

“In so doing, you would perform a very kind act; but you are not acquainted with M. Coustard; if you wish it, I will take charge of your commission for him.”

“Madame, I dare not venture to request you would do so; and yet your recommendation would no doubt have more effect than any application from myself, and you would confer a great favour upon our wounded; we are daily receiving an increase of them.”

"Well, then, sister, you may rely upon it that I will instantly attend to your wishes, and to the wants of the hospital."

The devotee proceeded on her way, penetrated with gratitude towards the amiable unknown who had just shewn her so much kindness; she had scarcely walked on a few steps when she reproached herself with having failed to inquire her name; she turned back, saw Josephine who had remained at the window of the pavilion, and was looking after her.

"Pardon, madame," said the sister, "the feeling of curiosity that brings me back to you; I am anxious to know the name of the lady who is honouring us by her generous protection? I think I can guess it, but—"

"Yes," interrupted the Empress, with a smile of benevolence, "it is poor Josephine . . . but do not mention it to any one."

"Certainly not, madame; we have long been aware that you do not wish your generosity to be made known. Since I am addressing the mother of the afflicted, I no longer fear my being indiscreet in any demand I may make for suffering humanity. We are in great want of lint; if Your Majesty would condescend—"

"I promise that you shall have some; *we will make it ourselves.*"

From that moment the evenings were employed at

Malmaison in making lint, and the Empress yielded to none in activity at this work.

Josephine had been many days without receiving a letter from the Emperor. She anticipated every kind of misfortune, and made the most anxious inquiries of every person coming from Paris; expecting to receive through their means some important information. She asked unconnected questions, gave no reply to those that were asked of herself; her mind was a prey to the deepest agitation, and her face was constantly bathed in tears. When she became acquainted with the preparations which were making by her brother-in-law, Joseph Napoleon, and by the Empress Maria Louisa to proceed to Blois, where it had been determined in the last council that the Regency should be established, she no longer doubted that Paris was threatened with fresh calamities. She resolved to fly without further loss of time; but in her agitation of mind at the dread of being given up to the enemies of Napoleon, she was uncertain as to the choice of a retreat. She at last decided upon taking the road to Navarre.

She precipitately departed on the 29th of March, at eight o'clock in the morning, in cold and rainy weather, after leaving directions for every one of her household to prepare to follow her to the residence of Navarre.

Josephine quitted her favourite residence at Mal-

maison in such a state of despair that her attendants had every difficulty in calming her apprehensions; she had already heard the cry of alarm: "*The Cossacks are coming!*" In fact, their arrival in any village was always a forerunner of its ruin, and of the misery of its wretched inhabitants.

The axletree of Her Majesty's carriage broke down on the high road, at the distance of ten leagues from Malmaison; it became necessary to stop. Whilst the carriage was undergoing repair, Josephine descried in the distance a detachment of hussars, which she mistook for a column of Prussian troops; fancying that those soldiers were sent in pursuit of her, she became so much alarmed that she fled across the fields under the impression that they would force her away with them; but L'Espérance, one of her footmen, having discovered that the detachment wore the uniform of the third regiment of hussars, ran after his mistress and overtook her at the distance of three hundred paces from the road; he found her a prey to the deepest despair and her mind almost bewildered. The journey was, however, resumed, and no unpleasant accident occurred to obstruct it.

Sad and painful must have been the reflections which assailed her as she quitted the threshold of a palace in which she deemed her personal safety in danger.

"Alas," said she, to Madame de Rémusat, who

sat by her side in the carriage, "Bonaparte is, no doubt, ignorant of what is taking place at the gates of Paris; if he is aware of it, his mind must be in a dreadful state of agitation."

It was remarked by her ladies that she no sooner reached Navarre than she courted solitude, and often remained closeted in her apartment for the purpose of reperusing the letters which were carefully locked up in her large travelling desk. One of these was her constant companion; and when she had ceased to read that letter, and had attentively looked at it, she was seen to conceal it in her bosom.*

If the report of the approach of the allied troops found its way to Malmaison, it was no less reëchoed within the precincts of the Palace of Navarre, where every one was lamenting the disasters which had befallen Napoleon. Nevertheless, Josephine had not abandoned all hope; she relied upon the bravery and talents of the Duc de Raguse, to whom the defence of Paris had been confided. Her Majesty's situation grew daily more and more critical; she was at a loss what to apprehend or expect. The persons who com-

* This was the last note written to her by the Emperor from Brienne, in which was the following amongst other passages: ". . . On revisiting this spot, where I passed my youthful days, and contrasting the peaceful condition I then enjoyed with the state of terror and agitation to which my mind is now a prey, often have I addressed myself in these words: 'I have sought death in numberless engagements; I can no longer dread its approach; I should now hail it as a boon . . .; nevertheless, I could still wish to see Josephine once more!'"

posed her suite were at last under the necessity of acquainting her that the capital had surrendered, that the three Monarchs had made their public entry into it, and that Napoleon had retreated to Fontainebleau.*

On learning the dreadful catastrophe which had just determined the future existence of the Emperor, Josephine fell ill; a deep silence was maintained in her presence; her ladies, with pale and alarmed countenances, appeared to give way to grief and dejection. Gradually reviving from her state of stupor, and recalling her strength of mind, —

“It is not fitting that I should remain in this

* The following letter was written to her by Napoleon from that town:

“TO THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE, AT MALMAISON.

“Fontainebleau, 16th April, 1814.

“MY DEAR JOSEPHINE, — I wrote to you on the 8th instant (it was on Friday), you perhaps have not received my letter; fighting was still going on, it is possible that it may have been stopped on its way; the communications must now be reestablished. My determination is taken; I have no doubt of this note coming to your hands. I do not repeat what I have already told you; I then complained of my situation, I now rejoice at it, my mind and attention are relieved from an enormous weight; my downfall is great, but it is at least said to be productive of good. In my retreat I intend to substitute the pen for the sword. The history of my reign will gratify the cravings of curiosity; hitherto I have only been seen in profile; I will now shew myself in full to the world. What facts have I not to disclose! How many men are incorrectly estimated! I have heaped favours upon a countless number of wretches! what have they latterly done for me? They have all betrayed me, one and all, save and except the excellent Eugène, so worthy of you and of me. May he ever enjoy happiness under a Sovereign fully competent to appreciate the feelings of nature and of honour! Adieu, my dear Josephine; follow my example and be resigned. Never dismiss from your recollection one who has never forgotten, and will never forget you. Farewell, Josephine. — NAPOLEON.

“P. S. — I expect to hear from you when I shall have reached the Island of Elba. I am far from being in good health.”

place," exclaimed Josephine; "my presence is called for near the Emperor, I ought to fulfil a duty which belonged much more to Maria Louisa than to me; the Emperor is alone and deserted . . . well, then, I will remain true to him. It was only whilst he was in the enjoyment of happiness that I could remain separated from him. I am quite certain that at this moment he expects me."

Tears now rushed from her eyes, and were a seasonable relief to a heart oppressed by such bitter recollections and cares.

"Nevertheless," said Josephine to M. de Beaumont, "you will remain with me until the allied Sovereigns shall have made me acquainted with their intentions respecting my future fate; I know them sufficiently to be satisfied that they will bestow upon the deserted consort of Napoleon those attentions which she has a right to expect from them."

During her short residence at Navarre she was constantly writing, without taking any kind of relaxation; she generally rode twice a day in the park; in the morning she was always alone, and in the evening had one of her ladies to keep her company. The conversation usually turned upon the political situation of France, and upon Napoleon, of whom she delighted to relate various anecdotes known only to herself; but towards the close of her ride she appeared exhausted by the weight of a concentrated sorrow, and

always concluded the conversation by these words, uttered with a heavy sigh:

“Would that he had heard me!”

A few days after her arrival at Navarre, she received a pressing invitation to yield to the wishes manifested by the allied Sovereigns of seeing her at the Palace of Malmaison. She was affected to tears by these marks of attention to which she was so justly entitled; nevertheless, she hesitated in complying, from an impression that Napoleon's first consort should henceforward remain invisible to every one. The welfare and preservation of her family operated, however, as weighty and powerful considerations, and induced her to quit her retreat and return to do the honours of the Palace of Malmaison.*

* It occurred to the Duc de Berry on reaching Caen that the Empress would naturally be uneasy at the rapid succession of events which were then taking place; and, with a view to calm her apprehensions, he immediately sent to the Palace of Navarre the Comte de Mesnard, his constant attendant during the emigration, with directions to ask Josephine if she desired to be attended by a guard of honour, and to assure her of his unfeigned respect and admiration, and of his readiness to comply with any wish she might express. This proof of the amiable character of a Prince, whose brilliant qualities are still more appreciated since his heroic death, was related to me by my friend, the Comte de Mesnard. M. de la Féronnays envied this gentleman a mission which enabled him to become acquainted with a lady so universally beloved. On arriving within a few leagues of Navarre, M. de Mesnard learnt that Josephine had taken her departure for Malmaison; and he has assured me that he felt the deepest regret at being deprived of the opportunity of acquitting himself of a message which was no less honourable to the personage from whom it emanated than to the lady to whom it was addressed. The Comte de Mesnard, so well known for his devoted attachment to the Duc de Berry, is now first equerry to her Royal Highness *Madame*; it is impossible to

She was greatly affected at revisiting a spot which she had so many motives to delight in. A guard of honour had already been sent to protect her; her property had been respected, and the day after her arrival she found herself, as it were, in the midst of a new Court, embellished by the most celebrated characters in Europe.

fill an important situation with greater zeal, to display a more honourable character, or manners better calculated to justify the selection made by that august Princess.

CHAPTER XXII.

Entry of Comte d'Artois into Paris. — Enthusiasm Excited by That Event. — Subsequent Entry of Louis XVIII. and of Madame Duchesse d'Angoulême. — Reflections on This Subject. — The Old Guard. — Theatrical Representation Attended by the Royal Family. — The Emperor Alexander. — The King of Prussia. — The Emperor of Austria. — Anecdotes Respecting the Emperor Alexander. — He Visits the Théâtre Français in Company with the King of Prussia. — Talma. — Act of Injustice Done to Him.

A FEW days after the entrance of the allies, it became known that the family of the Bourbons was again to reign over France; the utmost enthusiasm was manifested towards that family, and the arrival of the Comte d'Artois was anxiously expected; that event took place on the 12th of April; the sun shone in all its brightness as if to harmonize with the splendour of his entry. I shared in the general rejoicing on this occasion; from my earliest infancy I had heard my parents lament the absence of their legitimate Sovereign; the wish of recovering, for my sake a portion of their fortune, which they imagined might be restored to them, was their only inducement for returning to France. As my father had held no situa-

4

Comte d'Artois.

Photo-etching^u after painting by Guilbert.



tion under the Empire, he retained his political opinions unchanged; he rejoiced at the triumphs of France, at its freedom from a foreign yoke, at the glory of our armies; but his affections were all for the Bourbons. They were on the eve of being restored to us; all the distress of a life of exile was forgotten; the fate of those who were dear to me could not fail to be as prosperous as I wished; I was happy by anticipation, since I lived in hope.

A window was procured for my father and myself in the suburb of Saint-Denis, and we thus had an opportunity of admiring the brilliant retinue by which the Comte d'Artois was surrounded, and of enjoying the expression of happiness which beamed on the noble countenance of this Prince, whose affability won every heart. He was attended by the marshals and the most distinguished generals of modern France, and the retinue so composed was a forerunner of that reunion of all parties which we afterwards witnessed.

The Duc de Rovigo asserts in his "Memoirs" that curiosity alone attracted the immense crowds of people who filled the streets through which His Royal Highness was to pass. I cannot but think that M. de Rovigo's sense of gratitude towards his benefactor, and the regret he felt at seeing him so soon forgotten by those whom he had loaded with favours, has led him to take an incorrect view of the scene of the 12th

of April. Gladness beamed upon every countenance. I also think he was mistaken in asserting that the servants in attendance upon the carriages still wore Napoleon's livery; for I recollect my astonishment at finding that, within so short a notice, the royal arms had been painted upon the carriages, and the dresses prepared for the Prince's domestics. They certainly wore a green livery, but this was really the colour of *Monsieur's* livery. His Royal Highness was everywhere received with the loudest acclamations; and the verses sung on the occasion were greeted at all the theatres with unanimous applause. Every one was tired of war, and exhausted, as it were, under the weight of a glory achieved by sacrificing thousands of Frenchmen, destroyed almost before they had reached the years of manhood. All parties sighed after peace; the Bourbons brought it back in their train; they were accordingly loaded with blessings.

The King arrived on the 3d of May, and not in the month of April, as is incorrectly asserted by the Duc de Rovigo. His fine head, whitened before old age could have commenced its inroads, could not fail to inspire the deepest respect. The Duchesse d'Angoulême sat near the Prince, whose sorrows she had assuaged during his exile; her appearance stamped this entry with a character of austere solemnity, which kept the boisterous enthusiasm of the people in check. How was it possible to rejoice when it was

considered that the daughter of a king was entering, as it were, into her father's tomb? that she was about to pass before the prison of her mother; and that from the windows of her apartments she could behold the spot where the greatest crime of the Revolution was perpetrated?

The deep gloom impressed upon her features communicated itself to all those who recollected the numberless sorrows that had oppressed her, which the several places through which she passed could not fail to bring to her recollection. The old man, who had witnessed her sufferings, related them with emotion to his younger neighbours, who were more fortunate than he was, since they had not beheld acts of cruelty the bare recital of which was sufficient to make them shudder with horror. On that occasion, therefore, the signs of public satisfaction were far less boisterous than on the entry of Monsieur into Paris; but the expression of grief painted upon every countenance appeared to me to have afforded as incontrovertible a proof of the people's sentiments as the noisy acclamations of which it had been so lavish during the preceding twenty years. It is a far easier task to excite its admiration and enthusiasm than its tender feelings. The lively imagination of the French is quickly acted upon by deeds of valour; even public rejoicings are not slow in exciting them; but the respect due to misfortune, the veneration which vir-

tue inspires, proceed from the heart; for this reason it is more difficult to kindle those feelings in the breasts of men whose education has hardened and rendered them wholly inaccessible to the gentler emotions which are so readily found in the more susceptible feelings of society in general.

The King's calash was preceded by detachments of the Old Guard; they were greeted with repeated applause, and loud cries of "*Long live the Guards.*" These old and gallant soldiers presented a grave and calm aspect; they regretted the chief who had associated them with his numerous triumphs; there would have been manifest injustice at that time in requiring more from them than respect and submission. No doubt could be entertained that those men would afford proofs of devoted attachment as soon as France should again require their services. The Spanish campaign* has proved the truth of this observation. There, as well as in Italy and in Russia, they forgot everything but their anxiety to distinguish themselves, as if they had still to work their way to fame.

Plays analogous to the occasion were performed at all the theatres, and were received with great rapture.

* The 3d regiment of the Royal Guards, who took possession of the Trocadero, reckoned in its ranks a great number of soldiers of the Old Guard. This was the regiment in which the Prince de Carignano received his epaulets as a grenadier, so justly earned by his distinguished valour.

The King and his family attended those representations; it would be impossible to describe the transports of joy which his presence never failed to excite. Every allusion was laid hold of with an avidity which manifested itself as often as the audience was graced by the presence of the objects of an affection which seemed to have taken the deepest root. Unskilful Ministers effaced in a short time by their conduct the friendly sentiments so generally entertained, and were the real authors of the misfortunes we had to deplore at a later period; but at first the individuals who were most attached to Napoleon were sincere in their wishes for the peaceful reign of the Bourbons. What could, in fact, be more desirable for them than that state of repose to which they had so long been utter strangers! Victory was wearied of lavishing favours on them!

The Emperor Alexander was universally liked, owing to his uniform kindness of disposition, and an affability of manners which sooner finds its way to the hearts of Frenchmen than of any other nation. His moderation procured him the gratitude of a country which he alone was the means of preserving from horrors that could have been viewed in no other light than as just reprisals. He was as much praised for the evil he had prevented as for the good he was doing. The King of Prussia had not the same advantage in point of graceful deportment; his manners

were less free from restraint, he was far less a favourite with the French, and rather appeared as an aide-de-camp of Alexander than as his equal. With regard to the Emperor of Austria, there was something so revolting in his presence in Paris that I should be giving too favourable a picture of the reception he met with were I to say that it was one of mere indifference. If he deemed it impossible to avoid coming to Paris, which his daughter had quitted under circumstances so heartrending, he should at least have made his appearance *incognito*, and not at the hour of noon, and surrounded by a brilliant staff; he was scarcely noticed by the crowd, not a single acclamation was heard, not a hat was taken off. The people forgot that a Sovereign was making his entry, they only saw in him an unnatural father who was taking advantage of the misfortunes of his child. His extraordinary likeness to the Grand Duke of Wurtzburg spares me the necessity of alluding to his outward appearance; no twins ever bore a more striking resemblance to each other. Little was said in society of the occupations of the two last-named Sovereigns; but such was the general esteem entertained for Alexander that the utmost avidity was evinced in courting the acquaintance of those who could furnish details respecting that Monarch; the poor had most solid reasons for liking him, for he distributed numerous alms amongst them.

I was at the Théâtre Français the first time that the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia attended there ; the performances were “ *Iphigénie en Aulide* ” and “ *La Partie de Chasse.* ” The theatre was full to the very top, and contained a great number of elegantly dressed ladies, many of whom wore wreaths of lilies and enormous white cockades ; they had taken care to place themselves in the most conspicuous part of the boxes. It was easy to perceive that they came there rather with the intention of shewing themselves than for the purpose of gratifying their own curiosity. For my part, as I was modestly stationed in the fourth tier of boxes, I only felt a desire of closely observing in what manner the representation would pass off.

The Sovereigns were in the first tier of boxes, the Emperor of Russia on the right, in an open box which was merely guarded by a few young men of rank wearing white scarfs round their arms. The entrance was obstructed by a crowd of ladies ; and some children, carrying their indiscretion still further, entered Their Majesties’ box ; the Emperor kindly embraced some of them. At the moment when the curtain was about to be drawn up, after the performance of some national airs which were greatly applauded, a young man genteelly dressed rushed upon the stage, and affixed to the curtain the royal arms. Loud cries of “ *Long live the King, long live the Bourbons, long life to Alexander,* ” burst forth from every part of the

building. A spread eagle was seen to surmount a box close to the stage, towards which emblem all eyes were attentively directed a few months before. The whole pit rose in a state bordering upon frenzy, and, pointing to the box, cried out, "Down with the *goose!*" This ridiculous expression was followed by a dreadful uproar. The sound part of the public protested against such conduct; a sincere rejoicing at the peace which everything indicated was near at hand; a sentiment of affection for the Bourbons was not incompatible with the determination to oppose the insults attempted to be afforded by a crowd of young madmen to that eagle which so often led our fathers, our brothers, and our children to victory. They persisted in crying, "Down with the *goose!*" after half an hour's uproar, one of the servants of the theatre threw a white veil over that emblem of our glory, which, in fact, ought never to have reappeared, since it afterwards entailed such heavy misfortunes upon us.

The tragedy began. Talma performed the part of Achilles; the pit laid hold of several allusions which were flattering to Alexander, towards whom they turned by a simultaneous movement. His Majesty was frequently compelled to rise and bow to the audience. The King of Prussia appeared at a loss what countenance to assume, as nothing was said that could bear any application to him. As soon as the perform-

ance was over, Talma was called for. After trying for some time the patience of the public, he made his appearance in a frock coat, and was extremely well received. On a sudden several papers were thrown on the stage, which the despotic audience required Talma to read aloud. He hesitated; they insisted; hisses, clamours, stamping of feet and applause followed in rapid succession; the scene was one of absolute confusion; but as soon as Talma shewed signs of withdrawing, the uproar augmented; during a short interval of silence a stentorian voice exclaimed, "*Let Talma read the verses aloud.*" Pale and trembling with agitation, he picked up the paper, and read with emotion some invectives in rhyme against *the usurper*, and praises of the Bourbons. "*Talma, you must cry, 'Long live the King,'*" was distinctly uttered by the same voice.

"Agreed, gentlemen; Long live the King," said Talma, with a feeble accent, as he withdrew behind the curtain.

I am quite at a loss to understand the unrelenting endeavours made on this occasion to humble our celebrated tragic actor. Napoleon had been lavish of his favours to him; his gratitude, therefore, was not only excusable, but a bounden duty. He would have been generally blamed had he lost sight of the numerous services rendered to him; there was, consequently, great cruelty in requiring that he should read to the

audience the imprecations showered upon a man who should have been spared from abuse since he was deserted by fortune. In the days of the Revolution persecutions of this nature were inflicted upon several actors ; but the latter had participated in the horrid crimes which were then committed ; they had been seen to rejoice at the executions which followed each other in rapid succession ; it was strictly just, therefore, that they should be punished in such a manner as would prove to them that their conduct was well known, and that they should be compelled to make a public apology for it ; with respect to Talma, however, his only fault was that he retained and openly avowed an enthusiastic attachment which every one else was now anxious to disclaim. Though the cases were widely different, there was no difference in the punishment.

The "*Partie de Chasse*" was performed in exquisite style by Mdllles. Mars and Leverd, with Michot and Fleuri to second them. No expressions were suffered to escape that bore the slightest reference to the occurrences of the day, and Alexander was always the first to point them out to public attention. He appeared to appreciate the merit of the comedians, and is reported to have sent very elegant presents to some of them. He retired from the theatre at a very late hour, was followed by all the ladies as far as his carriage, and was loaded with the blessings of the crowd that had collected around him.

That evening was unquestionably the most remarkable and gratifying to his feelings of any he ever passed in Paris. At other times he merely came in for his share of those applauses which on the present occasion were exclusively intended for himself.

M. de M—— had frequently met him previous to his arrival in Paris. We requested that he would relate to us some anecdotes he had gathered respecting that Monarch; and he obligingly complied with our wishes.

“I was at Aix-la-Chapelle,” said this gentleman, “at the period of the Congress. The Emperor Alexander frequently took an early walk in the vicinity of the town. I once met him in the charming wood called *Pauline’s Wood*, a favourite promenade of Princess Borghèse, the youngest sister of Napoleon, when she came to drink the waters of Aix-la-Chapelle.

“Alexander was dressed in a plain green surtout. After accosting me in a familiar manner, he inquired the name of the owner of a large, newly repaired building at a short distance from the wood, which he pointed out with his switch. I gratified his curiosity by informing him that it was a spinning manufactory, and that Brouhoum was the name of the owner, with whom I was personally acquainted. He then asked whether it would be possible for him to obtain a view of that establishment, adding that *he was the Emperor*

of *Russia's aide-de-camp*. I offered to take him there, and he eagerly accepted my proposal.

“As we approached the building we met M. Brouhoum, and on behalf of the stranger who accompanied me I asked permission to see his establishment. M. Brouhoum, who knew as well as I did that the stranger was no less a personage than the Emperor Alexander, respected his *incognito*, and conducted us to his spinning manufactory, of which he shewed us every workshop in regular succession ; this visit took up two hours of our time.

“M. Brouhoum told us with a smile that if he were not apprehensive lest His Majesty's aide-de-camp might be called away by his duty to his Sovereign, he would *unceremoniously* offer us a breakfast. The Emperor replied that he was perfectly free, and, laying hold of M. Brouhoum's arm, assured him that he would do justice to the proffered breakfast, which he accepted with all his heart ; absolutely insisting, however, that nothing should be added on his account. We accordingly partook of a plain breakfast of coffee, butter, and fresh eggs, in dispatching which the Emperor gave the best evidence of his excellent appetite.

“The walls of the breakfasting apartment were lined with engravings which portrayed many of Napoleon's victories. One of those pictures represented his interview with Alexander on the Niemen,

and particularly attracted the Emperor's notice. After having considered it for a few moments :

“ ‘Very correct, very correct indeed,’ he said; ‘why did he not do the same on the Loire in 1815, instead of surrendering himself to the English? He might have done it; and had he resorted to that course there is no knowing . . . he might yet, perhaps, have been Emperor of the French.’

“ ‘But the House of Bourbon,’ observed M. Brouhous.

“ ‘The House of Bourbon!’ quickly replied the Emperor; ‘very true, it was then an obstacle in the way; I had quite forgotten it . . . but,’ he instantly resumed, ‘he might have done it in 1814, when the Bourbons had not yet anything to do with the war.’

“ On taking leave of M. Brouhous, the Emperor cordially thanked him for his friendly reception. As he crossed the courtyard, on his way back to town, he was met by a dozen workmen, who recognized and greeted him with thrice repeated acclamations of ‘*Long live the Emperor!*’ Alexander appeared disappointed by these applauses, and, as if much pressed for time, made his escape from them as fast as possible.

“ Two hours afterwards M. de Czernischeff, one of his aides-de-camp, came to the manufactory with a letter from the Emperor to M. Brouhous, accompanied by a magnificent ring, together with an elegant

snuff-box for myself, and a hundred ducats for distribution amongst the workmen.*

“The Emperor’s mode of living at Aix-la-Chapelle was exceedingly plain; his retinue was far from numerous. When he did not pay his visits on foot, and unaccompanied, as he often did to my knowledge, he hired a carriage, the driver of which, be it said by the way, was always drunk; this was no doubt the reason of his driving the Emperor in the narrowest streets of the town at a most rapid rate. Complaints against the coachman had often reached the Emperor, although Alexander constantly requested him to drive with greater caution.

“On one occasion, as he was taking the Emperor through the Rue Saint-Aldebert, he got entangled with and upset a cabriolet. Indignant at this occurrence, the Emperor rushed out of the carriage, pulled the man down from his seat, and compelled him to lead his horses by the bridle, in order to avoid any further accident.

“On another occasion, having met the King of Prussia in the *Rue des Trois Rois*, perhaps the narrowest street in Aix-la-Chapelle, since two carriages cannot move abreast in it, Alexander instantly

* I have been assured that in the early part of April, 1814, the Emperor Alexander called on M. J. Lafitte, who had never seen His Majesty, and addressed him in these words: “I have been anxious, sir, to become acquainted with the most celebrated and the most benevolent banker in Paris, and I come to ask a breakfast of him.”

stepped out of his own, and going up to the King's carriage :

“ ‘Come, my brother,’ said he, ‘let us give way with a good grace, and leave our coachmen to extricate themselves.’

“ So saying, he laid hold of the King's arm. His Majesty having hastened, on his part, to accost the Emperor, the Princes walked away to the great astonishment of every beholder.

“ At another time, Alexander having lost his way in the *Quartier-Vieux*, came up to the stall of a woman who sold vegetables, and asked her if she would direct him to the residence of the Emperor Alexander.

“ ‘Do you really think we are as stupid as you Russians?’ she replied, in her energetic language; ‘why, you are the Emperor, and you do not know where you live!’ . . . He laughed heartily at this rebuke, gave her some gold, and related the anecdote in my presence.”

We thanked M. de M—— for these details, with which he had so obligingly furnished us. I wrote down at night what I had heard, and I now transfer them to these Memoirs.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Affection of the Empress for Her Brother-in-law, M. de Beauharnais.—Letter written by Him to the President of the Convention.—M. Desèze.—Autograph Letters of Their Majesties Louis XVIII. and Charles X.—M. de Lakerswerth.—M. de Coli a Field-Marshal in the Austrian Service.—Anecdote Concerning a Basket.—Madame de Lavalette.

I HAVE already mentioned that the Empress entertained a strong attachment for her brother-in-law, M. François de Beauharnais, of whom she often spoke in those terms of praise so justly due to his elevated character. In the year 1792 he wrote the subjoined letter to the President of the National Convention, after the publication of the decree which gave permission for any Frenchman to undertake the defence of Louis XVI. Josephine had preserved that paper as a document which reflected high honour upon the family ; she obligingly confided it to my mother, and I experience the sincerest pleasure in transcribing in this place the copy which I took of it at the time.

So many traits of baseness, ingratitude, cowardice, and treachery have been collected and published for

the last thirty years, that nothing can equal my satisfaction at recording an act of devoted attachment and genuine loyalty. It would have remained buried in oblivion, owing to the modesty of M. de Beauharnais, if I had not fortunately had it in my power to lay it before the public; he displays as much care and anxiety in concealing his good actions as in bringing those of others to light; this is the highest compliment that can be paid to him.

LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION BY FRANÇOIS, MARQUIS DE BEAUHARNAIS, DEPUTED TO THE STATES-GENERAL BY THE ORDER OF THE NOBILITY IN PARIS.

“MONSIEUR,—I learn, in common with all Europe astonished at this new atrocity, that an attempt is to be made against the sacred person of the King by those who presume to pronounce judgment upon His Majesty. I claim the right to defend him, to plead the cause of my master, of my Sovereign, of the most virtuous man of his kingdom.

“You will be pleased to communicate my wish to the Convention, and to acquaint me with its answer.

“I refrain from pointing out in this letter the means of defence I intend to adopt; I shall not demonstrate in this place the precise political right that nations may exercise over their Sovereigns; and reciprocally, what is the duty of Sovereigns towards their subjects.

“My appeal will be far less directed to a factious and usurping assembly, which has arrogated to itself every power, than to the whole French nation, when I shall detail facts that will make known to it, on the one hand, the crimes of those

zealous partizans of a liberty which is destructive of all social order; and, on the other, the virtues of Louis XVI., of that unfortunate Monarch who was so justly entitled to the respect of his subjects, but who now is the bitter sport of fortune, and, perhaps guilty of too benevolent a disposition, has found himself by turns persecuted, betrayed, and, at last, basely abandoned, by those whom he had loaded with favours.

“Before that Public Tribunal I will unveil the guilty machinations of those political traitors who have seized upon the reigns of Government under pretence of the public welfare, in order the more effectually to conceal their ambitious projects.

“I will name the chief criminals, and display to public view the crooked folds of *a policy so fraught with danger to every Government.*

“The National Convention will have no hesitation in believing that I am ambitious of the signal honour of defending my King, since I can submit to petition rebels, and do not blush to entreat their inquisitorial tribunal to grant me so special a favour.

“The anarchy in which my unhappy country is plunged since the commencement of the Revolution, the crimes by which a part of the French nation has disgraced itself, its attempts against the Royal Family, the persecutions directed against the ministers of religion, and, above all, the anxiety so natural in a loyal subject of saving his King and extricating him from the grasp of his executioners, such are the motives which have made me quit my native land. This spontaneous feeling of self-devotion, which I share in common with a great number of my virtuous countrymen, is a title which I prize beyond all others. I request you, monsieur, to make the Assembly acquainted with my sentiments.

“After having opposed by every means in my power the

destruction of the monarchy, *in conjunction with that minority of the National Assembly to which I glory in having constantly adhered*, I have now come to join the standard of honour, and to die a soldier's death, after having solemnly protested against that constitution which you had sworn to maintain, and have since destroyed by your own authority.

"I expect from you, monsieur, a plain and precise answer; shelter your crimes under the semblance of that justice which I appeal to, and which every accused has a right to expect.

"If you forget *that Louis XVI. is a King*, recollect that he is a man; shew your impartiality in a cause which interests every Government, engages the attention of all Europe, who suspends her judgment on the issue, and the details of which will be carefully collected by posterity.

"I have the honour to be,

"FRANÇOIS, MARQUIS DE BEAUHARNAIS,

"Deputed to the States-General by the Order of the Nobility in Paris, and Assistant Adjutant-General in the Army of Condé."

Two other men * whose names, forever celebrated, will be handed down to the admiration and respect of after ages, obtained the favour which had been solicited with so much firmness and courage by M. de Beauharnais; but he has no less acquired a lasting claim to the esteem of those who entertain an abhorrence for the atrocious crime he endeavoured to prevent. Death was likely to be the only reward of his noble action! Nothing short of a miracle could have preserved M. Desèze from the vengeance of the savage wretches who beheld in his conduct the severest criti-

* M. Desèze and the virtuous Malesherbes.

cism upon their own. He has escaped the scaffold which threatened him and has witnessed the Restoration! Loaded with the favours of his Sovereign and of the daughter of Louis XVI., he has enjoyed the happiness to which he was so justly entitled, whilst M. de Beauharnais, who displayed no less self-devotion than he did, lives wholly forgotten by the Court, exclusively engaged in the education of his children, and delighting in recollections which cannot fail to brighten the remainder of his existence.*

Two autograph letters from Their Majesties Louis XVIII. and Charles X. sufficiently attest the high value set upon M. de Beauharnais's services. Nevertheless, he enjoys no pension as a general officer, although he was wounded on two occasions at the army of Condé and in the Vendée; neither does he receive any pension as Ambassador in Italy and in Spain; I believe him to be the only exception to the rule acted upon in cases of this nature.

The brother-in-law of the Empress Josephine is a character too much within the domain of history not to impose upon me the obligation of assigning to him a place in the picture I have attempted to sketch of every object in any way connected with her. The following particulars, for which I am indebted to a friend upon whom I place every reliance, will afford

* M. de Beauharnais was one of the hostages of Louis XVI. He was entrusted, as well as the late M. Malouet, with the joint commission of defending him at the Constituent Assembly.

a better description of the Marquis de Beauharnais than the most glowing colours which the esteem I entertain for his splendid qualities might suggest to me.

Appointed in 1804 Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from France to Her Majesty the Queen Regent of Etruria (Maria Louisa of Bourbon, sister of Ferdinand VII., King of Spain), he acquitted himself of that difficult mission in as honourable a manner as he did every other duty.

France was at war with the principal powers of Europe. M. de Beauharnais could not receive in an official character any of his colleagues, the foreign Ambassadors or Ministers, with the exception of M. Morrozo, the Pope's nuncio, who was wholly devoted to Austria. His instructions were an obstacle to his indulging in his benevolent disposition, which inclined him to live in perfect harmony with the diplomatic body. He had received the imperative order to compel the Swedish Minister in Tuscany, Comte de Lakerswerth, to quit that Court, and likewise to take precedence over the Spanish Minister.

M. de Lakerswerth was living on terms of friendship with M. de Beauharnais, who, by dint of politeness and attentions, succeeded in the object of his instructions. The Swedish Minister quitted Florence; the French Minister took precedence over the Spanish, in spite of the Queen and of the Minister, M. de Labra-

dor, without, however, involving himself in any angry discussions.

After a residence of four months in Tuscany, M. de Beauharnais became all-powerful with the Queen Regent, from the natural ascendancy of his character, which was frank without rudeness, polished without flattery, witty without pretensions, and of the safest social intercourse. Her Majesty's Ministers never resorted to any important step without previously consulting the French Minister.*

* On his departure from Florence, the Queen Regent presented him with her portrait, and a gold medal which had been struck by Her Majesty's orders, as a testimonial of her satisfaction; on one side were engraved the following words: "*The King and the Queen Regent to His Excellency the Marquis F. de Beauharnais*;" on the other, a crown of laurels, with these words: "*A token of sincere esteem.*" On the accession of Ferdinand VII. to the throne of Spain, M. de Beauharnais received from His Majesty the Grand Cross of the Order of Charles III., which confers the privilege of admission to the King's apartments and private closet; he received at the same time the King's portrait set in diamonds, with an autograph letter addressed "*To our dear and valued friend, the Marquis François de Beauharnais.*" M. de Beauharnais is also decorated with the Orders of Saint Louis, of the Legion of Honour, of Saint John of Jerusalem, and with the Grand Cross of the Iron Crown of Austria. The 5th article of the Regulations of the Chamber of Peers enacts that when a peer of France dies without *male issue*, the King reserves to himself the right of naming for his successor any member of the family bearing his name, whom he may think proper to select. Comte de Beauharnais, formerly *chevalier d'honneur* of the Empress Maria Louisa, having died some years ago without leaving any children, the Marquis de Beauharnais is the only surviving member of the family bearing that name, independently of his two grandnephews, Ducs de Leuchtenberg, sons of the late Prince Eugène. It must therefore be matter of astonishment that His Majesty should not have granted the peerage to a man who bears a name forever celebrated, and who by his talents and his devoted attachment was worthy of holding a place in the hereditary chamber.

For the accuracy of the following anecdote on this subject I am enabled to vouch, it having been communicated to me by one of the diplomatic body.

The old Field-Marshal Coli, Austrian Minister at Florence, was one of the most formidable adversaries M. de Beauharnais had to contend with. M. de Coli was as skilful a negotiator as he was an experienced general. The Tuscan territory was at this time surrounded by Austrian troops, whilst France had only a few thousand men at Leghorn under the command of Général Comte Verdier.

One of those men for whom money is everything, and who sacrifice their honour and conscience for a handful of gold, a spy of General Clark, M. de Beauharnais's predecessor at Florence, solicited a private interview with the latter Minister. M. de Beauharnais ordered the stranger to be introduced, who brought him a basket containing, as he asserted, very important papers from Vienna for M. de Coli, who always dreaded availing himself of the ordinary channels of communication when he expected dispatches of paramount importance.

Averse to everything that bore the character of illegality and unfairness, M. de Beauharnais rewarded the spy, dismissed him from his presence, and kept the basket. So far, however, from availing himself of the facility thus afforded him for perusing the papers that had fallen into his hands, he sent his

private secretary to M. de Coli with the basket in question, and with directions to inform him that it came to M. de Beauharnais by perfidious means ; that if nations were at war with each other, this was not the case between private individuals. He therefore lost no time in surrendering what he had received through a treacherous channel. At the same time he begged to apprise him that he was fully aware of the contents of the basket, though it had not even been untied, as he felt reluctance to employ discreditable means for discovering the secrets of a Minister for whom he entertained a personal esteem.

Grateful for an act of generosity which he was fully competent to appreciate, the Field-Marshal became from that moment the warmest friend of M. de Beauharnais, to the great astonishment of the Tuscans, who were never made acquainted with the motives for so sudden a change.

Appointed Ambassador to Spain previously to the abdication of Charles IV., M. de Beauharnais vainly endeavoured in his correspondence to make Napoleon acquainted with the true spirit of the Spanish nation. It was obstinately supposed that he was mistaken in his opinion, and the Imperial Cabinet acted in direct opposition to the advice of the Ambassador, who was idolized by a people the least disposed of any in favour of the French.

France was at war with Prussia during the period

in question, and accordingly M. de Beauharnais could hold no intercourse with the *chargé d'affairs* of a Court at variance with his own. He learned from one of his colleagues, who was on terms of intimacy with M. Henri, the Prussian *chargé d'affairs*, that the latter, having failed to receive his regular allowance, was placed in difficult circumstances, and unable to provide for the wants of his wife and two daughters, who resided with him at Madrid.

M. de Beauharnais repaired one evening to Madame Henri's residence, addressed his inquiries to her in language indicative of so much sincerity, and made such obliging offers of service, that he succeeded in eliciting the acknowledgment that she was destitute of the common necessities of life. Deeply affected at this circumstance, M. de Beauharnais issued orders to a person of his household, upon whom he could place every reliance, that he should provide Madame Henri with whatever she might stand in need of. For the space of two months that worthy family was supported by M. de Beauharnais's bounty.

After the insurrection of Aranjuez, which was aimed at the Prince of the Peace and his relatives, several of their houses were plundered, demolished, or set on fire. The Marquis of Branciforte, a Spanish grandee, a brother-in-law of the Prince of the Peace, and a sworn enemy of the French, whom he had severely persecuted during the period of his vice-royalty in Mexico, enter-

taining apprehensions for his life and for the safety of his family, sent to request that the French Ambassador would come to his assistance, and to assure him that His Excellency's protection could alone save him from the most dreadful fate. Forgetting the injuries inflicted by the Marquis of Branciforte upon the French, and exclusively intent upon the means of relieving him, M. de Beauharnais sent his carriage with his secretary, and brought to the Palace of the French Legation the whole of that family in the deepest agitation. M. de Branciforte came to throw himself at the feet of his benefactor, who, grieved at so unbecoming an act, hastened to raise him from the ground, saying:

"I am well aware of all you have done against the French; you will now learn in what manner they take their revenge. Compose yourself, monsieur; I pledge you my word that no harm shall be done to you."

Splendid apartments were assigned to his family, who were waited on by the servants of the embassy with the same attention as the Ambassador himself. They remained with M. de Beauharnais until the alarm had completely subsided. Their palace, however, was ransacked and plundered of everything.

As soon as the people learned that the sister and brother-in-law of the Prince of the Peace had fled for shelter to the palace of the French Ambassador, they repaired thither in a body and clamorously demanded

the surrender of those individuals, whom they already looked upon as their prey. Justly relying on the affection of the Spaniards, M. de Beauharnais left the palace unaccompanied, and went up to the mob eager for plunder, and exasperated at having missed a valuable prize. .

“My friends,” said he, “the Marquis of Branciforte is under my roof; he has thrown himself upon my protection; I am bound to give him hospitality, notwithstanding the injuries he has inflicted upon my countrymen. I appeal, worthy Spaniards, to your own hearts; would you in my place betray him? I leave you to decide the question.”

“Certainly not,” was the immediate and unanimous reply. “*Long life to His Excellency Beauharnais,*” exclaimed with one voice these infuriated men, hurrying away at the same time to spread fire and desolation in other quarters. Such traits stand in need of no commentary, and sufficiently describe M. de Beauharnais’s character.

Recalled from his embassy whilst the Emperor was at the Palace of Marac, he was unable to obtain an audience on his arrival. M. Champagny, Duc de Cadore, received him with some embarrassment when he asked if the Emperor would consent to see him.

“His Majesty is displeased at your obstinacy in thwarting his views; you are aware, sir, that in his first moment of anger he is at times violent; I should,

therefore, recommend your allowing some days to elapse previously to appearing in his presence."

"Monsieur le Duc, I have never dreaded to render an account of my conduct; in this, as in every other circumstance of my life, I am ready to enter into any explanation that may be demanded of me; accordingly, I feel desirous of seeing the Emperor; will he or will he not receive me?"

"Why, . . . he will not."

"Well, then, I will join my family in Paris; be pleased to assure His Majesty that he is deceived in whatever is reported to him concerning Spain. I have not to reproach myself with having employed any spies in my service; nevertheless, I am better informed than any one else of the real wishes of a nation as remarkable for its bravery as for its superstition. Whenever he may be disposed to hear me, I am prepared to state what I know on the subject."

"Excuse me, monsieur; but I am under the necessity of apprising you that the Emperor desires you will repair to Poland (*Pologne*) and not to Paris."

"To Poland, do you say? What can I do in that country; I have no estate in it, and should be a perfect stranger there? You no doubt mean *Sologne*. Eugène has estates in that part of France, where I might take up my abode."

"Well, then, to *Sologne*; be it so."

M. de Beauharnais accordingly proceeded to *Sologne*,

where he remained for a period of *eight years*. His exile only terminated on the return of the Bourbons to France.

During his embassy at Madrid, he had been instructed to make a pompous display; frequently to give diplomatic dinners, fêtes, etc. Not being possessed of any fortune, he was compelled to incur debts, the discharge of which was always promised to him. On his return to France, he applied for the sums which he was bound in honour to reimburse; but was put off from day to day for the space of three years. His patience being at last exhausted at delays which exposed him, in the eyes of his creditors, to unmerited blame, he wrote to the Minister that he was determined to allow an action to be brought against him, and to surrender himself to his creditors. "It would be," added M. de Beauharnais in his letter, "a circumstance as extraordinary as unbecoming, that an Ambassador should be thrown into prison for sums due by the Government." Soon after this he received the 100,000 francs he had so repeatedly demanded.*

A portion of his plate had remained in Madrid; all the rest was plundered *by the French army* on its way back to France. What had been left under the protection of the Spaniards was faithfully restored to him.

* And a pension of 18,000 francs a year, during a period of three years.

Madame de Lavalette, whose act of devoted attachment was the theme of general applause, is the daughter of M. de Beauharnais. His having nourished such noble sentiments in his children is a proof that his kindness as a father does not yield to his gallantry as a soldier, or to his skill as a negotiator; I repeat, therefore, that it is a source of just astonishment that such a man should be forgotten by a Government so well disposed to avail itself of the services of men of merit. I must apologize to M. de Beauharnais for having raised the veil of obscurity under which he has endeavoured to conceal himself from public view. Truth ought sooner or later to be made known, and I feel an unfeigned pleasure in bringing it to light on the present occasion.

CHAPTER XXIV.

M. de Laugeac. — Comte de Mesnard, Aide-de-camp to His Royal Highness the Duc de Berry. — The Duc de Berry. — Général Beauvais. — Madame Beauvais. — Visit Paid by H—— to Malmaison. — The Empress Wishes to Dispose of Her Jewels. — The Emperor Alexander Goes to See Her. — MM. Lecouteulx, de la Woëstine and Jacqueminot. — Général Sébastiani. — His Royal Highness the Duc d'Orléans.

GREAT was our delight at meeting several of our late friends and companions in exile, who had returned with the Princes; amongst others the worthy Comte de Laugeac, always regardless of self, and ready to oblige; and Comte de Mesnard, who was attached to the Duc de Berry in the capacity of his aide-de-camp. Both were on terms of the most intimate friendship with my family, and appeared as happy to see us as we were at again meeting them.

Having learned one morning through the newspapers that M. de Mesnard was to alight at the Tuileries that very day, we immediately proceeded to the palace for the purpose of paying him a visit. His travelling carriage was still unloaded; but in our anxiety to see him we hurried up the staircase with

such rapidity that we elbowed a National Guard who stood in our way, and did not even stop to apologize to him. After the first greeting, we questioned M. de Mesnard respecting the Duc de Berry and his external appearance, of which we could not form the least idea, having been unable to witness his entrance into the capital.

“You must have met him, however,” said M. de Mesnard, “for he was descending from La Feronnay’s apartments.”

“We met no one,” replied my mother, “except a National Guard, who was speaking to a footman.”

“That was the Prince.”

I was then vexed with myself for not taking time to be polite to the National Guard.

A grand dinner was given to the National Guards, whose uniform had been assumed by the Duc de Berry on the occasion. M. de Mesnard, not being provided with his own, was at a loss how to procure immediately the dress he stood in need of. We offered to take him to the Palais Royal; he adopted our suggestion, as also did his colleague, M. de Clermont Lodève, who was in the same predicament. We accordingly took those two gentlemen in our humble carriage to make their first purchases. Whilst we were driving through the streets, they furnished us with a variety of anecdotes respecting the Duc de Berry, which were illustrative of their attachment and of the merits of



that excellent Prince, who was never justly appreciated until his sublime death revealed to the world the numberless virtues and qualities which adorned him. All were agreed as to his extraordinary bravery, his excellent heart, his cultivated mind, his taste for the fine arts, which he sought every means to promote; but his violence of temper was greatly exaggerated by those who were on the lookout for a pretext to criticise all his actions. His protracted and deep misfortunes had irritated a mind naturally remarkable for its quickness and vivacity; and he gave a free vent to this disposition without reflecting that in resuming the rank which belonged to him he was bound to set the example to the numerous persons under his orders. He soon discovered the danger of affording a handle to a spirit of malevolence, ever ready to take advantage of a Prince's faults. He moderated his temper, and in the latter part of his life it was impossible to quote any trait in his character that did not redound to his credit.

I had for my neighbour at this period Général Beauvais, a highly talented man, in whose conversation I delighted; he led a very retired life in a distant quarter of Paris; for my part, I rarely quitted it except for the purpose of repairing to some evening parties which the laws of etiquette require should be attended during winter. Madame Beauvais was an excellent woman and a most fascinating acquaintance.

We were frequently together. Her husband was not sparing of encomiums upon the Princes; he often paid his court to them, and we fancied that his political opinions coincided with our own. He was at that time engaged in the important work of the "Victories and Conquests," which did not seem to us to militate with the sentiments we supposed him to entertain. It is the duty of every good Frenchman to praise his country and to make known the glorious achievements of his fellow countrymen. We, therefore, joined him in admiring the gallant deeds of our warriors, and no discussion ever arose between us that could then afford any proof of the wide difference which existed in our respective sentiments.

I was, also, in habits of intimacy with a man who was devoted to the Empress Josephine. He often conversed with me respecting her; and I felt too deeply interested in what concerned that Princess not to prefer the society of M. H—— to every other company. He told me that in the early part of May, 1814, he went to pay a visit at Malmaison, and had a conversation with Josephine in the gallery of paintings. She expressed herself in terms of displeasure at Napoleon's neglecting to transmit the pension that had been granted to her. The Emperor, however, was deserted by fortune, and Josephine's former affection for him appeared to have returned. She even spoke of selling her jewels in order to supply him with

money. She was highly offended at the insertion in the *Journal des Débats* of the following paragraph :

“The Emperor of Russia proceeded two days ago to the Palace of St. Leu, near Montmorency. His Majesty dined there with Prince Eugène, his mother, and sister.”

“Might they not,” said Josephine, “have spoken of me with a little more respect? Am I to be thus named after my son? Nothing can be more unbecoming. I have a name; I was once seated upon the throne. I have been crowned and anointed; the Emperor Alexander has extended his special protection to me. As soon as he obtained possession of the Bridge of Neuilly, he sent a safeguard to Malmaison. Owing to what reason, therefore, am I simply styled *Prince Eugène’s mother*? This title is, no doubt, dearer to me than any other; but a newspaper writer ought not to forget that I was once his Sovereign.”

She had scarcely uttered these words when the Emperor Alexander was announced. M. H—— drew back, but he attentively watched the illustrious personages, who were at no great distance from him, and communicated to me the observations which he thus had an opportunity of making.

Josephine, with her customary ease and gracefulness of manners, expressed to His Majesty how highly she was flattered by his visits. Alexander replied that he felt happy at paying her that homage of respect.

“I was longing, madame, to see you. Ever since I have been in France I have heard your name mentioned in terms of unbounded praise. In cottages as well as in palaces I have been furnished with never-ending details of your unbounded benevolence, and I feel a real satisfaction in being the bearer of the blessings which I have been requested to convey to Your Majesty.”

Finding that Their Majesties were retiring to a greater distance for the purpose of conversing more freely together, M. H—— withdrew to another extremity of the apartment. The conversation, as far as could be judged from the expression of the countenances, assumed a serious turn, and presently Their Majesties removed to the garden. In the meanwhile, Queen Hortense arrived in all haste from Paris. She proceeded to join her mother, and they walked for some time arm in arm with the Emperor.

The Empress was to be introduced to the King a short time afterwards. Prince Eugène had been very graciously received; Louis XVIII. had embraced him, and was publicly reported to have told him that he should be named a Marshal of France; that peace was on the point of being concluded; but that, if ever an occasion should arise, the utmost reliance would be placed upon the services of a Prince whose conduct might be held up as the brightest example which the army could exhibit, and who would be styled *the Bayard of the age*.

Queen Hortense had also been extremely well received, and was still to retain the honours of her rank.

The foolish conduct of three young men, who were as well known by their gallantry in the field of battle as by their situation in the world, formed at that moment the common topic of conversation in Paris.

Not reflecting, perhaps, that as soon as their chiefs gave the example of submission to the new Government, they were also bound to yield to an order of things which was repugnant to their feelings, MM. Lecouteulx, de la Woëstine, and Jacqueminot took it into their heads to ridicule the King's faithful servants who had recently arrived in the capital. They imitated their style of dress, wore old-fashioned clothes of Gothic shapes, powdered their hair, sallied forth with swords dangling by their sides, with small three-cornered hats on their heads, and with enormous crosses of Saint Louis suspended to their buttonholes; they repaired in this trim to Tortoni, where they held some very unbecoming language concerning the happiness of being decorated with orders without having seen any other fire than that in the kitchen grate; they imagined that all idlers would laugh at the joke, and turn into ridicule the individuals whom they intended to mimic. The public, on the contrary, saw in this attempt nothing more than a caricature in the very worst taste, as it was levelled at men of honour-

able characters, who had suffered during twenty years every species of privations rather than desert their unfortunate master. A feeling of pity was entertained for these young men, who attached importance to a style of dress of which an honourable poverty prevented the renewal; and it was considered as very surprising that military officers should level their attacks, through the dangerous weapon of ridicule, against old men who were absolutely precluded from revenging the insult.

The Minister of War took up the business; in so doing he committed an error, for he deprived himself, by a rigorous act of severity, of the services of two officers, MM. Jacqueminot and de la Woëstine, whose determined character recoiled at the bare idea of an apology. It would have been far better to pretend ignorance of a conduct which could do the emigrants no injury.

M. Lecouteulx, who was of a more composed turn of mind, frankly acknowledged that he had acted with too much levity, and remained in the King's service in which he has since distinguished himself.

M. Jacqueminot, feeling an aversion for the new Government, has set up a manufactory which is in a thriving condition, and enables him by his industry to be still of service to his country.

M. de la Woëstine has established himself in Belgium, where he successfully carries on the wine trade

Général Sébastiani, under whom he served in the capacity of aide-de-camp, has generously advanced him the means of commencing that business. He might now return to France and enjoy the independence he has acquired ; but he is detained in Belgium by motives foreign from the circumstance I have just related, and affording a clear evidence that a good heart is generally inseparable from a wild imagination. M. de la Woëstine is the grandson of the Comtesse de Genlis.

I was much delighted at again meeting in society Comte Anatole de Montesquiou, for I was apprehensive that, owing to some exaggerated notions, he might, like many other young men, have transferred his talents and his knowledge to some other country. The favour which his relations had enjoyed under the Emperor would have been his excuse for so doing, but the feelings of a Frenchman took precedence of every other in his breast ; without any act of flattery or baseness on his part, he has become a *chevalier d'honneur* to the Duchesse d'Orléans. This situation often enables him to solicit for others, and he is never found wanting in readiness to serve. It is by such men that Princes should be surrounded. They might then rest satisfied that their favours are not thrown away.

My father had claims upon His Royal Highness, the Duc d'Orléans. He went to see him, and was ex-

tremely well received on his first two visits ; but he no sooner spoke of his business than the door was forever closed against him. In vain he wrote to the Prince ; he received no reply ; he was at last compelled, against his inclination, and after three years of expectation, to commit to print a detailed statement of his claims. He intimated to the Prince that six thousand copies would be circulated in Paris unless he obtained within three days an audience of His Highness's principal councillor ; he would even be obliged to bring his case before a court of justice, his painful situation being such that he was bound as a father to try every fair means of bettering it.

The next morning a man on horseback brought a letter which fixed the desired appointment. After a long discussion, an arrangement highly advantageous to our interests was concluded between the Prince and my father. His services, his age, the total wreck of his fortune, claimed in his behalf a better treatment from the son of a man to whom he had been so long attached. I am far from accusing His Royal Highness ; his goodness of heart, so many proofs of which might be quoted, would, no doubt, have suggested to him a different course of conduct, had it not been for the advice of his men of business, who only consult the legal right of a claim in its strictest acceptation, without bestowing the least attention to the motives which ought to dictate a con-

trary mode of proceeding on the part of a Prince towards a private individual.*

The Duc d'Orléans is the most wealthy member of the Bourbon family; and yet he is, perhaps, the only Prince against whom it is found necessary to appeal to a public tribunal. It is a great misfortune that he should not follow the dictates of his own feelings; instead of complaints, he would then hear only praises of his conduct; he would, like the other members of his august family, have paid his debts in full, without invoking the privilege of being irresponsible heir, a claim the more extraordinary as His Royal Highness has recovered all his property, as his forests are much more productive than before the Revolution, and as his household, being far less numerous than the establishment of the late Duc d'Orléans, his expenses must be infinitely less; many important places in his service are still kept open to this day. It is said that he distributes large sums in charities, and that the Duchess and his children are often found to second him in his endeavours to relieve the distressed. This would further justify the belief that he is an utter stranger to the acts of injustice committed in his name. Necessity, want, a dread of his power and his rank, induce many persons to submit to enormous

* I am bound to except from the number of those who were opposed to our claim MM. Baudouix and de Broval, who always acted in a considerate manner towards us.

deductions of their claims, which it would have been more worthy of him not to contest, since the documents establishing them were complete, and his creditors had been so long suffering under the pressure of pecuniary distress.

CHAPTER XXV.

Commencement of Josephine's Illness. — Lord Beverley and His Sons. — Reflections of the Empress. — Her Sufferings Increase. — The Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia Dine at Malmaison. — Josephine Grows Worse. — MM. Horeau and Bourdois. — The Sacrament is Administered to the Empress. — Her Death.

ON returning home from Saint-Leu-Taverny, the very day on which Queen Hortense had given a grand dinner to the Sovereigns, Josephine felt indisposed without being able to describe her complaint. M. Horeau, her physician-in-ordinary, deemed it advisable to take some precautions; he recommended a purgative medicine and an emetic. Being partially relieved by attending to his advice, the Empress resumed her customary occupations; but it was easy to perceive that she was in great suffering.

Lord Beverley and his two sons breakfasted with her a few days afterwards. This was the occasion on which Josephine said, that, since the downfall of Napoleon, the English were the only nation who had the generosity to speak of him in becoming language. She very properly blamed those who, so far from respecting his unexampled misfortune, not

only dared to hold up to public view the Emperor's faults, which they formerly attempted to justify, but had even invented others of which he had never been guilty; she also expressed her surprise that Maria Louisa should have allowed secondary considerations to stand in the way of her joining the husband to whom she pretended to be tenderly attached. "Although I am no longer his wife," added Josephine, "I would readily start to-morrow to join him, were I not apprehensive of occasioning a misunderstanding between him and the consort to whom he sacrificed me. It is more particularly at this moment, when he is nearly abandoned by every one, that I should feel delighted at being with him, enabling him to bear the *ennui* of a residence in the Island of Elba, and sharing his sorrows. I now lament more than ever a divorce which was at all times a source of bitterness to me."

Those who have known Josephine will admit that these expressions emanated from the heart, and were by no means dictated by a desire of holding up to view the faults of her rival. Our sex, in particular, can fully appreciate the increased attachment excited in her breast by Napoleon's position; we are often inconsiderate and frivolous; but we are seldom inconstant when the object of our affection stands in need of its exercise. A heavy misfortune will frequently rekindle a sentiment of love which had

almost died away, and give strength enough to sacrifice everything to the happiness of procuring some consolation, however trifling, to the man whose presence was shunned a few days before; pity and compassion will revive a feeling of tenderness for him much sooner than all the favours of fortune could do; I shall ever, therefore, be at a loss to account for Maria Louisa's extraordinary desertion of her husband under such distressing circumstances. As a wife and a mother, her proper place was at St. Helena. She would in that island have been more powerful, more respected, than she could be near her father, and surrounded by all the pomp of a Court which was no longer suited to the wife of a proscribed individual. Her most zealous apologists will never succeed in justifying her conduct; and I doubt that posterity will ever concede to her the praise of having been worthy of the hero to whom she was united, whilst Josephine will be considered, what she really was, the best of wives, and the most entitled to share a throne which she consolidated as much by the attachment so generally borne to her as Napoleon had done by the glory of his arms.

The Emperor Alexander went to visit Josephine on the 10th of May, and dined at Malmaison. She remained in the salon, notwithstanding her acute bodily sufferings, which she endeavoured to resist. A game at prison-bars was played after dinner on

the handsome lawn before the palace; she attempted to take part in it, but her strength failed her, and she was under the necessity of sitting down. Her altered countenance was noticed by every one; to the most anxious inquiries she replied with a smile that a little rest would restore her strength; every one, in fact, retired with the hope that she would find herself better the next morning.

With a view to calm the uneasiness excited by her state of health, she attempted to take her usual walk, but her illness assumed a serious turn, and she was brought back to her apartment in a condition which excited great alarm.

The symptoms did not improve in the course of the day; she had repeated faintings. The night was still worse; she was already attacked with a kind of delirium, her mind was much agitated, she spoke much, contrary to the physician's express recommendation.

On the 24th of May (it was on a Friday) she awoke with a severe pain in her throat. The King of Prussia and the Emperor Alexander were expected to dine that day at Malmaison. Finding that Her Majesty had a slight attack of fever, M. Horeau insisted upon her remaining in bed and avoiding the least cold, the more so as having taken a purgative medicine, her exposure to the air might be attended with serious danger. As the Empress did

not seem disposed to follow his advice, he deemed it proper to appeal to Madame d'Arberg's influence; and this lady endeavoured to obtain a promise from Her Majesty that she should not rise from her bed. All was in vain; Josephine insisted upon dressing as usual, and descending from her apartment in order to do the honours of her house to the allied Sovereigns. She sat down to table, assisted at the Court circle, but at last her sufferings increased to such a degree that she was forced to retire, and requested Queen Hortense to supply her place.

From that moment her illness assumed a very serious and alarming turn. The next day, 25th of May, the Emperor Alexander paid her a visit, and, finding her much altered since the preceding day, he proposed to send her his private physician; she declined the offer, out of consideration for M. Horeau, in whom she reposed the utmost confidence. He had formerly been the Emperor's physician, and in quarterly attendance upon him. Ever since the divorce he was attached to the Empress, who entertained the highest opinion of his character and medical skill.

He invariably gave his attendance to her in the morning, and as soon as the consultation was over he took his departure for Paris. As he was lodged in a very small apartment at Boispréau, he never remained there; it was therefore doing him a manifest injustice to accuse him of neglect during that fatal 25th of

May. He was anxious to remain at Malmaison ; but the Empress, being apprehensive lest he should prevent her from rising, as it was her intention to do, pressed him to return as usual to Paris. As her health did not yet excite any apprehension for her life, he gave way and took his departure.

At night the physician of Rueil was sent for ; he was greatly alarmed at the danger in which he found the Empress, whose imprudent conduct was attended with such fatal consequences. He thought it would be advisable to apply immediately twenty-five leeches on the back of the neck and between the shoulders. He would not, however, take upon himself the responsibility of so violent a remedy. A messenger was sent to Paris in search of M. Horeau ; some time elapsed before he could be found ; he arrived at last, and nothing could exceed his distress of mind when he found Her Majesty in a condition which left but very faint hopes of her recovery. She was perfectly collected, but spoke with great difficulty. Her looks seemed to question M. Horeau, who attempted in vain to disguise his affliction. She pressed his hand to prove to him that she was fully aware of her danger ; and she displayed in that dreadful moment all the courage which was to be expected from her well-known character.

M. Horeau consulted with M. Lamoureux, the physician who had been called in ; the latter stated it as

his opinion that the application of leeches might have saved the Empress ; but he had not ventured to resort to this remedy without the previous approbation of Her Majesty's regular physician.

"Why, sir," exclaimed the latter, "in a case like this you ought not to have waited for me ; the loss of two hours is fatal."

A blister was applied between the shoulders, and sinapisms to the feet ; but alas ! it was too late ! her dreadful malady was making rigid and frightful strides.

This excellent woman, always apprehensive of giving pain to those she loved, abstained from all complaint, took every remedy that was prescribed, and by her gentle and affectionate looks endeavoured to calm the fears of those who surrounded her.

She was informed that Redouté, the celebrated painter of flowers, whose talent she admired, was at Malmaison, where he came to paint two beautiful greenhouse plants ; she expressed by signs her wish to see him. As soon as he appeared she held out her hand to him, and then gently forced him back, saying that she was afraid her complaint might be contagious.

"Next week," said Josephine, "I trust I shall see you working at some fresh masterpiece."

During the night, from the 27th to the 28th, she fell into a lethargic sleep which lasted five hours.

At ten o'clock in the morning M. Bourdois arrived. He agreed with M. Horeau that she was past all hope, and deemed it proper to prepare Queen Hortense and the Viceroy who, alarmed at the rapid inroads made upon that idolized countenance which they were contemplating with an always increasing apprehension, made her prepare for receiving the sacraments, and sent for the curate of Rueil to administer the rites of the Church. He was from home, and she confessed to the preceptor of the young Princes of Holland, who, though a priest, had long ceased to exercise his clerical functions. She answered with great difficulty, as her tongue was gradually refusing to perform its functions, but her countenance lost none of its calm and benevolent expression.

The Emperor Alexander arrived at Malmaison ; Josephine appeared to revive on seeing His Majesty, and cast a look of gratitude upon him. Prince Eugène and Queen Hortense knelt near their mother's bed, and received her blessing. They were both unable to address a single word to the Emperor ; their sobs alone gave utterances to their grief.

"At least," said Josephine, with an expiring voice, "I die regretted ; I have always desired the happiness of France, and have done everything in my power to promote it. I may say with truth, in the presence of you all who now attend my dying moments, that the first wife of Napoleon never caused a single tear to flow."

These were her last words, and the next day, 29th of May, at half after eleven in the morning, her sufferings were at an end, and those of her family past all remedy or consolation! * . . .

* She died of what the faculty formerly called "gangrened quinsy," and what now goes by the name of "angina."

CHAPTER XXVI.

In What Manner I Became Acquainted with the News.—
Particulars Respecting Her Funeral.—Her Tomb.—M.
Cartelier.

LIVING completely retired from the world, as I have already had occasion to mention, I never heard of the Empress Josephine's illness. My son, who was at this time four years old, entered my room quite out of breath, exclaiming :

“Mamma, make me say a prayer to Almighty God for a person just dead. You was very fond of her. She was very good ; she is in heaven ; but no matter for that, I must say a prayer for her.”

After giving utterance to these words, which, though perfectly unintelligible to me, created a strong agitation in my mind, the child fell upon his knees, joined his little hands, raised his eyes to heaven, and waited for me to dictate what he was to ask of God.

“My dear child,” I inquired of him, with lively emotion, “tell me what person is dead ?”

“Why, your Josephine, of whom you are always speaking.”

“The Empress !”

"I do not know ; but it is the wife of Bonaparte ; the grocer told it to my nurse, and I have hurried home to let you know of it, that you might make me say a prayer for her as I do for others."

I rang the bell in order to inquire into the truth of a report which I would fain consider as amongst the thousand-and-one tales circulated about Paris. My waiting-maid, who had been in our service during our stay at Navarre and Malmaison, came in with so deep an expression of sorrow upon her countenance that I could no longer doubt that the Empress had departed a life the latter years of which had been imbittered by such excruciating sorrows. I could learn only a few details respecting her heartrending and sudden death. I immediately left home, and called upon a friend who gave me the particulars I have related in the preceding chapter.

Few events have made a deeper or more painful impression upon my mind. I felt the utmost regret at not having been informed of Her Majesty's illness ; I should have instantly repaired to Malmaison, and endeavoured to acquaint her that her kindness towards me was fresh in my recollection ; I should have regretted her less had I acquired a certainty that she did not consider me ungrateful ; but I had not sufficient courage to approach a spot which was now converted into the abode of death. My family participated in my well-founded grief, and this loss,

which was so generally felt, was nowhere deplored so bitterly as in our domestic circle.

From the fatal day of the death of the Empress until June the 2d, on which day her funeral was to take place, upwards of twenty thousand persons beheld Josephine for the last time. I do not include in the number the many persons who *availed themselves of the opportunity* to obtain a sight of the Palace of Malmaison; the latter, after having made an obeisance before the state bed,* inquired in what direction was situated the *large greenhouse*, and went away with cheerful countenances to provoke the wild beasts. A far greater number came to bestow the tribute of their tears near the body, or to pray on their knees for the repose of its departed soul. They afterwards visited with becoming gravity those bowers which Josephine had planted, the fields of which she had superintended the cultivation, the shrubs she had watered with her delicate hands. Every one was in admiration at her work, and sought fresh motives for the regret which her loss had implanted in the breasts of all. The young girls who were attracted to this

* The body of Josephine, placed on a state bed in a small salon leading into the apartment where she died, was surrounded with a multitude of wax lights. A richly ornamented altar was erected on the right of the entrance door, and lined with seats and armchairs. This salon was hung with black drapery, but without cipher or escutcheon. Two officiating clergymen belonging to neighbouring villages, the curate of Rueil, and four valets, watched over the corpse of Josephine, whose face was covered with a white handkerchief. — (*Editor's note.*)

abode of sorrow shed tears in abundance ; they knew that many of their female companions were indebted to the Empress for the removal of difficulties thrown by sordid considerations in the way of their marrying the objects of their choice. The old men could not contain their grief when they recollected that they had now lost the pensions which had procured them many little enjoyments ; mothers were seen to shed tears when they recalled to mind that Josephine's bounty had restored their children to them, either by redeeming them from the conscription, by procuring their removal from active service, or obtaining their discharge. Each one accosted his neighbour, though a perfect stranger to him, in order to listen to the mutual recital of various traits in Josephine's character, which were honourable to her memory. Grief is the surest leveller of animosities ; accordingly, many persons at open variance with each other became reconciled on that solemn occasion, when everything was forgotten except the benevolent disposition of the being now no more, whose loss was deplored by all ; they met to speak of her ; and the recollection of Josephine occasioned more than one reconciliation of private misunderstanding. It was impossible to nourish a feeling of mutual ill-will near the tomb of a woman who had so many injuries to forgive ! The memory of her was therefore sufficient to effect what her presence might have operated. The slow chim-

ing of the bells of all the neighbouring parishes summoned the faithful to present at the foot of every altar the homage of their just gratitude.

The funeral took place at noon with the greatest pomp in the modest church of the village of Rueil, belonging to the parish of Malmaison.

The corners of the pall were borne by the Grand Duke of Baden (husband of the Grand Duchess Stephanie de Beauharnais, the Empress's niece), by the Marquis de Beauharnais (formerly a French Ambassador and Her Majesty's brother-in-law), by her nephew, Comte de Tascher, and, to the best of my recollection, by Comte de Beauharnais (*chevalier d'honneur* to Maria Louisa).

The *cortège* left the Palace of Malmaison by the iron gate and followed the high road as far as the village of Rueil. Général Sacken, representing the Emperor of Russia, and the Adjutant-General of the King of Prussia, on the part of his own Sovereign, walked at the head of the funeral procession, besides a great number of foreign Princes, of French marshals, generals, and other officers.* The banners of the several brotherhoods of the parish, with twenty young girls dressed in white, and singing canticles, formed part of the *cortège*, which was lined by Russian Hus-

* The Ducs de Rivère and de Polignac had been *invited* by the family of the Empress. They neglected, however, to pay this last homage to the benevolent woman who had saved their lives.

sars and by National Guards. The procession was closed by two thousand poor people of all ages.* Général Sacken was directed, on the part of his master, to announce to the relatives of the Empress who were united at Malmaison, that he was so deeply affected at Her Majesty's death as to feel a desire to devote to *the worthy Prince Eugène* and to his sister the thirty-six hours he had yet to remain in Paris. He quitted them, in fact, only to return to his dominions.

Upwards of four thousand inhabitants of the neighbouring districts are understood to have assembled for the purpose of paying a parting homage to the memory of a Princess who had so justly earned the

* The friend who has furnished me with all these details was present at this ceremony; she only left Malmaison at six o'clock in the evening, and was anxious to take a parting view of the church of Rueil, which was indebted to Josephine for the building of its new walls and the restoration of its sanctuary. A large mourning drapery was hung round the interior of this edifice, now deprived of its benefactress, whose remains were, however, to be restored to it at a later period.* When the shafts of death have levelled a crowned head to the ground, vanity eagerly raises the diadem, and places it as an ornament upon the coffin. No such ornament was to be seen at Rueil; no inscription had been drawn up; but the tears and affecting regrets of the Sovereigns of Europe were joined with those of the poor of France to pronounce the funeral oration of the *good Josephine!* . . .

* The body of the Empress Josephine is now placed in a magnificent tomb of white marble, erected by her two children. Her Majesty is there represented in an Imperial costume, in a kneeling attitude, and offering up a prayer for the happiness of France. "*Eugène and Hortense to Josephine*" are the only words engraved on that splendid monument which is placed in a side chapel, and is the production of the highly talented M. Cartelier. I doubt whether criticism can discover any fault in it. I acknowledge that I wept too bitterly, whilst contemplating the statue, to consider it otherwise than as a perfect composition.

title of *mother of the poor and of the afflicted*. Mass was celebrated by M. de Barral, Archbishop of Tours, her chief almoner, assisted by the Bishops of Evreux and Versailles; after the gospel he pronounced a short but affecting funeral oration.

The body of Josephine, placed in a leaden coffin enclosed in a wooden one, was afterwards temporarily deposited in a part of the burial-ground which contained the remains of the three hundred persons who had been crushed to death in the Rue Royale whilst returning from viewing the fireworks let off in the Place Louis XV. on the occasion of the marriage of Louis XVI. with Marie Antoinette.

On reaching the burial-ground Queen Hortense, who had previously remained in one of the chapels of the church of Rueil, threw herself upon her mother's tomb, to which she clung for some time, wholly absorbed in grief. It was found necessary to remove her by force from the fatal spot. The ceremony was not concluded until five o'clock in the evening.

The whole household of the illustrious deceased was bathed in tears, and several foreigners who were present, and who, nevertheless, had only been acquainted with her since the Restoration, mingled their tears with those of the many whose happiness she had secured by her benevolence, or whose sorrows she had mitigated by her kind sympathy.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Proposal of Receiving a Knight of the Extinguisher. — Général Beauvais Mentions the Landing of Napoleon at Cannes. — Madame de Lavalette. — Mdlle. Duchesnois. — Her Excellent Heart. — Colonel Duchamp. — His Marriage. — Fête Given at the Louvre by Comte de Vaudreuil, the Governor. — The Duc de Berry. — M. de Vaudreuil. — Curious Mistake Relative to Madame Princeteau, Sister of the Duc Decazes. — The Duc de Berry Grants Me an Audience.

THE Memoirs of the Empress Josephine ought to terminate here, but I am anxious to add to them some honourable traits to which I was a witness in 1815. Having been acquainted with many persons who acted a conspicuous part at that period and during a few subsequent years, I am enabled to relate a multitude of facts which deserve to find a place in historical memoirs, and I shall not lay down my pen until I have nothing to write about but myself.

Général Beauvais spoke to us of the "*Nain Jaune*," which he described merely as an amusing pamphlet. He lent us some of the early numbers, which were much more moderate than those which followed. We

were much entertained by them, and they appeared to us to contain nothing dangerous.

I intended to give a fancy ball, and M. Beauvais proposed that I should receive a mask in the character of the Knight of the Extinguisher. With my usual inconsiderateness I joyfully acceded to the proposal, and immediately set about making preparations for the ceremony, to which I attached no political allusion. My parents, more prudent than I, informed me that the title of Knights of the Extinguisher was applied derisively to the Royalists, and that consequently my house was not the proper place for playing off such a joke. I felt the truth of these observations, and renounced the design. The "*Nain Jaune*" soon after became decidedly seditious, and I had reason to congratulate myself on having followed good advice. At the risk of being complimented with the *double extinguisher*, I retained the honourable title of a devoted friend of the Bourbons.

Our attachment to the Empress Josephine involved no contradiction, for it was not evinced until she had become, as it were, a private individual and a stranger to the Government.

Some days after the ball to which I have just alluded, I was at the Théâtre des Variétés. Général Beauvais entered our box with an air of unusual cheerfulness.

"Have you heard the news?" said he.

"No," we replied ; " but it must be good news, for you appear in excellent spirits."

" Why, as to that, it is merely a report ; but if it were true, it would not much concern me. It is said that Napoleon is returned from Elba with his *growlers* ; that he has landed at Cannes and is advancing to Paris."

" That would be an unfortunate event ; but do you think he is mad enough to expose himself to certain danger, and do you think him capable of breaking his word ?"

" I cannot pretend to say ; I merely tell you what is reported."

Here the conversation ended, and we thought the General was merely joking. Two days after, the fatal news was published in an official form, and the severest measures were adopted for opposing the progress of Napoleon. A price was set upon his head, and the general belief was that the extraordinary enterprise must fail.

Events which it was impossible to foresee, but which it is needless for me to relate since they have been traced by many able pens, once more disorganized France, forced our Princes into a second banishment, entailed a series of misfortunes of which we still feel the effects, and caused the conqueror of the world to perish on a rock ! . . . For his sake, as well as for our own, we must deplore that return which replunged

France into anarchy, and sacrificed men who reflected honour on their country. A dark veil should obscure the period over which so many tears have been shed. I may, however, be permitted to raise a corner for the purpose of exhibiting the heroism of a woman who sacrificed herself to save an unfortunate relative. She is now no more! . . . But she has left behind her children to whom the noble conduct of their mother is an honourable inheritance.

On the arrest of M. de Labédoyère, several of his companions in arms exerted their efforts to save him. They consulted his cousin, the Marquise de Lavalette,* for the purpose of facilitating a plan which they had arranged for his escape. She ventured upon several steps attended by difficulty and danger, and sold an estate in order to raise money for the object she had in view; on being denounced to the police, she was obliged to conceal herself; and the celebrated actress, Mdlle. Duchesnois, with whom she was well acquainted, scrupled not to compromise her own safety by receiving her in her house. There Madame de Lavalette remained for six weeks, receiving every mark of delicate attention; and when, at the conclusion of the trial by which she was acquitted, she proceeded to America, she consigned to her generous friend the care of her children, who were placed at a

* Not the Madame de Lavalette who courageously took her husband's place at the Conciergerie.

boarding-school in Paris. Mdle. Duchesnois fulfilled this charge with the affection of a sister. This is not the only instance in which her excellent heart has led her to expose herself to danger for the sake of aiding unfortunate friends. I might give numberless anecdotes of this sort. When travelling about, she was always in the habit of performing for the benefit of the poor, and she was never known to refuse her coöperation in a good action.

In 1815 the same testimonials of attachment were lavished on our Princes, when after a few hours' hesitation they determined to quit Arnouville and enter Paris. Some National Guards had bivouacked on the Plaine St. Denis to precede them. The legions were all confounded together, and six thousand men, impatient to get sight of their King, served as his escort. It was rather singular to see them headed by several superior officers who had signed the proclamation to the National Guard, in which they declared that Louis XVIII. ought not to return to his capital without the tricoloured cockade. Either such a thing should not have been proposed to the brother of Louis XVI., or those by whom it was proposed should have supported their opinions, and not have been the first to meet the royal carriage with the white cockade. I can easily imagine that every man has his own way of thinking and feeling in politics; but I cannot understand how people's sentiments change so com-

pletely from day to day. Such versatility may be pardonable in a woman whose opinion has no weight, but nothing can justify those who, instead of holding out a worthy example to their fellow citizens, vary, vacillate, and compromise public tranquillity by misleading the feeble and irresolute.

An instance of noble conduct in times of difficulty was afforded by Colonel Duchamp, who declined serving the Bourbons because he owed his fortune to the Emperor. He gave in his resignation as soon as the King was seated on the throne. On the return of Napoleon he again entered the service. In July, 1815, it was proposed that he should continue in the command of his regiment; but he declared with the frankness of a soldier that he would not serve the successors of his benefactor. Such conduct must claim the admiration of all parties. Colonel Duchamp has found his reward, for he has since been united to an English lady, young, beautiful, and rich, and the domestic happiness is not less enviable than the glory he won on the field.

Comte de Vaudreuil, Governor of the Louvre, who had been well acquainted with my family during their emigration, invited us to an elegant fête which he gave in honor of the Duc de Berry. The entertainment was to commence with a concert and proverbs, and to terminate with a ball. Madame de Vaudreuil was still a pretty woman. She wore the Prince's

colours, namely, a dress of green and amaranth, which became her so admirably that one might have suspected the choice had been dictated by coquetry as much as by the wish to compliment her royal guest. She did the honours of the evening with the most finished elegance. The Count, who in his youth was the most fashionable man at the French Court, was now a model of agreeable old age. Good humour, gaiety, and a fund of pleasant anecdote, rendered his society desirable to all who were fond of agreeable and instructive conversation. Though continually suffering from illness, yet his equality of temper and politeness of manner never forsook him. In the service of others he could summon up all that vigour and activity which failed him when his own interests were to be advanced. Madame de Vaudreuil, who was, I believe, forty years younger than her husband,* shewed him unremitting attention, and cheered his home by every agreeable amusement. She never stirred out except when she went to Court, and her care was divided between her husband and her aged mother, a silly, good sort of old lady, who retained her Languedoc accent in full purity.

The Duc de Berry arrived precisely at the hour appointed. He spoke to everybody, and said some-

* The Count was her godfather, and on the day of her christening he jokingly observed that he would marry none but his little godchild; fortunately for him the prediction was realized.

thing agreeable to each. He seemed much amused, admired the elegance of the entertainment, and took his leave early.

I was informed that before our arrival a curious occurrence took place. The servant who announced the company, not being accustomed to usher in any one beneath the rank of a baron or a chevalier, never dreamed of the possibility of the Comte de Vaudreuil receiving untitled visitors. A lady presented herself. He asked her name, which she gave in a very low tone of voice. The man not having heard it distinctly vociferated, *Madame la Princesse Tot*. The lady was no other than Madame Princeteau, sister of the Duc Decaze. I did not witness this scene, which was described to me by a person who disliked the Minister, then in the height of favour. It was affirmed that his sister shared that favour; but I presume this was untrue, for Madame Princeteau now lives in great privacy. Had she been loaded with the favours of Louis XVIII., she would have been rich, and her society would have been courted; but she is now forgotten even by those on whose gratitude she has a claim. Her countenance was mild and interesting, and she was said to be exceedingly amiable. I was not acquainted with her, but I have frequently seen her surrounded by flatterers, and her manner was always graceful and pleasing. She sang well, and when asked to sing, readily and good humouredly

complied. But these recommendations have not secured her against ingratitude. She is now forsaken by those who once courted her. This is easily accounted for: she is poor!

I took great notice of the Duc de Berry, and I found that he was really the National Guard whom I so unceremoniously ran against on the staircase of the Tuileries when I was going to see the Comte de Mesnard. His countenance was not handsome and his figure wanted elegance, but his eyes were expressive, and his smile agreeable. All who conversed with him agreed in praising his talent and amiability. He subsequently proved that he possessed in an eminent degree the virtues which become a Prince. By his heroic death the character of his life may be appreciated. Two faults were attributed to him by the enemies of his family, ever anxious to detract from the merit of all who bore the name of Bourbon. He was accused of great hastiness of temper, of which a number of exaggerated anecdotes are told. Various gallant adventures are also related of him. No doubt he frequently gave way to violence of temper; but during the latter years of his life he had sensibly amended a fault which was not the effect of a bad disposition, but of an education which peculiar circumstances had rendered imperfect. Can there be a more convincing proof of the Duc de Berry's noble nature than the fact of his having solicited the pardon of his murderer?

I stood in need of His Royal Highness's protection for the attainment of an object which I had greatly at heart, and which was attended by numerous difficulties. I requested an audience, which was granted to me at six o'clock on the same evening. I arrived at the Tuileries very much alarmed at the idea of presenting myself to a *son of France*. In spite of myself I could not help fearing that my suit would be abruptly rejected, for I was prejudiced by the many idle stories I had heard respecting the Duke's imperfection of temper. On entering the anteroom where I had to wait until the time appointed for my introduction, I was still more disconcerted by the pleasantries of some officers, with whom my family was on a footing of intimacy. When the usher came to inform me that I might present myself to His Royal Highness, I experienced that agitation with which I am invariably seized on any extraordinary occasion. Having entered the grand salon, which was dimly lighted by four candles, I scarcely knew what I had come to solicit, and I was on the point of going back, feeling that I had not courage to utter a word. When I raised my eyes towards the Prince, my alarm instantly ceased, for in the countenance which I had expected to find so solemn and severe I saw only an expression of good temper and kindness. He took me by the hand, and, having conducted me to a seat beside himself, he inquired in what way he could

be useful to me. I explained in a few words what I wished.

"How, madame," said he, "you want my name to your petition? I assure you, you are mistaken, if you suppose I have any influence. I performed the *sentimental journey to Ghent*, and, consequently, my name is no recommendation to the Minister to whom you intend to appeal. However, if you think I can serve you, I will at least prove my willingness to do so."

With these words he approached a table on which there was an inkstand, and he wrote a few very urgent words at the bottom of the petition which I had presented to him. Then, again advancing to me, he said :

"I think I had better myself present this to the Minister. Your family, madame, has suffered so much for us that I shall be happy to be serviceable to you in any way."

He then asked me several questions, to which I replied as briefly as possible, and was then about to withdraw.

"Why such haste, madame?" he said; "it is to me an unusual advantage to receive agreeable visits, therefore I beg you will not make yours so short."

He asked me several questions respecting a celebrated lady (my relation), whose talent he admired; begged that I would inform her how highly he

esteemed her, and, when I again rose to take leave he added :

“ Well, madame, I will detain you no longer ; I see you are impatient to return home, and I know why ladies who love their husbands are never happy when away from them. If I can again be serviceable to you, pray employ me.”

He then conducted me to the door of the salon with an air of graceful politeness, of which certainly our Ministers cannot always boast.

I obtained what the Duc de Berry condescended to solicit for me, and I take this opportunity of recording my profound gratitude for the kindness with which I was honoured by that unfortunate Prince.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Duchesse de Berry Arrives in France. — Her Remarks on the Addresses Presented to Her. — Her Amiable Character. — Inscriptions at the Foundling Hospital. — The Duchesse de Berry Engages Masters. — Sale of the Works of the Princesses. — The Duchesse de Reggio. — MM. de Levis and de Mesnard. — Exhumation of the Duc d'Enghien. — The Comtesse de Bradi. — M. Arnault's Tragedy of "Germanicus." — Louvel's Coolness during the Reading of His Sentence. — The Marquis de Pérignon at the Conciergerie.

A GREAT deal was said about the Duc de Berry's marriage, and every one chose a consort for him. At length it was understood that the hand of the Princess of Naples was to be solicited. The politicians of the salons disapproved this measure, which, they observed, would not augment the power of France; they wished to see a union between the Duc de Berry and the sister of the Emperor of Russia. They complained long and bitterly because their judicious advice was not followed, and because the King and the Comte d'Artois presumed to arrange a marriage for the Duke without the consent of intelligent and well-informed statesmen.

The Princess landed at Marseilles, where she charmed every one by that affability which now renders her the idol of the French people. The individuals selected to form part of her household related many particulars respecting Her Royal Highness, which gave general satisfaction. Every unfavourable prepossession vanished, and all were eager to see the young and interesting Princess who so well understood the art of rendering herself beloved. The clever answers she returned to the formal addresses which were delivered to her were repeated from mouth to mouth, and a remark which she made to the Duc de Levis, her *chevalier d'honneur*, was particularly admired. In all the speeches that were addressed to her, mention was made of the children to which she was likely to give birth. Struck with these eternal repetitions, she said to the Duc de Levis :

“ Surely the French are exceedingly fond of children ! They are constantly expressing their wish that I should have a numerous family, but they say nothing about the happiness of the Duc de Berry. Yet I am come here to render him happy, am I not ? Certainly, and likewise to do all the good I can. These two duties I shall fulfil with great pleasure.”

She formed the happiness of the Prince, whom she tenderly loved ; and her conduct every day proves that she will not less scrupulously perform the second task that has devolved upon her.

Her Royal Highness entered Paris in an open carriage, accompanied by the King, the Dauphine, and the Duc de Berry. It had rained violently from an early hour in the morning, but the sun peeped out just as the cavalcade passed the barrier, and it continued fine during the remainder of the day. This trivial circumstance was regarded as a favourable augury. It proved, alas! fatally treacherous.

It seemed as though the whole population of Paris had advanced to meet Her Royal Highness, whose sweet countenance and childish air won all hearts. The houses were decorated with flags and garlands; the ladies, elegantly dressed, threw flowers from the windows as the carriage passed. Various appropriate inscriptions were displayed. The words, "She will be our mother," which appeared in front of the Foundling Hospital, were at once simple and impressive; indeed, they might almost be regarded as a prediction, for the Duchess subsequently founded the Hospital of *Les Enfants de la Providence*. This valuable institution, which is every year extending, affords a home to numbers of unfortunate children who have indeed no parents but God and the Princess.

A succession of brilliant fêtes celebrated the happy union which was to bring heirs to the descendant of Saint Louis. The amiable and graceful manners of the Duchess excited general admiration, and the Duke seemed to enjoy the popularity she obtained. He

inspired her with a taste for study, for the misfortunes with which the House of Naples had been visited had thrown great obstacles in the way of her education. With a perseverance by no means common in a young Princess newly married, and surrounded by all the gaieties of a Court, she engaged masters, devoted herself to study, and soon acquired many pleasing accomplishments, added to a stock of valuable information. She would suffer no one about her to remain idle ; and, to please Her Highness, it was necessary to rival her in application. The Duchesse de Berry excels in various beautiful works, which she presents to churches, or sells for the benefit of the poor at annual exhibitions. People about the Court attach a high value to the productions of the Princess, who augment their means of relieving the unfortunate by turning flattery to the profit of the poor.* The Duchesse de Reggio, whose name revives recollections of her husband's glory, and who is herself a model of every virtue that can adorn her sex, aids the Princess in selecting objects worthy of her benevolent regard. She is the confidante of the Duchess, and, when prais-

* Being a resident of a small provincial town (Meung sur Loire) in which there is a hospital zealously superintended by benevolent nuns, I solicited from the Duchesse de Berry, through the medium of Comte de Mesnard (who is ever ready to undertake such missions), an altar bouquet for a chapel that had been newly restored. Her Royal Highness was pleased to send some superb flowers *made by her own hands*, accompanied by a pleasing message to the nuns, whose sole occupation is to aid the distressed. It may be easily imagined that the bouquet was received with heartfelt gratitude on the day of Her Royal Highness's fête.

ing her benevolence, she seems at a loss in selecting the instances most worthy of admiration. She might adduce endless examples, but that modesty withholds her from divulging acts of goodness which she has herself advised. MM. de Levis and de Mesnard are worthy of such a mistress as the Duchesse de Berry. Can any higher praise be conferred on them?

On the 22d of March, 1815, the remains of the Duc d'Enghien were disinterred from the place in which he was so barbarously put to death. A Mass was performed by some of our most celebrated singers in the humble church of Vincennes, the curate of which town had been almoner to the Duc d'Enghien. He delivered a pathetic sermon, which would have produced an infinitely greater effect but for the disagreeable Norman accent of the worthy curate. All the officers of the household of the King and Princes were present at the ceremony, together with a considerable number of peers, generals, and the officers of some regiments of artillery, and the Royal Guard. An abundant collection was made for the poor; which was certainly the best mode of solemnizing the day.

We went to visit the remains of the Duc d'Enghien, which were temporarily deposited in the hall, where the pretended court-martial was held. I cannot describe the emotion which seized every one who entered the place, now converted into an expiatory sanctuary. Not a word was uttered; but every eye

was fixed on the bier, and all present knelt down mechanically, as if forced to bend before the ashes of the hero, the last of the line of Condé. I never experienced such sensations, except when I visited the lighted chapel containing the remains of the Duc de Berry. The fate of the two young Princes was somewhat similar, for the Duc d'Enghien's death can only be regarded in the light of assassination!

At this time we had the happiness of meeting the Comtesse de Bradi, whom we had not seen for a considerable period. With the view of completing the education of her children, of whom she was the only instructress, she had fixed her abode at a beautiful estate which she possessed near Orléans. Though courted in society for her beauty, her brilliant talent and acquirements, and, above all, her angelic disposition, she cheerfully relinquished pleasures which are usually so attractive to a young woman, and wholly devoted herself to the duties nearest her heart. Her friends, who regretted her loss, were consoled only by reading the charming works, the composition of which filled up her leisure hours. She enjoyed the happiness of seeing her plans succeed beyond her hopes, and her daughters bade fair one day to resemble their accomplished mother. The Comtesse de Bradi was a kind of benefactress to the poor of the village in which she resided.

The events of 1815 brought her back to Paris,

where she employed for the good of others that influence which she everywhere possessed. Since that period she has been a most sincere friend to me ; a circumstance of which I cannot but feel justly proud.

The representation of M. Arnault's tragedy of "Germanicus" gave rise to some distressing misunderstandings between the officers of the guard and those of the old army.* Conflicting opinions frequently occasioned duels between those who approved and those who disapproved of the piece. It was in consequence withdrawn, but was subsequently revived. Both parties were alike wrong, for they took upon themselves to decide without a hearing. By some unaccountable calumny I was numbered among the women who were guilty of the folly of taking part in the dispute, and I am aware that M. Arnault gave credit to the report. The truth is, I never sought to render myself conspicuous in any way, and, certainly, if I could ever have stepped out of my usual course it would not have been on the occasion here alluded to. The author of "Germanicus" was unfortunate ; I knew him well in my childhood. He was acquainted with an aunt of mine for whom I cherish an affectionate remembrance, and certainly I should have cautiously avoided anything that could have added

* Colonel Fitz-James, then a lieutenant of the guard, fought three duels in one day, a fact which sufficiently shews the degree of excitement that prevailed, for certainly no man could be less quarrelsome than the distinguished officer whom I have just named.

to his unhappiness. Besides, at the very time when "Germanicus" was brought out, I was visited by an affliction which prevented me from even thinking of what was doing at the Théâtre Français. The wish to repel an unjust accusation induces me to mention these facts.

The birth of Mademoiselle proved a consolation for the death of her sister; and soon after the infant Duc de Bordeaux would have crowned the wishes of the French people but for the awful event which filled every heart with dismay. The public grief for the loss of the Duc de Berry was aggravated instead of diminished by the birth of his son. "How happy would his father have been!" exclaimed every one, on beholding the orphan Prince. "And how bitter must be the sorrow of his courageous mother!" Crowds assembled beneath the windows of the Duchess, who, pale and feeble as she was, raised her son in her arms to shew him to the people. She summoned strength to smile, in spite of the sorrow that preyed upon her heart. The people answered this smile by tears; the most appropriate way in which their sympathy could be manifested.

I shall never forget the effect produced upon me by the appearance of the Duchesse de Berry at the window of the apartment, which was hung with black; she looked like the personification of Grief consoled by Hope.

It would be absurd presumption in me to attempt entering into any detail of the death of the Duc de Berry. M. de Châteaubriand, whose pen is not less powerful than the pencil of a painter, has described the melancholy event with the energy and eloquence peculiar to himself. I may, however, say a few words respecting the extraordinary indifference evinced by the assassin Louvel when the sentence of death was read to him by M. Cauchy, Keeper of the Records to the Chamber of Peers.

The Marquis de Pérignon* requested of the Grand Referendary leave to accompany M. Cauchy, and the permission was granted on condition of his laying aside his peer's robes.

When these gentlemen arrived, Louvel was *at dinner*. He was sent for, and, on making his appearance, he, with the utmost composure, made a profound obeisance to the persons who came to announce his fate. During the whole time of the reading of the sentence he evinced the utmost indifference, and was engaged in picking his nails. A slight contraction of the lips was observable when the word "death" was uttered, but he soon recovered himself. M. Cauchy,

* Son of the marshal of that name, a peer of France, and one of the gentlemen of the King's chamber. He is rarely on duty at Court, and does not regularly attend the sittings of the Chamber of Peers. He has also the command of a squadron of dragoons. It has been a matter of surprise that he was not engaged in the Spanish campaign, for it was in that country that his father distinguished himself.

in a mild tone, asked him whether he did not wish to see a priest.

“Why should I?” said Louvel. “A sick man calls in a physician because he is ill, and wishes to be cured; but my conscience being at rest I have no need of the doctor whom you propose. Leave that to women.”

“Would you wish to see your family?”

“No, sir; upon reflection I think I could not bear that. I will write to them; that will be better. Farewell, gentlemen, I am obliged to you; I have been tried in good company; that is certain. I will now go and finish my dinner.” *

M. de Pérignon, on quitting the *conciergerie* repeated these words to us, which were in consequence engraven in my memory, and for the truth of which I am enabled to vouch.

* When confined in the Luxembourg, he asked for a bottle of excellent wine and a roast chicken, in order, as he said, to make a good dinner for *once in his life*. He also requested to have a pair of fine sheets for the last night he was to sleep in the palace, for the sake of tasting the enjoyments of luxury. His wishes, it is said, were complied with.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Correspondence: Josephine's Letter to Citizen Barras, one of the Members of the Executive Directory. — To M. de Sansal. — To Madame Fanny de Beauharnais. — From Général Bonaparte to his Wife. — From Colonel Eugène Beauharnais to His Mother. — To Mdle. Hortense. — To Général Bonaparte. — To the Empress Josephine. — To Mdle. Lenormand. — Note Found in the Empress's Dinner Napkin. — Mdle. Lenormand's Reply to Her Majesty. — Letters to M. F. de Ch. —. — To Mdle. Aubert, the Empress's *Femme de Chambre*. — To M. Achille de Villedeuil. — To the Duc D'Otrante, Minister of Police. — To the Empress Maria Louisa. — To the Emperor Alexander.

JUST as I was on the point of closing this volume, I received from a gentleman no less respected for his private character than honoured for his military glory, a valuable collection of the correspondence of Her Majesty the Empress Josephine. It was my wish to have introduced all these letters in the course of my work; but on consideration I found that they would interrupt my narrative. I have therefore thought it preferable to reserve them until another opportunity, when they will appear in a complete form. Their perusal will render all other matter insipid, and, consequently, they ought not to be sepa-

rated. I feel myself under a deep obligation to the gentleman who deemed me worthy of so precious a trust. To afford me the means of enabling others to form a just estimate of the Empress's excellent understanding, noble sentiments, and goodness of heart, was indeed rendering me an invaluable service. I regret that I cannot disclose the name of the individual to whom I am so deeply indebted. Silence on this point was the price exacted for the favour he conferred on me. May the effort it costs me to obey him prove the extent of my gratitude!

I cannot refrain, however, from inserting here a few of these letters, which will, no doubt, have the effect of creating a desire for those which will hereafter be submitted to the public.

TO CITIZEN BARRAS, MEMBER OF THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORY.

“Fontainebleau.

“NOTHING could be more gratifying to me than what you announce, but at the same time nothing would have surprised me less. I was aware of your influence, and especially your zeal; I was sure of exciting your interest; and I was not the less certain that you would succeed. Thus, then, I am assured of possessing a home; and, thanks to that delicacy which enhances a favour by the manner in which it is conferred, that home is all I can wish. I may there devote myself to those pure and tranquil pursuits which in the days of my prosperity I cultivated from caprice, but which I now cherish

from predilection; I have inspired my children with a love for them; they formed the amusement of their childhood, and will be the charm of their more advanced years. My children are the heirs of an outlaw; it is, therefore, proper that their wishes should be humble, and their existence obscure. The life we are about to lead at Malmaison will be suited to our situation; and, in spite of all I have lost, had the father of my children been spared, I should have had nothing more to wish for; but had he lived I should not have known you—I should not have been unfortunate—and your kindness would never have been called into exercise in my behalf. We must take every situation of life with its chances. The most unfortunate has still some advantages, and good sense consists in turning them to the best account. But it is easy to say this when the mind is not agitated by passion. I have suffered a severe trial, and for several months I dared not look forward to brighter prospects. I had then only the choice of misfortunes; but I trust they are past, and what you have done restores me to new life. To devote that life to solitude, study, and the education of my children, will be the surest means of preserving my own happiness, and proving my unalterable gratitude.”

It is well known that it was M. Barras who brought about the marriage between Madame de Beauharnais and Général Bonaparte, in consequence of which union the latter obtained the command of the army of Italy. At that time Malmaison was purchased from M. Lecouteulx du Moley for the sum of 400,000 francs.

The Empress Josephine expended a vast deal of

money in improving Malmaison, which was previously remarkable only for several beautiful prospects.

“TO MONSIEUR DE SANSAL.

“YOUR petition, which arrived at Malmaison on the 12th, was delivered the same evening, and with my own hands, to Citizen Barras; next day it was sent to the *bureau des émigrés*, and a report was made upon it on the 14th; on the 16th it underwent its first examination. I have the pleasure to inform you, sir, that it has been brought to a favourable decision, that your name is erased from the fatal list, and that you may resume all the rights of a French citizen. In transmitting this communication, which is no less agreeable to me than to you, allow me to enhance its value by repeating the words with which the director accompanied it. ‘In general, madame,’ said he, delivering to me the packet, ‘I have little reason to refuse you anything, and I cannot regret this when your petitions have for their object to serve the cause of humanity. But pity for misfortune is not incompatible with justice, and justice is inseparable from the love of truth, which prompts me to offer M. de Sansal a little salutary advice. As an unfortunate man, M. de Sansal is deserving of sympathy; but as an emigrant he is entitled to none. I shall say no more. If I were inclined to be severe, he might experience harsh reprisals on the part of a Government to whose favours he replies by insolence, which, contemptible as it is, proves his ingratitude of heart and narrowness of mind. Others did the mischief, we are repairing it; that is no reason why we should be abused. If such be the ground of M. de Sansal’s hatred, he had better conceal his bad feelings rather than by expressing them expose himself to disagreeable retaliation, for all my colleagues are not so indulgent as I.’

"If, monsieur, there be anything unpleasant in this advice, you have only yourself to blame. It is, perhaps, harsh, but it is useful, and you will no doubt profit by it. The accuracy with which I have transmitted it to you proves at least the interest I feel in your welfare, and which it remains for you to justify."

TO MADAME FANNY DE BEAUHARNAIS.

"You ask me, my dear aunt, whether I am happy. This question admits of more than one answer. I am happy as a mother and a wife. Surely no woman was ever blessed with better children; none were ever more beloved or more worthy to be so. Can any husband reflect greater honour on the wife who bears his name? Yet he, that husband of whom I am so justly proud, is the cause of all my misery. Alas! how many sleepless nights have his victories cost me! Perhaps he would be less eager in the pursuit of glory if he knew that every leaf of his laurels is watered by my tears. But what signifies complaining? I am a Frenchman's wife, and I must have a French heart within me. Before I became a wife and mother, I was a citizeness, and Alexandre taught me to value that title above all others. His brave successor, the possessor of my affections, is likewise the heir to all his sentiments, by sharing which I will endeavour to deserve the honourable titles of widow of Beauharnais and wife of Bonaparte. What a glorious association is this! May fortune which frowned on the one still favour the other!

"I send you the letter which I have just received from Bonaparte; and also that from my son, which I know you will peruse with a mother's eyes. Both have been altered in the journals, but I send you correct copies."

I recollect having once seen Madame Fanny de Beauharnais, for whom the Empress cherished a great affection and respect. It was scarcely possible to judge of her features, which were thickly covered with red and white paint. Her face was daubed over like a palette. She spoke sensibly, but with an air of pretension, as though she was always striving to produce effect, and she rarely shewed any of that ease which constitutes the charm of conversation. She was said to be an exceedingly amiable woman, and she always readily employed her influence in behalf of persons who solicited her intercession for favours they had to seek. The celebrated epigram made upon her is, perhaps, too well known to be repeated :

*“Eglé jeune et poète a deux petits travers,
Elle fait son visage et ne fait pas ses vers.”*

This last hemistich, however, is said to be incorrect, for, to the period of her death, she produced many elegant compositions both in prose and verse.

FROM GÉNÉRAL BONAPARTE TO HIS WIFE.

“My first laurel, my love, must be for my country, my second shall be for you. While beating Alvinzi I thought of France; when I had defeated him I thought of you. Your son will present to you a standard which he received from Colonel Morbach, whom he made prisoner with his own hands. Our Eugène, you see, is worthy of his father; and I trust you do not think me an unworthy successor of the great

and unfortunate general, under whom I should have been proud to learn to conquer. I embrace you.

“BONAPARTE.”

COLONEL EUGÈNE BEAUHARNAIS TO HIS MOTHER.

“MY DEAR AND HONOURED MOTHER :

“Being detained at Lyons on business, I cannot resist my impatience to inform you that I have had the happiness to perform under the observation of Général Bonaparte an action which has met with his approval and raised me in my own estimation. When I made prisoner an Austrian lieutenant-colonel, I thought of my father; I was seen by the Général, and I knew that he would applaud me. Here were motives to exert myself in the service of my country! May I never want such encouragement; it can never cease to exercise the same powerful influence over me. Hang up this standard in your closet above my father’s portrait, to which I render homage as I also do to you. As to the standard which Hortense gave me, and the cipher which she herself embroidered, tell her I will not easily part with it. We intend to make the Austrians very liberal to us, but depend on it we shall be very niggardly to them.

“Adieu, my dear, good mother. Eight days hence I shall clap spurs to my dapple-gray, and hasten to throw myself at your feet.”

TO MADEMOISELLE HORTENSE.

“IN the woods of Fontainebleau you will find, my dear Hortense, a plant of the *Chenopodio-Morus* family, called *blète effilée*.* You will distinguish it by the peculiarity of its

* This is a species of the genus *blitum* (Linn.), commonly called strawberry spinach.

fruit, being precisely of the form and colour of the strawberry. Being one of those plants which do not easily thrive on being transplanted, you must take care to carry away a good portion of the grassy turf which surrounds it, along with the light earth with which it is nurtured. The whole must be well packed up and forwarded by Phédart's coach, which returns at short stages. Spire, my gardener, tells me that he has transplanted *blète* from its native soil into earth suited to it, and that on being cultivated it produced the common strawberry. I think this must be a mistake, but as the experiment will cost but little trouble I should like to try it."

The Empress, who was passionately fond of flowers, devoted considerable attention to the study of botany. She encouraged all who were distinguished for the cultivation of plants and flowers, among others M. Celse, whose greenhouses were the resort of elegant company, as those of M. Boursault now are. Josephine daily spent several hours with her gardeners, to whom she addressed numerous questions. By this means she acquired an extensive acquaintance with a science which is peculiarly suited to the study of women, since it enhances the charms of country life, and withdraws them from these gay scenes in which they are surrounded by so many dangers.

TO GÉNÉRAL BONAPARTE.

"I HAVE read over your letter, my dear, perhaps for the tenth time, and I must confess that the astonishment it caused

me has given way only to feelings of regret and alarm. You wish to raise up the throne of France, and that not for the purpose of seating upon it those whom the Revolution overthrew, but to place yourself upon it! You say, how enterprising, how grand, and, above all, how useful is this design! but I should say, how many obstacles oppose its execution! what sacrifices will its accomplishment demand! and, when realized, how incalculable will be its results? But let us suppose that your object were already attained, would you stop at the foundation of a new Empire? That new creation being opposed by neighbouring States would stir up war with them, and perhaps entail their ruin. Their neighbours in their turn will not behold it without alarm, or without endeavouring to gratify their revenge by checking it. And at home, how much envy and dissatisfaction will arise! how many plots must be put down, how many conspiracies punished! Kings will despise you as an upstart; subjects will hate you as an usurper, and your equals will denounce you as a tyrant. None will understand the necessity of your elevation, all will attribute it to ambition or pride. You will not want for slaves to crouch beneath your authority until, seconded by some more formidable power, they rise up to oppose you; happy will it be if poison or the poinard . . . ! But how can a wife, a friend, dwell on these dreadful anticipations!

“This brings my thoughts back to myself, about whom I should care but little were my personal interests alone concerned. But will not the throne inspire you with the wish to contract new alliances? Will you not seek to support your power by new family connections? Alas! whatever those connections may be, will they compensate for those which were first knit by corresponding fitness, and which affection promised to perpetuate? My thoughts linger on the picture which fear, may I say love, traces in the future. Your ambi-

tious project has excited my alarm, console me by the assurance of your moderation."

"TO THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

"MADAME :

"Your Majesty is about to prove to Europe that you are worthy of the high rank to which your happy circumstances have elevated you. For this you have but to cast your eyes on the name which adorns this request, and to act accordingly.

"In the society which the Vicomtesse de Beauharnais frequented, that name must often have struck her ears ; this is, of course, a sufficient recommendation to the Empress. With respect to the individual who has the honour to bear it, as her exalted rank rarely permitted her to meet the Viscountess, she thinks it necessary to trouble Your Majesty with some particulars on the subject.

"When a longer exercise of sovereign power shall have made Your Majesty acquainted with the illustrious persons conjointly with whom she is destined to share it, she will learn that among the German families most revered for antiquity and power, mine which is one of the most ancient, and was once the most powerful, is allied to every throne and to statesmen in every cabinet.

"Being descended from a collateral branch of the House of Lorraine, and connected by the female line to the Bourbons of Naples, there is no rank which I may not possibly attain, and no pretensions which I may not reasonably advance.

"Mine, however, are limited. I solicit only the place of Lady of Honour to Your Majesty. As the post of Lady of Honour is the first at Court, and as it was offered to an individual who subsequently became Queen of France, I do not

degrade myself in soliciting it, nor will it be any derogation of my dignity to exercise its functions.

"Had the situation not been promised by the late Queen, there is no doubt but that I should have filled it during her reign. By giving it to me she would have fulfilled a debt due both to propriety and relationship.

"Your Majesty, more happy than that ill-fated Queen, will fulfil her intentions by appointing me to a situation to which I have so many claims. Of this appointment I shall enjoy all the advantages, and Your Majesty all the honour.

"I have the honour to be, etc.,

"ALEXANDRINE, DUCHESSE DE LA R. B——,

"BORN PRINCESSE DE D——."

On the margin of the above letter are written the words:

"Recommended to the Emperor.

"*Signed, JOSEPHINE.*"

And in Napoleon's hand the following:

"The petitioner being too great a princess to fill the situation of Lady of Honour, we appoint her *dame d'annonce* of the Empress's palace."

And lower down in pencil:

"*This post she has accepted.*"

I have vainly sought to discover who could be the writer of this absurd letter. The situation of *dame d'annonce* was so inferior that it could not have been offered to a lady connected with the royal families of Germany, whom Napoleon was interested in conciliating, but who would have felt themselves hum-

bled by such a proposition. I therefore presume that the Empress did not communicate the Emperor's note to the "Duchesse de la R. B——, born Princesse de D——," and that the words written in pencil were a mere joke.

"TO MADEMOISELLE LENORMAND.

"YESTERDAY, on sitting down to dinner, I found under my napkin a little billet, written on gilt-edge and scented paper. I cannot understand a word of it, and I send it to you, venerable sibyl. This is the moment to ascend the sacred tripod, and to invoke either the devil or Apollo. I have heard that some poets make them one and the same; but it is not so with you and your Apollo, who, if he be a devil, is, at all events, a very agreeable one."

BILLET FOUND UNDER THE EMPRESS'S DINNER-NAPKIN.

"HE who tempts Providence will fail in his attempt. The bow too tightly drawn breaks in the hands of the hunter. Game thrives as ill in cold as in heat. Let him beware of the 23d and 31st; they are a duplicate evil. Happy his wife if she exchange seven stones for three twigs of fern or wisps of straw! Thus saith the prophet."

MADemoiselle LENORMAND'S ANSWER.

"WOULD that Your Majesty, instead of directing me to divine enigmas worthy of the almanac of Liège, would submit to me oracles proposed by the Sphinx. It is not necessary to be an Œdipus to interpret what you have sent me: my card drawer is competent to do it. My explanation is as follows:

I flatter myself that it will be found simple, clear, and conclusive.

“*To tempt Providence*, that is to say, to contemplate, to project or attempt an enterprise, is to expose oneself to the chance of failure; but to commence it with firm determination, to follow it up with proportionate means, and to support those means by resources like a strong rear-guard, is to ensure success. Apply this to His Majesty the Emperor.

“When *the bow is bent too tightly*, it breaks in the hand of the hunter, and the stag being near, he is killed by the splinters. What matter whether he fall by the arrows or the bow? The grand point is, that the hunter should be adroit enough to reach him, while he himself is without the reach of danger. Such is, I believe, the character of His Majesty's tactics.

“There is no doubt that *heat and cold are alike unfavourable to game*. Of this the heat of Syria and the frosts of Holland afford sufficient proofs. This requires no comment. We need only apply the past to the future.

“Owing to its vagueness, and the various ways in which it may be applied, the enigma relative to the 23d and 31st signifies nothing. It is perhaps a date, the number of allied Princes, the cipher of their treaty, the day on which it was signed, the numerical order of the affairs under consideration, the number of the house at which they reside, the number of votes given at the Diet, at the Senate, at the Council, some period of the week or month. I might reason, or rather non-reason to all eternity on such indefinite matters. So many and such complicated problems Cagliostro himself would not have attempted to solve. It is fate, the star—or I should rather say, the genius of the Emperor that must elucidate them.

“Your Majesty may easily imagine that the *seven stones* are the palaces you occupy, and that you are indeed happy in

exchanging those splendid abodes for the thatched roof of the poor and unfortunate on whom you bestow consolation and relief. All France would interpret this part of the prediction as I have done ; my explanation merely echoes the sentiments of Your Majesty's loving and grateful subjects.

"I remain, with profound respect, etc."

I have already observed that Her Majesty did not like predictions and fortune-tellers to be spoken of in her presence. She had the weakness sometimes to consult Mademoiselle Lenormand, though not more frequently than many ladies of rank, who, being weary of every other amusement, sought excitement in the Rue Tournon.

The sibyl of the Faubourg Saint-Germain cherishes for Her Majesty a degree of veneration and gratitude which might raise doubts of her proficiency in her art, for she ought to have foreseen that by making no disguise of an attachment which does honour to her heart, she would be likely to incur the displeasure of many of her clients, who would blush to have it known that they consulted her to learn whether they were to enjoy the favour of Madame Bonaparte.

"TO HER MAJESTY THE EMPRESS AND QUEEN.

"MADAME:

"Every tongue proclaims Your Majesty's praises, must mine alone remain silent on so gratifying a theme?

"It is said that the *lycées* are indebted for their libraries to Your Majesty's recommendation ; this is certainly very fortu-

nate for them, for those institutions which have only the title of colleges have nevertheless reason to complain.

"On this subject I argue as follows: If instruction at the *lycées* is so superior to that at the colleges as to render the qualification of the latter inferior to that of the former, what need have they for libraries? Why carry water to the river, and withhold it from the fertile but parched soil, which requires only moisture to render it productive.

"I do not, however, mean to infer that the *lycées* want no more books, but that the colleges also want some.

"The importance of this little syllogism does not arise from its regularity, but from that which Your Majesty will have the goodness to attach to it.

"There is, at all events, one man as well versed in logic as he is in everything else; should he find my reasoning conclusive, I refer to him for its explanation.

"To prove that there is nothing unreasonable in what I propose, I would suggest that if a college should be estimated as only half a *lycée* (no matter in what sense), let us have half a library, but a numerical half, and let it be my task to compensate the quantity by the quality. A very little gold will purchase many books.

"By this very reasonable arrangement we promise not to augment the number of powers hostile to the Emperor, and, joking apart, the matter is well worthy consideration. The hero who now makes Europe tremble was educated in a little provincial college.

"I am, with the greatest respect,

"Madame,

"Your Majesty's very humble and obscure subject,

"Signed, ISIDORE DEMANGIN.

"Student of Philosophy at the College of Bar.

"February 7th, 1805."

On the margin of this letter is written in the Emperor's hand:

"Referred to the consideration of the committee for superintending public education. In the meanwhile, granted to the College of Bar fifteen hundred volumes to be selected by M. Isidore Demangin.

"Signed, NAPOLEON."

This letter appears to me to deserve a place in this collection. From its style it might have been thought likely to displease Napoleon, but the Empress, knowing that he always looked back with pleasure on his youthful days, without hesitation submitted to him a demand which perhaps would not have been granted had it been couched in other terms, and had it wanted the allusion to the early education of the Emperor. He always loved to collect his old comrades about him, and several among them were his most intimate friends. Do they now remember him?

"TO MONSIEUR F. DE CH——.

"DURING my absence, my dear F——, let the acacia pavilion be cleared out, and the orangery pavilion arranged as my cabinet. I should like the the first room, which will serve as an antechamber, to be hung with a greenish-gray colour, bordered with lilac. In the centre of the panels hang my beautiful engravings of Esther, and under each, one of the portraits of the celebrated generals of the Revolution. In the middle of the room I should like a large flower-stand always filled with the flowers of the season, and in the

corner, stands with the busts of the French philosophers. I should like the bust of Rousseau to be placed between the two windows, so that the leaves and tendrils of the vine entering from the arbour may play over his head; this will be an appropriate crown for the author of 'Émile.' As to my private cabinet, let it be hung with plain lilac with a border of ranunculuses and scabiosas. The panels to be adorned with ten large engravings from the Gallery of Musée, and twenty medallions. The window curtain to be white and green, with plain gilt rods. Here must also be placed my piano, a green sofa, two *chaises-longues* also covered with green, a secretaire, a little bureau, and the large toilet-glass. Do not forget all this. In the middle a large table with fresh bouquets, the chimney ornaments to consist merely of a timepiece, together with two alabaster vases and branch candlesticks. Endeavour to combine elegance with variety, but let nothing be fantastic or extravagant, which is always repugnant to good taste. In short, my dear F——, I leave it to you to make the place a charming retreat where I may amuse myself and read . . . This is, of course, a hint that you are not to forget three hundred volumes of my small editions."

"TO MADEMOISELLE AUBERT, THE EMPRESS'S
FEMME DE CHAMBRE.

"I BEG, my dear Mdle. Aubert, that you will call on Biennais in your way back and see whether he intends at last to let me have my rouge boxes. I have not any left, as you know. Ask, also, whether the other things I ordered are ready; these ladies here are sitting with their hands folded, and I myself have nothing to do. Call also at the

'Père de Famille,' and take on my account a complete assortment of chenille and some dozens of English needles.

"You have here several commissions at once; to keep you from forgetting them, think on me. I am certain that you will acquit yourself well. Return soon."

At the Tuileries, as well as at Malmaison and Navarre, the Empress employed herself in working tapestries, and her ladies assisted in making various ornamental articles which afterwards appeared in the different Imperial residences.

"TO MONSIEUR ACHILLE DE VILLEDEUIL.

"RUE DE GRENELLE SAINT-GERMAIN, NO. 108.

"SIR,—The request you last addressed to me interferes with the archchancellor's office. If you will draw up a memorial for him and bring it to me, I sincerely promise to get the Emperor to endorse his recommendation on it, and his influence in that way is greater than mine.

"I shall feel happy, sir, in giving you this feeble testimonial of the esteem I have always entertained for you and your generous family, with whom I was well acquainted on my arrival in France. You may rely on my promises as well as on the justice of the Emperor."

M. de Villedeuil was one of the emigrants to whom the Empress's protection proved exceedingly useful. Some, though sincerely attached to the Bourbons, have not forgotten the favours of Josephine. M. de Villedeuil is one of these.

“TO THE DUC D’OTRANTE, MINISTER OF THE
POLICE.

“MONSIEUR LE DUC, — I wish young Dutertre to be provided for in some way or other whilst I continue Empress. You will soon forget him when I am no longer in power.

“I salute you, etc.”

When the Empress wrote in a tone so different from that she usually employed, she must doubtless have supposed she had some reason to complain of the Duc d’Otrante. However, the purport of her letter proves that she still relied on the Minister’s readiness to do what she wished.

During his administration, the Duc d’Otrante rendered frequent services to the emigrants; my family among others, experienced his kindness. So many persons now assail his character simply because he can do nothing more to help them, that I feel pleasure in expressing the gratitude which I am sure must be shared by numbers who affect to remember only the worst part of his conduct; those whom he obliged should bear in mind only the services they received from him. With them, at least, death should obliterate the rest.

“TO THE EMPRESS MARIA LOUISA.

“MADAME, — While you were only the second wife of the Emperor, I observed silence towards Your Majesty, but I think I may now break that silence since you have become the mother of the heir to the Empire.

"You would, perhaps, have doubted the sincerity of her whom you might have regarded as a rival, but I now offer you the congratulations of a Frenchwoman, for you have given a son to France.

"Your amiable disposition won the heart of the Emperor: your benevolence has procured for you the blessings of the unfortunate; the birth of your son will secure to you the affections of your subjects.

"It is indeed gratifying to possess the affections of a people like the French, who are endowed with so many amiable qualities, and who, to use a phrase which perfectly characterizes their disposition, *love to love*.

"This facility, but at the same time constancy, of affection, made the partizans of the old Kings of France count on keeping up a lasting feeling of regret for them. In this they have not been mistaken. Whatever turn events may take, the memory of Henri IV. will always be revered. But it must be confessed that the Revolution, though it has not had the effect of destroying public feeling, has considerably extended information, and made people less easily satisfied than before. During the reigns of their Kings the French were content with peace; now they wish for glory.

"These, madame, are the two blessings of which you are destined to give a foretaste to France; your son will permanently secure them if, to the nobler qualities of his father, he should unite the gentler virtues which adorn his august mother."

I have in the preceding volume of these Memoirs described the conduct of the Empress Josephine at the time of the birth of the King of Rome. She never said anything to us relative to this letter.

"TO THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER.

"SIRE, — I cannot repress the inclination I feel to convey to Your Majesty an expression of my gratitude. I shall never forget that no sooner had you arrived at, I will not say *entered*, Paris, than you deigned to think of me. Amidst the misfortunes that assail my country, this attention would almost console me if I could hope that it would extend to an individual whom I was once permitted to mention with pride. You, yourself, Sire, once cherished for him sentiments of august friendship. To mention those amicable feelings, which were mutual on both sides, is to hint what is due to their memory. In a heart like yours their memory can never be effaced."

CHAPTER XXX.

Pension Granted to My Daughter by a Princess. — Its Suppression. — M. Ladvocat. — Madame de Genlis. — MM. de Châteaubriand, De Barante, Villemain, Casimir Delavigne. — Last Visit to Malmaison.

WHEN I determined to publish the Memoirs of the Empress Josephine, I yielded, as I have already mentioned, to the repeated solicitations of friends who were persuaded that facts relating to that illustrious individual would excite a lively interest if related in a simple style, but with all the warmth of an affection on which time, death, and the cruel neglect I experienced after leaving Malmaison, have effected no change. The little practice I have had in writing rendered me apprehensive of the success of my work, and did not the interest of the subject account for the reception it has experienced, I should still be at a loss to what circumstance to attribute it. Be this as it may, I have now, I confess, reason to rejoice that I was prevailed on to undertake this little publication, not on account of the flattering manner in which it has been received — that I attrib-

ute solely to the indulgence naturally extended to the first essay of a woman who does not seek celebrity, since she does not disclose her name — but because it has enabled me to shew in its real light, the character of the most amiable of women, and to render justice to individuals too little known. In addition to all this, the liberality of M. Ladvoat had afforded me the means of providing for the education of a beloved daughter.

A Princess who once had reason to look forward to the same misfortunes as those which threatened my child, had for three years granted an annuity of eight hundred francs for defraying the school expenses of the object of my affections. Far from allowing my pride to reject this bounty, I received it, on the contrary, with gratitude. Indeed, I regarded it as nothing more than a just reward for the services rendered by my parents to a family which, more happy than mine, had recovered their honours and the fortune which enabled them to relieve the distresses of others. Great as was my attachment to the Bourbons, I felt happy in having an additional reason to invoke blessings on their name, and thus every step my daughter made in the progress of her education afforded me a twofold gratification. Accustomed, as I have been, to the visitation of misfortune, I need scarcely have been astonished at losing that which in my situation was a great source

of comfort to me ; yet I was, nevertheless, painfully surprised on receiving the letter which informed me that the trifling annuity of eight hundred francs was suppressed, and that the Princess seemed to regard the education of the child, in whom she had taken so much interest, as entirely finished. My daughter, however, being only in her fourteenth year, was not of an age to be removed from school, and the expense attendant on keeping her there was, in my narrow circumstances, a serious consideration. M. Ladvocat with his accustomed generosity put upon my feeble labours a price which emboldens me to hope that I may finish that which has been so well begun ; this realization of my fondest wishes will sufficiently compensate for all the fatigue and vexation I may have to encounter in the new career upon which I have entered. Before, therefore, I conclude these Memoirs, I take the opportunity of thus publicly expressing my gratitude to M. Ladvocat. All who have had any transactions with the *king of booksellers* (as he is called by his enemies in derision, and by his friends in justice), have born evidence to his estimable character ; my tribute and praise may therefore be spared. Anything that I might say in his favour would, perhaps, appear to be dictated by a sentiment which, however natural, would lessen its sincerity in the estimation of those who do not know him. The friendship of such persons as Madame de Genlis,

MM. de Châteaubriand, De Barante, Villemain, Casimir Delavigne, etc., speaks sufficiently in his favour. I must, however, beg leave to assure him that I shall never forget his disinterested conduct to me in one of the most distressing moments of my life.

I ask pardon for having so long engrossed the reader's attention by matters relating to myself personally, but every mother who peruses the above remarks will, I am sure, readily forgive them; and it is by mothers especially that I wish my feelings to be understood.

I intend to arrange in a separate volume the letters of the Empress Josephine which are in my possession, and which I found were too numerous to be all included in these Memoirs. They will be accompanied by some particulars relative to distinguished characters now living; and I trust they will meet with that favour on which I have hitherto had so much reason to congratulate myself. This correspondence, which is full of curious facts and portraits of celebrated individuals, traced with singular truth and vigour, will very shortly appear.

All that now remains to be spoken of is my last visit to Malmaison.

For the space of fourteen years I had both wished and feared to revisit the favourite retreat of Josephine. I had at various times made arrangements for an excursion thither, but I could never summon

resolution to go. I dreaded the painful feelings which I knew such a visit could not fail to excite; and I reproached myself for a weakness which made me in some measure wanting in the duty I owed to the memory of the Empress. However, on learning that the beautiful domain of Malmaison was about to be partially sold, and that it would probably soon be utterly changed or destroyed, I formed the resolution of bidding a melancholy adieu to the scene in which the Empress had spent so many happy days.

I set out from Paris on my melancholy pilgrimage alone, for I could not endure the thought of being accompanied by persons who must have been indifferent to my feelings.

On my arrival at the first gate, which was opened by a man with a wooden leg, I immediately observed the change visible at every step between what was and what had been. Instead of the numerous grenadiers of the Imperial Guard in full uniform, whom I had been accustomed to see in the pavilion, there was now only an old invalid; as though the wreck of the once brilliant army was the most appropriate guard for the ruins of the Imperial Palace!

As I advanced up the avenue leading to the château, I found myself unconsciously looking into the adjoining meadows for the flocks which I had so often admired, and which used to animate the now gloomy and deserted landscape. On entering the

courtyard I saw only an old, shabby looking porter seated on a bench, and apparently anxiously expecting to see some of the few travellers, whose visits occasionally enlivened his solitude. Where were now the throngs of carriages and laced and liveried servants? Where was the crowd of courtiers, all eager to gaze on the face of the Sovereign? Though scarcely able to speak, I asked the porter whether I might see the apartments.

"Oh, madame," he replied, "that you may soon do, for there is nothing to see."

"Nothing!" I exclaimed, in a tone of dismay, at which the man appeared not a little astonished.

"*Nothing*," he mournfully repeated, and I followed him without uttering another word.

I was soon convinced of the truth of what he had told me. All the furniture was removed, and a few chairs with dirty and tattered coverings were placed here and there in the salon, rather, I presume, to accommodate visitors, than to furnish an apartment to which they were so ill suited, and to whose former magnificence they presented so melancholy a contrast. But what were my sensations on entering the picture gallery, which was once filled with masterpieces of art. The regret I felt at seeing the ruined and deserted condition of a palace, once the model of taste and elegance, was increased by the reflection that many admirable pictures that adorned Malmai-

son were now lost to France.* Canova's superb statues were also gone; but the places on which they stood were still marked by the difference of colour in the magnificent inlaid floor. Her Majesty's velvet armchair still stood here, and the only remaining ornament of this spacious gallery was a stuffed black swan, now covered with dust, and the feathers dropping off at every touch.

Napoleon's apartment had been no more respected than any other. I returned a hasty glance towards the side where Gérard's portrait of Josephine used to hang.† But alas! that, too, had disappeared.

In the library the books were scattered here and there. I learned that they were to be sold in a few days, and that a catalogue was preparing. It is perfectly natural that Malmaison should be sold, since her heirs are minors; but it appears to me extraordinary that no wealthy private individual should have offered to become the sole purchaser of a collection of books which in a few years will become exceedingly valuable. This is evident from the value now attached to everything that once belonged to the man, who, though he could not be loved, must nevertheless be admired as the most extraordinary

* Most of them are said to have been purchased by foreigners, and the rest sent to Queen Hortense and the Duchess of Leuchtenberg.

† This splendid portrait is now at Munich. The most striking likeness I ever saw of the Empress is in the possession of the Duchesse de Rovigo. It was painted by M. Massot, of Geneva, to whose talents I have already had occasion to allude.

genius in the records of history. In one corner of the library, I observed a model of the cathedral of Strasburg in silver filagree. It had been broken in several places, the allies having thought it worth their while to carry away fragments of it. The carpet of the billiard-room had also been cut for the same purpose. It was fortunate they confined themselves to these trifling depredations, considering that they might have carried off and destroyed objects of greater value.

We ascended to the chamber in which Josephine drew her last breath. I can scarcely say what I saw, for a flood of tears immediately obscured my eyes. I should probably have been looked upon as mad had I given vent to my feelings as I approached the bed of death, which was not, as it should have been, consecrated by any sign of mourning. I therefore left the room and hastily descended to the garden, hoping that the fresh air would restore me. Here I thought I should at least find the verdure and the foliage the same as when I was an inmate of Malmaison, and I trusted that nature would compensate for all the bitter disappointments of my visit. I entered the park, but alas! it was scarcely recognizable. The rare and curious shrubs which sprung up at every step had been removed. The spot which used to be overshadowed with the beautiful rhododendron was covered with rankling weeds, while noxious vapours

were exhaled from the stagnant waters. In short, I found the park even less endurable than the castle, for there, at least, the walls stood as I had left them. Never was destruction so speedy and complete!

There are in France many honourable men who did not blush to avow their gratitude to Napoleon, who enriched them and made them the sharers of his glory. Might not one of these individuals have purchased Malmaison, and converted it into an orphan asylum? This would have been a noble and delicate way of preserving Malmaison from that total destruction that threatens it, and of rendering homage to the Empress Josephine, whose name must be ever dear to France.

Having taken a last view of the famous hothouse which was now converted into a private residence, I bade an eternal adieu to Malmaison, my visit to which proved more painful than I had even anticipated. I did indeed expect to find some traces of the respect and veneration due to Her Majesty; instead of which, it seemed as though some good fairy, after embellishing this delicious retreat, had departed, carrying away with her all that adorned it. I left the place, mournfully reflecting on the truth of the observation made by the guide on my entrance: for now, indeed, Malmaison is *nothing*!

