

# THE PRIVATE LIFE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE - V8

CONSTANT\*

PREMIER VALET DE CHAMBRE

TRANSLATED BY WALTER CLARK

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## CHAPTER XXII.

Towards the end of September the Emperor made a journey to Raab; and, as he was mounting his horse to return to his residence at Schoenbrunn, he saw the bishop a few steps from him. "Is not that the bishop?" said he to M. Jardin, who was holding his horse's head. "No, Sire, it is Soliman."—"I asked you if that was not the bishop," repeated his Majesty, pointing to the prelate. M. Jardin, intent on business, and thinking only of the Emperor's horse which bore the name of Bishop, again replied, "Sire, you forget that you rode him on the last relay." The Emperor now perceived the mistake, and broke into a laugh. I was witness at Wagram of an act which furnished a fine illustration of the Emperor's kindness of heart and consideration for others, of which I have already given several instances; for, although in the one I shall now relate, he was forced to refuse an act of clemency, his very refusal challenges admiration as an exhibition of the generosity and greatness of his soul.

A very rich woman, named Madame de Combray, who lived near Caen, allowed her chateau to be occupied by a band of royalists, who seemed to think they upheld their cause worthily by robbing diligences on the highway. She constituted herself treasurer of this band of partisans, and consigned the funds thus obtained to a pretended treasurer of Louis XVIII. Her daughter, Madame Aquet, joined this troop, and, dressed in men's clothing, showed most conspicuous bravery. Their exploits, however, were not of long duration; and pursued and overcome by superior forces, they were brought to trial, and Madame Aquet was condemned to death with her accomplices. By means of a pretended illness she obtained

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a reprieve, of which she availed herself to employ every means in her power to obtain a pardon, and finally, after eight months of useless supplications, decided to send her children to Germany to intercede with the Emperor. Her physician, accompanied by her sister and two daughters, reached Schoenbrunn just as the Emperor had gone to visit the field of Wagram, and for an entire day awaited the Emperor's return on the steps of the palace; and these children, one ten, the other twelve, years old, excited much interest. Notwithstanding this, their mother's crime was a terrible one; for although in political matters opinions may not be criminal, yet under every form of government opinions are punished, if thereby one becomes a robber and an assassin. The children, clothed in black, threw themselves at the Emperor's feet, crying, "Pardon, pardon, restore to us our mother." The Emperor raised them tenderly, took the petition from the hands of the aunt, read every word attentively, then questioned the physician with much interest, looked at the children, hesitated—but just as I, with all who witnessed this touching scene, thought he was going to pronounce her pardon, he recoiled several steps, exclaiming, "I cannot do it!" His changing color, eyes suffused with tears, and choking voice, gave evidence of the struggle through which he was passing; and witnessing this, his refusal appeared to me an act of sublime courage.

Following upon the remembrance of these violent crimes, so much the more worthy of condemnation since they were the work of a woman, who, in order to abandon herself to them, was forced to begin by trampling under foot all the gentle and modest virtues of her sex, I find recorded in my notes an act of fidelity and conjugal tenderness which well deserved a better result. The wife of an infantry colonel, unwilling to be parted from her husband, followed the march of his regiment in a coach, and on the days of battle mounted a horse and kept herself as near as possible to the line. At Friedland she saw the colonel fall, pierced by a ball, hastened to him with her servant, carried him from the ranks, and bore him away in an ambulance, though too late, for he was already dead. Her grief was silent, and no one saw her shed a tear. She offered her purse to a surgeon, and begged him to embalm her husband's corpse, which was done as well as possible under the circumstances; and she then had the corpse wrapped in bandages, placed in a box with a lid, and put in a carriage, and seating herself beside it, the heart-broken widow set out on her return to France. A grief thus repressed soon affected her mind; and at each halt she made on the journey, she shut herself up with her precious burden, drew the corpse from its bog, placed it on a bed, uncovered its face, and lavished on it the most tender caresses, talking to it as if it was living, and slept beside it. In the morning she replaced her husband in the box, and, resuming her gloomy silence, continued her route. For several days her secret remained unknown, and was discovered only a few days before she reached Paris.

The body had not been embalmed in such a manner as to preserve it long from decay; and this soon reached such a point, that, when she arrived at an inn, the horrible odor from the box aroused suspicion, and the unhappy

wife's room was entered that evening, and she was found clasping in her arms the already sadly disfigured corpse of her husband. "Silence," she cried to the frightened innkeeper. "My husband is asleep, why do you come to disturb his glorious rest?" With much difficulty the corpse was removed from the arms of the insane woman who had guarded it with such jealous care, and she was conveyed to Paris, where she afterward died, without recovering her reason for an instant.

There was much astonishment at the chateau of Schoenbrunn because the Archduke Charles never appeared there; for he was known to be much esteemed by the Emperor, who never spoke of him except with the highest consideration. I am entirely ignorant what motives prevented the prince from coming to Schoenbrunn, or the Emperor from visiting him; but, nevertheless, it is a fact, that, two or three days before his departure from Munich, his Majesty one morning attended a hunting-party, composed of several officers and myself; and that we stopped at a hunting-box called la Venerie on the road between Vienna and Bukusdorf, and on our arrival we found the Archduke Charles awaiting his Majesty, attended by a suite of only two persons. The Emperor and the archduke remained for a long while alone in the pavilion; and we did not return to Schoenbrunn until late in the evening.

On the 16th of October at noon the Emperor left this residence with his suite, composed of the grand marshal, the Duke of Frioul; Generals Rapp, Mouton, Savary, Nansouty, Durosnel and Lebrun; of three chamberlains; of M. Labbe, chief of the topographical bureau; of M. de Meneval, his Majesty's secretary, and M. Yvan; and accompanied by the Duke of Bassano, and the Duke of Cadore, then minister of foreign relations.

We arrived at Passau on the morning of the 18th; and the Emperor passed the entire day in visiting Forts Maximilian and Napoleon, and also seven or eight redoubts whose names recalled the principal battles of the campaign. More than twelve thousand men were working on these important fortifications, to whom his Majesty's visit was a fete. That evening we resumed our journey, and two days after we were at Munich.

At Augsburg, on leaving the palace of the Elector of Treves, the Emperor found in his path a woman kneeling in the dust, surrounded by four children; he raised her up and inquired kindly what she desired. The poor woman, without replying, handed his Majesty a petition written in German, which General Rapp translated. She was the widow of a German physician named Buiting, who had died a short time since, and was well known in the army from his faithfulness in ministering to the wounded French soldiers when by chance any fell into his hands. The Elector of Treves, and many persons of the Emperor's suite, supported earnestly this petition of Madame Buiting, whom her husband's death had reduced almost to poverty, and in which she besought the Emperor's aid for the children of this German physician, whose attentions had saved the lives of so many of his brave soldiers. His Majesty gave orders to pay the petitioner the first year's salary of a pension which he at once allowed her; and when

General Rapp had informed the widow of the Emperor's action, the poor woman fainted with a cry of joy.

I witnessed another scene which was equally as touching. When the Emperor was on the march to Vienna, the inhabitants of Augsburg, who had been guilty of some acts of cruelty towards the Bavarians, trembled lest his Majesty should take a terrible revenge on them; and this terror was at its height when it was learned that a part of the French army was to pass through the town.

A young woman of remarkable beauty, only a few months a widow, had retired to this place with her child in the hope of being more quiet than anywhere else, but, frightened by the approach of the troops, fled with her child in her arms. But, instead of avoiding our soldiers as she intended, she left Augsburg by the wrong gate, and fell into the midst of the advance posts of the French army. Fortunately, she encountered General Decourbe, and trembling, and almost beside herself with terror, conjured him on her knees to save her honor, even at the expense of her life, and immediately swooned away. Moved even to tears, the general showed her every attention, ordered a safe-conduct given her, and an escort to accompany her to a neighboring town, where she had stated that several of her relatives lived. The order to march was given at the same instant; and, in the midst of the general commotion which ensued, the child was forgotten by those who escorted the mother, and left in the outposts. A brave grenadier took charge of it, and, ascertaining where the poor mother had been taken, pledged himself to restore it to her at the earliest possible moment, unless a ball should carry him off before the return of the army. He made a leather pocket, in which he carried his young protege, arranged so that it was sheltered from the weather. Each time he went into battle the good grenadier dug a hole in the ground, in which he placed the little one, and returned for it when the battle was over; and though his comrades ridiculed him the first day, they could not but fail to admire the nobility of his conduct. The child escaped all danger, thanks to the incessant care of its adopted father; and, when the march to Munich was again begun, the grenadier, who was singularly attached to the little waif, almost regretted to see the moment draw near when he must restore it to its mother.

It may easily be understood what this poor woman suffered after losing her child. She besought and entreated the soldiers who escorted her to return; but they had their orders, which nothing could cause them to infringe. Immediately on her arrival she set out again on her return to Augsburg, making inquiries in all directions, but could obtain no information of her son, and at last being convinced that he was dead, wept bitterly for him. She had mourned thus for nearly six months, when the army re-passed Augsburg; and, while at work alone in her room one day, she was told that a soldier wished to see her, and had something precious to commit to her care; but he was unable to leave his corps, and must beg her to meet him on the public square. Little suspecting the happiness in store for her, she sought the grenadier, and the latter

leaving the ranks, pulled the "little good man" out of his pocket, and placed him in the arms of the poor mother, who could not believe the evidence of her own eyes. Thinking that this lady was probably not rich, this excellent man had collected a sum of money, which he had placed in one of the pockets of the little one's coat.

The Emperor remained only a short time at Munich; and the day of his arrival a courier was sent in haste by the grand marshal to M. de Lucay to inform him that his Majesty would be at Fontainebleau on the 27th of October, in the evening probably, and that the household of the Emperor, as well as that of the Empress, should be at this residence to receive his Majesty. But, instead of arriving on the evening of the 27th, the Emperor had traveled with such speed, that, on the 26th at ten o'clock in the morning, he was at the gates of the palace of Fontainebleau; and consequently, with the exception of the grand marshal, a courier, and the gate-keeper of Fontainebleau, he found no one to receive him on his descent from the carriage. This mischance, which was very natural, since it had been impossible to foresee an advance of more than a day in the time appointed, nevertheless incensed the Emperor greatly. He was regarding every one around him as if searching for some one to scold, when, finding that the courier was preparing to alight from his horse, on which he was more stuck than seated, he said to him: "You can rest to-morrow; hasten to Saint-Cloud and announce my arrival," and the poor courier recommenced his furious gallop.

This accident, which vexed his Majesty so greatly, could not be considered the fault of any one; for by the orders of the grand marshal, received from the Emperor, M. de Lucay had commanded their Majesties' service to be ready on the morning of the next day. Consequently, that evening was the earliest hour at which the service could possibly be expected to arrive; and he was compelled to wait until then.

During this time of waiting, the Emperor employed himself in visiting the new apartments that had been added to the chateau. The building in the court of the Cheval-Blanc, which had been formerly used as a military school, had been restored, enlarged, and decorated with extraordinary magnificence, and had been turned entirely into apartments of honor, in order, as his Majesty said, to give employment to the manufacturers of Lyons, whom the war deprived of any, outside market. After repeated promenades in all directions, the Emperor seated himself with every mark of extreme impatience, asking every moment what time it was, or looking at his watch; and at last ordered me to prepare writing materials, and took his seat all alone at a little table, doubtless swearing internally at his secretaries, who had not arrived.

At five o'clock a carriage came from Saint-Cloud; and as the Emperor heard it roll into the court he descended the stairs rapidly, and while a footman was opening the door and lowering the steps, he said to the persons inside: "Where is the Empress?" The answer was given that her Majesty the Empress would arrive in a quarter of an hour at most. "That

is well," said the Emperor; and turning his back, quickly remounted the stairs and entered a little study, where he prepared himself for work.

At last the Empress arrived, exactly at six o'clock. It was now dark. The Emperor this time did not go down; but listening until he learned that it was her Majesty, continued to write, without interrupting himself to go and meet her. It was the first time he had acted in this manner. The Empress found him seated in the cabinet. "Ah!" said his Majesty, "have you arrived, Madame? It is well, for I was about to set out for Saint-Cloud." And the Emperor, who had simply lifted his eyes from his work to glance at her Majesty, lowered them again, and resumed his writing. This harsh greeting, distressed Josephine exceedingly, and she attempted to excuse herself; but his Majesty replied in such a manner as to bring tears to her eyes, though he afterwards repented of this, and begged pardon of the Empress, acknowledging that he had been wrong.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

It is not, as has been stated in some Memoirs, because and as a result of the slight disagreement which I have related above, that the first idea of a divorce came to his Majesty. The Emperor thought it necessary for the welfare of France that he should have an heir of his own line; and as it was now certain that the Empress would never bear him one, he was compelled to think of a divorce. But it was by most gentle means, and with every mark of tender consideration, that he strove to bring the Empress to this painful sacrifice. He had no recourse, as has been said, to either threats or menaces, for it was to his wife's reason that he appealed; and her consent was entirely voluntary. I repeat that there was no violence on the part of the Emperor; but there was courage, resignation, and submission on that of the Empress. Her devotion to the Emperor would have made her submit to any sacrifice, she would have given her life for him; and although this separation might break her own heart, she still found consolation in the thought that by this means she would save the one she loved more than all beside from even one cause of distress or anxiety. And when she learned that the King of Rome was born, she lost sight of her own disappointment in sympathizing with the happiness of her friend; for they had always treated each other with all the attention and respect of the most perfect friendship.

The Emperor had taken, during the whole day of the 26th, only a cup of chocolate and a little soup; and I had heard him complain of hunger several times before the Empress arrived. Peace being restored, the husband and wife embraced each other tenderly, and the Empress passed on into her apartments in order to make her toilet. During this time the Emperor received Messieurs Decres and De Montalivet, whom he had summoned in the morning by a mounted messenger; and about half-past seven

the Empress reappeared, dressed in perfect taste. In spite of the cold, she had had her hair dressed with silver wheat and blue flowers, and wore a white satin polonaise, edged with swan's down, which costume was exceedingly becoming. The Emperor interrupted his work to regard her: "I did not take long at my toilet, did I?" said she, smiling; whereupon his Majesty, without replying, showed her the clock, then rose, gave her his hand, and was about to enter the dining-room, saying to Messieurs De Montalivet and Decres, "I will be with you in five minutes."—"But," said the Empress, "these gentlemen have perhaps not yet dined, as they have come from Paris."—"Ah, that is so!...." and the ministers entered the dining-room with their Majesties. But hardly had the Emperor taken his seat, than he rose, threw aside his napkin, and re-entered his cabinet, where these gentlemen were compelled to follow him, though much against their inclinations.

The day ended better than it had begun. In the evening there was a reception, not large, but most agreeable, at which the Emperor was very gay, and in excellent humor, and acted as if anxious to efface the memory of the little scene with the Empress. Their Majesties remained at Fontainebleau till the 14th of November. The King of Saxony had arrived the evening before at Paris; and the Emperor, who rode on horseback nearly all the way from Fontainebleau to Paris, repaired on his arrival to the Palace de l'Elysee. The two monarchs appeared very agreeably impressed with each other, and went in public together almost every day, and one morning early left the Tuileries on foot, each accompanied by a single escort. I was with the Emperor. They directed their steps, following the course of the stream, towards the bridge of Jena, the work on which was being rapidly carried to completion, and reached the Place de la Revolution, where fifty or sixty persons collected with the intention of accompanying the two sovereigns; but as this seemed to annoy the Emperor, agents of the police caused them to disperse. When he had reached the bridge, his Majesty examined the work attentively; and finding some defects in the construction, had the architect called, who admitted the correctness of his observations, although, in order to convince him, the Emperor had to talk for some time, and often repeated the same explanations. His Majesty, turning then towards the King of Saxony, said to him, "You see, my cousin, that the master's eye is necessary everywhere."—"Yes," replied the King of Saxony; "especially an eye so well trained as your Majesty's."

We had not been long at Fontainebleau, when I noticed that the Emperor in the presence of his august spouse was preoccupied and ill at ease. The same uneasiness was visible on the countenance of the Empress; and this state of constraint and mutual embarrassment soon became sufficiently evident to be remarked by all, and rendered the stay at Fontainebleau extremely sad and depressing. At Paris the presence of the King of Saxony made some diversion; but the Empress appeared more unhappy than ever, which gave rise to numerous conjectures, but as for me, I knew only too well the cause of it all. The Emperor's brow became more furrowed

with care each day, until the 30th of November arrived.

On that day the dinner was more silent than ever. The Empress had wept the whole day; and in order to conceal as far as possible her pallor, and the redness of her eyes, wore a large white hat tied under her chin, the brim of which concealed her face entirely. The Emperor sat in silence, his eyes fastened on his plate, while from time to time convulsive movements agitated his countenance; and if he happened to raise his eyes, glanced stealthily at the Empress with unmistakable signs of distress. The officers of the household, immovable as statues, regarded this painful and gloomy scene with sad anxiety; while the whole repast was simply a form, as their Majesties touched nothing, and no sound was heard but the regular movement of plates placed and carried away, varied sadly by the monotonous tones of the household officers, and the tinkling sound made by the Emperor's striking his knife mechanically on the edge of his glass. Once only his Majesty broke the silence by a deep sigh, followed by these words addressed to one of the officers: "What time is it?" An aimless question of the Emperor's, it seemed, for he did not hear, or at any rate did not seem to hear, the answer; but almost immediately he rose from the table, and the Empress followed him with slow steps, and her handkerchief pressed against her lips as if to suppress her sobs. Coffee was brought, and, according to custom, a page presented the waiter to the Empress that she might herself pour it out; but the Emperor took it himself, poured the coffee in the cup, and dissolved the sugar, still regarding the Empress, who remained standing as if struck with a stupor. He drank, and returned the cup to the page; then gave a signal that he wished to be alone, and closed the door of the saloon. I remained outside seated by the door; and soon no one remained in the dining-room except one of the prefects of the palace, who walked up and down with folded arms, foreseeing, as well as I, terrible events. At the end of a few moments I heard cries, and sprang up; just then the Emperor opened the door quickly, looked out, and saw there no one but us two. The Empress lay on the floor, screaming as if her heart were breaking: "No; you will not do it! You would not kill me!" The usher of the room had his back turned. I advanced towards him; he understood, and went out. His Majesty ordered the person who was with me to enter, and the door was again closed. I have since learned that the Emperor requested him to assist him in carrying the Empress to her apartment. "She has," he said, "a violent nervous attack, and her condition requires most prompt attention." M. de B— with the Emperor's assistance raised the Empress in his arms; and the Emperor, taking a lamp from the mantel, lighted M. de B— along the passage from which ascended the little staircase leading to the apartments of the Empress. This staircase was so narrow, that a man with such a burden could not go down without great risk of falling; and M. de B—, having called his Majesty's attention to this, he summoned the keeper of the portfolio, whose duty it was to be always at the door of the Emperor's cabinet which opened on this staircase, and gave him the light, which was no longer needed, as the lamps had just been lighted. His Majesty passed in front of the keeper, who still held the light, and carrying the feet of the Empress himself,

descended the staircase safely with M. de B—; and they thus reached the bedroom. The Emperor rang for her women, and when they entered, retired with tears in his eyes and every sign of the deepest emotion. This scene affected him so deeply that he said to M. de B— in a trembling, broken tone, some words which he must never reveal under any circumstances. The Emperor's agitation must have been very great for him to have informed M. de B— of the cause of her Majesty's despair, and to have told him that the interests of France and of the Imperial Dynasty had done violence to his heart, and the divorce had become a duty, deplorable and painful, but none the less a duty.

Queen Hortense and M. Corvisart soon reached the Empress, who passed a miserable night. The Emperor also did not sleep, and rose many times to ascertain Josephine's condition. During the whole night her Majesty did not utter a word. I have never witnessed such grief.

Immediately after this, the King of Naples, the King of Westphalia, the King of Wurtemberg, and the king and princesses of the Imperial family, arrived at Paris to be present at the fetes given by the city of Paris to his Majesty in commemoration of the victories and the pacification of Germany, and at the same time to celebrate the anniversary of the coronation. The session of the legislative corps was also about to open. It was necessary, in the interval between the scene which I have just described and the day on which the decree of divorce was signed, that the Empress should be present on all these occasions, and attend all these fetes, under the eyes of an immense crowd of people, at a time when solitude alone could have in any degree alleviated her sorrow; it was also necessary that she should cover up her face with rouge in order to conceal her pallor and the signs of a month passed in tears. What tortures she endured, and how much she must have bewailed this elevation, of which nothing remained to her but the necessity of concealing her feelings!

On the 3d of December their Majesties repaired to Notre Dame, where a 'Te Deum' was sung; after which the Imperial cortege marched to the palace of the Corps Legislatif, and the opening of the session was held with unusual magnificence. The Emperor took his place amidst inexpressible enthusiasm, and never had his appearance excited such bursts of applause: even the Empress was more cheerful for an instant, and seemed to enjoy these proofs of affection for one who was soon to be no longer her husband; but when he began to speak she relapsed into her gloomy reflections.

It was almost five o'clock when the cortege returned to the Tuileries, and the Imperial banquet was to take place at half-past seven. During this interval, a reception of the ambassadors was held, after which the guests passed on to the gallery of Diana.

The Emperor held a grand dining in his coronation robes, and wearing his plumed hat, which he did not remove for an instant. He ate more than was

his custom, notwithstanding the distress under which he seemed to be laboring, glanced around and behind him every moment, causing the grand chamberlain continually to bend forward to receive orders which he did not give. The Empress was seated in front of him, most magnificently dressed in an embroidered robe blazing with diamonds; but her face expressed even more suffering than in the morning.

On the right of the Emperor was seated the King of Saxony, in a white uniform with red facings, and collar richly embroidered in silver, wearing a false cue of prodigious length.

By the side of the King of Saxony was the King of Westphalia, Jerome Bonaparte, in a white satin tunic, and girdle ornamented with pearls and diamonds, which reached almost up to his arms. His neck was bare and white, and he wore no whiskers and very little beard; a collar of magnificent lace fell over his shoulders; and a black velvet cap ornamented with white plumes, which was the most elegant in the assembly, completed this costume. Next him was the King of Wurtemberg with his enormous stomach, which forced him to sit some distance from the table; and the King of Naples, in so magnificent a costume that it might almost be considered extravagant, covered with crosses and stars, who played with his fork, without eating or drinking.

On the right of the Empress was Madame Mere, the Queen of Westphalia, the Princess Borghese, and Queen Hortense, pale as the Empress, but rendered only more beautiful by her sadness, her face presenting a striking contrast on this occasion to that of the Princess Pauline, who never appeared in better spirits. Princess Pauline wore an exceedingly handsome toilet; but this did not increase the charms of her person nearly so much as that worn by the Queen of Holland, which, though simple, was elegant and full of taste.

Next day a magnificent fete was held at the Hotel de Ville, where the Empress displayed her accustomed grace and kind consideration. This was the last time she appeared on occasions of ceremony.

A few days after all these rejoicings, the Vice-king of Italy, Eugene de Beauharnais, arrived, and learned from the lips of the Empress herself the terrible measure which circumstances were about to render necessary. This news overcame him: agitated and despairing, he sought his Majesty; and, as if he could not believe what he had just heard asked the Emperor if it was true that a divorce was about to take place. The Emperor made a sign in the affirmative, and, with deep grief depicted on his countenance, held out his hand to his adopted son. "Sire, allow me to quit your service."—"What!"—"Yes, Sire; the son of one who is no longer Empress cannot remain vice-king. I wish to accompany my mother to her retreat, and console her."—"Do you wish to leave me, Eugene? You? Ah, you do not know how imperious are the reasons which force me to pursue such a course. And if I obtain this son, the object of my most cherished

wishes, this son who is so necessary to me, who will take my place with him when I shall be absent? Who will be a father to him when I die? Who will rear him, and who will make a man of him?" Tears filled the Emperor's eyes as he pronounced these words; he again took Eugene's hand, and drawing him to his arms, embraced him tenderly. I did not hear the remainder of this interesting conversation.

At last the fatal day arrived; it was the 16th of December. The Imperial family were assembled in ceremonial costume, when the Empress entered in a simple white dress, entirely devoid of ornament; she was pale, but calm, and leaned on the arm of Queen Hortense, who was equally as pale, and much more agitated than her august mother. The Prince de Beauharnais stood beside the Emperor, and trembled so violently that it was thought he would fall every moment. When the Empress entered, Count Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely read the act of separation.

This was heard in the midst of profound silence, and the deepest concern was depicted on every face. The Empress appeared calmer than any one else in the assemblage, although tears incessantly flowed from her eyes. She was seated in an armchair in the midst of the saloon, resting her elbow on a table, while Queen Hortense stood sobbing behind her. The reading of the act ended, the Empress rose, dried her eyes, and in a voice which was almost firm, pronounced the words of assent, then seated herself in a chair, took a pen from the hand of M. Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely, and signed the act. She then withdrew, leaning on the arm of Queen Hortense; and Prince Eugene endeavored to retire at the same moment through the cabinet, but his strength failed, and he fell insensible between the two doors. The cabinet usher immediately raised him up, and committed him to the care of his aide-de-camp, who lavished on him every attention which his sad condition demanded.

During this terrible ceremony the Emperor uttered not a word, made not a gesture, but stood immovable as a statue, his gaze fixed and almost wild, and remained silent and gloomy all day. In the evening, when he had just retired, as I was awaiting his last orders, the door opened, and the Empress entered, her hair in disorder, and her countenance showing great agitation. This sight terrified me. Josephine (for she was now no more than Josephine) advanced towards the Emperor with a trembling step, and when she reached him, paused, and weeping in the most heartrending manner, threw herself on the bed, placed her arms around the Emperor's neck, and lavished on him most endearing caresses. I cannot describe my emotions. The Emperor wept also, sat up and pressed Josephine to his heart, saying to her, "Come, my good Josephine, be more reasonable! Come, courage, courage; I will always be your friend." Stifled by her sobs, the Empress could not reply; and there followed a silent scene, in which their tears and sobs flowed together, and said more than the tenderest expressions could have done. At last his Majesty, recovering from this momentary forgetfulness as from a dream, perceived that I was there, and said to me in a voice choked with tears, "Withdraw, Constant." I obeyed, and went into the adjoining saloon; and an hour after Josephine

passed me, still sad and in tears, giving me a kind nod as she passed. I then returned to the sleeping-room to remove the light as usual; the Emperor was silent as death, and so covered with the bedclothes that his face could not be seen.

The next morning when I entered the Emperor's room he did not mention this visit of the Empress; but I found him suffering and dejected, and sighs which he could not repress issued from his breast. He did not speak during the whole time his toilet lasted, and as soon as it was completed entered his cabinet. This was the day on which Josephine was to leave the Tuileries for Malmaison, and all persons not engaged in their duties assembled in the vestibule to see once more this dethroned empress whom all hearts followed in her exile. They looked at her without daring to speak, as Josephine appeared, completely veiled, one hand resting on the shoulder of one of her ladies, and the other holding a handkerchief to her eyes. A concert of inexpressible lamentations arose as this adored woman crossed the short space which separated her from her carriage, and entered it without even a glance at the palace she was—quitting—quitting forever;—the blinds were immediately lowered, and the horses set off at full speed.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

The marriage of the Emperor to Marie Louise was the first step in a new career. He flattered himself that it would be as glorious as that he had just brought to a close, but it was to be far otherwise. Before entering on a recital of the events of the year 1810, I shall narrate some recollections, jotted down at random, which, although I can assign them no precise date, were, nevertheless, anterior to the period we have now reached.

The Empress Josephine had long been jealous of the beautiful Madame Gazani, one of her readers, and treated her coldly; and when she complained to the Emperor, he spoke to Josephine on the subject, and requested her to show more consideration for her reader, who deserved it on account of her attachment to the person of the Empress, and added that she was wrong in supposing that there was between Madame Gazani and himself the least liaison. The Empress, without being convinced by this last declaration of the Emperor, had nevertheless become much more cordial to Madame Gazani, when one morning the Emperor, who apparently was afraid the beautiful Genoese might obtain some ascendancy over her, suddenly entered the Empress's apartment, and said to her, "I do not wish to see Madame Gazani here longer; she must return to Italy." This time it was the good Josephine who defended her reader. There were already rumors of a divorce; and the Empress remarked to his Majesty, "You know well, my friend, that the best means of being rid of Madame Gazani's

presence is to allow her to remain with me. Let me keep her, then. We can weep together; she and I understand each other well.”

From this time the Empress was a firm friend of Madame Gazani, who accompanied her to Malmaison and Navarre. What increased the kind feelings of the Empress for this lady was that she thought her distressed by the Emperor’s inconstancy. For my part, I have always believed that Madame Gazani’s attachment to the Emperor was sincere, and her pride must have suffered when she was dismissed; but she had no difficulty in consoling herself in the midst of the homage and adoration which naturally surrounded such a pretty woman.

The name of the Empress Josephine recalls two anecdotes which the Emperor himself related to me. The outrageous extravagance in the Empress’s household was a continual vexation to him, and he had dismissed several furnishers of whose disposition to abuse Josephine’s ready credulity he had ample proof.

One morning he entered the Empress’s apartments unannounced, and found there assembled several ladies holding a secret toilet council, and a celebrated milliner making an official report as to all the handsomest and most elegant novelties. She was one of the very persons whom the Emperor had expressly forbidden to enter the palace; and he did not anticipate finding her there. Yet he made no outburst; and Josephine, who knew him better than any one else, was the only one who understood the irony of his look as he retired, saying, ”Continue ladies; I am sorry to have disturbed you.” The milliner, much astonished that she was not put rudely out of the door, hastened to retire; but when she reached the last step of the stairs leading to the apartments of her Majesty the Empress, she encountered an agent of the police, who requested her as politely as possible to enter a cab which awaited her in the Court of the Carrousel. In vain she protested that she much preferred walking; the agent, who had received precise instructions, seized her arm in such a manner as to prevent all reply, and she was obliged to obey, and to take in this unpleasant company the road to Bicetre.

Some one related to the Emperor that this arrest had caused much talk in Paris, and that he was loudly accused of wishing to restore the Bastille; that many persons had visited the prisoner, and expressed their sympathy, and there was a procession of carriages constantly before the prison.

His Majesty took no notice of this, and was much amused by the interest excited in this seller of topknots, as he called her. ”I will,” said his Majesty on this subject, ”let the gossips talk, who think it a point of honor to ruin themselves for gewgaws; but I want this old Jewess to learn that I put her inside because she had forgotten that I told her to stay outside.”

Another celebrated milliner also excited the surprise and anger of his

Majesty one day by observations which no one in France except this man would have had the audacity to make. The Emperor, who was accustomed, as I have said, to examine at the end of every month the accounts of his household, thought the bill of the milliner in question exorbitant, and ordered me to summon him. I sent for him; and he came in less than ten minutes, and was introduced into his Majesty's apartment while he was at his toilet. "Monsieur," said the Emperor, his eyes fixed on the account, "your prices are ridiculous, more ridiculous, if possible, than the silly, foolish people who think they need your goods. Reduce this to a reasonable amount or I will do it myself." The merchant, who held in his hand the duplicate of his bill, began to explain article by article the price of his goods, and concluded the somewhat long narration with a mild surprise that the sum total was no more. The Emperor, whom I was dressing during all this harangue, could hardly restrain his impatience; and I had already foreseen that this singular scene would end unpleasantly, when the milliner filled up the measure of his assurance by taking the unparalleled liberty of remarking to his Majesty that the sum allowed for her Majesty's toilet was insufficient, and that there were simple citizens' wives who spent more than that. I must confess that at this last impertinence I trembled for the shoulders of this imprudent person, and watched the Emperor's movements anxiously. Nevertheless, to my great astonishment, he contented himself with crumpling in his hand the bill of the audacious milliner, and, his arms folded on his breast, made two steps towards him, pronouncing this word only, "Really!" with such an accent and such a look that the merchant rushed to the door, and took to his heels without waiting for a settlement.

The Emperor did not like me to leave the chateau, as he wished always to have me within call, even when my duties were over and he did not need me; and I think it was with this idea of detaining me that his Majesty several times gave me copying to do. Sometimes, also, the Emperor wished notes to be taken while he was in bed or in his bath, and said to me, "Constant, take a pen and write;" but I always refused, and went to summon M. de Meneval. I have already stated that the misfortunes of the Revolution had caused my education to be more imperfect than it should have been; but even had it been as good as it is defective, I much doubt whether I would ever have been able to write from the Emperor's dictation. It was no easy thing to fill this office, and required that one should be well accustomed to it; for he spoke quickly, all in one breath, made no pause, and was impatient when obliged to repeat.

In order to have me always at hand, the Emperor gave me permission to hunt in the Park of Saint-Cloud, and was kind enough to remark that since I was very fond of hunting, in granting me this privilege he was very glad to have combined my pleasure with his need of me. I was the only person to whom permission was given to hunt in the park. At the same time the Emperor made me a present of a handsome double-barreled gun which had been presented to him at Liege, and which I have still in my possession. His Majesty himself did not like double-barreled guns, and used in preference the simple, small guns which had belonged to Louis

XVI., and on which this monarch, who was an excellent gunsmith, had worked, it is said, with his own hands.

The sight of these guns often led the Emperor to speak of Louis XVI., which he never did except in terms of respect and pity. "That unfortunate prince," said the Emperor, "was good, wise, and learned. At another period he would have been an excellent king, but he was worth nothing in a time of revolution. He was lacking in resolution and firmness, and could resist neither the foolishness nor the insolence of the Jacobins. The courtiers delivered him up to the Jacobins, and they led him to the scaffold. In his place I would have mounted my horse, and, with a few concessions on one side, and a few cracks of my whip on the other, I would have reduced things to order."

When the diplomatic corps came to pay their respects to the Emperor at Saint-Cloud (the same custom was in use at the Tuileries), tea, coffee, chocolate, or whatever these gentlemen requested, was served in the saloon of the ambassadors. M. Colin, steward controller, was present at this collation, which was served by the domestics of the service.

There was at Saint-Cloud an apartment which the Emperor fancied very much; it opened on a beautiful avenue of chestnut-trees in the private park, where he could walk at any hour without being seen. This apartment was surrounded with full-length portraits of all the princesses of the Imperial family, and was called the family salon. Their Highnesses were represented standing, surrounded by their children; the Queen of Westphalia only was seated. She had, as I have said, a very fine bust, but the rest of her figure was ungraceful. Her Majesty the Queen of Naples was represented with her four children; Queen Hortense with only one, the oldest of her living sons; the Queen of Spain with her two daughters; Princess Eliza with hers, dressed like a boy; the Vice-Queen alone, having no child at the time this portrait was made; Princess Pauline was also alone.

The theater and hunting were my chief amusements at Saint-Cloud. During my stay at this chateau I received a visit from a distant cousin whom I had not seen for many years. All that he had heard of the luxury which surrounded the Emperor, and the magnificence of the court, had vividly excited his curiosity, which I took pleasure in gratifying; and he was struck with wonder, at every step. One evening when there was a play at the chateau, I took him into my box, which was near the pit; and the view which the hall offered when filled so delighted my cousin, that I was obliged to name each personage in order to satisfy his insatiable curiosity, which took them all in succession, one by one. It was a short time before the marriage of the Emperor to the Archduchess of Austria, and the court was more brilliant than ever. I showed my cousin in succession their Majesties, the King and Queen of Westphalia, the King and Queen of Naples, the Queen of Holland, King of Bavaria, their Highnesses the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Prince and Princess Borghese, the Princess of Baden, the Grand Duke of Wurzburg, etc., besides the

numerous dignitaries, princes, marshals, ambassadors, etc., by whom the hall was filled. My cousin was in ecstasy, and thought himself at least a foot taller from being in the midst of this gilded multitude, and consequently paid no attention to the play, being much more interested in the interior of the hall; and when we left the theater could not tell me what piece had been played. His enthusiasm, however, did not carry him so far as to make him forget the incredible tales that had been related to him about the pickpockets of the capital, and the recommendations which had been made to him on this subject. In the promenades at the theater, in every assemblage whatever, my cousin watched with anxious solicitude over his purse, watch, and handkerchief; and this habitual prudence did not abandon him even at the court theater, for just as we were leaving our box, to mingle with the brilliant crowd which came out of the pit and descended from the boxes, he said to me with the utmost coolness, covering with his hand his chain and the seals of his watch, "After all, it is well to take precautions; one does not know every one here."

At the time of his marriage the Emperor was more than ever overwhelmed with petitions, and granted, as I shall relate farther on, a large number of pardons and petitions.

All petitions sent to the Emperor were handed by him to the aide-de-camp on duty, who carried them to his Majesty's cabinet, and received orders to make a report on them the next day; and not even as many as ten times did I find any petitions in his Majesty's pockets, though I always examined them carefully, and even these rare instances were owing to the fact that the Emperor had no aide-de-camp near him when they were presented. It is then untrue, as has been so often said and written, that the Emperor placed in a private pocket, which was called the good pocket, the petitions he wished to grant, without even examining them. All petitions which deserved it received an answer, and I remember that I personally presented a large number to his Majesty; he did not put these in his pocket, and in almost every instance I had the happiness of seeing them granted. I must, however, make an exception of some which I presented for the Cerf-Berr brothers, who claimed payment for supplies furnished the armies of the republic; for to them the Emperor was always inexorable. I was told that this was because Messieurs Cerf-Berr had refused General Bonaparte a certain sum which he needed during the campaign of Italy.

These gentlemen interested me deeply in their cause; and I several times presented their petition to his Majesty, and in spite of the care I took to place it in his Majesty's hands only when he was in good humor, I received no reply. I nevertheless continued to present the petition, though I perceived that when the Emperor caught a glimpse of it he always became angry; and at length one morning, just as his toilet was completed, I handed him as usual his gloves, handkerchief, and snuff-box, and attached to it again this unfortunate paper. His Majesty passed on into his cabinet, and I remained in the room attending to my duties, and

while busied with these saw the Emperor re-enter, a paper in his hand. He said to me, "Come, Constant, read this; you will see that you are mistaken, and the government owes nothing to the Cerf-Berr brothers; so say nothing more to me about it; they are regular Arabs." I threw my eyes on the paper, and read a few words obediently; and though I understood almost nothing of it, from that moment I was certain that the claim of these gentlemen would never be paid. I was grieved at this, and knowing their disappointment, made them an offer of services which they refused. The Cerf-Berr brothers, notwithstanding my want of success, were convinced of the zeal I had manifested in their service, and thanked me warmly. Each time I addressed a petition to the Emperor, I saw M. de Meneval, whom I begged to take charge of it. He was very obliging, and had the kindness to inform me whether my demands could hope for success; and he told me that as for the Cerf-Berr brothers, he did not think the Emperor would ever compensate them.

In fact, this family, at one time wealthy, but who had lost an immense patrimony in advances made to the Directory, never received any liquidation of these claims, which were confided to a man of great honesty, but too much disposed to justify the name given him.

Madame Theodore Cerf-Berr on my invitation had presented herself several times with her children at Rambouillet and Saint-Cloud, to beseech the Emperor to do her justice. This respectable mother of a family whom nothing could dismay, again presented herself with the eldest of her daughters at Compiègne. She awaited the Emperor in the forest, and throwing herself in the midst of the horses, succeeded in handing him her petition; but this time what was the result? Madame and Mademoiselle Cerf-Berr had hardly re-entered the hotel where they were staying, when an officer of the secret police came and requested them to accompany him. He made them enter a mean cart filled with straw, and conducted them under the escort of two gens d'armes to the prefecture of police at Paris, where they were forced to sign a contract never to present themselves again before the Emperor, and on this condition were restored to liberty.

About this time an occasion arose in which I was more successful. General Lemarrois, one of the oldest of his Majesty's aides-de-camp, a soldier of well-known courage, who won all hearts by his excellent qualities, was for some time out of favor with the Emperor, and several times endeavored to obtain an audience with him; but whether it was that the request was not made known to his Majesty, or he did not wish to reply, M. Lemarrois received no answer. In order to settle the matter he conceived the idea of addressing himself to me, entreating me to present his petition at an opportune moment. I did this, and had the happiness to succeed; and in consequence M. Lemarrois obtained an audience with such gratifying results that a short time after he obtained the governorship of Magdeburg.

The Emperor was absent-minded, and often forgot where he had put the

petitions which were handed to him, and thus they were sometimes left in his coats, and when I found them there I carried them to his Majesty's cabinet and handed them to M. de Meneval or M. Fain; and often, too, the papers for which he was hunting were found in the apartments of the Empress. Sometimes the Emperor gave me papers to put away, and those I placed in a box of which I alone had the key. One day there was a great commotion in the private apartments over a paper which could not be found. These were the circumstances:

Near the Emperor's cabinet was a small room in which the secretaries stayed, furnished with a desk, on which notes or petitions were—often placed. This room was usually occupied by the cabinet usher, and the Emperor was accustomed to enter it if he wished to hold a private conversation without being overheard by the secretaries. When the Emperor entered this room the usher withdrew and remained outside the door; he was responsible for everything in this room, which was never opened except by express orders from his Majesty.

Marshal Bessieres had several days before presented to the Emperor a request for promotion from a colonel of the army which he had warmly supported. One morning the marshal entered the little room of which I have just spoken, and finding his petition already signed lying on the desk, he carried it off, without being noticed by my wife's uncle who was on duty. A few hours after, the Emperor wished to examine this petition again, and was very sure he had left it in this small room; but it was not there, and it was thought that the usher must have allowed some one to enter without his Majesty's orders. Search was made everywhere in this room and in the Emperor's cabinet, and even in the apartments of the Empress, and at last it was necessary to announce to his Majesty that the search had been in vain; whereupon the Emperor gave way to one of those bursts of anger which were so terrible though fortunately so rare, which terrified the whole chateau, and the poor usher received orders never to appear in his sight again. At last Marshal Bessieres, having been told of this terrible commotion, came to accuse himself. The Emperor was appeased, the usher restored to favor, and everything forgotten; though each one was more careful than ever that nothing should be disturbed, and that the Emperor should find at his finger's end whatever papers he needed.

The Emperor would not allow any one to be introduced without his permission, either into the Empress's apartments or his own; and this was the one fault for which the people of the household could not expect pardon. Once, I do not exactly remember when, the wife of one of the Swiss Guard allowed one of her lovers to enter the apartments of the Empress; and this unfortunate woman, without the knowledge of her imprudent mistress, took in soft wax an impression of the key of the jewel-box which I have already mentioned as having belonged to Queen Marie Antoinette, and, by means of a false key made from this impression, succeeded in stealing several articles of jewelry. The police soon discovered the author of the robbery who was punished as he deserved,

though another person was also punished who did not deserve it, for the poor husband lost his place.

## CHAPTER XXV

After his divorce from the Empress Josephine, the Emperor appeared much preoccupied; and as it was known that he thought of marrying again, all persons at the chateau and in his Majesty's service were greatly concerned about this marriage, though all our conjectures concerning the princess destined to share the Imperial crown proved to be wrong. Some spoke of a Russian princess, while others said the Emperor would marry none but a French woman; but no one thought of an Austrian archduchess. When the marriage had been decided, nothing was spoken of at the court but the youth, grace, and native goodness of the new Empress. The Emperor was very gay, and paid more attention to his toilet, giving me orders to renew his wardrobe, and to order better fitting coats, made in a more modern style. The Emperor also sat for his portrait, which the Prince de Neuchatel carried to Marie Louise; and the Emperor received at the same time that of his young wife, with which he appeared delighted.

The Emperor, in order to win Marie Louise's affection, did more undignified things than he had ever done for any woman. For instance, one day when he was alone with Queen Hortense and the Princess Stephanie, the latter mischievously asked him if he knew how to waltz; and his Majesty replied that he had never been able to go beyond the first lesson, because after two or three turns he became so dizzy that he was compelled to stop. "When I was at l'ecole militaire," added the Emperor, "I tried again and again to overcome dizziness which waltzing produced, but I could not succeed. Our dancing-master having advised us, in learning to waltz, to take a chair in our arms instead of a lady, I never failed to fall with the chair, which I pressed so lovingly that it broke; and thus the chairs in my room, and that of two or three of my companions, were destroyed, one after the other." This tale told in the most animated and amusing manner by his Majesty excited bursts of laughter from the two princesses.

When this hilarity had somewhat subsided, Princess Stephanie returned to the charge, saying, "It really is a pity that your Majesty does not know how to waltz, for the Germans are wild over waltzing, and the Empress will naturally share the taste of her compatriots; she can have no partner but the Emperor, and thus she will be deprived of a great pleasure through your Majesty's fault."—"You are right!" replied the Emperor; "well, give me a lesson, and you will have a specimen of my skill." Whereupon he rose, took a few turns with Princess Stephanie, humming the air of the Queen of Prussia; but he could not take more than two or three turns, and even this he did so awkwardly that it increased

the amusement of these ladies. Then the Princess of Baden stopped, saying, "Sire, that is quite enough to convince me that you will never be anything but a poor pupil. You were made to give lessons, not to take them."

Early in March the Prince de Neuchatel set out for Vienna commissioned to officially request the hand of the Empress in marriage. The Archduke Charles, as proxy of the Emperor, married the Archduchess Marie Louise, and she set out at once for France, the little town of Brannan, on the frontier between Austria and Bavaria, having been designated as the place at which her Majesty was to pass into the care of a French suite. The road from Strasburg was soon filled with carriages conveying to Brannan. the household of the new Empress. Most of these ladies had passed from the household of the Empress Josephine into that of Marie Louise.

The Emperor wished to see for himself if the trousseau and wedding presents intended for his new wife were worthy of him and of her, consequently all the clothing and linen were brought to the Tuileries, spread out before him, and packed under his own eyes. The good taste and elegance of each article were equaled only by the richness of the materials. The furnishers and modistes of Paris had worked according to models sent from Vienna; and when these models were presented to the Emperor he took one of the shoes, which were remarkably small, and with it gave me a blow on the cheek in the form of a caress. "See, Constant," said his Majesty, "that is a shoe of good augury. Have you ever seen a foot like that? This is made to be held in the hand."

Her Majesty the Queen of Naples had been sent to Brannan, by the Emperor to receive the Empress. Queen Caroline, of whom the Emperor once said that she was a man among her sisters, as Prince Joseph was a woman among his brothers, mistook, it is said, the timidity of Marie Louise for weakness, and thought that she would only have to speak and her young sister-in-law would hasten to obey. On her arrival at Brannan the formal transfer was solemnly made; and the Empress bade farewell to all her Austrian household, retaining in her service only her first lady of honor, Madame de Lajanski, who had reared her and never been absent from her. Etiquette required that the household of the Empress should be entirely French, and the orders of the Emperor were very precise in this regard; but I do not know whether it is true, as has been stated, that the Empress had demanded and obtained from the Emperor permission to retain for a year this lady of honor. However that may be, the Queen of Naples thought it to her interest to remove a person whose influence over the mind of the Empress she so much feared; and as the ladies of the household of her Imperial Majesty were themselves eager to be rid of the rivalry of Madame de Lajanski, and endeavored to excite still more the jealousy of her Imperial highness, a positive order was demanded from the Emperor, and Madame de Lajanski was sent back from Munich to Vienna. The Empress obeyed without complaint, but knowing who had instigated the blow, cherished a profound resentment against her Majesty the Queen of Naples. The Empress traveled only by short stages, and was welcomed by

fetes in each town through which she passed. Each day the Emperor sent her a letter from his own hand, and she replied regularly. The first letters of the Empress were very short, and probably cold, for the Emperor said nothing about them; but afterwards they grew longer and gradually more affectionate, and the Emperor read them in transports of delight, awaiting the arrival of these letters with the impatience of a lover twenty years of age, and always saying the couriers traveled slowly, although they broke down their horses.

The Emperor returned from the chase one day holding in his hands two pheasants which he had himself killed, and followed by footmen bearing in their hands the rarest flowers from the conservatory of Saint-Cloud. He wrote a note, and immediately said to his first page, "In ten minutes be ready to enter your carriage. You will find there this package which you will give with your own hand to her Majesty the Empress, with the accompanying letter. Above all do not spare the horses; go as fast as possible, and fear nothing. The Duke of Vicenza shall say nothing to you." The young man asked nothing better than to obey his Majesty; and strong in this authority, which gave him perfect liberty, he did not grudge drink money to the postilions, and in twenty-four hours had reached Strasburg and delivered his message.

I do not know whether he received a reprimand from the grand equerry on his return; but if there was any cause for this, the latter would not have failed to bestow it, in spite of the Emperor's assurance to the first page. The Duke of Vicenza had organized and kept in admirable order the service of the stables, where nothing was done except by his will, which was most absolute; and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the Emperor himself could change an order which the grand equerry had given. For instance, his Majesty was one day en route to Fontainebleau, and being very anxious to arrive quickly, gave orders to the outrider who regulated the gait of the horses, to go faster. This order he transmitted to the Duke of Vicenza whose carriage preceded that of the Emperor; and finding that the grand equerry paid no attention to this order, the Emperor began to swear, and cried to the outrider through the door, "Let my carriage pass in front, since those in front will not go on." The outriders and postilions were about to execute this maneuver when the grand equerry also put his head out of the door and exclaimed, "Keep to a trot, the first man who gallops I will dismiss on arriving." It was well known that he would keep his word, so no one dared to pass, and his carriage continued to regulate the pace of the others. On reaching Fontainebleau the Emperor demanded of the Duke of Vicenza an explanation of his conduct. "Sire," replied the duke to his Majesty, "when you allow me a larger sum for the expenses of the stables, you can kill your horses at your pleasure."

The Emperor cursed every moment the ceremonials and fetes which delayed the arrival of his young wife. A camp had been formed near Soissons for the reception of the Empress. The Emperor was now at Compiègne, where he made a decree containing several clauses of benefits and indulgences on

the occasion of his marriage, setting at liberty many condemned, giving Imperial marriage dowries to six thousand soldiers, amnesties, promotions, etc. At length his Majesty learned that the Empress was not more than ten leagues from Soissons, and no longer able to restrain his impatience, called me with all his might, "Ohe ho, Constant! order a carriage without livery, and come and dress me." The Emperor wished to surprise the Empress, and present himself to her without being announced; and laughed immoderately at the effect this would produce. He attended to his toilet with even more exquisite care than usual, if that were possible, and with the coquetry of glory dressed himself in the gray redingote he had worn at Wagram; and thus arrayed, the Emperor entered a carriage with the King of Naples. The circumstances of this first meeting of their Imperial Majesties are well known.

In the little village of Courcelles, the Emperor met the last courier, who preceded by only a few moments the carriages of the Empress; and as it was raining in torrents, his Majesty took shelter on the porch of the village church. As the carriage of the Empress was passing, the Emperor made signs to the postilions to stop; and the equerry, who was at the Empress's door, perceiving the Emperor, hastily lowered the step, and announced his Majesty, who, somewhat vexed by this, exclaimed, "Could you not see that I made signs to you to be silent?" This slight ill-humor, however, passed away in an instant; and the Emperor threw himself on the neck of Marie Louise, who, holding in her hand the picture of her husband, and looking attentively first at it, then at him, remarked with a charming smile, "It is not flattered." A magnificent supper had been prepared at Soissons for the Empress and her cortege; but the Emperor gave orders to pass on, and drove as far as Compiègne, without regard to the appetites of the officers and ladies in the suite of the Empress.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

On their Majesties' arrival at Compiègne, the Emperor presented his hand to the Empress, and conducted her to her apartment. He wished that no one should approach or touch his young wife before himself; and his jealousy was so extreme on this point that he himself forbade the senator de Beauharnais, the Empress's chevalier of honor, to present his hand to her Imperial Majesty, although this was one of the requirements of his position. According to the programme, the Emperor should have occupied a different residence from the Empress, and have slept at the hotel of the Chancellerie; but he did nothing of the sort, since after a long conversation with the Empress, he returned to his room, undressed, perfumed himself with cologne, and wearing only a nightdress returned secretly to the Empress.

The next morning the Emperor asked me at his toilet if any one noticed

the change he had made in the programme; and I replied that I thought not, though at the risk of falsehood. Just then one of his Majesty's intimate friends entered who was unmarried, to whom his Majesty, pulling his ears, said, "My dear fellow, marry a German. They are the best wives in the world; gentle, good, artless, and fresh as roses." From the air of satisfaction with which the Emperor said this, it was easy to see that he was painting a portrait, and it was only a short while since the painter had left the model. After making his toilet, the Emperor returned to the Empress, and towards noon had breakfast sent up for her and him, and served near the bed by her Majesty's women. Throughout the day he was in a state of charming gayety, and contrary to his usual custom, having made a second toilet for dinner, wore the coat made by the tailor of the King of Naples; but next day he would not allow it to be put on again, saying it was much too uncomfortable.

The Emperor, as may be seen from the preceding details, loved his new wife most tenderly. He paid her constant attentions, and his whole conduct was that of a lover deeply enamoured. Nevertheless, it is not true, as some one has said, that he remained three months almost without working, to the great astonishment of his ministers; for work was not only a duty with the Emperor, it was both a necessity and an enjoyment, from which no other pleasure, however great, could distract him; and on this occasion, as on every other, he knew perfectly well how to combine the duties he owed to his empire and his army with those due to his charming wife.

The Empress Marie Louise was only nineteen years old at the period of her marriage. Her hair was blond, her eyes blue and expressive, her carriage noble, and her figure striking, while her hand and foot might have served as models; in fact, her whole person breathed youth, health, and freshness. She was diffident, and maintained a haughty reserve towards the court; but she was said to be affectionate and friendly in private life, and one fact I can assert positively is that she was very affectionate toward the Emperor, and submissive to his will. In their first interview the Emperor asked her what recommendations were made to her on her departure from Vienna. "To be entirely devoted to you, and to obey you in all things," which instructions she seemed to find no difficulty in obeying.

No one could resemble the first Empress less than the second, and except in the two points of similarity of temperament, and an extreme regard for the Emperor, the one was exactly the opposite of the other; and it must be confessed the Emperor congratulated himself on this difference, in which he found both novelty and charm. He himself drew a parallel between his two wives in these terms: "The one [Josephine] was all art and grace; the other [Marie Louise] innocence and natural simplicity. At no moment of her life were the manners or habits of the former other than agreeable and attractive, and it would have been impossible to take her at a disadvantage on these points; for it was her special object in life to produce only advantageous impressions, and she gained her end without

allowing this effort to be seen. All that art can furnish to supplement attractions was practiced by her, but so skillfully that the existence of this deception could only be suspected at most. On the contrary, it never occurred to the mind of the second that she could gain anything by innocent artifices. The one was always tempted to infringe upon the truth, and her first emotion was a negative one. The other was ignorant of dissimulation, and every deception was foreign to her. The first never asked for anything, but she owed everywhere. The second did not hesitate to ask if she needed anything, which was very rarely, and never purchased anything without feeling herself obliged to pay for it immediately. To sum it all up, both were good, gentle wives, and much attached to their husband." Such, or very nearly these, were the terms in which the Emperor spoke of his Empresses. It can be seen that he drew the comparison in favor of the second; and with this idea he gave her credit for qualities which she did not possess, or at least exaggerated greatly those really belonging to her.

The Emperor granted Marie Louise 500,000 francs for her toilet, but she never spent the entire amount. She had little taste in dress, and would have made a very inelegant appearance had she not been well advised. The Emperor was present at her toilet those days on which he wished her to appear especially well, and himself tried the effect of different ornaments on the head, neck, and arms of the Empress, always selecting something very handsome. The Emperor was an excellent husband, of which he gave proof in the case of both his wives. He adored his son, and both as father and husband might have served as a model for all his subjects; yet in spite of whatever he may have said on the subject himself, I do not think he loved Marie Louise with the same devoted affection as Josephine. The latter had a charming grace, a kindness, an intelligence, and a devotion to her husband which the Emperor knew and appreciated at its full value; and though Marie Louise was younger, she was colder, and had far less grace of manner. I think she was much attached to her husband; but she was reserved and reticent, and by no means took the place of Josephine with those who had enjoyed the happiness of being near the latter.

Notwithstanding the apparent submission with which she had bidden farewell to her Austrian household, it is certain that she had strong prejudices, not only against her own household, but also against that of the Emperor, and never addressed a gracious word to the persons in the Emperor's personal service. I saw her frequently, but not a smile, a look, a sign, on the part of the Empress showed me that I was in her eyes anything more than a stranger. On my return from Russia, whence I did not arrive until after the Emperor, I lost no time in entering his room, knowing that he had already asked for me, and found there his Majesty with the Empress and Queen Hortense. The Emperor consoled with me on the sufferings I had recently undergone, and said many flattering things which proved his high opinion of me; and the queen, with that charming grace of which she is the only model since the death of her august mother, conversed with me for some time in the kindest manner. The

Empress alone kept silence; and noticing this the Emperor said to her, "Louise, have you nothing to say to poor Constant?"—"I had not perceived him," said the Empress. This reply was most unkind, as it was impossible for her Majesty not to have "perceived" me, there being at that moment present in the room only the Emperor, Queen Hortense, and I.

The Emperor from the first took the severest precautions that no one, and especially no man, should approach the Empress, except in the presence of witnesses.

During the time of the Empress Josephine, there were four ladies whose only duty was to announce the persons received by her Majesty. The excessive indulgence of Josephine prevented her repressing the jealous pretensions of some persons of her household, which gave rise to endless debates and rivalries between the ladies of the palace and those of announcement. The Emperor had been much annoyed by all these bickerings, and, in order to avoid them in future, chose, from the ladies charged with the education of the daughters of the Legion of Honor in the school at Rouen, four new ladies of announcement for the Empress Marie Louise. Preference was at first given to the daughters or widows of generals; and the Emperor decided that the places becoming vacant belonged by right to the best pupils of the Imperial school of Rouen, and should be given as a reward for good conduct. A short time after, the number of these ladies now being as many as six, two pupils of Madame de Campan were named, and these ladies changed their titles to that of first ladies of the Empress.

This change, however, excited the displeasure of the ladies of the palace, and again aroused their clamors around the Emperor; and he consequently decided that the ladies of announcement should take the title of first ladies of the chamber. Great clamor among the ladies of announcement in their turn, who came in person to plead their cause before the Emperor; and he at last ended the matter by giving them the title of readers to the Empress, in order to reconcile the requirements of the two belligerent parties.

These ladies of announcement, or first ladies of the chamber, or readers, as the reader may please to call them, had under their orders six femmes de chambre, who entered the Empress's rooms only when summoned there by a bell. These latter arranged her Majesty's toilet and hair in the morning; and the six first ladies took no part in her toilet except the care of the diamonds, of which they had special charge. Their chief and almost only employment was to follow the steps of the Empress, whom they left no more than her shadow, entering her room before she arose, and leaving her no more till she was in bed. Then all the doors opening into her room were closed, except that leading into an adjoining room, in which was the bed of the lady on duty, and through which, in order to enter his wife's room, the Emperor himself must pass.

With the exception of M. de Meneval, secretary of orders of the Empress, and M. Ballouhai, superintendent of expenses, no man was admitted into

the private apartments of the Empress without an order from the Emperor; and the ladies even, except the lady of honor and the lady of attire, were received only after making an appointment with the Empress. The ladies of the private apartments were required to observe these rules, and were responsible for their execution; and one of them was required to be present at the music, painting, and embroidery lessons of the Empress, and wrote letters by her dictation or under her orders.

The Emperor did not wish that any man in the world should boast of having been alone with the Empress for two minutes; and he reprimanded very severely the lady on duty because she one day remained at the end of the saloon while M. Biennais, court watchmaker, showed her Majesty a secret drawer in a portfolio he had made for her. Another time the Emperor was much displeased because the lady on duty was not seated by the side of the Empress while she took her music-lesson with M. Pier.

These facts prove conclusively the falsity of the statement that the milliner Leroy was excluded from the palace for taking the liberty of saying to her Majesty that she had beautiful shoulders. M. Leroy had the dresses of the Empress made at his shop by a model which was sent him; and they were never tried on her Majesty, either by him, or any person of her Majesty's household, and necessary alterations were indicated by her *femmes de chambre*. It was the same with the other merchants and furnishers, makers of corsets, the shoemaker, glovemaker, etc.; not one of whom ever saw the Empress or spoke to her in her private apartments.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Their Majesties' civil marriage was celebrated at Saint-Cloud on Sunday, the 1st of April, at two o'clock in the afternoon. The religious ceremony was solemnized the next day in the grand gallery of the Louvre. A very singular circumstance in this connection was the fact that Sunday afternoon at Saint-Cloud the weather was beautiful, while the streets of Paris were flooded with a heavy shower lasting some time, and on Monday there was rain at Saint-Cloud, while the weather was magnificent in Paris, as if the fates had decreed that nothing should lessen the splendor of the cortege, or the brilliancy of the wonderful illuminations of that evening. "The star of the Emperor," said some one in the language of that period, "has borne him twice over equinoctial winds."

On Monday evening the city of Paris presented a scene that might have been taken from the realms of enchantment: the illuminations were the most brilliant I have ever witnessed, forming a succession of magic panorama in which houses, hotels, palaces, and churches, shone with dazzling splendor, the glittering towers of the churches appeared like stars and comets suspended in the air. The hotels of the grand

dignitaries of the empire, the ministers, the ambassadors of Austria and Russia, and the Duke d'Abrantes, rivaled each other in taste and beauty. The Place Louis XV. was like a scene from fairyland; from the midst of this Place, surrounded with orange-trees on fire, the eye was attracted in succession by the magnificent decorations of the Champs-Elysees, the Garde Meuble, the Temple of Glory, the Tuileries, and the Corps Legislatif. The palace of the latter represented the Temple of Hymen, the transparencies on the front representing Peace uniting the august spouses. Beside them stood two figures bearing shields, on which were represented the arms of the two empires; and behind this group came magistrates, warriors, and the people presenting crowns. At the two extremities of the transparencies were represented the Seine and the Danube, surrounded by children-image of fecundity. The twelve columns of the peristyle and the staircase were illuminated; and the columns were united by garlands of colored lights, the statues on the peristyle and the steps also bearing lights. The bridge Louis XV., by which this Temple of Hymen was reached, formed in itself an avenue, whose double rows of lamps, and obelisks and more than a hundred columns, each surmounted by a star and connected by spiral festoons of colored lights, produced an effect so brilliant that it was almost unendurable to the naked eye. The cupola of the dome of Saint Genevieve was also magnificently lighted, and each side outlined by a double row of lamps. At each corner were eagles, ciphers in colored glass, and garlands of fire suspended between torches of Hymen. The peristyle of the dome was lighted by lamps placed between each column, and as the columns were not lighted they seemed as if suspended in the air. The lantern tower was a blaze of light; and all this mass of brilliancy was surmounted by a tripod representing the altar of Hymen, from which shot tongues of flame, produced by bituminous materials. At a great elevation above the platform of the observatory, an immense star, isolated from the platform, and which from the variety of many-colored glasses composing it sparkled like a vast diamond, under the dome of night. The palace of the senate also attracted a large number of the curious; but I have already extended too far the description of this wonderful scene which unfolded itself at every step before us.

The city of Paris did homage to her Majesty the Empress by presenting her with a toilet set even more magnificent than that formerly presented to the Empress Josephine. Everything was in silver gilt, even the arm chair and the cheval glass. The paintings on the exquisite furniture had been made by the first artists, and the elegance and finish of the ornaments surpassed even the richness of the materials.

About the end of April their Majesties set out together to visit the departments of the North; and the journey was an almost exact repetition of the one I made in 1804 with the Emperor, only the Empress was no longer the good, kind Josephine. While passing again through all these towns, where I had seen her welcomed with so much enthusiasm, and who now addressed the same adoration and homage to a new sovereign, and while seeing again the chateaux of Lacken, Brussels, Antwerp, Boulogne, and

many other places where I had seen Josephine pass in triumph, as at present Marie Louise passed, I thought with chagrin of the isolation of the first wife from her husband, and the suffering which must penetrate even into her retreat, as she was told of the honors rendered to the one who had succeeded her in the Emperor's heart and on the Imperial throne.

The King and Queen of Westphalia and Prince Eugene accompanied their Majesties. We saw a vessel with eighty cannon launched at Antwerp, which received, before leaving the docks, the benediction of M. de Pradt, Archbishop of Malines. The King of Holland, who joined the Emperor at Antwerp, felt most unkindly towards his Majesty, who had recently required of him the cession of a part of his states, and soon after seized the remainder. He was, however, present in Paris at the marriage fetes of the Emperor, who had even sent him to meet Marie Louise; but the two brothers had not ceased their mutual distrust of each other, and it must be admitted that that of King Louis had only too good foundation. What struck me as very singular in their altercations was that the Emperor, in the absence of his brother, gave vent to the most terrible bursts of rage, and to violent threats against him, while if they had an interview they treated each other in the most amicable and familiar and brotherly manner. Apart they were, the one, Emperor of the French, the other, King of Holland, with opposite interests and views; together they were no more than, if I may be permitted to so express myself, Napoleon and Louis, companions and friends from childhood.

Prince Louis was habitually sad and melancholy. The annoyances he experienced on the throne, where he had been placed against his will, added to his domestic troubles, made him evidently very unhappy, and all who knew him pitied him sincerely; for King Louis was an excellent master, and an honest man of much merit. It has been said that when the Emperor had decided on the union of Holland and France, King Louis resolved to defend himself in the town of Amsterdam to the last extremity, and to break the dikes and inundate the whole country if necessary, in order to arrest the invasion of the French troops. I do not know whether this is true; but from what I have seen of this prince's character, I am very sure that, while having enough personal courage to expose his own person to all the chances of this desperate alternative, his naturally kind heart and his humanity would have prevented the execution of this project.

At Middleburg the Emperor embarked on board the Charlemagne to visit the mouth of the Scheldt and the port and island of Flushing. During this excursion we were assailed by a terrible tempest, three anchors were broken in succession; we met with other accidents, and encountered great dangers.

The Emperor was made very sick, and every few moments threw himself on his bed, making violent but unsuccessful efforts to vomit, which rendered his sickness more distressing. I was fortunate enough not to be at all

inconvenienced, and was thus in a position to give him all the attention he required; though all the persons of his suite were sick, and my uncle, who was usher on duty, and obliged to remain standing at the door of his Majesty's cabin, fell over continually, and suffered agony. During this time of torment, which lasted for three days, the Emperor was bursting with impatience. "I think," said he, "that I would have made a pretty admiral."

A short time after our return from this voyage, the Emperor wished her Majesty the Empress to learn to ride on horseback; and for this purpose she went to the riding-hall of Saint-Cloud. Several persons of the household were in the gallery to see her take her first lesson, I among the number; and I noticed the tender solicitude of the Emperor for his young wife, who was mounted on a gentle, well-broken horse, while the Emperor held her hand and walked by her side, M. Jardin, Sr., holding the horse's bridle. At the first step the horse made, the Empress screamed with fright, whereupon the Emperor said to her, "Come, Louise, be brave. What have you to fear? Am I not here?" And thus the lesson passed, in encouragement on one side and fright on the other. The next day the Emperor ordered the persons in the gallery to leave, as they embarrassed the Empress; but she soon overcame her timidity, and ended by becoming a very good horsewoman, often racing in the park with her ladies of honor and Madame the Duchess of Montebello, who also rode with much grace. A coach with some ladies followed the Empress, and Prince Aldobrandini, her equerry, never left her in her rides.

The Empress was at an age in which one enjoys balls and fetes; but the Emperor feared above all things her becoming tired, and consequently rejoicings and amusements were given up at the court and in the city. A fete given in honor of their Majesties by the Prince of Schwartzenberg, ambassador from Austria, ended in a frightful accident.

The prince occupied the former Hotel de la Montesson in the rue de la Chaussee d'Antin; and in order to give this ball had added to this residence a broad hall and wooden gallery, decorated with quantities of flowers, banners, candelabra, etc. Just as the Emperor, who had been present at the fete for two or three hours, was about to retire, one of the curtains, blown by the breeze, took fire from the lights, which had been placed too near the windows, and was instantly in flames. Some persons made ineffectual efforts to extinguish the fire by tearing down the drapery and smothering the flames with their hands; but in the twinkling of an eye the curtains, papers, and garlands caught, and the wood-work began to burn.

The Emperor was one of the first to perceive the rapid progress of the fire, and foresee the results. He approached the Empress, who had already risen to join him, and got out with her, not without some difficulty, on account of the crowd which rushed towards the doors; the Queens of Holland, Naples, Westphalia, the Princess Borghese, etc., following their Majesties, while the Vice-queen of Italy, who was

pregnant, remained in the hall, on the platform containing the Imperial boxes. The vice-king, fearing the crowd as much as the fire for his wife, took her out through a little door that had been cut in the platform in order to serve refreshments to their Majesties. No one had thought of this opening before Prince Eugene, and only a few persons went out with him. Her Majesty the Queen of Westphalia did not think herself safe, even when she had reached the terrace, and in her fright rushed into the rue Taitbout, where she was found by a passer-by.

The Emperor accompanied the Empress as far as the entrance of the Champs-

Elysees, where he left her to return to the fire, and did not re-enter Saint-Cloud until four o'clock in the morning. From the time of the arrival of the Empress we were in a state of terrible apprehension, and every one in the chateau was a prey to the greatest anxiety in regard to the Emperor. At last he arrived unharmed, but very tired, his clothing all in disorder, and his face blackened with smoke, his shoes and stockings scorched and burned by the fire. He went directly to the chamber of the Empress to assure himself if she had recovered from the fright she had experienced; and then returned to his room, and throwing his hat on the bed, dropped on a sofa, exclaiming, "Mon Dieu! What a fete!" I remarked that the Emperor's hands were all blackened, and he had lost his gloves at the fire. He was much dejected, and while I was undressing him, asked if I had attended the prince's fete, and when I replied in the negative, deigned to give me some details of this deplorable event. The Emperor spoke with an emotion which I saw him manifest only two or three times in his life, and which he never showed in regard to his own misfortunes. "The fire," said his Majesty, "has to-night devoured a heroic woman. The sister-in-law of the Prince of Schwartzberg, hearing from the burning hall cries which she thought were uttered by her eldest daughter, threw herself into the midst of the flames, and the floor, already nearly burned through, broke under her feet, and she disappeared. After all the poor mother was mistaken, and all her children were out of danger. Incredible efforts were made, and at last she was recovered from the flames; but she was entirely dead, and all the attentions of the physicians have been unsuccessful in restoring her to life." The emotion of the Emperor increased at the end of this recital. I had taken care to have his bath in readiness, foreseeing he would need it on his return; and his Majesty now took it, and after his customary rubbing, found himself in much better condition. Nevertheless, I remember his expressing fear that the terrible accident of this night was the precursor of some fatal event, and he long retained these apprehensions. Three years after, during the deplorable campaign of Russia, it was announced to the Emperor one day, that the army-corps commanded by the Prince of Schwartzberg had been destroyed, and that the prince himself had perished; afterwards he found fortunately that these tidings were false, but when they were brought to his Majesty, he exclaimed as if replying to an idea that had long preoccupied him, "Then it was he whom the bad omen threatened."

Towards morning the Emperor sent pages to the houses of all those who had suffered from the catastrophe with his compliments, and inquiries as to their condition. Sad answers were brought to his Majesty. Madame the Princess de la Layen, niece of the Prince Primate, had died from her wounds; and the lives of General Touzart, his wife, and daughter were despaired of,—in fact, they died that same day. There were other victims of this disaster; and among a number of persons who recovered after long-continued sufferings were Prince Kourakin and Madame Durosnel, wife of the general of that name.

Prince Kourakin, always remarkable for the magnificence as well as the singular taste of his toilet, wore at the ball a coat of gold cloth, and it was this which saved his life, as sparks and cinders slipped off his coat and the decorations with which he was covered like a helmet; yet, notwithstanding this, the prince was confined to his bed for several months. In the confusion he fell on his back, was for some time, trampled under foot and much injured, and owed his life only to the presence of mind and strength of a musician, who raised him in his arms and carried him out of the crowd.

General Durosnel, whose wife fainted in the ball-room, threw himself in the midst of the flames, and reappeared immediately, bearing in his arms his precious burden. He bore Madame Durosnel into a house on the boulevard, where he placed her until he could find a carriage in which to convey her to his hotel. The Countess Durosnel was painfully burned, and was ill more than two years. In going from the ambassador's hotel to the boulevard he saw by the light of the fire a robber steal the comb from the head of his wife who had fainted in his arms. This comb was set with diamonds, and very valuable.

Madame Durosnel's affection for her husband was equal to that he felt for her; and when at the end of a bloody combat, in the second campaign of Poland, General Durosnel was lost for several days, and news was sent to France that he was thought to be dead, the countess in despair fell ill of grief, and was at the point of death. A short time after it was learned that the general was badly but not mortally wounded, and that he had been found, and his wounds would quickly heal. When Madame Durosnel received this happy news her joy amounted almost to delirium; and in the court of her hotel she made a pile of her mourning clothes and those of her people, set fire to them, and saw this gloomy pile turn to ashes amid wild transports of joy and delight.

Two days after the burning of the hotel of the Prince of Schwartzberg, the Emperor received the news of the abdication of his brother Louis, by which event his Majesty seemed at first much chagrined, and said to some one who entered his room just as he had been informed of it, "I foresaw this madness of Louis, but I did not think he would be in such haste." Nevertheless, the Emperor soon decided what course to take; and a few days afterwards his Majesty, who during the toilet had not opened his mouth, came suddenly out of his preoccupation just as I handed him his

coat, and gave me two or three of his familiar taps. "Monsieur Constant," said he, "do you know what are the three capitals of the French Empire?" and without giving me time to answer, the Emperor continued, "Paris, Rome, and Amsterdam. That sounds well, does it not?"

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

In the latter part of July large crowds visited the Church of the Hotel des Invalides, in which were placed the remains of General Saint-Hilaire and the Duke de Montebello, the remains of the marshal being placed near the tomb of Turenne. The mornings were spent in the celebration of several masses, at a double altar which was raised between the nave and the dome; and for four days there floated from the spire of the dome a long black banner or flag edged with white.

The day the remains of the marshal were removed from the Invalides to the Pantheon, I was sent from Saint-Cloud to Paris with a special message for the Emperor. After this duty was attended to, I still had a short time of leisure, of which I availed myself to witness the sad ceremony and bid a last adieu to the brave warrior whose death I had witnessed. At noon all the civil and military authorities assembled at the Invalides; and the body was transferred from the dome into the church, and placed on a catafalque in the shape of a great Egyptian pyramid, raised on an elevated platform, and approached through four large arches, the posts of which were entwined with garlands of laurels interlaced with cypress. At the corners were statues in the attitude of grief, representing Force, Justice, Prudence, and Temperance, virtues characteristic of the hero. This pyramid ended in a funeral urn surmounted by a crown of fire. On the front of the pyramid were placed the arms of the duke, and medallions commemorating the most remarkable events of his life borne by genii. Under the obelisk was placed the sarcophagus containing the remains of the marshal, at the corners of which were trophies composed of banners taken from his enemies, and innumerable silver candelabra were placed on the steps by which the platform was reached. The oaken altar, in the position it occupied before the Revolution, was double, and had a double tabernacle, on the doors of which were the commandments, the whole surmounted by a large cross, from the intersection of which was suspended a shroud. At the corners of the altar were the statues of St. Louis and St. Napoleon. Four large candelabra were placed on pedestals at the corners of the steps, and the pavement of the choir and that of the nave were covered with a black carpet. The pulpit, also draped in black and decorated with the Imperial eagle, and from which was pronounced the funeral oration over the marshal, was situated on the left in front of the bier; on the right was a seat of ebony decorated with Imperial arms, bees, stars, lace, fringes, and other ornaments in silver, which was intended for the prince arch-chancellor of the Empire, who presided at

the ceremony. Steps were erected in the arches of the aisles, and corresponded to the tribunes which were above; and in front of these steps were seats and benches for the civil and military authorities, the cardinals, archbishops, bishops, etc. The arms, decorations, baton, and laurel crown of the marshal were placed on the bier.

All the nave and the bottom of the aisles were covered with black with a white bordering, as were the windows also, and the draperies displayed the marshal's arms, baton, and cipher.

The organ was entirely concealed by voluminous hangings which in no wise lessened the effect of its mournful tones. Eighteen sepulchral silver lamps were suspended by chains from lances, bearing on their points flags taken from the enemy. On the pilasters of the nave were fastened trophies of arms, composed of banners captured in the numerous engagements which had made the marshal's life illustrious. The railing of the altar on the side of the esplanade was draped in black, and above this were the arms of the duke borne by two figures of Fame holding palms of victory; above was written: "Napoleon to the Memory of the Duke of Montebello, who died gloriously on the field of Essling, 22d. May, 1809."

The conservatory of music executed a mass composed of selections from the best of Mozart's sacred pieces. After the ceremony the body was carried as far as the door of the church and placed on the funeral car, which was ornamented with laurel and four groups of the banners captured from the enemy by his army-corps in the numerous battles in which the marshal had taken part, and was preceded by a military and religious procession, followed by one of mourning and honor. The military cortege was composed of detachments from all branches of the army, cavalry, and light infantry, and the line, and artillery both horse and foot; followed by cannon, caissons, sappers, and miners, all preceded by drums, trumpets, bands, etc.; and the general staff, with the marshal, Prince of Wagram, at its head, formed of all the general officers, with the staff of the division and of the place.

The religious procession was composed of children and old men from the hospitals, clergy from all the parishes and from the metropolitan church of Paris, bearing crosses and banners, with singers and sacred music, and his Majesty's chaplain with his assistants. The car on which was placed the marshal's body followed immediately after. The marshals, Duke of Conegliano, Count Serrurier, Duke of Istria, and Prince of Eckmuhl, bore the corners of the pall. On each side of the car two of the marshal's aides-de-camp bore a standard, and on the bier were fastened the baton of the marshal and the decorations of the Duke of Montebello.

After the car came the cortege of mourning and of honor; the marshal's empty carriage, with two of his aides-de-camp on horseback at the door, four mourning carriages for the marshal's family, the carriages of the princes, grand dignitaries, marshals, ministers, colonel-generals, and chief inspectors. Then came a detachment of cavalry preceded by

trumpets, and bands on horseback followed the carriages and ended the procession. Music accompanied the chants, all the bells of the churches tolled, and thirteen cannon thundered at intervals.

On arriving at the subterranean entrance of the church of Saint-Genevieve, the body was removed from the car by grenadiers who had been decorated and wounded in the same battles as the marshal. His Majesty's chaplain delivered the body to the arch-priest. The Prince of Eckmuhl addressed to the new Duke of Montebello the condolences of the army, and the prince arch-chancellor deposited on the bier the medal destined to perpetuate the memory of these funeral honors of the warrior to whom they were paid, and of the services which so well merited them. Then all the crowd passed away, and there remained in the church only a few old servants of the marshal, who honored his memory as much and even more by the tears which they shed in silence than did all this public mourning and imposing ceremony. They recognized me, for we had been together on the campaign. I remained some time with them, and we left the Pantheon together.

During my short excursion to Paris, their Majesties had left Saint-Cloud for Rambouillet, so I set out to rejoin them with the equipages of the marshal, Prince de Neuchatel, who had left court temporarily to be present at the obsequies of the brave Duke of Montebello.

It was, if I am not mistaken, on arriving at Rambouillet that I learned the particulars of a duel which had taken place that day between two gentlemen, pages of his Majesty. I do not recall the subject of the quarrel; but, though very trivial in its origin, it became very serious from the course of conduct to which it led. It was a dispute between schoolboys; but these school-boys wore swords, and regarded each other, not without reason, as more than three-fourths soldiers, so they had decided to fight. But for this fight, two things were necessary,—time and secrecy; as to their time, it was employed from four or five in the morning till nine in the evening, almost constantly, and secrecy was not maintained.

M. d'Assigny, a man of rare merit and fine character, was then sub-governor of the pages, by whom his faithfulness, kindness, and justice had caused him to be much beloved. Wishing to prevent a calamity, he called before him the two adversaries; but these young men, destined for army service, would hear of no other reparation than the duel. M. d'Assigny had too much tact to attempt to argue with them, knowing that he would not have been obeyed; but he offered himself as second, was accepted by the young men, and being given the selection of arms, chose the pistol, and appointed as the time of meeting an early hour next morning, and everything was conducted in the order usual to such affairs. One of the pages shot first, and missed his adversary; the other discharged his weapon in the air, upon which they immediately rushed into each other's arms, and M. d'Assigny took this opportunity of giving them a truly paternal lecture. Moreover, the worthy sub-governor not only

kept their secret, but he kept his own also; for the pistols loaded by M. d'Assigny contained only cork balls; a fact of which the young men are still ignorant.

Some persons saw the 25th of August, which was the fete day of the Empress, arrive with feelings of curiosity. They thought that from a fear of exciting the memories of the royalists, the Emperor would postpone this solemnity to another period of the year, which he could easily have done by feting his august spouse under the name of Marie. But the Emperor was not deterred by such fears, and it is also very probable that he was the only one in the chateau to whom no such idea occurred. Secure in his power, and the hopes that the French nation then built upon him, he knew well that he had nothing to dread from exiled princes, or from a party which appeared dead without the least chance of resurrection. I have heard it asserted since, and very seriously too, that his Majesty was wrong to fete Saint Louis, which had brought him misfortune, etc.; but these prognostications, made afterwards, did not then occupy the thoughts of any one, and Saint Louis was celebrated in honor of the Empress Marie Louise with almost unparalleled pomp and brilliancy.

A few days after these rejoicings, their Majesties held in the Bois de Boulogne a review of the regiments of the Imperial Guard of Holland, which the Emperor had recently ordered to Paris. In honor of their arrival his Majesty had placed here and there in the walks of the Bois casks of wine with the heads knocked in, so that each soldier could drink at will; but this imperial munificence had serious results which might have become fatal. The Holland soldiery more accustomed to strong beer than to wine, nevertheless found the latter much to their taste, and imbibed it in such great quantities, that in consequence their heads were turned to an alarming extent. They began at first with some encounters, either among themselves or with the curious crowd who observed them too closely. Just then a storm arose suddenly, and the promenaders of Saint-Cloud and its environs hastened to return to Paris, passing hurriedly through the Bois de Boulogne; and these Hollanders, now in an almost complete state of intoxication, began fighting with each other in the woods, stopping all the women who passed, and threatening very rudely the men by whom, most of them were accompanied. In a flash the Bois resounded with cries of terror, shouts, oaths, and innumerable combats. Some frightened persons ran as far as Saint-Cloud, where the Emperor then was; and he was no sooner informed of this commotion, than he ordered squad after squad of police to march on the Hollanders and bring them to reason. His Majesty was very angry, and said, "Has any one ever seen anything equal to these big heads? See them turned topsy-turvy by two glasses of wine!" but in spite of this jesting, the Emperor was not without some anxiety and placed himself at the grating of the park, opposite the bridge, and in person gave directions to the officers and soldiers sent to restore order. Unfortunately the darkness was too far advanced for the soldiers to see in what direction to march; and there is no knowing how it would have ended if an officer of one of the patrol

guards had not conceived the happy idea of calling out, "The Emperor! there is the Emperor!" And the sentinels repeated after him, "There is the Emperor," while charging the most mutinous Hollanders. And such was the terror inspired in these soldiers by the simple name of his Majesty, that thousands of armed men, drunken and furious, dispersed before this name alone, and regained their quarters as quickly and secretly as they could. A few were arrested and severely punished.

I have already said that the Emperor often superintended the toilet of the Empress, and even that of her ladies. In fact, he liked all the persons surrounding him to be well and even richly dressed.

But about this time he gave an order the wisdom of which I much admired. Having often to hold at the baptismal font the children of his grand officers, and foreseeing that the parents would not fail to dress their new-born babes in magnificent toilets, the Emperor ordered that children presented for baptism should wear only a simple long linen robe. This prudent measure spared at the same time the purse and the vanity of the parents. I remarked during this ceremony that the Emperor had some trouble in paying the necessary attention to the questions of the officiating priest. The Emperor was usually very absentminded during the services at church, which were not long, as they never lasted more than ten or fifteen minutes; and yet I have been told that his Majesty asked if it were not possible to perform them in less time.—He bit his nails, took snuff oftener than usual, and looked about him constantly, while a prince of the church uselessly took the trouble to turn the leaves of his Majesty's book, in order to follow the service.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

The pregnancy of Marie Louise had been free from accident, and promised a happy deliverance, which was awaited by the Emperor with an impatience in which France had joined for a long while. It was a curious thing to observe the state of the public mind, while the people formed all sorts of conjectures, and made unanimous and ardent prayers that the child should be a son, who might receive the vast inheritance of Imperial glory. The 19th of March, at seven o'clock in the evening, the Empress was taken ill; and from that moment the whole palace was in commotion. The Emperor was informed, and sent immediately for M. Dubois, who had been staying constantly at the chateau for some time past, and whose attentions were so valued at such a time.

All the private household of the Empress, as well as Madame de Montesquieu, were gathered in the apartment, the Emperor, his mother, sisters, Messieurs Corvisart, Bourdier, and Yvan in an adjoining room.

The Emperor came in frequently, and encouraged his young wife. In the interior of the palace, the attention was eager, impassioned, clamorous; and each vied with the other as to who should first have the news of the birth of the child. At five o'clock in the morning, as the situation of the Empress continued the same, the Emperor ordered every one to retire, and himself withdrew in order to take his bath; for the anxiety he had undergone made a moment of repose very necessary to him in his great agitation. After fifteen minutes spent in the bath he was hastily summoned, as the condition of the Empress had become both critical and dangerous. Hastily throwing on his dressing-gown, he returned to the apartment of the Empress, and tenderly encouraged her, holding her hand. The physician, M. Dubois, informed him that it was improbable both mother and child could be saved; whereupon he cried, "Come, M. Dubois, keep your wits about you! Save the mother, think only of the mother, I order you."

As the intense suffering continued, it became necessary to use instruments; and Marie Louise, perceiving this, exclaimed with bitterness, "Is it necessary to sacrifice me because I am an Empress?" The Emperor overcome by his emotions had retired to the dressing-room, pale as death, and almost beside himself. At last the child came into the world; and the Emperor immediately rushed into the apartment, embracing the Empress with extreme tenderness, without glancing at the child, which was thought to be dead; and in fact, it was seven minutes before he gave any signs of life, though a few drops of brandy were blown into his mouth and many efforts made to revive him. At last he uttered a cry.

The Emperor rushed from the Empress's arms to embrace this child, whose birth was for him the last and highest favor of fortune, and seemed almost beside himself with joy, rushing from the son to the mother, from the mother to the son, as if he could not sufficiently feast his eyes on either. When he entered his room to make his toilet, his face beamed with joy; and, seeing me, he exclaimed, "Well, Constant, we have a big boy! He is well made to pinch ears for example;" announcing it thus to every one he met. It was in these effusions of domestic bliss that I could appreciate how deeply this great soul, which was thought impressible only to glory, felt the joys of family life.

From the moment the great bell of Notre Dame and the bells of the different churches of Paris sounded in the middle of the night, until the hour when the cannon announced the happy delivery of the Empress, an extreme agitation was felt throughout Paris. At break of day the crowd rushed towards the Tuileries, and filled the streets and quays, all awaiting in anxious suspense the first discharge of the cannon. But this curious sight was not only seen in the Tuileries and neighboring districts, but at half-past nine in streets far removed from the chateau, and in all parts of Paris, people could be seen stopping to count with emotion the discharges of the cannon.

The twenty-second discharge which announced the birth of a boy was hailed

with general acclamations. To the silence of expectation, which had arrested as if by enchantment the steps of all persons scattered over all parts of the city, succeeded a burst of enthusiasm almost indescribable. In this twenty-second [It had been announced in the papers that if it, was a girl a salute of twenty-one guns would be fired; if a boy, one hundred guns.] boom of the cannon was a whole dynasty, a whole future, and simultaneously hats went up in the air; people ran over each other, and embraced those to whom they were strangers amid shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" Old soldiers shed tears of joy, thinking that they had contributed by their labors and their fatigues to prepare the heritage of the King of Rome, and that their laurels would wave over the cradle of a dynasty.

Napoleon, concealed behind a curtain at one of the windows of the Empress's room, enjoyed the sight of the popular joy, and seemed deeply touched. Great tears rolled from his eyes, and overcome by emotion he came again to embrace his son. Never had glory made him shed a tear; but the happiness of being a father had softened this heart on which the most brilliant victories and the most sincere testimonials of public admiration seemed hardly to make an impression. And in truth Napoleon had a right to believe in his good fortune, which had reached its height on the day when an archduchess of Austria made him the father of a king, who had begun as a cadet in a Corsican family. At the end of a few hours the event which was awaited with equal impatience by France and Europe had become the personal joy of every household.

At half-past ten Madame Blanchard set out from L'Ecole Militaire in a balloon for the purpose of carrying into all the towns and villages through which she passed, the news of the birth of the King of Rome.

The telegraph carried the happy news in every direction; and at two o'clock in the afternoon replies had already been received from Lyons, Lille, Brussels, Antwerp, Brest, and many other large towns of the Empire, which replies, as may well be imagined were in perfect accord with the sentiments entertained at the capital.

In order to respond to the eagerness of the crowd which pressed continually around the doors of the palace to learn of the welfare of the Empress and her august child, it was decided that one of the chamberlains should stand from morning till evening in the first saloon of the state apartments, to receive those who came, and inform them of the bulletins which her Majesty's physicians issued twice a day. At the end of a few hours, special couriers were sent on all roads leading to foreign courts, bearing the news of the delivery of the Empress; the Emperor's pages being charged with this mission to the Senate of Italy, and the municipal bodies of Milan and Rome. Orders were given in the fortified towns and ports that the same salutes should be fired as at Paris, and that the fleets should be decorated. A beautiful evening favored the special rejoicings at the capital where the houses were voluntarily illuminated. Those who seek to ascertain by external appearances the real feelings of

a people amid events of this kind, remarked that the topmost stories of houses in the faubourgs were as well lighted as the most magnificent hotels and finest houses of the capital. Public buildings, which under other circumstances are remarkable from the darkness of the surrounding houses, were scarcely seen amid this profusion of lights with which public gratitude had lighted every window. The boatmen gave an impromptu fete which lasted part of the night, and to witness which an immense crowd covered the shore, testifying the most ardent joy. This people, who for thirty years had passed through so many different emotions, and who had celebrated so many victories, showed as much enthusiasm as if it had been their first fete, or a happy change in their destiny. Verses were sung or recited at all the theaters; and there was no poetic formula, from the ode to the fable, which was not made use of to celebrate the event of the 20th of March, 1811. I learned from a well-informed person that the sum of one hundred thousand francs from the private funds of the Emperor was distributed by M. Dequevauvilliers, secretary of the treasury of the chamber, among the authors of the poetry sent to the Tuileries; and finally, fashion, which makes use of the least events, invented stuffs called *roi-de-Rome*, as in the old regime they had been called *dauphin*. On the evening of the 20th of March at nine o'clock the King of Rome was anointed in the chapel of the Tuileries. This was a most magnificent ceremony. The Emperor Napoleon, surrounded by the princes and princesses of his whole court, placed him in the center of the chapel on a sofa surmounted by a canopy with a *Prie-Dieu*. Between the altar and the balustrade had been placed on a carpet of white velvet a pedestal of granite surmounted by a handsome silver gilt vase to be used as a baptismal font. The Emperor was grave; but paternal tenderness diffused over his face an expression of happiness, and it might have been said that he felt himself half relieved of the burdens of the Empire on seeing the august child who seemed destined to receive it one day from the hands of his father. When he approached the baptismal font to present the child to be anointed there was a moment of silence and religious contemplation, which formed a touching contrast to the vociferous gayety which at the same moment animated the crowd outside, whom the spectacle of the brilliant fireworks had drawn from all parts of Paris to the Tuileries.

Madame Blanchard, who as I have said had set out in her balloon an hour after the birth of the King of Rome, to carry the news into all places she passed, first descended at Saint-Tiebault near Lagny, and from there, as the wind had subsided, returned to Paris. Her balloon rose after her departure, and fell at a place six leagues farther on, and the inhabitants, finding in this balloon only clothing and provisions, did not doubt that the intrepid aeronaut had been killed; but fortunately just as her death was announced at Paris, Madame Blanchard herself arrived and dispelled all anxiety.

Many persons had doubted Marie Louise's pregnancy. Some believed it assumed, and I never could comprehend the foolish reasons given by these persons on this subject which malevolence tried to 'gular' fact which

carries its great number of these evil-thinking, suspicious persons, one part accused the Emperor of being a libertine, supposing him the father of many natural children, and the other thought him incapable of obtaining children even by a young princess only nineteen years of age, their hatred thus blinding their judgment. If Napoleon had natural children, why could he not have legitimate ones, especially with a young wife who was known to be in most flourishing health. Besides, it was not the first, as it was not the last, shaft of malice aimed at Napoleon; for his position was too high, his glory too brilliant, not to inspire exaggerated sentiments whether of joy or hatred.

There were also some ill-wishers who took pleasure in saying that Napoleon was incapable of tender sentiments, and that the happiness of being a father could not penetrate this heart so filled with ambition as to exclude all else. I can cite, among many others in my knowledge, a little anecdote which touched me exceedingly, and which I take much pleasure in relating, since, while it triumphantly answers the calumnies of which I have spoken, it also proves the special consideration with which his Majesty honored me, and consequently, both as a father and a faithful servant, I experience a mild satisfaction in placing it in these Memoirs. Napoleon was very fond of children; and having one day asked me to bring mine to him, I went to seek him. Meanwhile Talleyrand was announced to the Emperor; and as the interview lasted a long time, my child grew weary of waiting, and I carried him back to his mother. A short time after he was taken with croup, which cruel disease, concerning which his Majesty had made a special appeal to the faculty of Paris, [on the occasion of the death from croup in 1807 of his heir presumptive, the young son of the King of Holland]. It snatched many children from their families. Mine died at Paris. We were then at the chateau of Compiègne, and I received the sad news just as I was preparing to go to the toilet. I was too much overcome by my loss to perform my duties; and when the Emperor asked what prevented my coming, and was told that I had just heard of the death of my son, said kindly, "Poor Constant! what a terrible sorrow! We fathers alone can know what it is!"

A short time after, my wife went to see the Empress Josephine at Malmaison; and this lovely princess deigned to receive her alone in the little room in front of her bedroom. There she seated herself beside her, and tried in touching words of sympathy to console her, saying that this stroke did not reach us alone, and that her grandson, too, had died of the same disease. As she said this she began to weep; for this remembrance reopened in her soul recent griefs, and my wife bathed with tears the hands of this excellent princess. Josephine added many touching remarks, trying to alleviate her sorrow by sharing it, and thus restore resignation to the heart of the poor mother. The remembrance of this kindness helped to calm our grief, and I confess that it is at once both an honor and a consolation to recall the august sympathy which the loss of this dear child excited in the hearts of Napoleon and Josephine. The world will never know how much sensibility and compassion Josephine felt for the sorrows of others, and all the treasures of goodness

contained in her beautiful soul.

## CHAPTER XXX.

Napoleon was accustomed to compare Marie Louise with Josephine, attributing to the latter all the advantages of art and grace, and to the former all the charms of simplicity, modesty, and innocence. Sometimes, however, this simplicity had in it something childish, an instance of which I received from good authority. The young Empress, thinking herself sick, consulted M. Corvisart, who, finding that her imagination alone was at fault, and that she was suffering simply from the nervousness natural to a young woman, ordered, as his only prescription, a box of pills composed of bread and sugar, which the Empress was to take regularly; after doing which Marie Louise found herself better, and thanked M. Corvisart, who did not think proper, as may well be believed, to enlighten her as to his little deception. Having been educated in a German court, and having learned French only from masters, Marie Louise spoke the language with the difficulty usually found in expressing one's self in a foreign tongue. Among the awkward expressions she often used, but which in her graceful mouth were not without a certain charm, the one which struck me especially, because it often recurred, was this: "Napoleon qu'est ce que veux-to?" The Emperor showed the deepest affection for his young wife, and at the same time made her conform to all the rules of etiquette, to which the Empress submitted with the utmost grace. In the month of May, 1811, their Majesties made a journey into the departments of Calvados and La Manche, where they were received with enthusiasm by all the towns; and the Emperor made his stay at Caen memorable by his gifts, favors, and acts of benevolence. Many young men belonging to good families received sub-lieutenancies, and one hundred and thirty thousand francs were devoted to various charities. From Caen their Majesties went to Cherbourg. The day after their arrival the Emperor set out on horseback early in the morning, visited the heights of the town, and embarked on several vessels, while the populace pressed around him crying "Vive l'Empereur!" The following day his Majesty held several Councils, and in the evening visited all the marine buildings, and descended to the bottom of the basin which is cut out of the solid rock in order to allow the passage of vessels of the line, and which was to be covered with fifty-five feet of water. On this brilliant journey the Empress received her share of the enthusiasm of the inhabitants, and in return, at the different receptions which took place, gave a graceful welcome to the authorities of the country. I dwell purposely on these details, as they prove that joy over the birth of the King of Rome was not confined to Paris alone, but, on the contrary, the provinces were in perfect sympathy with the capital.

The return of their Majesties to Paris brought with them a return of

rejoicings and fetes on the occasion of the baptismal ceremony of the King of Rome, and the fetes by which it was accompanied were celebrated at Paris with a pomp worthy of their object. They had as spectators the entire population of Paris, increased by a prodigious crowd of strangers of every class.

At four o'clock the Senate left its palace; the Council of State, the Tuileries; the Corps Legislatif, its palace; the Court of Cassation, the Court of Accounts, the Council of the University, and the Imperial Court, the ordinary places of their sittings; the municipal corps of Paris and the deputations from the forty-nine good towns, the Hotel de Ville. On their arrival at the Metropolitan Church these bodies were placed by the master of ceremonies with his aides, according to their rank, on the right and left of the throne, reaching from the choir to the middle of the nave. The diplomatic corps at five o'clock took their place on the platform erected for this purpose.

At half-past five cannon announced the departure of their Majesties from the Tuileries. The Imperial procession was dazzlingly magnificent; the fine bearing of the troops, the richness and elegance of the carriages, the brilliant costumes, made up a ravishing spectacle. The acclamations of the people which resounded on their Majesties' route, the houses hung with garlands and drapery, the banners streaming from the windows, the long line of carriages, the trappings and accouterments of which progressively increased in magnificence, following each other as in the order of a hierarchy, this immense paraphernalia of a fete which inspired true feeling and hopes for the future—all this is profoundly engraved on my memory, and often occupies the long leisure hours of the old servitor of a family which has disappeared. The baptismal ceremony took place with unusual pomp and solemnity. After the baptism the Emperor took his august son in his arms, and presented him to the clergy present. Immediately the acclamations, which had been repressed till then from respect to the ceremony and the sanctity of the place, burst forth on all sides. The prayers being ended, their Majesties, at eight o'clock in the evening, went to the Hotel de Ville, and were there received by the municipal corps. A brilliant concert and a sumptuous banquet had been tendered them by the city of Paris. The decorations of the banquet hall showed the arms of the forty-nine good cities, Paris, Rome, Amsterdam, being placed first, and the forty-six others in alphabetical order. After the banquet their Majesties took their places in the concert hall; and at the conclusion of the concert they repaired to the throne room, where all invited persons formed a circle. The Emperor passed round this circle, speaking affably, sometimes even familiarly, to most of the persons who composed it, each of whom responded in the most cordial manner.

At last, before retiring, their Majesties were invited to pass into the artificial garden which had been made in the court of the Hotel de Ville, the decorations of which were very elegant. At the bottom of the garden, the Tiber was represented by flowing water, the course of which was

directed most artistically, and diffused a refreshing coolness. Their Majesties left the Hotel de Ville about half-past eleven, and returned to the Tuileries by the light of most beautiful illuminations and luminous emblems, designed in most exquisite taste. Perfect weather and a delightful temperature favored this memorable day.

The aeronaut Garnerin left Paris at half-past six in the evening, and descended the morning of the next day at Maule, in the department of Seine-et-Oise. After resting there a short while, he re-entered his balloon and continued his journey.

The provinces vied in magnificence with the capital in celebrating the fetes of the birth and baptism of the King of Rome. Every imaginable device, both in emblems and illuminations, had been made use of in order to add still more pomp to these fetes; and each town had been governed in the form of homage it rendered to the new king, either by its geographical position or by its especial industry. For instance, at Clermont-Ferrand an immense fire had been lighted at ten o'clock in the evening on the summit of the Puy-de-Dome, at a height of more than five thousand feet; and several departments could enjoy during the whole night this grand and singular sight. In the port of Flushing the vessels were covered with flags and banners of all colors. In the evening the whole squadron was illuminated; thousands of lanterns hung from the masts, yards, and rigging, forming a beautiful scene. Suddenly, at the signal of a gun fired from the admiral's vessel, all the vessels sent forth at once tongues of flame, and it seemed as if the most brilliant day succeeded to the darkest night, outlining magnificently those imposing masses reflected in the water of the sea as in a glass.

We passed so continually from one fete to another it was almost confusing. The rejoicings over the baptism were followed by a fete given by the Emperor in the private park of Saint-Cloud, and from early in the morning the road from Paris to Saint-Cloud was covered with carriages and men on foot. The fete took place in the inclosed park and the orangery, all the boxes of which and the front of the chateau were decorated with rich hangings, while temples and kiosks rose in the groves, and the whole avenue of chestnut-trees was hung with garlands of colored glass. Fountains of barley water and currant wine had been distributed so that all persons attending the fete might refresh themselves, and tables, elegantly arranged, had been placed in the walks. The whole park was illuminated by pots-a-feu concealed among the shrubbery and groups of trees.

Madame Blanchard had received orders to hold herself in readiness to set out at half-past nine at a given signal.

At nine o'clock, the balloon being filled, she entered the basket, and was carried to the end of the basin of the swans, in front of the chateau; and until the moment of departure she remained in this position, above the height of the tallest trees, and thus for more than half an

hour could be seen by all the spectators present at the fete. At half-past nine, a gun fired from the chateau having given the expected signal, the cords which held the balloon were cut; and immediately the intrepid aeronaut could be seen rising majestically into the air before the eyes of the crowd assembled in the throne room. Having arrived at a certain height, she set off an immense star constructed around the basket, the center of which she thus occupied; and this star for seven or eight moments threw from its points and angles numerous other small stars, producing a most extraordinary effect. It was the first time a woman had been seen to rise boldly into the air surrounded by fireworks, and she appeared as if sailing in a chariot of fire at an immense height. I imagined myself in fairyland.

The whole of the garden which their Majesties traversed presented a view of which it is impossible to give an idea. The illuminations were designed in perfect taste; there were a variety of amusements, and numerous orchestras concealed amid the trees added yet more to the enchantment. At a given signal three doves flew from the top of a column surmounted with a vase of flowers, and offered to their Majesties numerous and most ingenious devices. Farther on German peasants danced waltzes on a charming lawn, and crowned with flowers the bust of her Majesty the Empress, and shepherds and nymphs from the opera executed dances. Finally, a theater had been erected in the midst of the trees, on which was represented a village fete, a comedy composed by M. Itienne, and set to music by Nicolo. The Emperor and Empress were seated under a dais during this play, when suddenly a heavy shower fell, throwing all the spectators into commotion. Their Majesties did not notice the rain at first, protected as they were by the dais, and the Emperor being engaged in conversation with the mayor of the town of Lyons. The latter was complaining of the sales of the cloths of that town, when Napoleon, noticing the frightful rain which was falling, said to this functionary, "I answer for it that to-morrow you will have large orders."

The Emperor kept his position during most of the storm, while the courtiers, dressed in silk and velvet, with uncovered heads, received the rain with a smiling face. The poor musicians, wet to the skin, at last could no longer draw any sound from their instruments, of which the rain had snapped or stretched the cords, and it was time to put an end to this state of affairs. The Emperor gave the signal for departure, and they retired.

On that day Prince Aldobrandini, who in his quality of first equerry of Marie Louise accompanied the Empress, was very happy to find and borrow an umbrella in order to shelter Marie Louise; but there was much dissatisfaction in the group where this borrowing was done because the umbrella was not returned. That evening the Prince Borghese and Princess Pauline nearly fell into the Seine in their carriage while returning to their country house at Neuilly. Those persons who took pleasure in finding omens, and those especially (a very small number) who saw with chagrin the rejoicings of the Empire, did not fail to remark that every

fete given to Marie Louise had been attended by some accident. They spoke affectedly of the ball given by the Prince of Schwartzberg on the occasion of the espousals, and of the fire which consumed the dancing-hall, and the tragic death of several persons, notably of the sister of the prince. They drew from this coincidence bad auguries; some from ill-will, and in order to undermine the enthusiasm inspired by the high fortunes of Napoleon; others from a superstitious credulity, as if there could have been any serious connection between a fire which cost the lives of several persons, and the very usual accident of a storm in June, which ruined the toilets, and wet to the skin thousands of spectators.

It was a very amusing scene for those who had no finery to spoil, and who ran only the risk of taking cold, to see these poor women drenched with the rain, running in every direction, with or without a cavalier, and hunting for shelter which could not be found.

A few were fortunate enough to find modest umbrellas; but most of them saw the flowers fall from their heads, beaten down by the rain, or their finery dripping with water, dragging on the ground, in a pitiable state. When it was time to return to Paris the carriages were missing, as the coachmen, thinking that the fete would last till daylight, had prudently thought that they would not take the trouble to wait all night. Those persons with carriages could not use them, as the press was so great that it was almost impossible to move. Several ladies got lost, and returned to Paris on foot; others lost their shoes, and it was a pitiable sight to see the pretty feet in the mud. Happily there were few or no accidents, and the physician and the bed repaired everything. But the Emperor laughed heartily at this adventure, and said that the merchants would gain by it.

M. de Remusat, so good and ready to render a service, always forgetting himself for others, had succeeded in procuring an umbrella, when he met my wife and mother-in-law, who were escaping like the others, took them on his arm, and conducted them to the palace without their having received the least injury. For an hour he traveled back and forth from the palace to the park, and from the park to the garden, and had the happiness to be useful to a great number of ladies whose toilets he saved from entire ruin. It was an act of gallantry which inspired infinite gratitude, because it was performed in a manner evincing such kindness of heart.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

This seemed to be a year of fetes, and I dwell upon it with pleasure because it preceded one filled with misfortunes. The years 1811 and 1812 offered a striking contrast to each other. All those flowers lavished on

the fetes of the King of Rome and his august mother covered an abyss, and all this enthusiasm was changed to mourning a few months later. Never were more brilliant fetes followed by more overwhelming misfortunes. Let us, then, dwell a little longer upon the rejoicings which preceded 1812. I feel that I need to be fortified before entering upon reminiscences of that time of unprofitable sacrifices, of bloodshed without preserving or conquering, and of glory without result. On the 25th of August, the Empress's fete was celebrated at Trianon; and from early in the morning the road from Paris to Trianon was covered with an immense number of carriages and people on foot, the same sentiment attracting the court, the citizens, the people, to the delightful place at which the fete was held. All ranks were mingled, all went pell-mell; and I have never seen a crowd more singularly variegated, or which presented a more striking picture of all conditions of society. Ordinarily the multitude at fetes of this kind is composed of little more than one class of people and a few modest bourgeois that is all; very rarely of people with equipages, more rarely still people of the court; but here there were all, and there was no one so low that he could not have the satisfaction of elbowing a countess or some other noble inhabitant of the Faubourg St. Germain, for all Paris seemed to be at Versailles. That town so beautiful, but yet so sadly beautiful, which seemed since the last king to be bereft of its inhabitants, those broad streets in which no one was to be seen, those squares, the least of which could hold all the inhabitants of Versailles, and which could hardly contain the courtiers of the Great King, this magnificent solitude which we call Versailles, had been populated suddenly by the capital. The private houses could not contain the crowd which arrived from every direction. The park was inundated with a multitude of promenaders of every sex and all ages; in these immense avenues one walked on foot, one needed air on this vast plateau which was so airy, one felt cramped on this theater of a great public fete, as at balls given in those little saloons of Paris built for about a dozen persons, and where fashion crams together a hundred and fifty.

Great preparations had been made for four or five days in the delightful gardens of Trianon; but the evening before, the sky became cloudy, and many toilets which had been eagerly prepared were prudently laid aside; but the next day a beautiful blue sky reassured every one, and they set out for Trianon in spite of the recollections of the storm which had dispersed the spectators at the fete of Saint Cloud. Nevertheless, at three o'clock a heavy shower made every one fear for a short while that the evening might end badly. "Afternoon shower making its obeisance," as the proverb says; but, on the contrary, this only made the fete pleasanter, by refreshing the scorching air of August, and laying the dust which was most disagreeable. At six o'clock the sun had reappeared, and the summer of 1811 had no softer or more agreeable evening.

All the outlines of the architecture of the Grand Trianon were ornamented with lamps of different colors. In the gallery could be seen six hundred women, brilliant with youth and adornments; and the Empress addressed gracious words to several among them, and all were charmed by the cordial

and affable manners of a young princess who had lived in France only fifteen months.

At this fete, as at all the fetes of the Empire, there were not wanting poets to sing praises of those in whose honor they were given. There was a play which had been composed for the occasion, the author of which I remember perfectly was M. Alissan de Chazet; but I have forgotten the title. At the end of the piece, the principal artists of the opera executed a ballet which was considered very fine. When the play was over, their Majesties commenced a promenade in the park of the Petit-Trianon, the Emperor, hat in hand, giving his arm to the Empress, and being followed by all his court. They first visited the Isle of Love, and found all the enchantments of fairyland and its illusions there united. The temple, situated in the midst of the lake, was splendidly illuminated, and the water reflected its columns of fire. A multitude of beautiful boats furrowed this lake, which seemed on fire, manned by a swarm of Cupids, who appeared to sport with each other in the rigging. Musicians concealed on board played melodious airs; and this harmony, at once gentle and mysterious, which seemed to spring from the bosom of the waves, added still more to the magic of the picture and the charms of the illusion. To this spectacle succeeded scenes of another kind, taken from rural life,—a Flemish living picture, with its pleasant-faced, jolly people, and its rustic ease; and groups of inhabitants from every province of France, giving an impression that all parts of the Empire were convened at this fete. In fine, a wonderful variety of attractions in turn arrested the attention of their Majesties. Arrived at the saloon of Polhymnie, they were welcomed by a charming choir, the music composed, I think, by Paer, and the words by the same M. Alissan de Chazet. At last, after a magnificent supper, which was served in the grand gallery, their Majesties retired at one o'clock in the morning.

There was only one opinion in this immense assembly as to the grace and perfect dignity of Marie Louise. This young princess was really charming, but with peculiarities rather than traits of character. I recall some occurrences in her domestic life which will not be without interest to the reader.

Marie Louise talked but little with the people of her household; but whether this arose from a habit brought with her from the Austrian court, whether she feared to compromise her dignity by her foreign accent before persons of inferior condition, or whether it arose from timidity or indifference, few of these persons could remember a word she had uttered. I have heard her steward say that in three years she spoke to him only once.

The ladies of the household agreed in saying that in private she was kind and agreeable. She did not like Madame de Montesquieu. This was wrong; since there were no cares, endearments, attentions of all sorts, which Madame de Montesquieu did not lavish on the King of Rome.

The Emperor, however, appreciated highly this excellent lady who was so perfect in every respect. As a man he admired the dignity, perfect propriety, and extreme discretion of Madame de Montesquieu; and as a father he felt an infinite gratitude for the cares she lavished on his son. Each one explained in his own way the coolness which the young Empress showed to this lady; and there were several reasons assigned for this, all more or less untrue, though the leisure moments of the ladies of the palace were much occupied with it. What appeared to me the most likely solution, and most in accordance with the artless simplicity of Marie Louise, was this: The Empress had as lady of honor Madame de Montebello, a charming woman of perfect manners. Now, there was little friendship between Madame de Montesquieu and Madame de Montebello, as the latter feared it is said to have a rival in the heart of her august friend; and, in fact, Madame de Montesquieu would have proved a most dangerous rival for this lady, as she combined all those qualities which please and make one beloved. Born of an illustrious family, she had received a distinguished education, and united the tone and manners of the best society with a solid and enlightened piety. Never had calumny dared to attack her conduct, which was as noble as discreet. I must admit that she was somewhat haughty; but this haughtiness was tempered by such elegant politeness, and such gracious consideration, that it might be considered simple dignity. She was attentive and assiduous in her devotion to the King of Rome, and was entitled to the deep gratitude of the Empress; for she afterwards, actuated by the most generous devotion, tore herself from her country, her friends, her family, to follow the fate of a child whose every hope was blasted.

Madame de Montebello was accustomed to rise late. In the morning when the Emperor was absent, Marie Louise went to converse with her in her room; and in order not to go through the saloon where the ladies of the palace were assembled, she entered the apartment of her lady of honor through a very dark closet, and this conduct deeply wounded the feelings of the other ladies. I have heard Josephine say that Madame de Montebello was wrong to initiate the young Empress into the scandalous adventures, whether true or false, attributed to some of these ladies, and which a young, pure, simple woman like Marie Louise should not have known; and that this was one cause of her coldness towards the ladies of her court, who on their side did not like her, and confided their feelings to their neighbors and friends.

Josephine tenderly loved Madame de Montesquieu, and when they were parted wrote to her often; this correspondence lasted till Josephine's death. One day Madame de Montesquieu received orders from the Emperor to take the little king to Bagatelle, where Josephine then was. She had obtained permission to see this child, whose birth had covered Europe with fetes. It is well known how disinterested Josephine's love for Napoleon was, and how she viewed everything that could increase his glory and render it more durable; and there entered into the prayers she made for him since

the burning disgrace of the divorce, even the hope that he might be happy in his private life, and that his new wife might bear this child, this firstborn of his dynasty, to him whom she herself could not make a father.

This woman of angelic goodness, who had fallen into a long swoon on learning her sentence of repudiation, and who since that fatal day had dragged out a sad life in the brilliant solitude of Malmaison; this devoted wife who had shared for fifteen years the fortunes of her husband, and who had assisted so powerfully in his elevation, was not the last to rejoice at the birth of the King of Rome. She was accustomed to say that the desire to leave a posterity, and to be represented after our death by beings who owe their life and position to us, was a sentiment deeply engraved in the heart of man; that this desire, which was so natural, and which she had felt so deeply as wife and mother, this desire to have children to survive and continue us on earth, was still more augmented when we had a high destiny to transmit to them; that in Napoleon's peculiar position, as founder of a vast empire, it was impossible he should long resist a sentiment which is at the bottom of every heart, and which, if it is true that this sentiment increases in proportion to the inheritance we leave our children, no one could experience more fully than Napoleon, for no one had yet possessed so formidable a power on the earth; that the course of nature having made her sterility a hopeless evil, it was her duty to be the first to sacrifice the sentiments of her heart to the good of the state, and the personal happiness of Napoleon sad but powerful reasoning, which policy invoked in aid of the divorce, and of which this excellent princess in the illusion of her devotion thought herself convinced in the depths of her heart.

The royal child was presented to her. I know nothing in the world which could be more touching than the joy of this excellent woman at the sight of Napoleon's son. She at first regarded him with eyes swimming in tears; then she took him in her arms, and pressed him to her heart with a tenderness too deep for words. There were present no indiscreet witnesses to take pleasure in indulging irreverent curiosity, or observe with critical irony the feelings of Josephine, nor was there ridiculous etiquette to freeze the expression of this tender soul; it was a scene from private life, and Josephine entered into it with all her heart. From the manner in which she caressed this child, it might have been said that it was some ordinary child, and not a son of the Caesars, as flatterers said, not the son of a great man, whose cradle was surrounded with so many honors, and who had been born a king. Josephine bathed him with her tears, and said to him some of those baby words with which a mother makes herself understood and loved by her new born. It was necessary at last to separate them. The interview had been short, but it had been well employed by the loving soul of Josephine. In this scene one could judge from her joy of the sincerity of her sacrifice, while at the same time her stifled sighs testified to its extent. Madame de Montesquieu's visits were made only at long intervals, which distressed

Josephine greatly; but the child was growing larger, an indiscreet word lisped by him, a childish remembrance, the least thing, might offend Marie Louise, who feared Josephine. The Emperor wished to avoid this annoyance, which would have affected his domestic happiness; so he ordered that the visits should be made more rarely, and at last they were stopped. I have heard Josephine say that the birth of the King of Rome repaid her for all sacrifices, and surely never was the devotion of a woman more disinterested or more complete.

Immediately after his birth the King of Rome was confided to the care of a nurse of a healthy, robust constitution, taken from among the people. This woman could neither leave the palace nor receive a visit from any man; the strictest precautions were observed in this respect. She was taken out to ride for her health in a carriage, and even then she was accompanied by several women.

These were the habits of Marie Louise with her son. In the morning about nine o'clock the king was brought to his mother; she took him in her arms and caressed him a few moments, then returned him to his nurse, and began to read the papers. The child grew tired, and the lady in charge took him away. At four o'clock the mother went to visit her son; that is to say, Marie Louise went down into the king's apartments, carrying with her some embroidery, on which she worked at intervals. Twenty minutes after she was informed that M. Isabey or M. Prudhon had arrived for the lesson in painting or drawing, whereupon the Empress returned to her apartments.

Thus passed the first months which followed the birth of the King of Rome. In the intervals between fetes, the Emperor was occupied with decrees, reviews, monuments, and plans, constantly employed, with few distractions, indefatigable in every work, and still not seeming to have anything to occupy his powerful mind, and happy in his private life with his young wife, by whom he was tenderly beloved. The Empress led a very simple life, which suited her disposition well. Josephine needed more excitement; her life had been also more in the outside world, more animated, more expansive; though this did not prevent her being very faithful to the duties of her domestic life, and very tender and loving towards her husband, whom she knew how to render happy in her own way.

One day Bonaparte returned from a hunt worn out with fatigue, and begged Marie Louise to come to him. She came, and the Emperor took her in his arms and gave her a sounding kiss on the cheek. Marie Louise took her handkerchief and wiped her cheek. "Well, Louise, you are disgusted with me?"—"No," replied the Empress, "I did it from habit; I do the same with the King of Rome." The Emperor seemed vexed. Josephine was very different; she received her husband's caresses affectionately, and even met him half way. The Emperor sometimes said to her, "Louise, sleep in my room."—"It is too warm there," replied the Empress. In fact, she could not endure the heat, and Napoleon's apartments were constantly warmed. She had also an extreme repugnance to odors, and in her own rooms allowed only vinegar or sugar to be burnt.

