

still living, and was still considered as an infallible oracle. A few days before her departure, Josephine, with all the superstitious faith of a creole, went to ask the old prophetess if her journey would be propitious.

The old Euphemia stared long and fixedly into Josephine's smiling countenance; then, as if overcome by a sudden thought, she exclaimed: "Go! go as fast as possible, for death and danger threaten you! Already are on the watch wicked and bloodthirsty fiends, who every moment are ready to rush among us with fire and sword, and to destroy the colony in their cruel wrath!"

"And shall I safely arrive in France?" asked Josephine. "Shall I again see my husband?"

"You will see him again," exclaimed the prophetess, "but hasten to go to him."

"Is he threatened with any danger?" demanded Josephine.

"Not yet!—not at once!" said the old negress. "They now applaud your husband and recognize his services. But he has powerful enemies, and one day they will threaten his life, and will lead him to the scaffold and murder him!"

Before Josephine left Martinique, a portion of these prophecies of the old negro woman were to be fulfilled. The wicked and bloodthirsty fiends, of whom she said they were ready with fire and sword to rush upon the colony—those fiends did light the firebrand and destroy the peace of Martinique.

The resounding cries for freedom uttered in the National Assembly, and which shook the whole continent, had rushed along across the ocean to Martinique. The storm-wind of the revolution had on its wings borne the wondrous story to Martinique—the wondrous story of man's sacred rights, which Lafayette had proclaimed in the National Assembly, the wondrous story that man was born free, that he ought

to remain free, that there were to be no more slaves in the land of liberty, in France, and in her colonies.

The storm-wind which brought this great news across the ocean to Martinique scattered it into the negro-cabins, and at first they listened to it with wondrous delight. Then the delirium of joy came over them; jubilant they broke their chains, and in wild madness anticipated their human rights, their personal freedom.

The revolution, with its terrible consequences of blood and horrors, broke loose in Martinique, and, exulting in freedom, the slaves threw the firebrand on the roof of their former masters, rushed with war's wild cry into their dwellings, and, in freedom's name, punished those who so long had punished them in tyranny's name.

Amid the barbaric shouts of those dark free men, Josephine embarked on board the ship which was to carry her and her little Hortense to France; and the flames which rose from the roofs of the houses as so many way-marks of fire for the new era, were Josephine's last, sad farewell from the home which she was never to see again.*

CHAPTER X.

THE DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION.

HAPPINESS had once more penetrated into the heart of Josephine. Love again threw her sun-gleams upon her existence, and filled her whole being with animation and joy. She was once more united to her husband, who, with tears of joy and repentance, had again taken her to his heart. She was once more with her relatives, who, in the day of

* Le Normand, "Mémoires de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i., p. 147.

distress, had shown her so much love and faithfulness, and finally she had also her son, her own dear Eugene, from whom she had been separated during the sad years of their matrimonial disagreements.

How different was the husband she now found from him she had quitted! He was now a man, an earnest, thoughtful man, with a fiery determination, with decidedness of purpose, and yet thoughtful, following only what reason approved, even if the heart had been the mover. The passions of youth had died away. The excitable, thoughtless, pleasure-seeking officer of the king had become a grave, industrious, indefatigable, moral, austere servant of the people and of liberty. The songs of joy, of equivocal jesting, of political satire, had died away on those lips which only opened now in the clubs, in the National Assembly, to utter inspired words in regard to liberty, fraternity, and equality.

The most beautiful dancer of Versailles had become the president of the National Assembly, which made so many tears run, and awoke so much anger and hatred in the king's palace of Versailles. He at least belonged to the constitutional fraction of the National Assembly; he was the friend and guest of Mirabeau and of Lafayette; he was the opponent of Robespierre, Marat, and Danton, and of all the fanatics of the Mountain party, who already announced their bloody views, and claimed a republic as the object of their conflicts.

Alexandre de Beauharnais was no republican, however enthusiastic he might have been in favor of America's struggle for freedom, however deeply he had longed to go like Lafayette to America, for the sake of assisting the Americans to break the chains which yoked them to England, so as to build a republic for themselves. The enthusiasm of that day, the enthusiasm for France had driven him upon the path of the opposition; but while desiring freedom for the people, he still hoped that the people's free-

dom was compatible with the power and dignity of the crown; that at the head of constitutional France the throne of a constitutional king would be maintained. To bring to pass this reunion, this balance of right between the monarchy and the people, such was the object of the wishes of Alexandre de Beauharnais; this was the ultimate aim of his struggles and longings.

Josephine looked upon these tumultuous conflicts of parties, upon this wild storm of politics, with wondering, sad looks. With all the tact of tender womanhood she held herself aloof from every personal interference in these political party strifes. At the bottom of her heart a true and zealous royalist, she guarded herself carefully from endeavoring to keep her husband back from his chosen path, and to bring into her house and family the party strifes of the political arena. She wanted and longed for peace, unity, and rest, and in his home at least her husband would have no debates to go through, no sentiments to fight against.

In silence and devotedness Josephine submitted to her husband's will, and left him to perform his political part, while she assumed the part of wife, mother, of the representative of the household; and every evening opened her drawing-room to her friends, and to her husband's associates in the same conflict.

What a mixed and extraordinary assemblage was seen in the drawing-room of the president of the National Assembly! There were the representatives of old France, the brilliant members of the old nobility: the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, the Count de Montmorency, the Marquis de Caulaincourt, the Prince de Salm-Cherbourg, the Princess von Hohenzollern, Madame de Montesson, the wife of the old Duke d'Orleans; and alongside of these names of the *ancien régime*, new names rose up. There were the deputies of the National Assembly—Barnave, Mounier, Thouvet, Lafayette, and the favorite of the people, the great Mira-

beau. Old France and Young France met here in this drawing-room of Josephine on neutral grounds, and the beautiful viscountess, full of grace and prudence, offered to them both the honors of her house. She listened with modest bashfulness to the words of the great tribunes of the people, and oftentimes with a smile or a soft word she reconciled the royalists, those old friends who sought in this drawing-room for the Viscountess de Beauharnais, and found there only the wife of the president of the National Assembly.

The saloon of Josephine was soon spoken of, and seemed as a haven in which the refined, elegant manners, the grace, the wit, the *esprit*, had been saved from the stormy flood of political strife. Every one sought the privilege of being admitted into this drawing-room, whose charming mistress in her own gentleness and grace received the homage of all parties, pleased every one by her loveliness, her charms, the fine, exquisite tact with which she managed at all times the sentiments of the company, and with which she knew how to guide the conversation so that it would never dwindle into political debates or into impassioned speeches.

However violent was the tempest of faction outside, Josephine endeavored that in the interior of her home the serene peace of happiness should prevail. For she was now happy again, and all the liveliness, all the joys of youth, had again found entrance into her mind. The anguish endured, the tears shed, had also brought their blessing; they had strengthened and invigorated her heart; with their grave, solemn memories they preserved Josephine, that child of the South, of the sun, and of joy, from that light frivolity which otherwise is so often the common heritage of the creoles.

The viscount had now the satisfaction which ten years ago, at the beginning of his married life, he had so intently longed for, the satisfaction of seeing his wife occupied with grave studies, with the culture of her own mind and talents.

It was to him a ravishment to see Josephine in her drawing-room in earnest conversation with Buffon, and with all the aptitude of a naturalist speak of the organization and formation of the different families of plants; he exulted in the open praise paid to her when, with her fine, far-reaching voice, she sang the songs of her home, which she herself accompanied on the harp; he was proud when, in her saloon, with all the tact and assurance of a lady of the world, she took the lead in the conversation, and could speak with poets and authors, with artists and savants, and that, with understanding and feeling, upon their latest works and creations; he was made happy when, passing from serious gravity to the most innocent gayety, she jested, laughed, and danced, as if she were yet the sixteen-year-old child whom ten years ago he had made his wife, and from whom he had then so cruelly exacted that she should demean herself as a fine, experienced, and highly-refined lady.

Life had since undertaken to mould the young creole into an elegant, highly-accomplished woman, but fortunately life had been impotent to change her heart, and that heart was ever beating in all the freshness of youth, in all the joyous warmth and faithfulness of the young girl of sixteen years who had come to France with so many ideal visions, so many illusions, so many dreams and hopes. It is true this ideal had vanished away, these illusions had burst into pieces like meteors in the skies; the dreams and hopes of the young maiden heart had fallen into dust, but the love, the confiding, faithful, hoping love, the love assured of the future, had remained alive; it had overcome the storms and conflicts; it had been Josephine's consolation in the days of sorrow; it was now her delight in these days of happiness.

Her whole heart, her undivided love, belonged to her husband, to her children, and often from the society gathered in her reception-rooms, she would slip away and hasten

to the bed of her little Hortense to bid good-night to the child, who never would sleep without bidding good-night to its mother, who would kneel at the side of the crib with little Hortense, and utter the evening prayer, asking of God to grant to them all prosperity and peace!

But this peace which Josephine so earnestly longed for was soon to be imperilled more and more, was to be banished from the interior of home and family, from its most sacred asylum, by the revolution and its stormy factions.

An important event, pregnant with results, suddenly moved all Paris, and filled the minds of all with the most fearful anticipations.

The king, with his wife and children, had fled! Openly and irretrievably he had separated himself from country and people; he had, by this flight, solemnly expressed before all Europe the discord which existed between him and his people, between the king and the constitution to which he had sworn allegiance.

Alexandre de Beauharnais, the president of the National Assembly, was the first to be informed of this extraordinary event. On the morning of the 21st of June, 1791, M. de Bailly, mayor of Paris, came to announce to him that the king with all his family had fled from Paris the previous evening.

It was the hour at which the sessions of the National Assembly began every morning, and Beauharnais, accompanied by Bailly, hastened to the Assembly. The deputies were already seated when the president took the chair with a grave, solemn countenance. This countenance told the deputies of the people that the president had an important and very unusual message to communicate, and a deep stillness, an oppressive silence, overspread the whole assemblage as the president rose from his seat to address them.

"Gentlemen," said he, with a voice which, amid the general silence, sounded solemn and powerful—"gentlemen,

I have a sad message to bring before you. The mayor of Paris has just now informed me that the king and his family have this night been seduced into flight by the enemies of the people."*

This news had a stupendous effect on the deputies. At first they sat there dumb, as if petrified with fear; then they all rose up to make their remarks and motions in a whirl of confusion, and it required all the energy and determination of the president to re-establish peace, and to control their minds.

The Assembly then, in quiet debate, resolved to declare itself in permanent session until the termination of this crisis, and gave to the president full power during this time to provide for the tranquillity and security of the Assembly. Bailly and Lafayette were by the president summoned before the deputies, to state what the sentiments of Paris were, what was the attitude of the National Guards, what were the precautions they had taken to preserve aright the peace of Paris.

But this peace was not in danger, and the only one whom the Parisian people at this moment dreaded, was he who had fled from Paris—the king! And yet, not for a moment did the people rise in anger against the king; actuated by a new and overpowering thought, the people in their enthusiasm for this idea forgot their anger against him who by his deed had kindled this thought. The thought which was uppermost in all minds at the flight of the king was this: that the state could subsist even if there were no king at its head; that law and order still remained in Paris, even when the king had fled.

This law and order was the National Assembly, the living representation and embodiment of the law; the government was there; the king alone had disappeared. Such was the

* Aubenas, "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i., p. 171.

sentiment which animated all classes, which brought the people in streaming masses to the palace where the National Assembly held its sittings. A few hours after the news of the king's flight had spread through Paris, thousands were besieging the National Assembly, and shouting enthusiastically: "Our king is here; he is in the hall of session. Louis XVI. can go; he can do what he wills; our king is still in Paris!"*

The Assembly, "the King of Paris," remained in permanent session, waiting for the developments of events, and working out in committees the decrees passed in common deliberation, whilst the president and the secretary remained the whole night in the council-room, so as to be ready at any moment to receive fresh news and to issue the necessary orders.

Early next morning the most important news had reached the president, and the deputies hastened from their respective committees into the hall of session, there to take their seats.

Amid the breathless silence of the Assembly, President Beauharnais announced that the king, the queen, the dauphin, Madame, and divers persons of their suite, had been arrested in Varennes.

The Assembly received this communication with dignified quietude, for they were conscious that the king's return would in no wise impair their own sovereignty, that the power was in their hands, even if the king were there. In this full assurance of their dignity the National Assembly passed a decree ordering the proper authorities "to protect the king's return, to seize and imprison all those who might forget the respect they owed to the royal dignity."

At the same time the National Assembly sent from their number two deputies, Barnave and Pétion, to bring back

* Prudhomme, "Histoire Parlémentaire de la Révolution," vol. x., p. 241.

from Varennes the unfortunate royal family and to accompany them to Paris.

Meanwhile the news of the king's capture only increased the people's enthusiasm for the National Assembly, the truly acknowledged sovereign of France. Every one was anxious to give expression to this enthusiasm; the National Guards of Paris begged for the privilege of taking the oath of allegiance to the National Assembly, and when at the motion of the president this was granted by the Assembly, a whole detachment was marched into the hall so as to take the oath of allegiance to the National Assembly with one voice, amid the applause of the Assembly and the tribunes. This detachment was followed by fresh companies, and the people filled the streets to see the National Guards come and go, and like them to swear allegiance to the National Assembly with enthusiastic shouts.

The provinces would not be a whit behind the enthusiasm of Paris; and whilst the guards swore their oath, from all cities and provinces came to the president of the National Assembly, addresses congratulating the Assembly on its triumphs, and promising the most unconditional devotedness.

Finally after two days of restless activity, after two days, during which Alexandre de Beauharnais had hardly found time to quiet his wife by a note, explaining his absence from home, finally a courier brought the news that the captive royal family were entering Paris. A second courier followed the first. He announced that the royal family had reached the Tuileries surrounded by an immense crowd, whose excitement caused serious apprehensions. Pétion had, therefore, thought it expedient not to allow the royal family to alight, but had confined them to the two carriages, and he now sent the keys of these two carriages to the president of the National Assembly, as it was now his duty to adopt still further measures.

Beauharnais proposed that at once twenty deputies be

chosen to speed on to the Tuileries to deliver the royal family from their prison, and to lead them into the palace.

The motion was carried, and the deputies reached the court of the Tuileries yet in time to save the affrighted family from the people, who, in their wild madness, were about to destroy the carriages, and to take possession of the king and queen.

The presence of the deputies imposed silence on the shouts and howlings of the people. The king had come into the Tuileries, and before him bowed the people in dumb respect. They quietly allowed that this their king should open the carriage wherein the other king, the king by God's grace, Louis XVI., sat a prisoner; they allowed that the king by the grace of the people, the National Assembly, through its twenty deputies, should render liberty to Louis and to his family, and lead them quietly under their protection into the Tuileries.

But from this day the Tuileries, which for centuries had been the palace of the kings of France, now became a prison for the King of France!

Louis XVI. was returned, not as the head, but as the prisoner of the state; from the moment he left Paris, the ermine mantle of his royalty had fallen from his shoulders upon the shoulders of the National Assembly; King Louis XVI. had dethroned himself.

Amid these fatal storms, amid these ever-swelling revolutionary floods, there was yet an hour of happiness for Josephine. Out of the wild waves of rebellion was to rise, for a short time, an island of bliss. The National Assembly, whose president, Alexandre de Beauharnais, had once more, in the course of the sessions, been re-elected by general acclamation, declared itself on the 3d of September, 1791, dissolved, and its members vanished to make room for the Legislative Assembly, which organized the very next day.

Alexandre de Beauharnais, after having so long and so

zealously discharged his duties as a citizen, returned to his Josephine, to his children; and, weary with the storms and debates of the last months, longed for a quiet little place, away from the turmoil of the capital and from the attrition of parties. Josephine acquiesced gladly in the wishes of her husband, for she felt her innermost being shattered by these last exciting times, and perhaps she cherished the secret hope that her husband, once removed from Paris, would be drawn away from the dangerous arena of politics, into which his enthusiasm had driven him. She was, and remained at heart, a good and true royalist; and as Mirabeau, dying in the midst of revolution's storms, had said of himself, that "he took to his grave the mourning-badge for the monarchy,"* so also Josephine's heart, since the flight to Varennes, wore the mourning-badge for the unfortunate royal family, who since that day had to endure so much humiliation, so much insult, and to whom Josephine in her loyal sense of duty consecrated the homage of a devout subject.

Josephine, therefore, gladly consented to the viscount's proposal to leave Paris. Accompanied by their children and by the governess of Hortense, Madame Lanoy, the viscount and his wife went to a property belonging to one of the Beauharnais family near Solange.

Three months were granted to Josephine in the quietude, in the sweet repose of a country-life, at her husband's side, and with her children, to gather strength from the anxieties and griefs which she had suffered in Paris. She enjoyed these days as one enjoys an unexpected blessing, a last sunshine before winter's near approach, with thankful heart to God. Full of cheerful devotedness to her husband, to her children, her lovely countenance was radiant with joy and love; she was ever busy, with the sunshine of her smile, to

* Mirabeau died on the 6th of May, 1791.—See, on his death, "Count Mirabeau," by Théodore Mundt, vol. iv.

dissipate the shadows from her husband's brow, and to replace the impassioned excitements, the honors and distinctions of his Parisian life, by the pleasantness and joys of home.

But Alexandre de Beauharnais could no longer find satisfaction in the quiet, harmless joys of home; he even reproached himself that he could be cheerful and satisfied whilst France resounded with cries of distress and complaints, whilst France was torn in her innermost life by the disputes and conflicts of factions which, no more satisfied with the speeches of the tribune, filled the streets with blood and wounds. The revolution had entered into a new phase, the Legislative Assembly had become the Constituent Assembly, which despoiled the monarchy of the last appearance of power and degraded it to a mere insignificance. The Girondists, those ideal fanatics, who wanted to regenerate France after the model of the states of antiquity, had seized the power and the ministerial *portefeuilles*. The beautiful, witty, and noble Madame Roland ruled, by means of her husband, the Minister Roland, and was striving to realize in France the ideal of a republic after the pattern of Greece; she was the very soul of the new cabinet, the soul of the Girondists, the rulers of France; in her drawing-room, during the evening, the new laws to be proposed next day in the Constituent Assembly, were spoken of, and the government measures discussed.

For a moment it had seemed as if the king, through his cabinet of Girondists, would once more be reconciled with his people, and especially with the Constituent Assembly, as if the nation and the monarchy would once more endeavor to stand one by the other in harmony and peace. Perhaps the Girondists had believed in this possibility, and had regarded the king's assurances that he would adhere to the constitution, and that he would go hand in hand with his ministers, and accept the constitution as the faithful expres-

sion of his will. But when they discovered that Louis was not honorable in his assurances; that he was in secret correspondence with the enemies of France; that in a letter to his brother-in-law, the Emperor Leopold, he had made bitter complaints about the constraint to which he was subjected, then the Girondists were inflamed with animosity, and had recourse to counter-measures. They decreed the exile of the priests, and the formation, in the vicinity of Paris, of a camp of twenty thousand militia from all the departments of France.

Foreign nations looked upon this decree as a sign of dawning hostilities, and threatened France with counter-measures. France responded to the challenge thus thrown at her, and, in a stormy session of the Assembly, the fatherland was declared to be in danger, the organization of an army to occupy the frontiers was decreed, and all the children of the fatherland were solemnly called to her defence.

This call awoke Alexandre de Beauharnais from the dreamy repose to which he had abandoned himself during the last months. His country called him, and he dared not remain deaf to this call; it was his duty to tear himself from the quiet peace of the household, from the arms of his wife and family, and place himself in the ranks of the defenders of his country.

Josephine heard this resolution with tears in her eyes, but she could not keep back her husband, whose countenance was beaming with enthusiasm, and who dreamed of fame and victory. She accompanied Alexandre to Paris, and after he had been gladly received by the minister of war, and appointed to the Northern army, she then took from him a last, fond farewell, entreated him with all the eloquence of love to spare himself, and not wantonly to face danger, but to preserve his life for his wife and children.

Deeply moved by this tender solicitude of his wife, Alexandre promised to hold her requests as sacred. Once more

they embraced each other before they both quitted Paris on diverging roads.

Alexandre de Beauharnais went to Valenciennes, where commanded Marshal Rochambeau, to whom he had been commissioned adjutant.

Josephine hastened with her children toward Fontainebleau, so at least to be there united with her husband's father, and to live under his protection until the return of her husband.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TENTH OF AUGUST, AND THE LETTER OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

SINCE the death of Mirabeau, the last defender of the monarchy, since the failure of the contemplated flight, royalty in France had no chance of existence left; the throne had lost every prop upon which it could find support, and it sank more and more into the abyss which the revolution had dug under its feet.

Marie Antoinette was conscious of it; her foreboding spirit foresaw the coming evil; her proud soul nearly broke under the humiliations and griefs which every day brought on. She had hitherto courageously and heroically struggled against adversity; she had concealed tears and anguish, to smile at that people which hated her and cursed her, which insulted and reviled her constantly. But a day was to come in which the smile would forever depart from her lip—in which Marie Antoinette, the daughter of the Cæsars, so deeply humbled and trodden down in the dust, would no more lift up her head, would no more rise from the terrible blow.

This day was the 10th of August, in the year 1792. The

terrible storm, which so long had filled the air with its mutterings, and had shaken the throne with its thunderings, was on this day with terrific power to be let loose and to dash in pieces the monarchy. The king furnished the occasion for this eruption by dismissing his Girondist ministry, by not signing the decree for the organization of a national militia, and for the exile of the priests.

This refusal was the flash which broke open the heavy clouds that so long had hung over his head—the flash which caused the tempest to burst forth.

Since that day Paris was in a state of rebellion; fresh disturbances took place every day; and finally, on the morning of the 10th of August, bands of people rushed to the palace of the Tuileries and surrounded it with wild howlings and shouts. A portion of the National Guards endeavored to force the people into a retreat; the other portion united with the people in fierce assaults upon the Tuileries, and on its defenders the Swiss. These were massacred by the people armed with pikes; with jubilant howlings the armed masses rushed over the corpses of the fallen into the king's palace.

The Procurator-General Roderer implored the king to save himself with his family by taking refuge in the National Assembly, for there alone was safety for him and the queen.

Louis hesitated; but Marie Antoinette felt once more the pride of a queen awake within her; she felt it was nobler and worthier to die as the loyal Swiss had done, to die sword in hand, than to meet pardon and disgrace, than to bow her head under the yoke. She entreated the king to remain with the loyal National Guards and to fight with his soldiers and die in the palace of his fathers. She spoke to the successor of Henry IV., to the father of the dauphin, for whom he should maintain the inheritance received; she appealed to the heart, to the honor of Louis; she spoke with flaming eyes, and with the eloquence of despair.