

the eyes of General Bonaparte, as with a commanding voice he repeated, "Let us wait!"

Was this one of those few and pregnant moments in which the mind with prophetic power gazes into the future? Had a corner of the veil which hid the future been lifted up before the glowing eagle-eye of Napoleon, and did he see the splendor and the glory of that future which were to be his? However great his imagination, however ambitious his dreams, however wide his hopes, yet they all were to be one day surpassed by the reality. For would he not have considered a madman him who, at this hour, would have told him: "Smooth the furrows on your brow, Bonaparte; be not downcast about the present. You are now in want, you are thrust aside; forgetfulness and obscurity are now your lot; but be of good cheer, you will be emperor, and all Europe will lie trembling at your feet. You love the young Désirée Clary, and her indifference troubles you; but be of good cheer, you will one day marry the daughter of a Cæsar, and the little Désirée, the daughter of a merchant from Marseilles, will one day be Sweden's queen! You refuse to Junot, your friend, the gratification of his wishes, because he possesses nothing but his officer's epaulets: but be of good cheer, for you will one day convert the little Lieutenant Junot into a duke, and give him a kingdom for a dowry! You feel downhearted and ashamed, because your sister Pauline is not rich, because she possesses nothing but her beauty and her name: but be of good cheer, she will one day be the wife of the wealthiest prince of Italy; all the treasures of art will be gathered in her palace, and yet she will be the most precious ornament of that palace!"

Surely the General Bonaparte would have laughed at the madman, who, in the year 1795, should have thus spoken to him—and yet a mere decade of years was to suffice for the realization of all these prophecies, and to turn the incredible into a reality.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE THIRTEENTH VENDÉMIAIRE.

THE days of terror, and of blood, under which France has sighed so long, were not to end with the fall of Robespierre. Another enemy of the rest and peace of France had now made its entrance into Paris—hunger began to exercise its dreary rule of horror, and to fill the hearts of men with rage and despair.

Everywhere throughout France the crops had failed, and the republic had too much to do with the guillotine, with the political struggles in the interior, with the enemies on the frontier, she had been so busy with the heads of her children, that she could have no care for the welfare of their stomachs.

The corn-magazines were empty, and in the treasury of the republican government there was no money to buy grain in foreign markets. Very soon the want of bread, the cry for food, made itself felt everywhere; soon hunger goaded into new struggles of despair the poor Parisian people, already so weary with political storms, longing for rest, and exhausted by conflicts. Hunger drove them again into politics, hunger converted the women into demons, and their husbands into fanatical Jacobins. Every day, tumults and seditious gatherings took place in Paris; the murmuring and howling crowd threatened to rise up. Every day appeared at the bar of the Convention the sections of Paris, entreating with wild cries for a remedy for their distress. At every step in the streets one was met by intoxicated women, who tried to find oblivion of their hunger in wine, and to whom, notwithstanding their drunkenness, the consciousness of their calamity remained. These drunken women, with the gestures of madness, shouted: "Bread! give us bread! We had bread at least in the year '93!"

Bread! Down with the republic! Down with the Convention, which leaves us to starve!"

To these shouts responded other masses of the people: "Down with the constitutionalists! Long live the Mountain! Long live the Convention!"

Civil war, which in its exhaustion had remained subdued for a moment, threatened to break out with renewed rage, for the parties stood face to face in determined hostility, and "Down with the constitutionalists!—down with the republicans!" was the watchword of these parties.

For a moment it seemed as if the Mountain, as if the revolution, would regain the ascendancy, as if the terrorists would once more seize the rudder which had slipped from their blood-stained hands. But the Convention, which for a time had remained undecided, trembling and vacillating, rose at length from its lethargy to firm, energetic measures, and came to the determination to restore peace at any price.

The people, stirred up by the terrorists, the furious men of the Mountain, had to be reduced to silence, and the cry, "Long live the constitution of '93!—down with the Convention!"—this cry, which every day rolled on through the streets of Paris like the vague thunderings of the war-drum,—had to be put down by armed force. Barrere, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes, the remnant of the sanguinary administration of Robespierre, the terrorists who excited the people against the Convention, who pressed on the Thermidorists, and wanted to occupy their place, these were the ones who with their adherents and friends threatened the Convention and imperilled its existence. The Convention rose up in its might and punished these leaders of sedition, so as through fear and horror to disperse the masses of the people.

Barrere, Collot d'Herbois, and Billaud Varennes, were arrested and sent to Cayenne; six of their friends, six re-

publicans and terrorists, were also seized, and as they were convicted of forging plots against the Convention and the actual administration, they were sentenced to death. A seventh had also been at the head of this conspiracy; and this seventh one, who with the others had been sentenced to death, and whom the Committee of Safety had watched for everywhere, to bring down upon him the chastisement due, this seventh one was Salicetti—the same Salicetti who after the fall of Robespierre had arrested General Bonaparte as suspect. Bonaparte had never forgiven him, and though he often met him in the house of Madame de Permout, and appeared to be reconciled with him, yet he could not forget that he was the one who had stopped him in the midst of his course of fame, that it was he who had debarred him from his whole career.

"Salicetti has done me much harm," said Bonaparte to Madame de Permout, and a strange look from his eyes met her face—"Salicetti has destroyed my future in its dawn. He has blighted my plans of fame in their bud. I repeat, he has done me much harm. He has been my evil spirit. I can never forget it," but added he, thoughtfully, "I will now try to forgive."*

And again a peculiar, searching look of his eyes met the face of Madame de Permout.

She, however, turned aside, she avoided his look, for she dared not tell him that Salicetti, for whom the Convention searched throughout Paris so as to bring upon him the execution of his death-warrant—that Salicetti, whom Bonaparte so fiercely hated, was hid a few steps from him in the little *cabinet* near the drawing-room.

Like Bonaparte, Salicetti was the countryman of Madame de Permout; in the days of his power, he had saved the husband and the son of Panonia from the persecution of

* Abrantes, vol. i, p. 300.

the terrorists, and he had now come to ask safety from those whom he had once saved.

Madame de Permout had not had the courage to refuse an asylum to Salicetti; she kept him secreted in her house for weeks; and during all these weeks, Bonaparte came daily to visit Madame de Permout and her children, and every day he turned the conversation upon Salicetti, and asked if they knew not yet where he was secreted. And every time, when Madame de Permout answered him in the negative, he gazed at her with a piercing look, and with his light, sarcastic smile.

Meanwhile Salicetti's danger for himself, and those who secreted him, increased every day, and Madame de Permout resolved to quit Paris. The sickness of her husband, who was in Toulon, furnished her with the welcomed opportunity of a journey. She made known to the friends and acquaintances who visited her house, and especially to Bonaparte, that she had received a letter from the physician in Toulon, requesting her presence at her husband's bed of sickness. Bonaparte read the letter, and again the same strange look met the face of Madame de Permout.

"It is, indeed, important," said he, "that you should travel, and I advise you to do so as soon as possible. Fatal consequences might ensue to M. de Permout, were you to delay any longer in going to Toulon."

Madame de Permout made, therefore, all her arrangements for this journey. Salicetti, disguised as a servant, was to accompany her. Bonaparte still came as usual every day, and took great interest in the preparations for her journey, and conversed with her in the most friendly and pleasant manner. On the day of departure, he saluted her most cordially, assured her of his true, unswerving attachment, and, with a final, significant look, expressed a wish that her journey might be accomplished without danger.

When Madame de Permout had overcome all difficulties,

and she and her daughter had left Paris and passed the *barrière*, as the carriage rolled on without interruption (Salicetti, disguised as a servant, sitting near the postilion on the driver's seat), the housemaid handed to her a letter which General Bonaparte had given her, with positive orders to hand it to her mistress only when they should be beyond the outer gates of Paris.

The letter ran thus: "I have never been deceived: I would seem to be in your estimation, if I did not tell you that, for the last twenty days, I knew that Salicetti was secreted in your house. Remember what I told you on the first day, Prairial, Madame de Permout—I had then the mental conviction of this secrecy. Now it is a matter of fact.—Salicetti, you see I could have returned to you the wrong which you perpetrated against me, and by so doing I should have revenged myself, whilst you wronged me without any offence on my part. Who plays at this moment the nobler part, you or I? Yes, I could have revenged myself, and I have not done it. You will, perhaps, say that your benefactress acted as a protecting shield. That is true, and it also is taken into consideration. Yet, even without this consideration, such as you were—alone, disarmed, sentenced—your head would even then have been sacred to me. Go, seek in peace a refuge where you can rise to nobler sentiments for your country. My mouth remains closed in reference to your name, and will no more utter it. Repent, and, above all things, do justice to my intentions. I deserve it, for they are noble and generous.

"Madame de Permout, my best wishes accompany you and your daughter. You are two frail beings, without protection. Providence and prayers will accompany you. Be prudent, and during your journey never stop in large towns. Farewell, and receive the assurance of my friendship."*

* Abrantes, "Mémoires," vol. i., p. 351.

The nobility of mind which Bonaparte displayed toward his enemy was soon to receive its reward; for, whilst Salicetti, a fugitive, sick, and sentenced to death, was compelled to remain hidden, Bonaparte was emerging from the oblivion to which the ambitious zeal of Salicetti would have consigned him.

When Napoleon, dismissed from his position, arrived in Paris, and appealed to Aubry, the chief of the war department, to be re-established in his command, he was told: "Bonaparte is too young to command an army as general-in-chief;" and Bonaparte answered: "One soon becomes old on the battle-field, and I come from it."*

But Aubry, in his functions of chief of the war department, was soon superseded by the representative Douclet de Ponté-Coulant, and this event gave to the position of the young general a different aspect. Ponté-Coulant had for some time followed with attention the course of the young general, whose military talents and warlike reputation had filled him with astonishment. He had especially been surprised at the plan for the conduct of the war and the conquest of Italy which Bonaparte had laid before the war committee. Now that Ponté-Coulant had been promoted to be chief of the war department, he sent for General Bonaparte, and attached him to the topographic committee, where the plans of campaigns were decided and the movements of each separate corps delineated.

The forgotten one, doomed to inactivity, General Napoleon Bonaparte, now arose from his obscurity, and before him again opened life, the world, and fame's pathway, which was to lead him up to a throne. But the envy and jealousy of the party-men of the Convention ever threw obstacles before him on his glorious course, and the war-scheme which he now unfolded to the committee for the

* Norvins, "Histoire de Napoléon," vol. i., p. 60.

campaign did not receive the approbation of the successor of Ponté-Coulant in the war department, and it was thrust aside. A new political crisis was needed to place in the hands of Napoleon the command of the army, the ruling authority over France, and this crisis was at hand.

Paris, diseased, still bleeding in its innermost life with a thousand wounds, was devoured by hunger. The unfortunate people, wretched from want and pain, during many past years, were now driven to despair. The political party leaders understood but too well how to take advantage of this, and to prey upon it. The royalists were busy instilling into the people's minds the idea that the return of the Bourbons would restore to miserable France peace and happiness. The terrorists told the people that the Convention was the sole obstacle to their rest and to their peace, that it was necessary to scatter it to the winds, and to re-establish the Constitution of 1793. The whole population of Paris was divided and broken into factions, struggling one against the other with infuriated passions. The royalists, strengthened by daily accessions of emigrants, who, under fictitious names and with false passports, returned to Paris to claim the benefit of the milder laws passed in their favor, constituted a formidable power in that city. Whole sections were devoted to them, and were secretly supplied by them with arms and provisions, so as finally to be prepared to act against the Convention. An occasion soon presented itself.

The Convention had, through eleven of its committee members, prepared a new constitution, and had laid it before the people for adoption or rejection, according to the majority of votes. The whole country, with the exception of Paris, was in favor of this new constitution—she alone in her popular assemblies rejected it, declared the Convention dissolved, and the armed sections arose to make new elections. The Convention declared these assemblies to be illegal, and

ordered their dissolution. The armed sections made resistance, congregated together, and by force opposed the troops of the Convention—the National Guards—commanded by General Menou. On the 12th Vendémiaire all Paris was under arms again; barricades were thrown up by the people, who swore to die in their defence sooner than to submit to the will of the Convention; the noise of drums and trumpets was heard in every street; all the horrors and cruelties of a civil war once more filled the capital of the revolution, and the city was drunk with blood!

The people fought with the courage of despair, pressed on victoriously, and won from General Menou a few streets; whole battalions of the National Guards abandoned the troops of the Convention and went over to the sections. General Menou found himself in so dangerous a position as to be forced to conclude an armistice until the next day with the Section Lepelletier, which was opposed to him, up to which time the troops on either side were to suspend operations.

The Section Lepelletier declared itself at once *en permanence*, sent her delegates to all the other sections, and called upon "the sovereign people, whose rights the Convention wished to usurp," to make a last and decisive struggle.

The Convention found itself in the most alarming position; it trembled for its very existence, and already in fancy saw again the days of terror, the guillotine rising and claiming for its first victims the heads of the members of the Convention. A pallid fear overspread all faces as constantly fresh news of the advance of the sections reached them, when General Menou sent news of the concluded armistice.

At this moment a pale young man rushed into the hall of session, and with glowing eloquence and persuasive manner entreated the Convention not to accept the armistice, not to give time to the sections to increase their strength,

nor to recognize them as a hostile power to war against the government.

This pale young man—whose impassioned language filled the minds of all his hearers with animosity against General Menou, and with fresh courage and desire to fight—was Napoleon Bonaparte.

After he had spoken, other representatives rushed to the tribune, to make propositions to the Assembly, all their motions converging to the same end—all desired to have General Menou placed under arrest, and Bonaparte appointed in his place, and intrusted with the defence of the Convention and of the legislative power against the people.

The Assembly accepted this motion, and appointed Bonaparte commanding officer of the troops of the Convention, and, for form's sake, named Barras, president of the Convention, commander-in-chief.

Bonaparte accepted the commission; and now, at last, after so much waiting, so many painful months of inactivity, he found himself called to action; he stood again at the head of an army, however small it might be, and could again lift up the sword as the signal for the march to the fight.

It is true this fight had a sad, horrible purpose; it was directed against the people, against the sections which declared themselves to be the committee of the sovereign people, and that they were fighting the holy fight of freedom against those who usurped their rights.

General Bonaparte had refused to go to Vendée, because he wished not to fight against his own countrymen, and could not take part in a civil war; but now, at this hour of extreme peril, he placed himself in opposition to the people's sovereignty, and assumed command over the troops of the Convention, whose mission it was to subdue the people.

Every thing now assumed a more earnest attitude; during the night the newly-appointed commanding officer sent

three hundred chasseurs, under Murat, to bring to Paris forty cannon from the park of artillery in Sablons, and, when the morning of the 13th Vendémiaire began to dawn, the pieces were already in position in the court of the Tuileries and pointed against the people. Besides which, General Bonaparte had taken advantage of the night to occupy all the important points and places, and to arm them; even into the hall of session of the Convention he ordered arms and ammunition to be brought, that the representatives might defend themselves, in case they were pressed upon by the people.

As the sun of the 13th Vendémiaire rose over Paris, a terrible street-fight began—the fight of the sovereign people against the Convention. It was carried on by both sides with the utmost bitterness and fierceness, the sections rushing with fanatic courage, with all the energy of hatred, against these soldiers who dared slay their brothers and bind their liberty in chains; the soldiers of the Convention fought with all the bitterness which the consciousness of their hated position instilled into them.

The cannon thundered in every street and mingled their sounds with the cries of rage from the *sectionnaires*—the howlings of the women, the whiz of the howitzers, the loud clangs of the bells, which incessantly called the people to arms. Streams of blood flowed again through the streets; everywhere, near the scattered barricades, near the houses captured by storm, lay bloody corpses; everywhere resounded the cries of the dying, the shrieks and groans of the wounded, the wild shouts of the combatants. In the Church of St. Roche, and in the Théâtre Française, the *sectionnaires*, driven from the neighboring streets by the troops of General Bonaparte, had gathered together and endeavored to defend these places with the courage of despair. But the howitzers of Bonaparte soon scattered them, and the contest was decided.

The sections were defeated; the people, conquered by the Convention, had to recognize its authority; they were no more the sovereigns of France; they had found a ruler before whom they must bow.

This ruler was yet called the Convention, but behind the Convention stood another ruler—General Bonaparte!

It was he who had defeated the people, who had secured the authority to the Convention, and it was therefore natural that it should be thankful and exhibit its gratitude. General Bonaparte, in acknowledgment for the great services done to his country, was by the Convention appointed commander-in-chief of the army of the interior, and thus suddenly he saw himself raised from degrading obscurity to pomp and influence, surrounded by a brilliant staff, installed in a handsome palace by virtue of his office as chief officer, entitled to and justified in maintaining an establishment wherein to represent worthily the dignity of his new position.

The 13th Vendémiaire, which dethroned the sovereign people, brought General Bonaparte a step nearer to the throne.

CHAPTER XX.

THE WIDOW JOSEPHINE BEAUHARNAIS.

MEANWHILE Josephine had passed the first months of her newly-obtained freedom in quiet contentment with her children in Fontainebleau, at the house of her father-in-law. Her soul, bowed down by so much misery and pain, needed quietness and solitude to allow her wounds to cease bleeding and to heal; her heart, which had experienced so much anguish and so many deceptions, needed to rest on the bosom of her children and her relatives, so as to be quickened into

new life. Only in the solitude and stillness of Fontainebleau did she feel well and satisfied; every other distraction, every interruption of this quiet, orderly existence brought on a nervous trembling, which mastered her whole body, as if some other adversity was about to break upon her. The days of terror which she had passed in Paris, and especially the days she had outlived in prison, were ever fresh before her mind, and tormented her with their reminiscences alike in her vigils and in her dreams.

She wanted to hear nothing of the world's events, nothing from Paris, the mention of which place filled her with fear and horror; and with tears in her eyes she entreated her father-in-law to omit all mention of the political changes and revolutions which took place there.

But, alas! the politics from which Josephine fled, to which she closed her ears, rushed upon her against her will—they came to her in the shape of want and privation.

Josephine, who wished to have nothing more to do with the affairs of this world, learned, through the deprivations which she had to endure, the want to which she and her family were exposed, that the world had not yet been pushed back into the old grooves, out of which the revolution had so violently lifted it up; that the republic yet exercised a despotic authority, and was not prepared to return to the heirs the property of the victims of the guillotine! The income and property of General Beauharnais had all been confiscated by the republic, for he had been executed as a state criminal, and the procedure had this in common with the ordinary actions of the government, that it never returned what it had once usurped. Even Josephine's father-in-law, as well as her aunt—Madame de Renaudin, who, after her husband's death, had been married to the Marquis de Beauharnais—had both in the revolutionary storms lost all their property, and saw themselves reduced to the last extremity. They lived from day to day with the greatest economy, upon

the smallest means, and flattered themselves with the hope that justice would be done to the innocent victims of the revolution; that at last to the widow and children of the murdered General Beauharnais his income and property would be returned.

Another hope remained to Josephine: reliance upon her relatives, especially upon her mother in Martinique. She had written to her as soon as she had obtained her liberty; she had entreated her mother, who had been a widow for two years, to rent all her property in Martinique, and to come to France, and at her daughter's side to enjoy a few quiet years of domestic happiness.

But this hope also was to be destroyed, for the revolution in Martinique had committed the same devastations as in France, and the burning houses of their masters had been the bonfires whose flames were sent up to heaven by the newly-freed slaves in the name of the republic and of the rights of man. Madame Tascher de la Pagerie had experienced the same fate as all the planters in Martinique; her house and outbuildings had been burnt, her plantations destroyed, and a long time would be required before the fields could again be made to produce a harvest. Until then, Madame Tascher would be sorely limited in her means, and, if she did not succeed in selling some of her property and raising funds, would be without the money necessary to bring under cultivation the remnant of her large plantation. She was, therefore, not immediately prepared to supply her daughter with any considerable assistance, and Josephine endured the anguish of seeing not only herself and children, but also her dear mother, suffer through want and privation.

To the need of gold to procure bare necessities, was soon added the very lack of them. Famine, with all its horrors, was at hand; the people were clamoring for food, and the land-owners as well as the rich were suffering from the want of that prime necessary of life—bread! The Convention

had adopted no measures to satisfy the demands of the howling populace, and it had to remain contented with making accessible to all such provisions as were in the land. One law, therefore, ordered all land-owners to deliver to the state their stores of meal; a second law prohibited any person from buying more than one pound of bread on the same day. The greatest delicacy in those days of common wretchedness was white bread, and there were many families that for a long time were unable to procure this luxury.

Josephine herself had with many others to endure this privation: the costly white loaf was beyond her reach. In her depressed and sad lot the unfortunate widowed viscountess remained in possession of a treasure for which many of the wealthy and high-born longed in vain, and which neither gold nor wealth could procure—Josephine possessed friends, true, devoted friends, who forsook her not in the day of need, but stood the more closely at her side, helping and loving.

Among these friends were, above all, Madame Dumoulin and M. Emery. Madame Dumoulin, the wife of a wealthy purveyor of the republican army, was at heart a true royalist, and had made it her mission, as much as was within her power, to assist with her means the most destitute from whom the revolution had taken their family joys and property. She aided with money and clothing the unfortunate emigrants, who, as prominent and influential friends of the king and of Old France, had abandoned their country, and who now, as nameless, wretched beggars, returned home to beg of New France the privilege at least to hunger and starve, and at last to die in their motherland. Madame Dumoulin had always an open house for those aristocrats and *ci-devants* who had the courage not to emigrate and to bow their despised heads to all the fluctuations of the republic, and had remained in France, though deprived by the republic of their ancestral names, property, and rank. Those

aristocrats who had not migrated found a friendly reception in the house of the witty and amiable Madame Dumoulin, and twice a week she gathered those friends of the *ancien régime* to a dinner, which was prepared with all the luxury of former days, and which offered to her friends, besides material enjoyment, the pleasures of an agreeable and attractive company.

Among Madame Dumoulin's friends who never failed to be present at these dinners was Josephine de Beauharnais, of whom Madame Dumoulin said she was the sunbeam of her drawing-room, for she warmed and vitalized all hearts. But this sunbeam had not the power to bring forth out of the unfruitful soil of the fatherland a few ears of wheat to turn its flour into white bread. As every one was allowed to buy bread only according to the numbers in the household, Madame Dumoulin could not give to her guests at dinner any white bread, and on her cards of invitation was the then usual form, "You are invited to bring a loaf of white bread."

But it was beyond the means of the poor Viscountess de Beauharnais to fulfil this invitation; her purse was not sufficient to afford her twice a week the luxury of white bread. Madame Dumoulin, who knew this, came kindly to the rescue of Josephine's distress, and entreated her not to trouble herself with bringing bread, but to allow her to procure it for her friend.

Josephine accepted this offer with tears of emotion, and she never forgot the goodness and kindness of Madame Dumoulin. In the days of her highest glory she remembered her, and once, when empress, radiant with jewels and ornaments of gold, as she stood in the midst of her court, related with a bewitching smile, to the ladies around her, that there was a time when she would have given a year of her life to possess but one of those jewels, not to adorn herself therewith, but to sell it, so as to buy bread for her children, and

that in those days the excellent Madame Dumoulin had been a benefactress to her, and that she had received at her hands the bread of charity.*

The same abiding friendship was shown to Josephine by M. Emery, a banker who had a considerable business in Dunkirk, and who for many years had been in mercantile relations with the family of Tascher de la Pagerie in Martinique. Madame de la Pagerie had every year sent him the produce of her sugar plantations, and he had attended to the sale to the largest houses in Germany. He knew better than any one else the pecuniary circumstances of the Pagerie family; he knew that, if at present Madame de la Pagerie could not repay his advanced sums, her plantations would soon produce a rich harvest, and even now be a sufficient security. M. Emery was therefore willing to assist the daughter of Madame Tascher de la Pagerie, and several times he advanced to Josephine considerable sums which she had drawn upon her mother.

The cares of every-day life, its physical necessities, lifted Josephine out of the sad melancholy in which she had lulled her sick, wounded heart, within the solitude of Fontainebleau. She must not settle down in this inactive twilight, nor wrap herself up in the gloomy gray veil of widowhood! Life had still claims upon her; it called to her through her children's voices, for whom she had a future to provide, as well as through the voice of her own youth, which she must not intrust hopelessly to the gloomy Fontainebleau.

And the young mother dared not and wanted not to close her ears to these calls; she arose from her supineness, and courageously resolved to begin anew life's battle, and to claim her share from the enjoyments and pleasures of this world.

She first, by the advice of M. Emery, undertook a jour-

* "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Josephine," par Mad. Ducrest, chap. xxxvi.

ney to Hamburg, to make some arrangements with the rich and highly respectable banking-house of Mathiesen and Sissen. Mathiesen, the banker, who had married a niece of Madame de Genlis, had always shown the greatest hospitality to all Frenchmen who had applied to him, and he had assisted them with advice and deeds. To him Josephine appealed, at the request of M. Emery, so as to procure a safe opportunity to send letters to her mother in Martinique, and also to obtain from him funds on bills drawn upon her mother.

M. Mathiesen met her wishes with a generous pleasure, and through him Josephine received sufficient sums of money to protect her from further embarrassments and anxieties, at least until her mother, who was on the eve of selling a portion of her plantation, could send her some money.

On her return from her business-journey to Hamburg, as she was no longer a poor widow without means, she adopted the courageous resolution of leaving her asylum and returning to dangerous and deserted Paris, there to prepare for her son an honorable future, and endeavor to procure for her daughter an education suited to her rank and capacities.

At the end of the year 1795, Josephine returned with her two children to Paris, which one year before she had left so sorrowfully and so dispirited.

What changes had been wrought during this one year! How the face of things had been altered! The revolution had bled to death. The thirteenth Vendémiaire had scattered to the winds the seditious elements of revolution, and the republic was beginning quietly and peacefully to grow into stature. The Convention, with its Mountain, its terrorists, its Committee of Safety, its persecutions and executions, had outlived its power, which it had consigned to the pages of history with so many tears and so much blood. In

a strange contradiction with its own bloody deeds, it celebrated the last day of its existence by a law which, as a farewell to the thousand corpses it had sacrificed to the revolution, it had printed on its gory brow. On the day of its dissolution the Convention gave to France this last law: "Capital punishment is forever abolished." *

With this farewell kiss, this love-salutation to the France of the future, to the new self-informing France, the Convention dissolved itself, and in its stead came the Council of Elders, the Council of Five Hundred, and lastly the Directory, composed of five members, among whom had been elected the more eminent members of the Convention, namely, Barras and Carnot.

Josephine's first movement in Paris was to find the lovely friend whom she made in the Carmelite prison, and to whom she in some measure owed her life, to visit Therese de Fontenay and see if the heart of the beautiful, celebrated woman had in its days of happiness and power retained its remembrances of those of wretchedness and mortal fears.

Therese de Fontenay was now the wife of Tallien, who, elected to the Council of the Five Hundred, continued to play an influential and important part, and therefore had his court of flatterers and time-serving friends as well as any ruling prince. His house was one of the most splendid in Paris; the feasts and banquets which took place there reminded one, by their extravagant magnificence, of the days of ancient Rome, and that this remembrance might still be more striking, ladies in the rich, costly costumes of patrician matrons of ancient Rome appeared at those festivities not unworthy of a Lucullus. Madame Tallien—in the ample robe of wrought gold of a Roman empress, shod with light sandals, from which issued the beautiful naked feet, and the toes adorned with costly rings, her exquisitely

* Norvins, "Histoire de Napoleon," vol. i., p. 82.

moulded arms ornamented with massive gold bracelets; her short curly hair fastened together by a gold bandelet, which rose over the forehead in the shape of a diadem, bejewelled with precious diamonds; the mantle of purple, fringed with gold and placed on the shoulders—was in this costume of such a wonderful beauty, that men gazed at her with astonishment and women with envy.

And this beautiful woman, often worshipped and adored, though sometimes slandered, had amid her triumphs kept a faithful remembrance of the past. She received Josephine with the affection of a true friend. In her generosity she allowed her no time to proffer any request, but came forward herself with offers to intercede for her friend, and to use all the means at her disposal, omitting nothing that would help Josephine to recover her fortune, her lost property. With all the eagerness of true love she took the arm of her friend and led her to Tallien, and with the enchanting smile and attitude of a commanding princess she told him that he must help Josephine to become happy again, that every thing he could do for her would be rewarded by an increasing love; that if he did not do justice to Josephine, she would punish him by her anger and coldness.

Tallien listened with complacency to the praiseworthy commands of his worshipped Therese, and promised to use all his influence to have justice done to the will of the sacrificed General de Beauharnais. He himself accompanied Josephine to Barras, that she might present her application to him personally and request at his hands restitution of her property. She was received by Barras, as well as by the other four directors, with the greatest politeness; each promised to attend to her case and to return to the widow and to the children of Alexandre de Beauharnais the property which had been so unjustly taken from them.

It is true, weeks and months of waiting and uncertainty passed away, but Josephine had hope for a comforter; she

had, besides, her beautiful friend Therese Tallien, who with affectionate eloquence endeavored to instil courage into Josephine, and by her constant petitions and prayers did not allow the Directory, amid its many important affairs of government, to forget the case of the poor young widow. Therese took care also that Josephine should appear in society at the receptions and balls given by the members of the new government; and when made timid through misfortune, and depressed at heart by the uncertainty of her narrow lot, she desired to keep aloof from these rejoicings, Therese knew how to convince her that she must sacrifice her love of retirement to her children; that it was her duty to accept the invitations of the Directory, so as to keep alive their interest and favor in her behalf; and that, were she to retreat into solitude and obscurity, she would thereby imperil her future and that of her children.

Josephine submitted to this law of necessity, and appeared in society. She screened her cares and her heart-sorrows under the covert of smiles, she forced herself into cheerfulness, and when now and then the smile vanished from her lip and tears filled her eyes, she thought of her children, and, mastering her sorrows, she was again the beautiful, lovely woman, whose elegant manners and lively and witty conversation charmed and astonished every one.

At last, after long months of uncertainty, Therese Tallien, her face beaming with joy, came one morning to visit her friend Josephine, and presented to her a paper with a large seal, which Tallien had given her that very morning.

It was an order, signed by the five directors, instructing the administrator of the domains to relieve the capital and the property of General Beauharnais from the sequestration laid upon them, and also to remove the seals from his furniture and his movables, and to reinstate the Widow Beauharnais in possession of all the property left by her husband.

Josephine received this paper with tears of joy, and, full

of religious, devout gratitude, she fell on her knees and cried:

“I thank Thee, my God! I thank Thee! My children will no more suffer from want, and now I can give them a suitable education.”

She then fell upon her friend's neck, thanking her for her faithfulness, and swore her everlasting friendship and affection.

The dark clouds which had so long overshadowed Josephine's life were now gone, and in its place dawned day, bright and clear.

But the sun which was to illumine this day with wondrous glory had not yet appeared. Therese at this hour reminded her friend of a day in prison when Josephine had assured her friends trembling for her life that she was not going to die, that she would one day be Queen of France.

“Yes,” said Josephine, smiling and thoughtful, “who knows if this prophecy will not be fulfilled? To-day begins for me a new life. I have done with the past, and it will sink behind me in the abyss of oblivion. I trust in the future! It must repay me for all the tears and anxieties of my past life, and who knows if it will not erect me a throne?”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE NEW PARIS.

YES, they were now ended, the days of sufferings and privations! The wife of General Beauharnais was no more the poor widow who appeared as a petitioner in the drawing-rooms of the members of the Directory, and often obliged, even in the worst kind of weather, to go on foot