

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

to the festivals of Madame Tallien, because she lacked the means to pay for a cab; she was no longer the poor mother who had to be satisfied to procure inferior teachers for her children, because she could not possibly pay superior ones.

Now, as by a spell, all was changed, and gold was the magic wand which had produced it. Thanks to this talisman, the Viscountess de Beauharnais could now quit the small, remote, gloomy dwelling in which she had hitherto resided, and could again procure a house, gather society round about her, and, above all things, provide for the education of her children.

This was her dearest duty, her most important obligation, with which she busied herself even before she rented a modestly-furnished room. Her Eugene, the darling of her heart, desired like his father to devote himself to a military life, and his mother took him to a boarding-school in St. Germain, where young men of distinguished families received their education. Her twelve-year-old daughter Hortense, of whom Josephine had said, "She is my angel with the gold locks, who alone can smile away the tears from my eyes and sorrow from my heart"—Hortense entered the newly-opened educational establishment of Madame Campan, once the lady-in-waiting of Marie Antoinette. Josephine wept hot tears as she accompanied her Hortense into the boarding-school, and, embracing her blond curly-haired angel, she closely pressed her to her heart, and said:

"Judge how much I love you, my daughter, since I have the courage to leave you and to deprive myself of the greatest of my life's enjoyments! Ah, I shall be very lonesome, Hortense, but my thoughts will be with you continually—with you and your brother Eugene. Live to be an honor to your father, grow and prosper to be your mother's happiness!"

Then with a kiss she took leave of her daughter, and

comfortless and alone she returned to her solitary apartments in Paris.

During the next eight days her doors were shut; she opened them to none, not even to her friend Therese, and not once did Josephine leave her dwelling during this time, nor did she accept any of the invitations which came to her from all sides.

Her heart was yet wrapped in mourning for her separation from her children, and, with all the intensity of an affectionate mother's love, she preferred leaving her anguish to die out of itself than to suppress it with amusements and pleasures.

But after this last sorrow had been overcome, Josephine, with serenity and a smile of cheerfulness, came again from her solitude into the world which called her forth with all its voices of joy, pleasure, and flattery. And Josephine no longer closed her ears to these sweet attractive voices. She had long enough suffered, wept, fasted; now she ought to reap enjoyments, and gather her portion of this life's pleasures; now she must live! The past had set behind her, and, as one new-born or risen from the dead, Josephine walked into the world with a young maiden heart, and a mind opened to all that is beautiful, great, and good; her soul filled with visions, hopes, desires, and dreams. Out of the widow's veil came forth the young, charming creole, and her radiant eyes saluted the world with intelligent looks and an expression of the most attractive goodness.

Her next care was to procure a pleasant, convenient home suited to her rank. She purchased from the actor Talma a house which he possessed in the Street Chauteraine, and where he had, during the storms of the revolution, received his friends as well as all the literary, artistic, and political notables of the day with the kindest hospitality. It was not a brilliant, distinguished hotel, no splendid building, but a small, tastefully and conveniently arranged house, with

pretty rooms, a cheerful drawing-room, lovely garden, exactly suited to have therein a quiet, agreeable, informal pastime. Josephine possessed in the highest degree the art of her sex to furnish rooms with elegance and taste, so as to make every one in them comfortable, satisfied, at ease, and cheerful.

The drawing-room of the widow of General Beauharnais became soon the central point where all her friends of former days found themselves together again, and all the remnants of the good old society found reception; where the learned, the artist, the poet, met with a refuge, there to rest for a few hours from political strife, to put aside the serpent's skin of assumed republican manners, and again assume the tone and forms of the higher society. Such drawing-rooms in these revolutionary days were extremely few; no one dared to become conspicuous; every one was reserved and quiet; every one shrank from making himself suspected of being a *ci-devant*, even if under the republican toga he left visible his dress-coat of the upper society with its embroidery of gold. Men had entirely broken with the past, wishing to deny it, and not be under the yoke of its forms and rules; it was therefore necessary, out of the chaos of the republic, to create a new world, a new society, new forms of etiquette, and new fashions. Meanwhile, until these new fashions for republican France should be found, men had recourse (so as not to go back to the days of the late monarchy of France) to the republics of olden times; the ladies dressed according to the patterns of the old statues of the deities of Greece and Rome, giving receptions in the style of ancient Greece, and banquets laid out in all the extravagant splendors of a Lucullus.

The members of the republican Directory, whose residence was in the palace of the Luxemburg, took the lead in all these neo-Grecian and neo-Roman festivities; and, whereas they loudly proclaimed that it was necessary to furnish

opportunities to the working-classes and laborers to gain money, and that it was incumbent on all to promote industry, they rivalled each other in their efforts to exhibit an extravagant pomp and a brilliant display. On reception-days of the members of the Directory the public streamed in masses toward the Luxemburg, there to admire the splendors of the five monarchs, and to rejoice that the days of the *carmagnoles*, the *sans-culottes*, the dirty blouse, and the *bonnet rouge* were at least gone by. The five directors, to the delight of the Parisian people, wore costly silk and velvet garments embroidered with gold, and on their hats, trimmed also with gold lace, waved large ostrich-plumes.

Luxury celebrated its return to Paris, after having had to secrete itself, so long from the blood-stained hands of the *sans-culottes*, in the most obscure corners of the deserted palaces of St. Germain. Pleasure, which had fled away horrified from the guillotine and from the terrorists, dared once more to show its rose-wreathed brow and smiling countenance, and here and there make its cheerful festivities resound.

Men became glad, and dared to laugh again; they came out from the stillness of their homes, which anxiety had kept closed, to search for amusement, pleasure, and recreation; but no citizen dared to be select, none dared to assume aristocratic exclusiveness. One had to be pleased with a dinner at a tavern; with a glass of ice-water in a *café*, or to take part in a public ball which was opened to every one who could pay his fee of admission; and especially in the evening the public rushed to the theatre with the same eagerness that was exhibited in the morning to reach the shops of the bakers and butchers, where each received his portion of meat or bread by producing a card signed by the circuit commissioners. In front of these shops, as well as in front of the theatres, the pressure was so great that for hours it was necessary to fall into line, and sometimes go

away dissatisfied; for the republic had yet retained the system of equality, so that the rich and the influential were not served any sooner than the poor and the unknown; there was only one exception: only one condition received distinction before the baker's shop and the theatre: it was that of the mothers of the future, those women whose external appearance revealed that they would soon bring forth a future citizen, a new soldier for the republic, which had lost so many of its sons upon the scaffold and on the battle-field.

It was so long that one had been deprived of laughter and merriment, and had walked with sad countenance and grave solemnity through the days of blood and terror, that now every occasion for hilarity was received eagerly and thankfully, and every opportunity for mirth and amusement sought out. The theatres were therefore filled every evening with an attentive, thankful audience; every jest of the actor, every part well performed, elicited enthusiastic approbation. It is true no one yet dared act any other pieces than those which had reference to the revolution, and in some shape or other celebrated the republic, accusing and vilifying the royalists. The pieces represented were—"The Perfect Equality," or else "Thee and Thou," "The Last Trial of the Queen," "Tarquin, or the Fall of the Monarchy," "Marat's Apotheosis," and similar dramas, all infused with republicanism; still, men faint at heart and satiated with the republic, hastened notwithstanding to the theatre, to enjoy an hour of recreation and merriment.

To be cheerful, happy, and joyous, seemed now to the Parisians the highest duty of life, and every thing was made subservient to it. The people had wept and mourned so long, that now, to shake off this oppressive heaviness of mind, they rushed with fanatical precipitancy into pleasure; they gave themselves up to the wildest orgies and bacchanals, and without disgust or shame abandoned themselves to the most immoral conduct. All tears were dried up as if

by magic; honest poverty began to be ashamed of itself; and the wealth so carefully hid until now, was again brought to light; even those who in the days of revolutionary terror had become rich through the property of the sacrificed victims, exposed themselves to public gaze with impunity and without shame. They plundered and adorned themselves with a wealth acquired only through cunning, treachery, and murder. Everywhere feasts, banquets, and balls, were organized; and it was an ordinary event to find in the same company the accuser and the accused, the executioner and his victim, the murderer near the daughter of the man whose head he had given over to the guillotine!

This was especially the case at the so-called victim balls (*bals à la victime*) which were given by the heirs, the sons and fathers of those who had perished by the guillotine. People gathered together in brilliant entertainments and balls to the honor and memory of the executed ones. Every one who could pay the large fee of admission to these *bals à la victime* were permitted to enter. Those who came there, not for pleasure, but to honor their dead, showed this intention by their clothing, and especially by the arrangement of their hair. To remind them that those who had been led to the guillotine had had their hair cut close, gentlemen now had theirs cut short, and the dressing of the hair *à la victime* was for gentlemen as much a fashion as the dressing of the hair *à la Titus* (the Roman emperor) was for the ladies. Besides this, the heirs of the victims wore some token of the departed ones, and ladies and gentlemen were seen in the blood-stained garments which their relatives had worn on their way to the scaffold, and which they had purchased with large sums of money from the executioner, that lord of Paris. It often happened that a lady in the blood-stained dress of her mother danced with the son of the man who had delivered her mother to the guillotine; that a son of a member of the Convention of 1793

led, in the minuet, the graceful "pas de châte," with the daughter of an emigrant marquis. The most fanatical men of the days of terror, now exalted into wealthy land-owners, led on in the gay waltz the daughters of their former landlords; and these women pressed the hand soiled with the blood of their relatives because now, as amends for their traffic in blood, they could offer future wealth and distinction.

It seemed that all Paris and all France had gone mad—that the whole nation was drunk with blood as with intoxicating wine, and wanted to stifle the voice of conscience in the horrible revelry of the saturnalia.

Josephine never took part in these public balls and festivities; never did the widow of General Beauharnais, one of the victims of the revolution, attend these *bals à la victime*, where man prided himself on his misfortune and gloried in his sorrows. The *Moniteur*—which then gave daily notices of the balls and amusements that were to take place in Paris, so as to let the world know how cheerful and happy every one felt there, and which made it its business to publish the names of the *ci-devants* and ex-nobles who had partaken in these festivities—never in its long and correct list mentions the name of the widow of General Beauharnais.

Josephine kept aloof from all these wild dissipations—these balls and banquets. She would neither dance, nor adorn herself in the memory of her husband; she would not take a part in the splendid festivities of a republic which had murdered him, and had pierced her loyal heart with the deepest wounds.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FIRST INTERVIEW.

IN the midst of these joys and amusements of the new-growing Paris, the storm of the thirteenth Vendémiaire launched forth its destructive thunderbolts, and another rent was made in the lofty structure of the republic. The royalists, who had cunningly frequented these *bals à la victime*, to weave intrigues and conspiracies, found their webs scattered, and the republic assumed a new form.

Napoleon with his sword had cut to pieces the webs and snares of the royalists as well as of the revolutionists, and France had to bow to the constitution. In the Tuileries now sat the Council of the Elders; in the *Salle du Manège* sat the Five Hundred; and in the palace of Luxemburg resided the five directors of the republic.

On the thirteenth Vendémiaire Paris had passed through a crisis of its revolutionary disease; and, to prevent its falling immediately into another, it permitted the newly-appointed commander-in-chief of the army of the interior of France, General Napoleon Bonaparte, to have every house strictly searched, and to confiscate all weapons found.

Even into the house of the Viscountess de Beauharnais, in the rue Chauteraine, came the soldiers of the republic to search for secreted weapons. They found there the sword of Alexandre de Beauharnais, which certainly Josephine had not hidden, for it was the chief ornament of her son's room. When Eugene, on the next Saturday, came to Paris from St. Germain, as he did every week, to pass the Sunday in his mother's house; to his great distress he saw vacant on the wall the place where the sword of his father had been hanging. With trembling voice and tears in her eyes his mother told him that General Bonaparte, the new com-