

while he approached the altar, the bands played "Long live the emperor," which the Abbé Rose had composed for this solemnity. Then the pope, standing before the altar, intoned the *Te Deum*, which was at once executed by four choirs and two orchestras, and which completed the ecclesiastical part of the ceremony.

This was followed by a secular one. The emperor took, on the Bible which Cardinal Fesch presented to him, the oath prescribed in the constitution, and whereby he pledged himself solemnly to maintain "the most wise results of the revolution, to defend the integrity of the territory, and to rule only in the interest of the happiness and glory of the French people." After he had taken this oath, a herald approached the edge of the platform, and, according to ancient custom, cried out in a loud voice: "The most mighty and glorious Emperor Napoleon, Emperor of the French, is crowned and enthroned! Long live the emperor!"

A tremendous, prolonged shout of joy followed this proclamation: "Long live the emperor! Long live the empress!" and then an artillery salute thundered forth from behind the cathedral, and a similar salute responded from the Tuileries, and from the Invalides, and proclaimed to all Paris that France had again found a ruler, that a new dynasty had been lifted up above the French people.

At this moment from the *Place de Carrousel* ascended an enormous air balloon surmounted by an ornamental, gigantic crown, and which, on the wings of the wind, was to announce to France the same tidings proclaimed to Paris by bell and cannon: "The republic of France is converted into an empire! The free republicans are now the subjects of the Emperor Napoleon I.!"

The gigantic balloon arose amid the joyous shouts of the crowd, and soon disappeared from the gaze of the spectators. It flew, as a trophy of victory of Napoleon I., all over France. Thousands saw it and understood its silent

and yet eloquent meaning, but no one could tell where it had fallen. Finally, after many weeks, the emperor, who had often asked after the balloon's fate, received the wished-for answer. The balloon had fallen in Rome, upon Nero's grave!

Napoleon remained silent a moment at this news: a shadow passed over his countenance; then his brow brightened again, and he exclaimed: "Well, I would sooner see it there, than in the dust of the streets!"

CHAPTER XLI.

DAYS OF HAPPINESS.

THE prophecy of the old woman in Martinique had now been fulfilled: Josephine was more than a queen, she was an empress! She stood on life's summit, and a world lay at her feet. Before the husband who stood at her side, the princes and the people of Europe bowed in the dust, and paid him homage—the hero who by new victories had won ever-increasing fame and fresh laurels, who had defeated Austria, Prussia, and Russia, and who had engraven on the rolls of French glory the mighty victories of Austerlitz, Jena, and Eylau!

Josephine stood on the pinnacle of life; she saw the princes of foreign states come to France as conquered, as captives, and as allies, to bring to her husband and to herself the homage of subjects; she saw devoted courtiers and flatterers; pomp and splendor surrounded her on every side.

Amid this glory she remained simple and modest—she never gave up her cheerful gentleness and mildness; she never forgot the days which had been; she never allowed

herself to be exalted by the brilliancy of the moment to an ambitious pride or to a lofty self-conceit. The friends of the widow Josephine de Beauharnais always found in the empress Josephine a thankful, obliging friend, ever ready to appeal to her husband, and intercede with him in their behalf. To the royalists, when weary of their long exile, though poor and helpless still loyal to the royal family—when they returned to France with bleeding feet and wounded hearts, to implore from the Emperor of the French the privilege of dying in their native country—to them all Josephine was a counsellor, a helper, a compassionate protectress. With deep interest she inquired from them how it fared with the Count de Lille, whom her heart yet named as the King of France, though her lips dared not utter it. All the assistance she gave to the royalists, and the protection she afforded them, oftentimes despite Napoleon's anger, all the loyalty, the generosity, and self-denial she manifested, were the quiet sacrifice which she offered to God for her own happiness, and with which she sought to propitiate the revengeful spirit of the old monarchy, loitering perchance in the Tuileries, where she now, in the place of the wife of the Count de Lille, was enthroned as sovereign.

Josephine's heart was unwearied and inexhaustible in well-doing and in liberality; if Napoleon was truly the emperor and the father of the army and of the soldiers, Josephine was equally the empress and the mother of the poor and unfortunate.

But she was also, in the true sense of the word, the empress of the happy. No one understood so well as she did how to be the leader at festivals, to preside at a joyous company, to give new attractions by her gracious womanly sweetness and amiableness, or to receive homage with such beaming eyes, and to make others happy while she herself seemed to be made happy by them.

Amid this life full of splendor and grandeur there were

sad hours, when the sun was shadowed by clouds, and the eyes of the Empress of the French filled with such bitter tears as only the wife and the widow of General Beauharnais could shed.

Three things especially contributed to draw these tears from the eyes of the Empress Josephine: her jealousy, her extravagance, and, lastly, her childlessness.

Josephine was jealous, for she not only loved Napoleon, she worshipped him as her providence, her future, her happiness. Her heart was yet so full of passion, and so young, that it hoped for much happiness, and could not submit to that resignation which is satisfied to give more love than it receives, and instead of the warm, intoxicating cup of love, to receive the cool, sober beverage of friendship. Josephine wanted not merely to be the friend, but to remain Napoleon's beloved one; and she looked upon all these beautiful women who adorned the imperial court of the Tuileries as enemies who came to dispute with her the love of her husband.

And, alas! she had too often to acknowledge herself defeated in this struggle, to see her rivals triumph, and for weeks to retreat into the background before the victorious one who may have succeeded in enchaining the inconstant heart of Napoleon, and to make the proud Cæsar bow to her love. But afterward, when love's short dream had vanished, Napoleon, penitent, would come back with renewed love to his Josephine, whom he still called "the star of his happiness;" and oftentimes, touched by her tears, he sacrificed to her anxiety and jealousy a love-caprice, and became more affectionate, more agreeable even, than when he had forsaken her; for then, to prove to her how unreserved was his confidence, he often told her of his new love-adventures, and was even indiscreet enough at times to betray all his gallantries to her.

The second object of the constant solicitude and trials of

the empress was her extravagance. She did not understand how to economize; her indolent creole nature found it impossible to calculate, to bring numbers into columns, or to question tedious figures, to see if debt and purse agreed—if her generous heart must be prevented from giving to the poor—from rendering assistance to the helpless, or from spending handfuls for the suffering; to see if her taste for the arts was no longer to be gratified with pictures, paintings, statues, cameos, and other objects of *vertu*, which filled her with so much joy and admiration; if her elegant manners and fondness for finery and dress were to be denied all that was costly, all that was fashionable, and which seemed to have been expressly invented for the adorning of an empress. And when, in some of those grave, melancholy hours of internal anxiety, the cruel phantoms of the future reckonings arose before her and warned her to stop purchasing, Josephine comforted herself with the idea that it was Napoleon himself who had requested her to be to all the ladies of his court a pattern of elegance, and to be distinguished above all by the most brilliant, the choicest, the costliest toilet.

The emperor would often come into the cabinet of the empress, and to the great astonishment of her ladies-in-waiting would enter into the most minute details of her dress, and designate the robes and ornaments which he desired her to wear on some special festivity. It even happened in Aix-la-Chapelle that Napoleon, who had come into the toilet-room of the empress and found that she had put on a robe which did not please him, poured ink on the costly dress of silver brocade, so as to compel her to put on another.*

And then how was it possible to resist the temptation of purchasing all those beautiful things which were constantly

* Avrillon, "Mémoires," vol. i., p. 98; and Constant, "Mémoires," vol. iii., p. 103.

brought to her for inspection? Josephine loved what was beautiful, tasteful, and artistic; all works of art which she admired must be purchased, whatever price was asked; and when the merchants came to offer to the empress their superb and splendid articles of luxury, how could she have the cruel courage to repel them? How often did she purchase objects of extraordinary value for which she had no need, simply to please herself and the merchant! Every thing that was beautiful and tasteful pleased her, and she must possess it. No one had a more remarkably fine taste than Josephine, but the artists, the manufacturers, the merchants, also had fine taste, and they came to the empress with the best they had; it was therefore natural that she should purchase from them. But unfortunately the happy moment of the purchase was followed by the unhappy one of the payment, and the outlay was constantly beyond the income of the empress, whose treasury, besides, was so often emptied in charities, pensions, and presents. Then when the merchants urged payment, and the purse was empty, Josephine had recourse to the emperor, and had to entreat him to meet her expenses, and then came violent scenes, reproaches, and bitter words. The emperor was angry, Josephine wept, and payment and reconciliation followed these scenes. Josephine promised to the emperor and to herself to be more economical in the future, and no longer to purchase what she could not pay for, but ever came the temptation, with all its inviting treasures, and being no saintly Anthony, she would fall a prey to the temptation.

The third and thickest cloud which often darkened the serene sky of her happiness after her marriage was, as already said, Josephine's childlessness. This was the bitter drop which was mixed in the golden cup of her joy—this was the sting which, however deeply hid under the roses, still reached her heart and wounded it painfully. She had no children who could call Napoleon father, no offspring to

prolong the future of the new dynasty. And therefore the firmer the emperor's power became, the higher he stood above all other princes, the more distressing and the more anxious were the emotions which filled the heart of Josephine, the louder was the warning voice which ceased not to whisper to her heart, and which she forgot only now and then under the glow of Napoleon's assurances of love, or amid the noise of festivities. This voice whispered: "You must give place to another. Napoleon will reject you, to marry a wife of princely birth, who will give an heir to his empire!"

How Josephine strove to silence these agonizing whisperings of her heart! With what restlessness of sorrow she rushed into the gayeties and amusements of a court life! How she sought, in charitable occupations, in the joys of society, in every thing which was congruous to the life of a woman, of an empress, to obtain the forgetfulness of her torments! With what envious attention she listened to the whispers of courtiers, scrutinized their features, read their looks, to find out if they still believed in the existence of an empress in the wife of Napoleon! With what jealous solicitude she observed all the families on European thrones, and considered what princesses among them were marriageable, and whether Napoleon's relations with the fathers of such princesses were more intimate than those with the other princes!

And then she ever sought to deafen this vigilant, warning voice, by comforting herself with the thought that the emperor had adopted his brother's son, the son of Hortense, and that he had made him his heir, and consequently the throne and the dynasty were secure in a successor.

But alas! Fate would not leave this last comfort to the unfortunate empress. In May of the year 1807, Prince Napoleon, the crown prince of Holland, Napoleon's adopted son and successor, died of a child's disease, which in a few

days tore him away from the arms of his despairing mother.

Josephine's anguish was boundless, and in the first hours of this misfortune, which with such annihilating force fell upon her, the empress, as if in a state of hallucination, gazed into the future, and, with prophetic voice, exclaimed: "Now I am lost! Now is divorce certain!"

Yes, she was lost! She felt it, she knew it! Nothing the emperor did to pacify her anguish—the numerous expressions of his love, of his sympathy, of his winning affection—nothing could any longer deceive Josephine. The voices which had so long whispered in her breast now cried aloud: "You must give place to another! Napoleon will reject you, so as to have a son!"

But the emperor seemed still to try to dispel these fears, and, to give to his Josephine a new proof of his love and faithfulness, he chose Eugene de Beauharnais, the son of Josephine, for his adopted heir, and named him Vice-King of Italy, and gave him in marriage the daughter of the King of Bavaria; he thus afforded to Europe the proof that he still considered Josephine as his wife, and that he desired to be shown to her all the respect due to her dignity, for he travelled to Munich in company with her in order to be present at the nuptials.

This journey to attend her son's marriage was the last pleasure of Josephine—her last days of honors and happiness. Once more she saw herself surrounded by all the splendor and the pomp of her rank; once more she was publicly honored and admired as the wife of the first and greatest ruler of the world, the wife of the Emperor Napoleon.

Perhaps Josephine, in these hours of happiness, when as empress, wife, and mother, she enjoyed the purest and most sacred pleasure, forgot the sad forebodings and fears of her soul. Perhaps she now believed that, since Napoleon

had adopted her Eugene as his son, and had given to this son a wife of royal extraction, Fate would be propitious to her; that the emperor would be satisfied with the son of his choice, and that the future scions of the royal princess would be the heirs of his throne.

But one word of Napoleon frightened her out of this ephemeral security into which happiness had lulled her.

Josephine wept as she bade farewell to her son; she was comfortless when with his young wife Eugene left for Italy. She complained to Napoleon, in justification of her tears, that she should seldom see her son, that now he was lost to his mother's heart.

The emperor, who at first had endeavored to comfort her, felt at last wounded by her sorrow.

"You weep, Josephine," said he, hastily, "but you have no reasonable motives to do so; you weep simply because you are separated from your son. If already the absence of your children causes you so much sorrow, think then what I must endure! The tenderness which you feel for your children makes me cruelly experience how unhappy it is for me to have none."*

Josephine trembled, and her tears ceased flowing in the presence of the emperor, but only to fall more abundantly as soon as he had left her. Now she wept no longer at her separation from her son; her tears were still more bitter and painful—she grieved over the coming future; she wept because those voices which happiness for a moment had deafened, now spoke more loudly—more fearfully and menacingly shouted: "Napoleon will reject you! He will choose for himself a wife of royal birth, who will give an heir to his throne and his empire."

* *Avrillon*, "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Joséphine," vol. i., p. 202.

CHAPTER XLII.

DIVORCE.

It was at last decided! The storm which had so long and so fearfully rolled over Josephine's head was to burst, and with one single flash destroy her earthly happiness, her love, her future!

The peace of Vienna had been ratified on the 13th of October, 1809. Napoleon passed the three long months of peace negotiations in Vienna and in Schönbrunn, while Josephine, solitary and full of sad misgivings, lived quietly in the retreat of Malmaison.

Now that peace was signed, Napoleon returned to France with fresh laurels and new crowns of victory. But not, as usual after so long an absence, did he greet Josephine with the tenderness and joy of a home-returning husband. He approached her with clouded brow; with a proud, cold demeanor; with the mien of a ruling master, before whom all must bow, even his wife, even his own heart.

At Fontainebleau, whither the emperor in a few, short, commanding words—in a letter of three lines—had invited the empress, did the first interview of Josephine and Napoleon take place. She hastened to meet her husband with a cheerful face and beaming eyes. He, however, received her coldly, and endeavored to hide his feelings of uneasiness and shame under a repulsive, domineering manner.

He returned to his home victorious; the whole world lay conquered at his feet; he was triumphant. He had so deeply humiliated the pride of Austria that she not only accepted his harsh terms of peace, but, as once men had appeased the Minotaur by the sacrifice of the most amiable and most beautiful maiden, so Austria had asked in a low voice whether the daughter of the emperor, Maria Louisa,