QUEEN HORTENSE.

BOOK I.

DAYS OF CHILDHOOD AND OF THE REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

DAYS OF CHILDHOOD.

"One moment of bliss is not too dearly bought with death," says our great German poet, and he may be right; but a moment of bliss purchased with a long lifetime full of trial and suffering is far too costly.

And when did it come for her, this "moment of bliss?" When could Hortense Beauharnais, in speaking of herself, declare, "I am happy? Now, let suffering and sorrow come upon me, if they will; I have tasted felicity, and, in the memories it has left me, it is imperishable and eternal!"

Much, very much, had this daughter of an empress and mother of an emperor to endure.

In her earliest youth she had been made familiar with misfortune and with tears; and in her later life, as maiden, wife, and mother, she was not spared.

A touchingly-beautiful figure amid the drama of the Napoleonic days was this gentle and yet high-spirited queen, who, when she had descended from the throne and had ceased to be a sovereign, exhausted and weary of life, found refuge at length in the grave, yet still survived among us as a queen—no longer, indeed, a queen of nations, but the Queen of Flowers.

The flowers have retained their remembrance of Josephine's beautiful daughter; they did not, like so many of her own race, deny her when she was no longer the daughter of the all-powerful emperor, but merely the daughter of the "exile." Among the flowers the lovely Hortense continued to live on, and Gavarni, the great poet of the floral realm, has reared to her, as Hortensia, the Flower Queen, an enchanting monument, in his "*Fleurs Animées*." Upon a mound of Hortensias rests the image of the Queen Hortense, and, in the far distance, like the limnings of a half-forgotten dream, are seen the towers and domes of Paris. Farther in the foreground lies the grave of Hortense, with the carved likeness of the queenly sister of the flowers. Loneliness reigns around the spot, but above it, in the air, hovers the imperial eagle. The imperial mantle, studded with its golden bees, undulates behind him, like the train of a comet; the dark-red ribbon of the Legion of Honor, with the golden cross, hangs around his neck, and in his beak he bears a full-blooming branch of the crown imperial.

It is a page of world-renowned history that this charming picture of Gavarni's conjures up before us—

an historical pageant that sweeps by us in wondrous fantastic forms of light and shadow, when we scan the life of Queen Hortense with searching gaze, and meditate upon her destiny. She had known all the grandeur and splendor of earth, and had seen them all crumble again to dust. No, not all! Her ballads and poems remain, for genius needs no diadem to be immortal.

When Hortense ceased to be a queen by the grace of Napoleon, she none the less continued to be a poetess "by the grace of God." Her poems are sympathetic and charming, full of tender plaintiveness and full of impassioned warmth, which, however, in no instance oversteps the bounds of womanly gentleness. Her musical compositions, too, are equally melodious and attractive to the heart. Who does not know the song, "*Va t'en, Guerrier*," which Hortense wrote and set to music, and then, at Napoleon's request, converted into a military march? The soldiers of France once left their native land, in those days, to the sound of this march, to carry the French eagles to Russia; and to the same warlike harmony they have marched forth more recently, toward the same distant destination. This ballad, written by Hortense, survived. At one time everybody sang it, joyously, aloud. Then, when the Bourbons had returned, the scarred and crippled veterans of the *Invalides* hummed it under their breath, while they whispered secretly to each other of the glory of *La Belle France*, as of a beautiful dream of youth, now gone forever.

To-day, that song rings out with power again through

France, and mounts in jubilee to the summit of the column on the Place Vendôme. The bronze visage of the emperor seems to melt into a smile as these tremulous billows of melody go sweeping around his brow, and the Hortensias on the queen's grave raise dreamingly their heads of bloom, in which the dews of heaven, or the tears of the departed one, glisten like rarest gems, and seem to look forth lovingly and listen to this ditty, which now for France has won so holy a significance—holy because it is the master-chant of a religion which all men and all nations should revere—the "religion of our memories." Thus, this "*Va t'en, Guerrier*," which France now sings, resounds over the grave of the queen, like a salute of honor over the last resting-place of some brave soldier.

She had much to contend with — this hapless and amiable queen—but she ever proved firm, and ever retained one kind of courage that belongs to woman—the courage to smile through her tears. Her father perished on the scaffold; her mother, the doubly-dethroned empress, died of a broken heart; her step-father, the Emperor Napoleon, pined away, liked a caged lion, on a lone rock in the sea! Her whole family—all the dethroned kings and queens—went wandering about as fugitives and pariahs, banished from their country, and scarcely wringing from the clemency of those to whom *they* had been clement, a little spot of earth, where, far from the bustle and intercourse of the world, they might live in quiet obscurity, with their great recollections and their mighty sorrows. Their past lay behind them, like a glittering fairy tale, which no one now believed; and only the present seemed, to men and nations, a welcome reality, which they, with envenomed stings, were eager to brand upon the foreheads of the dethroned Napoleon race.

Yet, despite all these sorrows and discouragements, Hortensia had the mental strength not to hate her fellow-beings, but, on the contrary, to teach her children to love them and do good to them. The heart of the dethroned queen bled from a thousand wounds, but she did not allow these wounds to stiffen into callousness, nor her heart to harden under the broad scars of sorrow that had ceased to bleed. She cherished her bereavements and her wounds, and kept them open with her tears; but, even while she suffered measureless woes, it solaced her heart to relieve the woes and dry the tears of others. Thus was her life a constant charity; and when she died she could, like the Empress Josephine, say of herself, "I have wept much, but never have I made others weep."

Hortense was the daughter of the Viscount de Beauharnais, who, against the wishes of his relatives, married the beautiful Josephine Tascher de la Pagerie, a young creole lady of Martinique. This alliance, which love alone had brought about, seemed destined, nevertheless, to no happy issue. While both were young, and both inexperienced, passionate, and jealous, both lacked the strength and energy requisite to restrain the wild impulses of their fiery temperaments within the cool and tranquil bounds of quiet married life. The viscount was too young to be not merely a lover and tender husband,

but also a sober counsellor and cautious instructor in the difficult after-day of life; and Josephine was too innocent, too artless, too sportive and genial, to avoid all those things that might give to the watchful and hostile family of her husband an opportunity for ill-natured suspicions, which were whispered in the viscount's ear as cruel certainties. It may readily be conceived, then, that such a state of things soon led to violent scenes and bitter grief. Josephine was too beautiful and amiable not to attract attention and admiration wherever she went, and she was not yet *blasée* and hackneyed enough to take no pleasure in the court thus paid to her, and the admiration so universally shown her, nor even to omit doing her part to win them. But, while she was naive and innocent at heart, she required of her husband that these trifling outside coquetries should not disquiet him nor render him distrustful, and that he should repose the most unshaken confidence in her. Her pride revolted against his suspicions, as did his jealousy against her seeming frivolity; and both became quite willing, at last, to separate, notwithstanding the love they really bore each other at the bottom of their hearts, had not their children rendered such a separation impossible. These children were a son, Eugene, and a daughter, Hortense, four years younger than the boy. Both parents loved these children with passionate tenderness; and often when one of the stormy scenes at which we have hinted took place in the presence of the young people, an imploring word from Eugene or a caress from little Hortense would suffice to

reconcile their father and mother, whose anger, after all, was but the result of excessive attachment.

But these domestic broils became more violent with time, and the moment arrived when Eugene was no longer there to stand by his little sister in her efforts to soothe the irritation of her parents. The viscount had sent Eugene, who was now seven years of age, to a boarding-school; and little Hortense, quite disheartened by the absence of her brother, had no longer the means or the courage to allay the quarrels that raged between her parents, but would escape in terror and dismay, when they broke out, to some lonely corner, and there weep bitterly over a misfortune, the extent of which her poor little childish heart could not yet estimate.

In the midst of this gloomy and stormy period, the young viscountess received a letter from Martinique. It was from her mother, Madame Tascher de la Pagerie, who vividly depicted to her daughter the terrors of her lonely situation in her huge, silent residence, where there was no one around her but servants and slaves, whose singularly altered and insubordinate manner had, of late, alarmed the old lady, and filled her with secret apprehensions for the future. She, therefore, besought her daughter to come to her, and live with her, so that she might cheer the last few years of her mother's existence with the bright presence of her dazzling youth.

Josephine accepted this appealing letter from her mother as a hint from destiny; and, weary of her domestic wrangles, and resolved to end them forever, she took

her little daughter, Hortense, then scarcely four years old, and with her sailed away from France, to seek beyond the ocean and in her mother's arms the new happiness of undisturbed tranquillity.

But, at that juncture, tranquillity had fled the world. The mutterings and moanings of the impending tempest could be heard on all sides. A subterranean rumbling was audible throughout all lands; a dull thundering and outcry, as though the solid earth were about to change into one vast volcano — one measureless crater — that would dash to atoms, and entomb, with its blazing lava-streams and fiery cinder-showers, the happiness and peace of all humanity. And, finally, this terrific crater did, indeed, open and hurl destruction and death on all sides, over the whole world, uprooting, with demoniac fury, entire races and nations, and silencing the merry laugh and harmless jest with the overpowering echoes of its awful voice!

This volcano was the revolution. In France, the first and most fearful explosion of this terrific crater occurred, but the whole world shook and heaved with it, and, on all sides, the furious masses from beneath overflowed on the surface, seeking to reverse the order of things and place the lowest where the highest had been. Even away in Martinique this social earthquake was felt, which had already, in France, flung out the bloody guillotine from its relentless crater. This guillotine had become the altar of the so-called enfranchisement of nations, and upon this altar the intoxicated, unthinking

masses offered up to their new idol those who, until then, had been their lords and masters, and by whose death they now believed that they could purchase freedom for evermore.

"*Egalité! fraternité! liberté!*" Such was the battle-cry of this howling, murdering populace. Such were the three words which burned in blood-red letters of fire above the guillotine, and their mocking emblem was the glittering axe, that flashed down, to sever from their bodies the heads of the aristocrats whom, in spite of the new religion represented in those three words, they would not recognize as brethren and equals, or admit to the freedom of life and of opinion. And this battle-cry of the murderous French populace had penetrated as far as Martinique, where it had aroused the slaves from their sullen obedience to the point of demanding by force that participation in freedom, equality, and brotherhood, that had so long been denied them. They, at last, rose everywhere in open insurrection against their masters, and the firebrands which they hurled into the dwellings of the whites served as the bridal torches to their espousal of liberty.

The house of Madame Tascher de la Pagerie was one of the abodes in which these firebrands fell.

One night Josephine was awakened by the blinding light of the flames, which had already penetrated to her chamber. With a shriek of terror, she sprang from her bed, caught up little Hortense in her arms from the couch where the child lay quietly slumbering, wrapped

her in the bedclothes, and rushed, in her night-attire, from the house. She burst, with the lion-like courage of a mother, through the shouting, fighting crowds of soldiers and blacks outside, and fled, with all the speed of mortal terror, toward the harbor. There lay a French vessel, just ready to weigh anchor. An officer, who at that moment was stepping into the small boat that was to convey him to the departing ship, saw this young woman, as, holding her child tightly to her bosom, she sank down, with one last despairing cry, half inanimate, upon the beach. Filled with the deepest compassion, he hastened to her, and, raising both mother and child in his arms, he bore them to his boat, which then instantly put out from land, and bounded away over the billows with its lovely burden.

The ship was soon reached, and Josephine, still tightly clasping her child to her breast, and happy in having saved this only jewel, climbed up the unsteady ladder to the ship's decks. Until this moment all her thoughts remained concentrated upon her child, and it was only when she had seen her little Hortense safely put to bed in the cabin and free from all danger—only after she had fulfilled all the duties of a mother, that the woman revived in her breast, and she cast shamed and frightened glances around her. Only half-clad, in light, fluttering night-clothes, without any other covering to her beautiful neck and bosom than her superb, luxuriant hair, which fell around her and partly hid them, like a thick black veil, stood the young Viscountess Josephine

de Beauharnais, in the midst of a group of gazing men!

However, some of the ladies on the ship came to her aid, and, so soon as her toilet had been sufficiently improved, Josephine eagerly requested to be taken back to land, in order that she might fly to her mother's assistance.

But the captain opposed this request, as he was unwilling to give the young fugitive over to the tender mercies of the assassins who were burning and massacring ashore, and whose murderous yells could be distinctly heard on board of the vessel. The entire coast, so far as the eye could reach, looked like another sea—a sea, though, of flame and smoke, which shot up its leaping billows in long tongues of fire far against the sky. It was a terrible, an appalling spectacle; and Josephine fled from it to the bedside of her little sleeping daughter. Then, kneeling there by the couch of her child, she uplifted to heaven her face, down which the tears were streaming, and implored God to spare her mother.

But, meanwhile, the ship weighed anchor, and sped farther and farther away from this blazing coast.

Josephine stood on the deck and gazed back at her mother's burning home, which gradually grew less to her sight, then glimmered only like a tiny star on the distant horizon, and finally vanished altogether. With that last ray her childhood and past life had sunk forever in the sea, and a new world and a new life opened for both mother and child. The past was, like the ships of Cor-

tez, burned behind her; yet it threw a magic light far away over into her future, and as Josephine stood there with her little Hortense in her arms, and sent her last farewell to the island where her early days had been spent, she bethought her of the old mulatto-woman who had whispered in her ear one day:

"You will go back to France, and, ere long after that, all France will be at your feet. You will be greater there than a queen."

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPHECY.

It was toward the close of the year 1790 that Josephine, with her little daughter, Hortense, arrived in Paris and took up her residence in a small dwelling. There she soon received the intelligence of the rescue of her mother, and of the re-establishment of peace in Martinique. In France, however, the revolution and the guillotine still raged, and the banner of the Reign of Terror—the red flag—still cast its bloody shadow over Paris. Its inhabitants were terror-stricken; no one knew in the evening that he would still be at liberty on the following day, or that he would live to see another sunset. Death lay in wait at every door, and reaped its dread harvest in every house and in every family. In the face of these horrors, Josephine forgot all her earlier

griefs, all the insults and humiliations to which she had been subjected by her husband; the old love revived in her breast, and, as it might well be that on the morrow death would come knocking at her own door, she wished to devote the present moment to a reconciliation with her husband, and a reunion with her son.

But all her attempts in this direction were in vain. The viscount had felt her flight to Martinique to be too grave an injury, too great an insult, to be now willing to consent to a reconciliation with his wife. Sympathizing friends arranged a meeting between them, without, however, previously informing the viscount of their design. His anger was therefore great when, on entering the parlor of Count Montmorin, in response to that gentleman's invitation, he found there the wife he had so obstinately and wrathfully avoided. He was about to retire hastily, when a charming child rushed forward, greeted him tenderly in silvery tones, and threw herself into his arms. The viscount was now powerless to fly; he pressed his child, his Hortense, to his heart, and when the child, with a winning smile, entreated him to kiss her mamma as he had kissed her; when he saw the beautiful countenance of Josephine wet with tears; when he heard his father's voice saying, "My son, reconcile yourself with my daughter! Josephine is my daughter, and I would not call her so if she were unworthy," and when he saw his handsome son, Eugene, gazing at him wistfully, his head resting on his mother's shoulder, his heart relented. Leading little Hortense by the hand, he stepped forward

to his wife, and, with a loud cry of joy and a blissful greeting of love, Josephine sank on his bosom.

Peace was re-established, and husband and wife were now united in a closer bond of love than ever before. The storms seemed to have spent their rage, and the heaven of their happiness was clear and cloudless. But this heaven was soon to be overcast with the black shadow of the revolution.

Viscount Beauharnais, returned by the nobility of Blois to the new legislative body, the Estates-General, resigned this position, in order to serve his country with his sword instead of his tongue. With the rank of adjutant-general, he repaired to the Army of the North, accompanied by Josephine's blessings and tears. A dread premonition told her that she would never see the general again, and this premonition did not deceive her. The spirit of anarchy and insurrection not only raged among the people of Paris, but also in the army. The aristocrats, who were given over to the guillotine in Paris, were also regarded with distrust and hatred in the army, and Viscount Beauharnais, who, for his gallantry on the battle-field of Soissons, had been promoted to the position of commanding general, was accused by his own officers of being an enemy of France and of the new order of things. He was arrested, taken back to Paris, and thrown into the prison of the Luxembourg, where so many other victims of the revolution lay in confinement.

The sad intelligence of her husband's misfortune soon reached Josephine, and aroused her love to energetic

action in his behalf. She mentally vowed to liberate her husband, the father of her children, or to die with him. She courageously confronted all dangers, all suspicions, and was happy when she found him in his prison, where she visited him, whispering words of consolation and hope in his ear.

But at that time love and fidelity were also capital crimes, and Josephine's guilt was twofold: first, because she was an aristocrat herself, and secondly, because she loved and wept for the fate of an aristocrat, and an alleged traitor to his country. Josephine was arrested and thrown into the prison of St. Pelagie.

Eugene and Hortense were now little better than orphans, for the prisoners of the Luxembourg and St. Pelagie, at that time, only left their prisons to mount the scaffold. Alone, deprived of all help, avoided by all whom they had once known and loved, the two children were threatened with misery, want, and even with hunger, for the estate of their parents had been confiscated, and, in the same hour in which Josephine was conducted to prison, the entrances and doors of their dwelling were sealed, and the poor children left to find a sheltering roof for themselves. But yet they were not entirely helpless, not quite friendless, for a friend of Josephine, a Madame Holstein, had the courage to come to the rescue, and take the children into her own family.

But it was necessary to go to work cautiously and wisely, in order to avoid exciting the hatred and vengeance of those who, coming from the scum of the peo-

ple, were now the rulers of France. An imprudent word, a look, might suffice to cast suspicion upon, and render up to the guillotine, this good Madame Holstein, this courageous friend of the two children. It was in itself a capital crime that she had taken the children of the accused into her house, and it was therefore necessary to adopt every means of conciliating the authorities. It was thought necessary that Hortense should, in company with her protectress, attend the festivals and patriotic processions, that were renewed at every decade in honor of the one and indivisible republic, but she was never required to take an active part in these celebrations. She was not considered worthy to figure among the daughters of the people; she had not yet been forgiven for being the daughter of a viscount, of an imprisoned *ci-devant*. Eugene had been apprenticed to a carpenter, and the son of the viscount was now often seen walking through the streets in a blouse, carrying a board on his shoulder or a saw under his arm.

While the children of the accused were thus enjoying temporary security, the future of their parents was growing darker and darker, and not only the life of the general, but also that of his wife, was now seriously endangered. Josephine had been removed from the prison of St. Pelagie to that of the Carmelites, and this brought her a step nearer the scaffold. But she did not tremble for herself, she thought only of her children and her husband; she wrote affectionate letters to the former, which she bribed her jailer to forward to their destination, but all her efforts to place herself in communication with her husband were abortive. One day she received the fearful intelligence that her husband had just been conducted before the revolutionary tribunal. Josephine waited for further intelligence in an agony of suspense. Had this tribunal acquitted her husband, or had it condemned him to death? Was he already free, or was he free in a higher sense—was he dead? If he were free, he would have found means to inform her of the fact; and if he were dead, his name would certainly have been mentioned in the list of the condemned. In this agony of suspense, Josephine passed the long day. Night came, but brought no rest for her and her companions in misery—the other occupants of the prison—who also looked death in the face, and who watched with her throughout the long night.

The society assembled in this prison was brilliant and select. There were the Dowager Duchess de Choiseul, the Viscountess de Maille, whose seventeen-years-old daughter had just been guillotined; there was the Marquise de Créqui, the intellectual lady who has often been called the last marquise of the *ancien régime*, and who in her witty memoirs wrote the French history of the eighteenth century as viewed from an aristocratic standpoint. There was Abbé Téxier, who, when the revolutionists threatened him with the lantern, because he had refused to take the oath of allegiance to the new constitution, replied: "Will you see any better after having hung me to the lantern?" And there was yet another,

a M. Duvivier, a pupil of Cagliostro, who, like his master, could read the future, and with the assistance of a decanter full of water and a "dove," that is, an innocent young girl of less than seven, could solve the mysteries of fate.

To him, to the Grand Cophta, Josephine now addressed herself after this day of dread uncertainty, and demanded information of the fate of her husband.

In the stillness of the night the gloomy, desolate hall of the prison now presented a strange aspect. The jailer, bribed with an assignat of fifty francs, then worth only forty sous, however, had consented that his little six-years-old daughter should serve the Grand Cophta as "dove," and had made all other preparations. A table stood in the middle of the hall, on which was a decanter filled with clear, fresh water, around which were three candles in the form of a triangle, and placed as near the decanter as possible, in order that the dove should be able to see the better. The little girl, just aroused from sleep and brought from her bed in her night-gown, sat on a chair close to the table, and behind her stood the earnest, sombre figure of the Grand Cophta. Around the table stood the prisoners, these duchesses and marquises, these ladies of the court of Versailles who had preserved their aristocratic manners in the prison, and were even here so strictly observant of etiquette, that those of them who had enjoyed the honor of the *tabouret* in the Tuileries, were here accorded the same precedence, and all possible consideration shown them.

On the other side of the table, in breathless suspense, her large, dark eyes fastened on the child with a touching expression, stood the unhappy Josephine, and, at some distance behind the ladies, the jailer with his wife.

Now the Grand Cophta laid both hands on the child's head and cried in a loud voice, "Open your eyes and look!"

The child turned pale and shuddered as it fixed its gaze on the decanter.

"What do you see?" asked the Grand Cophta. "I want you to look into the prison of General Beauharnais. What do you see?"

"I see a little room," said the child with vivacity. "On a cot lies a young man who sleeps; at his side stands another man, writing on a sheet of paper that lies on a large book."

"Can you read?"

"No, citizen. Now the man cuts off his hair, and folds it in the paper."

"The one who sleeps?"

"No, the one who was just now writing. He is now writing something on the back of the paper in which he wrapped the hair; now he opens a little red pocket-book, and takes papers out of it; they are assignats, he counts them and then puts them back in the pocket-book. Now he rises and walks softly, softly."

"What do you mean by softly? You have not heard the slightest noise as yet, have you?"

"No, but he walks through the room on tiptoe."

"What do you see now?"

"He now covers his face with his hands and seems to be weeping."

"But what did he do with his pocket-book?"

"Ah, he has put the pocket book and the package with the hair in the pocket of the coat that lies on the sleeping man's bed."

"Of what color is this coat?"

"I cannot see, exactly; it is red or brown, lined with blue silk and covered with shining buttons."

"That will do," said the Grand Cophta; "you can go to bed, child."

He stooped down over the child and breathed on her forehead. The little girl seemed to awaken as from a trance, and hurried to her parents, who led her from the hall.

"General Beauharnais still lives!" said the Grand Cophta, addressing Josephine.

"Yes, he still lives," cried she, sadly, "but he is preparing for death." *

Josephine was right. A few days later Duchess d'Anville received a package and a letter. It was sent to her by a prisoner in La Force, named De Legrois. He had occupied the same cell with General Beauharnais and had found the package and the letter, addressed to the duchess, in his pocket on the morning of the execution of the general.

* This scene is exactly as represented by the Marquise de Créqui, who was present and relates it in her memoirs, vol. vi., p. 238.

In this letter the general conjured Duchess D'Anville to deliver to Josephine the package which contained his hair and his last adieus to wife and children.

This was the only inheritance which General Beauharnais could bequeath to his Josephine and her unhappy children!

Josephine was so agitated by the sight of her husband's hair and his last fond words of adieu, that she fainted away, a stream of blood gushing from her mouth.

Her companions in misfortune vied with each other in giving her the most tender attention, and demanded of the jailer that a physician should be called.

"Why a physician!" said the man, indifferently. "Death is the best physician. He called the general to-day; in a few days he will restore to him his wife."

This prophecy was almost verified. Josephine, scarcely recovered from her illness, received her citation from the Tribunal of Terror. This was the herald of certain death, and she courageously prepared for the grave, troubled only by thoughts of the children she must leave behind.

A fortunate and unforeseen occurrence saved her. The men of the revolution had now attained the summit of their power, and, as there was no standing still for them, they sank into the abyss which themselves had digged.

The fall of Robespierre opened the prisons and set at liberty thousands of the already condemned victims of the revolution.

Viscountess Josephine left her prison; she was re-

stored to liberty, and could now hasten to her children, but she came back to them as a poor widow, for the seals of the "one and indivisible republic" were on hers and her children's property as well as on that of all other aristocrats.

CHAPTER III.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVOLUTION.

France drew a breath of relief; the Reign of Terror was at an end, and a milder and more moderate government wielded the sceptre over the poor land that had so lately lain in the agonies of death. It was no longer a capital offence to bear an aristocratic name, to be better dressed than the *sans-culottes*, to wear no Jacobin-cap, and to be related to the emigrants. The guillotine, which had ruled over Paris during two years of blood and tears, now rested from its horrid work, and allowed the Parisians to think of something else besides making their wills and preparing for death.

Mindful of the uncertainty of the times, the people were disposed to make the most of this release from the fear of immediate death, and to enjoy themselves to the utmost while they could.

They had so long wept, that they eagerly desired to laugh once more; so long lived in sorrow and fear, that they now ardently longed for amusement and relaxation. The beautiful women of Paris, who had been dethroned

by the guillotine, and from whose hands the reins had been torn, now found the courage to grasp these reins again, and reconquer the position from which the storm-wind of the revolution had hurled them.

Madame Tallien, the all-powerful wife of one of the five directors who now swayed the destinies of France; Madame Récamier, the friend of all the eminent and distinguished men of that period; and Madame de Staël, the daughter of Necker, and the wife of the ambassador of Sweden, whose government had recognized the republic—these three ladies gave to Paris its drawing-rooms, its reunions, its *fêtes*, its fashions, and its luxury. All Paris had assumed a new form, and, although the Church had not yet again obtained official recognition, the belief in a Supreme Being was already re-established. Robespierre had already been bold enough to cause the inscription, "There is a Supreme Being," to be placed over the altars of the churches that had been converted into "Temples of Reason." Yes, there is a Supreme Being; and Robespierre, who had first acknowledged its existence, was soon to experience in himself that such was the case. Betrayed by his own associates, and charged by them with desiring to make himself dictator, and place himself at the head of the new Roman-French Republic as a new Cæsar, Robespierre fell a prey to the Tribunal of Terror which he himself had called into existence. While engaged in the Hôtel de Ville in signing death-sentences which were to furnish fresh victims to the guillotine, he was arrested by the Jacobins and Na-