The notary's words had entered the ambitious young man's heart like a dagger, and had wounded him deeply. But he had uttered no complaint, and made no mention of it; but to-day, on the day of his supreme triumph, to-day the emperor remembered that moment of humiliation, and, arrayed with the full insignia of the highest earthly dignity, he accorded himself the triumph of reminding the little notary that he had once advised Josephine not to marry him, because of his poverty.

The poor General Bonaparte had now transformed himself into the mighty Emperor Napoleon. Then he possessed nothing but his hat and his sword, but now the Pope awaited him in the cathedral of Notre-Dame, to place the golden imperial crown on his head.

CHAPTER VI.

NAPOLEON'S HEIR.

Hortense had not been able to take any part in the festivities of the coronation; but another festivity had been prepared for her in the retirement of her apartments. She had given birth to a son; and in this child the happy mother found consolation and a new hope.

Josephine, who had assumed the imperial crown with a feeling of foreboding sadness, received the intelligence of the birth of her grandson with exultation. It seemed to her that the clouds that had been gathering over her

head were now dissipated, and that a day of unclouded sunshine now smiled down upon her. Hortense had assured her mother's future; she had given birth to a son, and had thus given a first support to the new imperial dynasty. There was now no longer a reason why Napoleon should entertain the thoughts of a separation, for there was a son to whom he could one day bequeath the imperial throne of France.

The emperor also seemed to be disposed to favor Josephine's wishes, and to adopt his brother's son as his own. Had he not requested the Pope to delay his departure for a few days, in order to baptize the child? The Pope performed this sacred rite at St. Cloud, the emperor holding the child, and Madame Letitia standing at his side as second witness. Hortense now possessed an object upon which she could lavish the whole wealth of love that had until now lain concealed in her heart. The little Napoleon Charles was Hortense's first happy love; and she gave way to this intoxicating feeling with the most intense delight.

Josephine's house was now her home in the fullest sense of the word; she no longer shared her home with her husband, and could now bestow her undivided love and care upon her child. Louis Napoleon, the Grand-Constable of France, had been appointed Governor of Piedmont by Napoleon; and Hortense, owing to her delicate health, had not been compelled to accompany him, but had been permitted to remain in her little house in Paris, which she could exchange when sum-

mer came for her husband's new estate, the castle of Saint-Leu.

But the tranquillity which Josephine enjoyed with her child in this charming country-resort was to be of short duration. The brother and sister-in-law of the emperor could not hope to be permitted to lead a life of retirement. They were rays of the sun that now dazzled the whole world; they must fulfil their destiny, and contribute their light to the ruling sun.

An order of Napoleon recalled the constable, who had returned from Piedmont a short time before, and repaired to Saint-Leu to see his son, to Paris. Napoleon had appointed his brother to a brilliant destiny; the Constable of France was to become a king. Delegates of the Republic of Batavia, the late Holland, had arrived in Paris, and requested their mighty neighbor, the Emperor Napoleon, to give them a king, who should unite them with the glittering empire, through the ties of blood. Napoleon intended to fulfil their wishes, and present them with a king, in the person of his brother Louis.

But Louis was rather appalled than dazzled by this offer, and refused to accept the proposed dignity. In this refusal he was also in perfect harmony with his wife, who did all in her power to strengthen his resolution. Both felt that the crown which it was proposed to place on their heads would be nothing more than a golden chain of dependence; that the King of Holland could be nothing more than the vassal of France; and

their personal relations to each other added another objection to this political consideration.

In Paris, husband and wife could forget the chain that bound them together; there they were in the circle of their friends, and could avoid each other. The great, glittering imperial court served to separate and reconcile the young couple, who had never forgiven themselves for having fettered each other in this involuntary union. In Paris they had amusements, friends, society; while in Holland they would live in entire dependence on each other, and hear continually the rattling of the chain with which each had bound the other to the galley of a union without love.

Both felt this, and both were, therefore, united in the endeavor to ward off this new misfortune that was suspended over their heads, in the form of a kingly crown.

But how could they resist successfully the iron will of Napoleon? Hortense had never had the courage to address Napoleon directly on the subject of her wishes and petitions, and Josephine already felt that her wishes no longer exercised the power of earlier days over the emperor. She therefore avoided interceding where she was not sure of being successful.

At the outset, Louis had the courage to resist his brother openly; but Napoleon's angry glance annihilated his opposition, and his gentle, yielding nature was forced to succumb. In the presence of the deputation of the Batavian Republic, that so ardently longed for a sceptre and crown, Napoleon appealed to his brother Louis to ac-

cept the crown which had been freely tendered him, and to be to his country a king who would respect and protect its liberties, its laws, and its religion.

With emotion, Louis Bonaparte declared himself ready to accept this crown, and to be a good and true ruler to his new country.

And to keep this oath faithfully was from this time the single and sacred endeavor to which he devoted his every thought and energy. The people of Holland having chosen him to be their king, he was determined to do honor to their choice; having been compelled to give up his own country and nationality, he determined to belong to his new country with his whole heart and being—to become a thorough Hollander, as he could no longer remain a Frenchman.

This heretofore so gentle and passive nature now developed an entirely new energy; this dreamer, this pale, silent brother of the emperor, was now suddenly transformed into a bold, self-reliant man of action, who had fixed his gaze on a noble aim, and was ready to devote all the powers of his being to its attainment. As King of Holland, he desired, above all, to be beloved by his subjects, and to be able to contribute to their welfare and happiness. He studied their language with untiring diligence, and made himself acquainted with their manners and customs, for the purpose of making them his own. He investigated the sources of their wealth and of their wants, and sought to develop the former and relieve the latter. He was restless in his efforts to provide for his

country, and to merit the love and confidence which his subjects bestowed on him.

His wife also exerted herself to do justice to her new and glittering position, and to wear worthily the crown which she had so unwillingly accepted. In her drawing-rooms she brought together, at brilliant entertainments, the old aristocracy and the new nobility of Holland, and taught the stiff society of that country the fine, unconstrained tone, and the vivacious intellectual conversation of Parisian society. It was under Hortense's fostering hand that art and science first made their way into the aristocratic parlors of Holland, giving to their social reunions a higher and nobler importance.

And Hortense was not only the protectress of art and science, but also the mother of the poor, the ministering angel of the unhappy, whose tears she dried, and whose misery she alleviated—and this royal pair, though adored and blessed by their subjects, could not find within their palaces the least reflection of the happiness they so well knew how to confer upon others without its walls. Between these two beings, so gentle and yielding to others, a strange antipathy continued to exist, and not even the birth of a second, and of a third, son could fill up the chasm that separated them.

And this chasm was soon to be broadened by a new blow of destiny. Hortense's eldest, the adopted son of Napoleon, the presumptive heir to his throne, the child that Napoleon loved so dearly that he often played with him for hours on the terraces of St. Cloud, the child Jo-

sephine worshipped, because its existence seemed to assure her own happiness, the child that had awakened the first feeling of motherly bliss in Hortense's bosom, the child that had often even consoled Louis Bonaparte for the unenjoyable present with bright hopes for the future —the little Napoleon Charles died in the year 1807, of the measles.

This was a terrific blow that struck the parents, and the imperial pair of France with equal force. Napoleon's eyes filled with tears when this intelligence was brought him, and a cry of horror escaped Josephine's lips.

"Now I am lost!" she murmured in a low voice; "now my fate is decided. He will put me away."

But after this first egotistical outburst of her own pain, she hastened to the Hague to weep with her daughter, and bring her away from the place associated with her loss and her anguish. Hortense returned with the empress to St. Cloud; while her husband, who had almost succumbed to his grief, was compelled to seek renewed health in the baths of the Pyrenees. The royal palace at the Hague now stood desolate again; death had banished life and joy from its halls; and, though the royal pair were subsequently compelled to return to it, joy and happiness came back with them no more.

King Louis had returned from the Pyrenees in a more gloomy and ill-natured frame of mind than ever; a sickly distrust, a repulsive irritability, had taken possession of his whole being, and his young wife no longer

had the good-will to bear with his caprices, and excuse his irritable disposition. They were totally different in their views, desires, inclinations, and aspirations; and their children, instead of being a means of reuniting, seemed to estrange them the more, for each insisted on considering them his or her exclusive property, and in having them educated according to his or her views and wishes.

But Hortense was soon to forget her own household troubles and cares, in the greater misery of her mother. A letter from Josephine, an agonized appeal to her daughter for consolation, recalled Hortense to her mother's side, and she left the Hague and hastened to Paris.

CHAPTER VII.

PREMONITIONS.

JOSEPHINE'S fears, and the prophecies of the French clairvoyante, were now about to be fulfilled. The crown which Josephine had reluctantly and sorrowfully accepted, and which she had afterward worn with so much grace and amiability, with such natural majesty and dignity, was about to fall from her head. Napoleon had the cruel courage, now that the dreamed-of future had been realized, to put away from him the woman who had loved him and chosen him when he had nothing to offer her but his hopes for the future. Josephine, who,

with smiling courage and brave fidelity, had stood at his side in the times of want and humiliation, was now to be banished from his side into the isolation of a glittering widowhood. Napoleon had the courage to determine that this should be done, but he lacked the courage to break it to Josephine, and to pronounce the word of separation himself. He was determined to sacrifice to his ambition the woman he had so long called his "good angel;" and he, who had never trembled in battle, trembled at the thought of her tears, and avoided meeting her sad, entreating gaze.

But Josephine divined the whole terrible misfortune that hung threateningly over her head. She read it in the gloomy, averted countenance of the emperor, who, since his recent return from Vienna, had caused the door that connected his room with that of his wife to be locked; she read it in the faces of the courtiers, who dared to address her with less reverence, but with a touch of compassionate sympathy; she heard it in the low whispering that ceased when she approached a group of persons in her parlors; it was betrayed to her in the covert, mysterious insinuations of the public press, which attached a deep and comprehensive significance to the emperor's journey to Vienna.

She knew that her destiny must now be fulfilled, and that she was too weak to offer any resistance. But she was determined to act her part as wife and empress worthily to the end. Her tears should not flow outwardly, but inwardly to her grief-stricken heart; she

suppressed her sighs with a smile, and concealed the pallor of her cheeks with rouge. But she longed for a heart to whom she could confide her anguish, and show her tears, and therefore called her daughter to her side.

How painful was this reunion of mother and daughter, how many tears were shed, how bitter were the lamentations Josephine whispered in her daughter's ear!

"If you knew," said she, "in what torments I have passed the last few weeks, in which I was no longer his wife, although compelled to appear before the world as such! What glances, Hortense, what glances courtiers fasten upon a discarded woman! In what uncertainty, what expectancy more cruel than death, have I lived and am I still living, awaiting the lightning stroke that has long glowed in Napoleon's eyes!" *

Hortense listened to her mother's lamentations with a heart full of bitterness. She thought of how she had been compelled to sacrifice her own happiness to that of her mother, of how she had been condemned to a union without love, in order that the happiness of her mother's union might be established on a firm basis. And now all had been in vain; the sacrifice had not sufficed to arrest the tide of misfortune now about to bear down her unhappy mother. Hortense could do nothing to avert it. She was a queen, and yet only a weak, pitiable woman, who envied the beggar on the street her freedom and her humble lot. Both mother and daughter stood on the summit of earthly magnificence, and yet this empress and

* Josephine's own words.—Bourrienne, vol. viii., p. 243.

this queen felt themselves so poor and miserable, that they looked back with envy at the days of the revolution —the days in which they had led in retirement a life of poverty and want. Then, though struggling with want and care, they had been rich in hopes, in wishes, in illusions; now, they possessed all that could adorn life; now millions of men bowed down to them, and saluted them with the proud word "majesty," and yet empress and queen were now poor in hopes and wishes, poor in the illusions that lay shattered at their feet, and rejoicing only in the one happiness, that of being able to confide their misery to each other.

A few days after her arrival, the emperor caused Hortense to be called to his cabinet. He advanced toward her with vivacity, but before the gaze of her large eyes the glance of the man before whom the whole world now bowed, almost quailed.

"Hortense," said he, "we are now called on to decide an important matter, and it is our duty not to recoil. The nation has done so much for me and my family, that I owe them the sacrifice which they demand of me. The tranquillity and welfare of France require that I shall choose a wife who can give the country an heir to the throne. Josephine has been living in suspense and anguish for six months, and this must end. You, Hortense, are her dearest friend and her confidante; she loves you more than all else in the world. Will you undertake to prepare your mother for this step? You would thereby relieve my heart of a heavy burden."

Hortense had the strength to suppress her tears, and fasten her eyes on the emperor's countenance in a firm, determined gaze. His glance again quailed, as the lion recoils from the angry glance of a pure, innocent woman. Hortense had the courage to positively refuse the emperor's request.

"How, Hortense!" exclaimed Napoleon with emotion. "You then refuse my request?"

"Sire," said she, hardly able longer to restrain her tears, "sire, I have not the strength to stab my mother to the heart." *

And regardless of etiquette, Hortense turned away and left the emperor's cabinet, the tears pouring in streams from her eyes.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIVORCE.

Napoleon made one other attempt to impart to Josephine, through a third person, the distressing tidings of his determination with regard to herself. He begged Eugene, the Viceroy of Italy, to come to Paris, and on his arrival informed him of his intentions and of his wish. Eugene, like his sister, received this intelligence in silent submissiveness, but like his sister, he refused to impart to his mother, tidings that must destroy her happiness forever.

* Schelten, vol. ii., p. 45.

The emperor had finally to make up his mind to impart the distressing tidings in person.

It was on the 30th of November, 1809. The emperor and empress dined, as usual, at the same table. His gloomy aspect on entering the room made Josephine's heart quake; she read in his countenance that the fatal hour had come. But she repressed the tears which were rushing to her eyes, and looked entreatingly at her daughter, who sat on the opposite side of the table, a deathly pallor on her countenance.

Not a word was spoken during this gloomy, ominous dinner. The sighs and half-suppressed moaning that escaped Josephine's heaving breast were quite audible. Without, the wind shrieked and howled dismally, and drove the rain violently against the window-panes; within, an ominous, oppressive silence prevailed. The commotion of Nature contrasted, and yet, at the same time, harmonized strangely with this human silence. Napoleon broke this silence but once, and that was when, in a harsh voice, he asked the lackey, who stood behind him, what time it was. Then all was still as before.

At last Napoleon gave the signal to rise from the table, and coffee was then taken standing. Napoleon drank hastily, and then set the cup down with a trembling hand, making it ring out as it touched the table. With an angry gesture he dismissed the attendants.

"Sire, may Hortense remain?" asked Josephine, almost inaudibly.

"No!" exclaimed the emperor, vehemently. Hortense made a profound obeisance, and, taking leave of her mother with a look of tender compassion, left the room, followed by the rest.

The imperial pair were now alone. And how horrible was this being left alone under the circumstances; how sad the silence in which they sat opposite each other! How strange the glance which the emperor fastened on his wife!

She read in his excited, quivering features the struggle that moved his soul, but she also read in them that her hour was come!

As he now approached her, his outstretched hand trembled, and Josephine shudderingly recoiled.

Napoleon took her hand in his, and laid it on his heart, regarding her with a long and sorrowful farewell-glance.

"Josephine," said he, his voice trembling with emotion, "my good Josephine, you know that I have loved you! To you, and to you alone, do I owe the only moments of happiness I have enjoyed in this world. Josephine, my destiny is stronger than my will. My dearest desires must yield to the interests of France." *

"Speak no further," cried Josephine, withdrawing her hand angrily—"no, speak no further. I understand you, and I expected this, but the blow is not the less deadly."

She could speak no further, her voice failed. A feeling of despair came over her; the long-repressed storm

* The emperor's own words. See Bourrienne, vol. iii., p. 344.

of agony at last broke forth. She wept, she wrung her hands; groans escaped her heaving breast, and a loud cry of anguish burst from her lips. She at last fainted away, and was thus relieved from a consciousness of her sufferings.

When she awoke she found herself on her bed, and Hortense and her physician Corvisart at her side. Josephine stretched out her trembling arms toward her daughter, who threw herself on her mother's heart, sobbing bitterly. Corvisart silently withdrew, feeling that he could be of no further assistance. It had only been in his power to recall Josephine to a consciousness of her misery; but for her misery itself he had no medicine; he knew that her tears and her daughter's sympathy could alone give relief.

Josephine lay weeping in her daughter's arms, when Napoleon came in to inquire after her condition. As he seated himself at her bedside, she shrank back with a feeling of horror, her tears ceased to flow, and her usually so mild and joyous eyes now shot glances of anger and offended love at the emperor. But love soon conquered anger. She extended her tremulous hand to Napoleon; the sad, sweet smile, peculiar to woman, trembled on her lips, and, in a gentle, touching voice, she said: "Was I not right, my friend, when I shrank back in terror from the thought of becoming an empress?" *

Napoleon made no reply. He turned away and

* Josephine's own narrative. See Bourrienne, vol. iii., p. 342, *et seq.*

wept. But these farewell tears of his love could not change Josephine's fate; the emperor had already determined it irrevocably. His demand of the hand of the Archduchess Marie Louise had already been acceded to in Vienna. Nothing now remained to be done but to remove Josephine from the throne, and elevate a new, a legitimate empress, to the vacant place!

The emperor could not and would not retrace his steps. He assembled about him all his brothers, all the kings, dukes, and princes, created by his mighty will, and in the state-chambers of the Tuileries, in the presence of his court and the Senate, the emperor appeared; at his side the empress, arrayed for the last time in all the insignia of the dignity she was about to lay aside forever.

In a loud, firm voice the emperor declared to the assembly his determination to divorce himself from his wife; and Josephine, in a trembling voice, often interrupted by tears, repeated her husband's words. The arch-chancellor, Cambacérès, then caused the appropriate paragraph of the *Code Civile* to be read, applied it to the case under consideration, in a short, terse address, and pronounced the union of the emperor and empress dissolved.

This ended the ceremony, and satisfied the requirements of the law. Josephine had now only to take leave of her husband and of the court, and she did this with the gentle, angelic composure, in the graceful, sweet manner, which was hers in a degree possessed by few other women.

As she bowed profoundly to Napoleon, her pale face illumined by inward emotion, his lips murmured a few inaudible words, and his iron countenance quivered for an instant with pain. As she then walked through the chamber, her children, Hortense and Eugene, on either side, and greeted all with a last soft look, a last inclination of the head, nothing could be heard but weeping, and even those who rejoiced over her downfall, because they hoped much from the new empress and the new dynasty, were now moved to tears by this silent and yet so eloquent leave-taking.

The sacrifice was accomplished. Napoleon had sacrificed his dearest possession to ambition; he had divorced himself from Josephine.

On the same day she left the Tuileries to repair to Malmaison, her future home—to Malmaison, that had once been the paradise, and was now to be the widow's seat, of her love.

Josephine left the court, but the hearts of those who constituted this court did not leave her. During the next few weeks the crowds of the coming and going on the road from Paris to Malmaison presented the appearance of a procession; the equipages of all the kings and princes who were sojourning in Paris, and of all the nobles and dignitaries of the new France, were to be seen there. Even the Faubourg St.-Germain, that still preserved its sympathy for the Bourbons, repaired to the empress at Malmaison. And this pilgrimage was made by the poor and humble, as well as by the rich and great.

All wished to say to the empress that they still loved and honored her, and that she was still enthroned in their hearts, although her rule on the throne was at an end.

The whole people mourned with Josephine and her children. It was whispered about that Napoleon's star would now grow pale; that, with Josephine, his good angel had left him, and that the future would avenge her tears.

CHAPTER IX.

THE KING OF HOLLAND.

While Josephine was weeping over her divorce at Malmaison, Hortense was seeking one for herself. A divorce which her mother lamented as a misfortune, because she still loved her husband, would have conferred happiness upon Hortense, who never had loved her husband. Once again in harmony with her husband, Hortense entreated the emperor to permit them to be divorced, and the king united his entreaties with those of the queen.

But Napoleon was unrelenting. His family should not appear before the people as disregarding the sanctity of the marriage bond. For state reasons he had separated from his wife, and for state reasons he could not give his consent to the dissolution of the union of his brother and step-daughter. They must, therefore, continue to drag