shall now, perhaps, learn the happiness of retirement, and prefer it to all the magnificence that once surrounded me. I do not believe I can remain in France; the lively interest now shown in my behalf might eventually occasion mistrust. This idea is annihilating; I feel it, but I shall not willingly occasion sorrow to any one. My brother will be happy; my mother can remain in her country, and retain her estates. I, with my children, shall go to a foreign land, and, as the happiness of those I love is assured, I shall be able to bear the misfortune that strikes only at my material interests, but not at my heart. I am still deeply moved and confounded by the fate that has overtaken the Emperor Napoleon and his family. Is it true? Has all been finally determined? Write me on this subject. I hope that my children will not be taken from me; in that case I should lose all courage. I will so educate them that they shall be happy in any station of life. I shall teach them to bear fortune and misfortune with equal dignity, and to seek true happiness in contentment with themselves. This is worth more than crowns. Fortunately, they are healthy. Thank Count Nesselrode for his sympathy. I assure you there are days that are properly called days of misfortune, and that are yet not without a charm; such are those that enable us to discern the true sentiments people hold toward us. I rejoice over the affection which you show me, and it will always afford me gratification to tell you that I return it. HORTENSE." *

* Cochelet, vol. i., pp. 275–277.

CHAPTER XIV.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE QUEEN AND LOUISE DE COCHELET.

IN the meanwhile, Hortense was still living with her mother in Novara, firmly resolved to remain in her retirement, sorrowing over the fate of the imperial house, but quite indifferent as to her own fate.

But her friends—and even in misfortune Hortense still had friends—and above all her truest friend, Louise de Cochelet, busied themselves all the more about her future, endeavoring to rescue out of the general wreck of the imperial house at least a few fragments for the queen.

Louise de Cochelet was still sojourning in Paris, and the letters which she daily wrote to the queen at Novara, and in which she informed her of all that was taking place in the city, are so true a picture of that strange and confused era, that we cannot refrain from here inserting some of them.

In one of her first letters Louise de Cochelet relates a conversation which she had had with Count Nesselrode, in relation to the queen's future.

"The Bourbons," she writes, "have now been finally accepted. I asked Count Nesselrode, whom I have just left: 'Do you believe that the queen will be permitted to remain in France? Will the new rulers consider this proper?' 'Certainly,' he replied, 'I am sure of it, for

we will make it a condition with them, and without us they would never have come to the throne at all! It is not the Bourbons, but it is we, it is all Europe, that arranges and regulates these matters. I therefore trust that they will never violate the agreement. Rest assured that the Emperor Alexander will always support the right.'

"All of these strangers here speak of you, madame, with great enthusiasm. Metternich, who doubtlessly recollects your great kindness to his wife and children, inquired after you with lively interest. Prince Leopold is devotedly attached to yourself and the Empress Josephine, and ardently desires to be able to serve you both. Count Nesselrode thinks it would be well for you to write to the Emperor Alexander, as he takes so warm an interest in your affairs.

"The old nobility is already much discontented; it considers itself debased, because it sees itself mixed with so many new elements."

"Come to Malmaison with the empress," she writes a few days later, "the Emperor Alexander will then go there at once to meet you; he is anxious to make your acquaintance, and you already owe him some thanks, as he devotes himself to your interests as though they were his own. The Duke of Vicenza, who demeans himself so worthily with regard to the Emperor Napoleon, requests me to inform you that the future of your children depends on your coming to Malmaison.

"The Emperor Napoleon has signed an agreement,

that secures the future of all the members of his family; you can remain in France, and retain your titles. You are to have for yourself and children an income of four hundred thousand francs.

"It is said here that the Faubourg St. Germain is furious over the brilliant positions provided for the imperial family and the empress. This is their gratitude for all her goodness to them.

"You wish to make Switzerland your home. Count Nesselrode thinks you may be right, that it is a good retreat; but you should not give up the one you have here, and should in any event retain the right to return to France.

"Fancy, madame, Count Nesselrode insists on my seeing his emperor! I have not yet consented, because I do not like to do any thing without your assent; but I confess I long to make his acquaintance. I am made quite happy by hearing you so well spoken of here.

"Count Nesselrode said to me yesterday: 'Tell the queen that I shall be happy to fulfil all her wishes, and that I can do so, that I have the power.' For great security he wishes to have a future assured you that shall be independent of the treaty. I do not know what to say to him. Write to me, and demand something, I conjure you!"

The queen's only response to this appeal was a letter addressed to the Emperor Napoleon, and sent to Count Nesselrode, with the request that it should be forwarded to its destination.

"It is strange," wrote Louise de Cochelet in relation to this matter—"strange that all my efforts to serve you here have had no other result than your sending a commission to Count Nesselrode to forward to Fontainebleau a letter addressed to the Emperor Napoleon. He at first thought I was bringing him the letter he had solicited for his emperor; but he well knows how to appreciate all that is noble and great, and as he possesses the most admirable tact, he thinks the letter cannot well reach the emperor through him, and will therefore send it to the Duke of Vicenza, at Fontainebleau, to be delivered by him to the Emperor Napoleon."

Another letter of Louise de Cochelet is as follows: "I have just seen Count Nesselrode again; he makes many inquiries concerning you; the Emperor of Russia now resides on the Elysée Bourbon. The count tells me a story that is in circulation here, and has reference to the Empress Marie Louise and the kings her brothers-in-law. They were about to force her to enter a carriage, in which they were to continue their journey with her; when she refused to enter, it is said the King of Westphalia became so violent that he gave her a little beating. She cried for help, and General Caffarelli,* who commanded the guards, came to her rescue. On the following day she and her son were made prisoners, and all

* According to Napoleon's instructions, his brothers were to prevent the empress and the King of Rome from falling into the hands of the enemy. De Baussue narrates this scene in his memoirs, and it is self-evident that it was not so stormy as the gossip of Paris portrayed it.

the crown diamonds in her possession seized by the authorities; but it seems as though capture was precisely what she wished.

"The Queen of Westphalia has just arrived in Paris; the Emperor Alexander, her cousin, called on her immediately. It is supposed that she will return to her father.

"Your brother's future is not yet determined on, but it will certainly be a desirable and worthy one. There are many intrigues going on in connection with it, as Count Nesselrode informs me. As for the kingdom of Naples, it is no longer spoken of. By the details of the last war with us, narrated to me by the count, I see that he despises many of our ministers and marshals, and that these must be very culpable; and yet he tells me that they considered the result uncertain a week before our overthrow; as late as the 10th of March they believed that peace had been made with Prussia at least.

"Do not grieve over the fate of the emperor on the island of Elba. The emperor selected it himself; the allies would have preferred any other place.

"All the mails arriving at Paris have been seized by the allies. Among the letters there was one from the Empress Marie Louise to her husband. She writes that her son is well, but that on awakening from a good night's rest he had cried and told her he had dreamed of his father; notwithstanding all her coaxing and promises of playthings, he had, however, refused to tell what he had dreamed of his father, and that this circumstance had made her uneasy in spite of her will.

"Prince Leopold resides in the same house with Countess Tascher; he is incessantly busied with yours and your mother's affairs; he at least is not oblivious of the kindness you have both shown him. I know that it is his intention to speak to the Emperor of Russia, and then write to you.

"All your friends say that you must consider the interest of your children, and accept the future offered you. M. de Lavalette and the Duke of Vicenza are also of this opinion. You lose enough without this, and you may well permit the victors to return a small portion of that which they have taken from you, and which is rightfully yours.

"In short, all your friends demand that you shall repair to Malmaison as soon as the Emperor Napoleon shall have departed from Fontainebleau. I am assured that the Emperor Alexander intends to hunt you up in Novara if you should not come to Malmaison. It will therefore be impossible to avoid him. Consider that the fate of your children lies in his hands! In the treaty of Fontainebleau you and your children were provided for together; this is a great point for you, and proves how highly you are thought of.

"It is to the Emperor of Russia alone that you owe this; and when the Duke of Vicenza submitted this article of the treaty to the Emperor Napoleon for his signature, it met with his entire approval. Your sole and undivided authority over your children is thereby acknowledged. You should, therefore, not reject the good

offered you for your children. I do not think it would require much persuasion to induce others to accept that which is tendered you.

"Madame Tascher, who has proved herself to be your true friend and relative, has just had her first interview with the Duke of Dalberg, the member of the provisional government. She spoke of you, and I will here give you his response, word for word: 'She is considered as being altogether foreign to the Bonaparte family, because she has separated herself from her husband. She will be the refuge of her children, who are left to her. She is so dearly beloved and highly esteemed, that she can be very happy. She can remain in France, and do whatever she pleases; but she must now return to Paris.' Countess Tascher came to me immediately after leaving the duke, in order to acquaint me with what he had said.

"Friends and foes alike say this about you: 'Those who are not delighted with what is being done for the queen are bad people! And as for her, what has she to regret in all this? Only the good she has done! Now, the world will dare to love her, and to express their love; she has so few wishes, she is so perfect!'

"In short, it would seem almost that the people are pleased with the misfortune that places you in the right light, and they say, 'She is far more worthy in herself than when surrounded by a glittering court!'

"Yesterday I saw the new arrivals from Fontainebleau, M. de Lascour and M. de Lavoestine. They came

to me to learn where you were to be found, and intend visiting you at once, either at Novara or at Malmaison, as the case may be. These two gentlemen are true knights. 'No matter what she is to become,' said they; 'we can now show our devotion, without incurring the risk of being considered flatterers.'

"The last two weeks at Fontainebleau have been a period of the greatest interest. All these young men, together with M. de Labédoyère and M. de Montesquieu, wished to accompany the emperor; but he forbade their doing so, and, in taking leave of them, appealed to them to remain, and to continue to serve their country zealously.

"Lascour and Lavoestine, together with many other officers of the army, are much displeased with the generals who left Fontainebleau without taking leave of the emperor.

"Upon taking leave of the Empress Josephine, the emperor is reported to have said: 'She was right; my separation from her has brought misfortune upon my head.'

"It is said that the Duchess of Montebello will leave the Empress Marie Louise."

But all these entreaties and flatteries, and these appeals to a mother's heart, were, as yet, powerless to break the queen's pride. She still considered it more worthy and becoming to remain away from the city in which the ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain were celebrating the orgies of their victorious royalism with the soldiers

of the allied armies. Instead of yielding to Louise de Cochelet's entreaties, the queen wrote her the following letter:

"My dear Louise,—My resolution gives you pain! You all accuse me of childish waywardness. You are unjust! My mother can follow the Duke de Vicenza's counsel; she will go to Malmaison, but *I remain here*, and I have good reasons for doing so. I cannot separate my interests from those of my children. It is they, it is their nearest relatives, who are being sacrificed by all that is taking place, and I am, therefore, determined not to approach those who are working our ruin. I must be saddened by our great misfortune, and I will appear so, and abstain from approaching those who would still consider me a supplicant, even though I should demand nothing of them.

"I can readily believe that the Emperor Alexander is kindly disposed toward me; I have heard much good of him, even from the Emperor Napoleon. Although I was once anxious to make his acquaintance, I at this moment have no desire to see him. Is he not our vanquisher? In their hearts, your friends must all approve of my determination, whatever they may say. I find retirement congenial. When you have seen enough of your friends, you will return to me. I am suffering in my breast, and shall perhaps go to some watering-place. I do not know whether it is due to the air of Novara, but since I have been here I cannot breathe. My friends maintain that

it is due to the mental shocks resulting from the great events that have transpired; but they are in error; death has spared us all, and the loss of a glittering position is not the greatest loss one can sustain. What personal happiness do I lose? My brother will, I trust, be well and suitably provided for, and he will be no longer exposed to danger. He must be very uneasy on our account, and yet I dare not write to him, as my letters would probably never reach him; if an opportunity should present itself, please let him know that we are no longer surrounded by dangers. Adieu. I entreat you once more to undertake nothing in my behalf. I fear your impetuosity and friendship, and yet I love to be able to count on you. My children are well. My mother opposes all my plans; she asserts that she has need of me; but I shall, nevertheless, go to her who must now be more unhappy than all of us. HORTENSE."

She of whom Hortense thought that she must be more unhappy than all of them, was the wife of Napoleon, Marie Louise, who had now left Blois, to which place she had gone as empress-regent, and repaired to Rambouillet, to await the decision of the allies with regard to the future of herself and son. It was certainly one of the most peculiar features of this period, so rich in extraordinary occurrences, to see the sovereigns of Europe, the overthrown rulers of France, and those who were about to grasp the sceptre once more, thrown confusedly together in Paris, and within a circuit of some

fifty miles around that city: a Bourbon in the Tuileries, Bonaparte at Fontainebleau, his wife and his son at Rambouillet, the divorced empress at Novara, the Emperors of Russia and Austria, and the King of Prussia, at Paris; moreover, a whole train of little German potentates and princes, and the Napoleonic kings and princes, who were all sojourning in Paris or its vicinity.

The Queen of Holland considered it her duty, in these days of misfortune and danger, to stand at the side of her whom Napoleon had commanded them to consider the head of the family, and to serve faithfully in life and death. Hortense therefore determined to go to the Empress Marie Louise at Rambouillet, in accordance with the emperor's commands.

This determination filled the hearts of the queen's friends with sorrow; and Louise had no sooner received the letter in which the queen announced her impending departure, than she hastened to reply, imploring her to abandon this intention. M. de Marmold, the queen's equerry, departed with all speed to bring this letter to the queen at Louis, where she was to pass the night, and to add his entreaties to those of Louise.

"M. de Marmold, the bearer of this letter, will deliver it to you at Louis, if he arrives there in good time," wrote Louise de Cochelet. "If you go to Rambouillet, you will destroy your own position, and also that of your children; this is the conviction of all your friends. I was so happy, for Prince Leopold had written you, in the name of the Emperor Alexander, and begged you to come to Mal-

maison. You could not have avoided seeing him, as he would even have gone to Novara. Instead, however, of returning with the Empress Josephine, you are on the point of uniting yourself with a family that has never loved you. With them you will experience nothing but distress, and they will not be thankful for the sacrifice you are about to make. You will regret this step when it is too late. I conjure you, do not go to Rambouillet!

"Your course will touch those to whom you are going but little, and will displease the allies, who take so much interest in you.

"The empress is a thorough Austrian at heart, and the visits of members of her husband's family are regarded with disfavor. I tell you this at the request of Prince Leopold and Madame de Caulaincourt. The latter, if you do not come here soon, will go to you, in spite of her great age. She conjures you not to go to Rambouillet, as your lady of honor, and the friend of your mother; she even forbids your doing so.

"When I informed Prince Leopold of your intention to go to the Empress Marie Louise at Rambouillet, his eyes filled with tears. 'It is beautiful to be proud,' said he, 'but she can no longer retreat; she is already under obligations to the Emperor of Russia, who effected the treaty of the 11th of April. I await her reply, to deliver it to the emperor: she owes him a reply.'

"I passed an hour with our good friend Lavalette this morning. This excellent man knew nothing of the measures we have been taking to persuade you to return,

and said to me: 'How fortunate it would be for her and her children, if the emperor should desire to see her!' Do come, do come; show your friends this favor; we shall all be in despair if you go to Rambouillet!

"Prince Leopold will write you a few lines. He could not be more devoted to yourself and the Empress Josephine if you were his mother and his sister. Count Tschernitscheff has been to see me. The Emperor of Austria arrives here to-morrow, and the new French princes and the king will soon follow. What a change!

"You must see the Emperor of Russia, because he so much desires it. I conjure you, on my knees, to do me this favor! The emperor conducts himself so handsomely that every one is constrained to respect him; one forgets that he is the conqueror, and can only remember him as the protector. He seems to be the refuge of all those who have lost all, and are in distress. His conduct is admirable; he receives none but business calls, and such others as are absolutely necessary. The fair ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain cannot boast of his attention to them, and this does him all the more credit, he being, as it is said, very susceptible to the fair sex. He told Prince Leopold that he intended going to Novara, adding: 'You know that I love and esteem this family; Prince Eugene is the prince of knights; I esteem the Empress Josephine, Queen Hortense, and Prince Eugene, all the more from the fact that her demeanor toward the Emperor Napoleon has been so much more noble than that of so many others, who should have shown him

more devotion.' How could it be possible not to respect a man of such nobility of character? I trust you will soon have an opportunity of judging of this yourself. For God's sake, return! LOUISE."

But these entreaties were all in vain. M. de Marmold arrived at Louis in time to see the queen; he delivered the letters of her friends, and did all that lay in his power to persuade her not to go to Rambouillet.

But Hortense held firmly to her intention. "You are right," said she. "All this is true; but I shall, nevertheless, go to the Empress Marie Louise, for it is my duty to do so. If unpleasant consequences should result from this step for me, I shall pay no attention to them, but merely continue to do my duty. Of all of us, the Empress Marie Louise must be the most unhappy, and must stand most in need of consolation; it is, therefore, at her side that I can be of most use, and nothing can alter my determination."

CHAPTER XV.

QUEEN HORTENSE AND THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER.

QUEEN HORTENSE had gone to Rambouillet, in spite of the entreaties and exhortations of her friends. The Empress Marie Louise had, however, received her with an air of embarrassment. She had told the queen that she was expecting her father, the Emperor of Austria,

and that she feared the queen's presence might make him feel ill at ease. Moreover, the young empress, although dejected and grave, was by no means so sorrowful and miserable as Hortense expected. The fate of her husband had not wounded the heart of Marie Louise as deeply as that of the Empress Josephine.

Hortense felt that she was not needed there; that the presence of the Emperor of Austria would suffice to console the Empress of France for her husband's overthrow. She thought of Josephine, who was so deeply saddened by Napoleon's fate; and finding that, instead of consoling, she only embarrassed the Empress Marie Louise, she hastened to relieve her of her presence.

And now, at last, Hortense bowed her proud, pure heart beneath the yoke of necessity; now, at last, she listened to the prayers and representations of her mother, who had returned to Malmaison, and of her friends, and went to Paris. It had been too often urged upon her that she owed it to her sons to secure their fortune and future, not to overcome her personal repugnance, and conform herself to this new command of duty.

She had, therefore, returned to Paris for a few days, and taken up her abode in her dwelling, whose present dreariness recalled, with sorrowful eloquence, the grandeur of the past.

These drawing-rooms, once the rendezvous of so many kings and princes, were now desolate, and bore on their soiled floors the footprints of the hostile soldiers who had recently been quartered there. At the czar's solici-

tation, they had now been removed; but the queen's household servants had also left it. Faithless and ungrateful, they had turned their backs on the setting sun, and fled from the storm that had burst over the head of their mistress.

The Emperor Alexander hastened to the queen's dwelling as soon as her arrival in Paris was announced, the queen advancing to meet him as far as the outermost antechamber.

"Sire," said she, with a soft smile, "I have no means of receiving you with due ceremony; my antechambers are deserted."

The appearance of this solitary woman, this queen without a crown, without fortune, and without protection and support, who nevertheless stood before him in all the charms of beauty and womanhood, a soft smile on her lips, made a deep impression on the emperor, and his eyes filled with tears.

The queen observed this, and hastened to say, "But what of that? I do not think that antechambers filled with gold-embroidered liveries would make those who come to see me happier, and I esteem myself happy in being able to do you the honors of my house alone. I have, therefore, only won."

The emperor took her hand, and, while conducting the queen to her room, conversed with her, with that soft, sad expression peculiar to him, lamenting with bitter self-reproaches almost that he was himself, in part, to blame for the misfortunes that had overtaken the emperor and his family. He then conjured her to abandon her intention of leaving France, and to preserve herself for her mother and friends. He told her that, in abandoning her country, her friends, and her rights, she would be guilty of a crime against her own children, against her two sons, who were entitled to demand a country and a fortune at her hands.

The queen, overcome at last by these earnest and eloquent representations, declared her readiness to remain in France, if the welfare of her sons should require it.

"Until now," said she, "I had formed all my resolutions with reference to misfortune. I was entirely resigned, and I never thought of the possibility of any thing fortunate happening for me; and even yet, I do not know what I can desire and demand. I am, however, determined to accept nothing for myself and children that would be unworthy of us, and I do not know what that could be."

With an assuring smile, the emperor extended his hand to the queen. "Leave that to me," said he. "It is, then, understood, you are to remain in France?"

"Sire, you have convinced me that the future of my sons requires it. I shall therefore remain."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NEW UNCLES.

MALMAISON, to which place Hortense had returned after a short stay in Paris, and where the Empress Josephine was also sojourning, was a kind of focus for social amusement and relaxation for the sovereigns assembled in Paris. Each of these kings and princes wished to pay his homage to the Empress Josephine and her daughter, and thereby, in a measure, show the last honors to the dethroned emperor.

On one occasion, when the King of Prussia, with his two sons, Prince Frederick William (the late king) and William, had come to Malmaison, and announced their desire to call on the empress, she sent them an invitation to a family dinner, at which she also invited the Emperor of Russia and his two brothers to attend.

The emperor accepted this invitation, and on entering, with the young archdukes, the parlor in which the Duchess de St. Leu was sitting, he took his two brothers by the hand and conducted them to Hortense.

"Madame," said he, "I confide my brothers to your keeping. They are now making their *début* in society. My mother fears their heads may be turned by the beauties of France; and in bringing them to Malmaison, where so many charming persons are assembled, I am certainly fulfilling my promise to preserve them from such a fate but poorly."

"Reassure yourself, sire," replied the queen, gravely; "I will be their mentor, and I promise you a motherly surveillance."

The emperor laughed, and, pointing to Hortense's two sons, who had just been brought in, he said: "Ah, madame, it would be much less dangerous for my brothers if they were of the age of these boys."

He approached the two boys with extended hands, and while conversing with them in a kindly and affectionate manner, addressed them with the titles "monseigneur" and "imperial highness."

The children regarded him wonderingly, for the Russian emperor was the first to address the little Napoleon and his younger brother, Louis Napoleon, with these imposing titles. The queen had never allowed them to be called by any but their own names. She wished to preserve them from vain pride, and teach them to depend on their own intrinsic merit.

Shortly afterward the King of Prussia and his sons were announced, and the emperor and his brothers left the young princes, and advanced to meet the king.

While the emperor and the king were exchanging salutations, Hortense's two sons inquired of their governess the names of the gentlemen who had just entered.

"It is the King of Prussia," whispered the governess; "and the gentleman who has just spoken with you is the Emperor of Russia."

The little Louis Napoleon regarded the tall figures of these princes thoughtfully for a moment, by no means

impressed by their imposing titles. He was so accustomed to see his mother surrounded by kings, and these kings had always been his uncles.

"Mademoiselle," said the little Louis Napoleon, after a short pause, "are these two new gentlemen, the emperor and the king, also our uncles, like all the others, and must we call them so?"

"No, Louis, you must simply call them 'sire.'"

"But," said the boy, after a moment's reflection, "why is it that they are not our uncles?"

The governess withdrew with the two children to the back of the parlor, and explained to them, in a low voice, that the emperors and kings then in Paris, far from being their uncles, were their vanquishers.

"Then," exclaimed the elder boy, Napoleon Louis, his face flushing with anger, "then they are the enemies of my uncle, the emperor! Why did this Emperor of Russia embrace us?"

"Because he is a noble and generous enemy, who is endeavoring to serve you and your mother in your present misfortune. Without him you would possess nothing more in the world, and the fate of your uncle, the emperor, would be much sadder than it already is."

"Then we ought to love this emperor very dearly?" said the little Louis Napoleon.

"Certainly; for you owe him many thanks."

The young prince regarded the emperor, who was conversing with the empress Josephine, long and thoughtfully.

When the emperor returned to Malmaison on the following day, and while he was sitting at his mother's side in the garden-house, little Louis Napoleon, walking on tiptoe, noiselessly approached the emperor from behind, laid a small glittering object in his hand, and ran away.

The queen called him back, and demanded with earnest severity to know what he had done.

The little prince returned reluctantly, hanging his head with embarrassment, and said, blushing deeply: "Ah, *maman*, it is the ring Uncle Eugene gave me. I wished to give it to the emperor, because he is so good to my *maman!*"

Deeply touched, the emperor took the boy in his arms, seated him on his knees, and kissed him tenderly.

Then, in order to give the little prince an immediate reward, he attached the ring to his watch-chain, and swore that he would wear the token as long as he lived.*

CHAPTER XVII.

DEATH OF THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

Since Napoleon's star had grown pale, and himself compelled to leave France as an exile, life seemed to Josephine also to be enveloped in a gloomy mourning-veil; she felt that her sun had set, and night come upon her.

* Cochelet, vol. i., p. 355.