tagious disease was ravaging the vicinity. "Is he indeed ill?" cried she, in dismay.

"Yes; and he earnestly desires to see you, madame!"

"Oh," exclaimed Hortense, in terror, "if he calls for me, he must be very ill indeed!—Forward, forward, with all possible speed; I must see my son!"

And onward they went with the speed of the wind from station to station, approaching nearer and nearer to their destination; but as they neared their destination, the faces they met grew sadder and sadder. At every station groups of people assembled about her carriage and gazed at her sorrowfully; everywhere she heard them murmur: "Napoleon is dead! Poor mother! Napoleon is dead!" Hortense heard, but did not believe it! These words had not been spoken by men, but were the utterances of her anxious heart! Her son was not dead, he could not be dead. Napoleon lived, yes, he still lived! And again the people around her carriage murmured, "Napoleon is dead!"

Hortense reclined in her carriage, pale and motionless. Her thoughts were confused, her heart scarcely beat.

At last she reached her destination; her carriage drove up to the house in Pesaro, where her sons were awaiting her.

At this moment a young man, his countenance of a deathly pallor, and flooded with tears, rushed out of the door and to her carriage. Hortense recognized him, and stretched out her arms to him. It was her son Louis

Napoleon, and on beholding his pale, sorrowful countenance, and his tear-stained eyes, the unhappy mother learned the truth. Yes, it was not her heart, it was the people who had uttered the fearful words: "Napoleon is dead! Poor mother! Napoleon is dead!"

With a heart-rending cry, Hortense sank to the ground in a swoon.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FLIGHT FROM ITALY.

But Hortense now had no leisure to weep over the son she had so dearly loved; the safety of the son who remained to her, whom she loved no less, and on whom her whole love must now be concentrated, was at stake.

She still had a son to save, and she must now think of him—of Louis Napoleon, who stood in sorrow at her side, lamenting that Fate had not allowed him to die with his brother.

Her son must be saved. This thought restored Hortense to health and strength. She is informed that the authorities of Bologna have already tendered submission to the Austrians; that the insurgent army is already scattering in every direction; that the Austrian fleet is already to be seen in the distance, approaching, perhaps with the intention of landing at Sinigaglia, in order to surround the insurgents and render flight impossible.

This intelligence aroused Hortense from her grief

and restored her energy. She ordered her carriage and drove with her son to Ancona, in full view of the people, in order that every one should know that it was her purpose to embark with her son for Corfu at that seaport. At Ancona, immediately fronting the sea, stood her nephew's palace, and there Hortense descended from her carriage.

The waves of the storm-tossed sea sometimes rushed up to the windows of the room occupied by the duchess; from there she could see the port, and the crowds of fugitives who were pressing forward to save themselves on the miserable little vessels that there lay at anchor.

And these poor people had but little time left them in which to seek safety. The Austrians were rapidly advancing; on entering the papal territory, they had proclaimed an amnesty, from the benefits of which Prince Louis Napoleon, General Zucchi, and the inhabitants of Modena, were, however, excepted. The strangers who had taken part in the insurrection were to be arrested and treated with all the severity of the law.

The young people who had flocked from Modena, Milan, and from all Italy, to enroll themselves under the banner of the Roman revolution, now found it necessary to seek safety from the pursuing Austrians in flight.

Louis Napoleon also had no time to lose; each moment lost might render flight impossible! Hortense was weary and ill, but she now had no time to think of herself; she must first save her son, then she could die, but not sooner.

With perfect composure she prepared for her double (her feigned and her real) departure.

Outwardly, she purposed embarking with her son at Corfu; secretly, it was her intention to fly to England through France! But the English passport that she had received for this purpose mentioned two sons, and Hortense now possessed but one; and it was necessary for her to provide a substitute for the one she had lost.

She found one in the person of the young Marquis Zappi, who, compromised more than all the rest, joyfully accepted the proposition of the Duchess of St. Leu, promising to conform himself wholly to her arrangements, without knowing her plans and without being initiated in her secrets.

Hortense then procured all that was necessary to the disguise of the young men as liveried servants, and ordered her carriage to be held in readiness for her departure.

While this was being done in secret, she publicly caused all preparations to be made for her journey to Corfu. She sent her passport to the authorities for the purpose of obtaining the official *visa* for herself and sons, and had her trunks packed. Louis Napoleon had looked on, with cold and mute indifference, while these preparations were being made. He stood by, pale and dejected, without complaining or giving utterance to his grief.

Becoming at last convinced that he was ill, Hortense sent for a physician.

The latter declared that the prince was suffering from a severe attack of fever, which might become dangerous unless he sought repose at once. It was therefore necessary to postpone their departure for a day, and Hortense passed an anxious night at the bedside of her fever-shaken, delirious son.

The morning at last dawned, the morning of the day on which they hoped to fly; but when the rising sun shed its light into the chamber in which Hortense stood at her son's bedside, who can describe the unhappy mother's horror when she saw her son's face swollen, disfigured, and covered with red spots!

Like his brother, Louis Napoleon had also taken the same disease.

For a moment Hortense was completely overwhelmed, and then, by the greatest effort of her life, she summoned her fortitude to her aid. She immediately sent for the physician again, and, trusting to a sympathetic human heart, she confided all to him, and he did not disappoint her. What is to be done must be done quickly, immediately, or it will be in vain!

Hortense thinks of all, and provides for all. Especially, she causes her son's passport to Corfu to be signed by the authorities, and a passage to be taken for him on the only ship destined for Corfu now lying in the harbor. She instructs the servants, who are conveying trunks and packages to the vessel, to inform the curious spectators of her son's intended departure on this vessel. She at the same time causes the report to be circulated that she has

suddenly been taken ill, and can therefore not accompany her son.

The physician confirms this statement, and informs all Ancona of the dangerous illness of the Duchess of St. Leu.

And after all this had been done, Hortense causes her son's bed to be carried into the little cabinet adjoining her room, and falling on her knees at his bedside, and covering her face with her hands, she prays to God to preserve the life of her child!

On the evening of this day the vessel destined for Corfu hoisted its anchor. No one doubted that Louis Napoleon had embarked on it, and every one pitied the poor duchess, who, made ill by grief and anxiety, had not been able to accompany her son.

In the mean while Hortense was sitting at the bedside of her delirious son. But she no longer felt weak or disquieted; nervous excitement sustained her, and gave her strength and presence of mind. Her son was at the same time threatened by two dangers—by the disease, which the slightest mistake might render mortal; and by the arrival of the Austrians, who had expressly excepted her son Louis Napoleon from the benefits of the amnesty. She must save her son from both these dangers—this thought gave her strength.

Two days had now passed; the last two vessels had left the harbor, crowded with fugitives; and now the advance-guard of the Austrians was marching into Ancona.

The commandant of the advance-guard, upon whom

the duty of designating quarters for the following army devolved, selected the palace of Princess Canino, where the Duchess of St. Leu resided, as headquarters for the commanding general and his staff. Hortense had expected this, and had withdrawn to a few small rooms in advance, holding all the parlors and large rooms in readiness for the general. When they, however, demanded that the entire palace should be vacated, the wife of the janitor, the only person whom Hortense had taken into her confidence, informed them that Queen Hortense, who was ill and unhappy, was the sole occupant of these reserved rooms.

Strange to relate, the Austrian captain who came to the palace to make the necessary preparations for his general's reception was one of those who, in the year 1815, had protected the queen and her children from the fury of the royalists. For the second time he now interested himself zealously in behalf of the duchess, and hastened forward to meet the general-in-chief, Baron Geppert, who was just entering the city, in order to acquaint him with the state of affairs. He, in common with all the world, convinced that her son, Louis Napoleon, had fled to Corfu, declared his readiness to permit the duchess to retain the rooms she was occupying, and begged permission to call on her. But the duchess was still ill, and confined to her bed, and could receive no one.

The Austrians took up their quarters in the palace; and in the midst of them, separated from the general's room by a locked door only, were Hortense and her sick

son. The least noise might betray him. When he coughed it was necessary to cover his head with the bedclothes, in order to deaden the sound; when he desired to speak he could only do so in a whisper, for his Austrian neighbors would have been astonished to hear a male voice in the room of the sick duchess, and their suspicions might have been thereby aroused.

At last, after eight days of torment and anxiety, the physician declared that Louis Napoleon could now undertake the journey without danger, and consequently the duchess suddenly recovered! She requested the Austrian general, Baron Geppert, to honor her with a call, in order that she might thank him for his protection and sympathy; she told him that she was now ready to depart, and proposed embarking at Livorno, in order to join her son at Malta, and go with him to England. As she would be compelled to pass through the whole Austrian army-corps on her way, she begged the general to furnish her with a passport through his lines over his own signature; requesting in addition that, in order to avoid all sensation, the instrument should not contain her name.

The general, deeply sympathizing with the unhappy woman who was about to follow her proscribed son, readily accorded her request.

Hortense purposed beginning her journey on the following day, the first day of the Easter festival; and, on sending her farewell greeting to the Austrian general, she informed him that she would start at a very early hour, in order to hear mass at Loretto.

During the night all necessary preparations for the journey were made, and Louis Napoleon was compelled to disguise himself in the dress of a liveried servant; a similar attire was also sent to Marquis Zappi, who had hitherto been concealed in the house of a friend, and in this attire he was to await the duchess below at the carriage.

At last, day broke and the hour of departure came. The horn of the postilion resounded through the street. Through the midst of the sleeping Austrian soldiers who occupied the antechamber through which they were compelled to pass, Hortense walked, followed by her son, loaded with packages, in his livery. Their departure was witnessed by no one except the sentinel on duty.

Day had hardly dawned. In the first carriage sat the duchess, with a lady companion, and in front, on the box, her son, as a servant, at the side of the postilion; in the second carriage her maid, behind her the young Marquis Zappi.

As the sun arose and shone down upon the beautiful Easter day, Ancona was already far behind, and Hortense knelt down at the side of Louis Napoleon to thank God tearfully for having permitted her to succeed so far in rescuing her son, and to entreat Him to be merciful in the future. But there were still many dangers to be overcome; the slightest accident might still betray them. The danger consisted not only in having to pass through all the places where the Austrian troops were stationed; General Geppert's pass was a sufficient protection against any thing that might threaten them from this quarter.

The greatest danger was to be apprehended from their friends—from some one who might accidentally recognize her son, and unintentionally betray them.

They must pass through the grand-duchy of Tuscany, and there the greatest danger menaced, for there her son was known to every one, and every one might betray them. This part of the journey must therefore be made, as far as possible, by night. The courier whom they had dispatched in advance had everywhere ordered the necessary relays of horses; their dismay was, therefore, great when they found no horses at the station Camoscia, on the boundary of Tuscany, and were informed that several hours must elapse before they could obtain any!

These hours of expectation and anxiety were fearful. Hortense passed them in her carriage, breathlessly listening to the slightest noise that broke upon the air.

Her son Louis had descended from the carriage, and seated himself on a stone bench that stood in front of the miserable little station-house. Worn out by grief and still weak from disease, indifferent to the dangers that menaced from all sides, heedless of the night wind that swept, with its icy breath, over his face, the prince sank down upon this stone bench, and went to sleep.

Thus they passed the night. Hortense, once a queen, in a half-open carriage; Louis Napoleon, the present Emperor of France, on a stone bench, that served him as a couch!

CHAPTER VII.

THE PILGRIMAGE.

Heaven took pity on the agony of the unhappy Duchess of St. Leu. It heard the prayer of her anxious mother's heart, and permitted mother and son to escape the dangers that menaced them at every step in Italy.

At Antibes they succeeded in crossing the French boundary without being recognized. They were now in their own country—in *la belle France*, which they still loved and proudly called their mother, although it had forsaken and discarded them. The death-penalty threatened the Bonapartes who should dare to set foot on French soil. But what cared they for that? Neither Hortense nor her son thought of it. They only knew that they were in their own country. They inhaled with delight the air that seemed to them better and purer than any other; with hearts throbbing with joy, they listened to the music of this beautiful language that greeted them with the sweet native melodies.

At Cannes they passed the first night. What recollections did this place recall to Hortense! Here it was that Napoleon had landed on his return from Elba to France; from Cannes he had commenced his march to Paris with a handful of soldiers, and had arrived there with an army. For the people had everywhere received him with exultation; the regiments that had been sent out against the advancing general had everywhere joy-

ously gone over to his standard. Charles de Labédoyère, this enthusiastic adherent of the emperor, had been the first to do this. He was to have advanced against the emperor from Grenoble; but, with the exulting cry, "*Vive l'empereur!*" the entire regiment had gone over to its adored chieftain. Labédoyère had paid dearly for the enthusiasm of those moments; for, the for-the-second-time restored Bourbons punished his fidelity with death. Like Marshal Ney, Charles de Labédoyère was also shot; like the emperor himself, he paid for the triumph of the hundred days with his liberty and with his life!

Of all these names and events of the past, Hortense thought, while enjoying the first hours of repose in their room at an hotel in Cannes. Leaning back in her chair, her large eyes gazing dreamily at the ceiling above her, she told the attentive prince of the days that had been, and spoke to him of the days in which they were now living—of these days of humiliation and obscurity—of those days in which the French nation had risen, and, shaking its lion's mane, hurled the Bourbons from their ancestral throne, and out of the land they had hitherto proudly called their own. On driving out the Bourbons, the people had freely chosen another king—not the King of Rome, who, in Vienna, as Duke of Reichstadt, had been made to forget the brilliant days of his childhood—not the son of the Emperor Napoleon. The people of France had chosen the Duke of Orleans as their king, and Louis Philippe's first act had been to renew the decree of banishment which the Bourbons had fulminated against

the Bonapartes, and which declared it to be a capital crime if they should ever dare to set foot on the soil of France.

"The people acted freely and according to their own will," said Hortense, with a sad smile, as she saw her son turn pale, and wrinkles gather on his brow. "Honor the will of the people, my son! In order to reward the emperor for his great services to the country, the people of France had unanimously chosen him their emperor. The people who give have also the right to take back again. The Bourbons, who consider themselves the owners of France, may reclaim it as an estate of which they have been robbed by the house of Orleans. But the Bonapartes must remember that they derived all their power from the will of the people. They must be content to await the future expression of its will, and then submit, and conform themselves to it." *

Louis Napoleon bowed his head and sighed. He must conform to the will of the people; cautiously, under a borrowed name, he must steal into the land of his longing and of his dreams; he must deny his nationality, and be indebted, for his name and passport, to the country that had bound his uncle, like a second Prometheus, to the rock, and left him there to die! But he did it with a sorrowful, with a bleeding heart; he wandered with his mother, who walked heavily veiled at his side, from place to place, listening to her reminiscences of the great past. At her

* The duchess's own words. See La Reine Hortense en Italie, Suisse, France, etc., p. 79.

relation of these reminiscences, his love and enthusiasm for the fatherland, from which he had so long been banished, burned brighter and brighter. The sight, the air of this fatherland, had electrified him; he entertained but one wish: to remain in France, and to serve France, although in the humble capacity of a private soldier.

One day Louis Napoleon entered his mother's room with a letter in his hand, and begged her to read it. It was a letter addressed to Louis Philippe, in which Louis Napoleon begged the French king to annul his exile, and to permit him to enter the French army as a private soldier.

Hortense read the letter, and shook her head sadly. It wounded her just pride that her son, the nephew of the great emperor, should ask a favor of him who had not hesitated to make the most of the revolution for himself, but had nevertheless lacked the courage to help the banished Bonapartes to recover their rights, and enable them to return to their country. In his ardent desire to serve France, Louis Napoleon had forgotten this insult of the King of France.

"My children," says Hortense, in her memoirs, "my children, who had been cruelly persecuted by all the courts, even by those who owed every thing to the emperor, their uncle, loved their country with whole-souled devotion. Their eyes ever turned toward France, busied with the consideration of institutions that might make France happy; they knew that the people alone were their friends; the hatred of the great had taught them

this. To conform to the will of the people with resignation was to them a duty, but to devote themselves to the service of France was their hearts' dearest wish. It was for this reason that my son had written to Louis Philippe, hoping to be permitted to make himself useful to his country in some way."

Hortense advised against this venturous step; and when she saw how much this grieved her son, and observed his eyes filling with tears, she begged that he would at least wait and reflect, and postpone his decision until their arrival in Paris.

Louis Napoleon yielded to his mother's entreaties, and in silence and sadness these two pilgrims continued their wandering through the country and cities, that to Hortense seemed transformed into luminous monuments of departed glory.

In Fontainebleau Hortense showed her son the palace that had been the witness of the greatest triumphs and also of the most bitter grief of his great uncle. Leaning on his arm, her countenance concealed by a heavy black veil, to prevent any one from recognizing her, Hortense walked through the chambers, in which she had once been installed as a mighty and honored queen, and in which she was now covertly an exile menaced with death. The servants who conducted her were the same who had been there during the days of the emperor! Hortense recognized them at once; she did not dare to make herself known, but she nevertheless felt that she, too, was remembered there. She saw this in the expression with which the servants opened the rooms she had once occupied; she heard it in the tone in which they mentioned her name! Every thing in this palace had remained as it then was! There was the same furniture in the rooms which the imperial family had occupied after the peace of Tilsit, and in which they had given such brilliant *fêtes*, and received the homage of so many of the kings and princes of Europe, all of whom had come to implore the assistance and favor of their vanquisher! There were also the apartments which the pope had occupied, once voluntarily; subsequently, under compulsion. Alas! and there was also the little cabinet, in which the emperor, the once so mighty and illustrious ruler of Europe, had abdicated the crown which his victories, his good deeds, and the love of the French people, had placed on his head! And, finally, there were also the chapel and the altar before which the Emperor Napoleon had stood god-father to his nephew Louis Napoleon! All was still as it had been, except that the garden, that Hortense and her mother had laid out and planted, had grown more luxuriant, and now sang to the poor banished pilgrim with its rustling tree-tops a melancholy song of her long separation from her home!

The sorrowing couple wandered on, and at last arrived before the gates of Paris. At this moment, Hortense was a Frenchwoman, a Parisian only, and, forgetting every thing else, all her grief and sufferings, she sought only to do the honors of Paris for her son. She ordered the coachman to drive them through the boulevards to the

Rue de la Paix, and then to stop at the first good hotel. This was the same way over which she had passed sixteen years before, escorted by an Austrian officer. Then she had quitted Paris by night, driven out in a measure by the allies, who so much feared her, the poor, weak woman, with her little boys, that troops had been placed under arms at regular intervals on her way, in order, as it was given out, to secure her safe passage. Now, after sixteen years, Hortense returned to Paris by the same route, still exiled and homeless, at her side the son who was not only menaced by the French decree of banishment, but also by the Austrian edict of proscription.

But yet she was once more in Paris, once more at home, and she wept with joy at beholding once more the streets and places about which the memories of her youth clustered.

By a strange chance, it was at the "*Hôtel de Hollande*" that the former Queen of Holland descended from her carriage, and took up her residence, holding thus, in a measure, her entrance into Paris, under the fluttering banner of the past. In the little *Hôtel de Hollande*, the Queen of Holland took possession of the apartments of the first floor, which commanded a view of the boulevard and the column of the *Place Vendôme*. "Say to the column on the *Place Vendôme* that I am dying, because I cannot embrace it," the Duke de Reichstadt once wrote in the album of a French nobleman, who had succeeded, in spite of the watchful spies, who surrounded the emperor's son, in speaking to him of his

father and of the empire. This happiness, vainly longed for by the emperor's son, was at least to be enjoyed by his nephew.

Louis Napoleon could venture to show himself. In Paris he was entirely unknown, and could therefore be betrayed by no one. He could go down into the square and hasten to the foot of the *Vendôme* column, and in thought at least kneel down before the monument that immortalized the renown and grandeur of the emperor. Hortense remained behind, in order to perform a sacred duty, imposed on her, as she believed, by her own honor and dignity.

She was not willing to sojourn secretly, like a fugitive criminal, in the city that in the exercise of its free will had chosen itself a king, but not a Bonaparte. She was not willing to partake of French hospitality and enjoy French protection by stealth; she was not willing to go about in disguise, deceiving the government with a false pass and a borrowed name. She had the courage of truth and sincerity, and she resolved to say to the King of France that she had come, not to defy his decree of banishment by her presence, not for the purpose of intriguing against his new crown, by arousing the Bonapartists from their sleep of forgetfulness by her appearance, but solely because there was no other means of saving her son; because she must pass through France with him in order to reach England.

Revolution, which so strangely intermingles the destinies of men, had surrounded the new king almost en-

tirely with the friends and servants of the emperor and of the Duchess of St. Leu. But, in order not to excite suspicion against these, Hortense now addressed herself to him with whom she had the slightest acquaintance, and whose devotion to the Orleans family was too well known to be called in doubt by her undertaking. Hortense therefore addressed herself to M. de Houdetot, the adjutant of the king, or rather, she caused her friend Mlle. de Massuyer to write to him. She was instructed to inform the count that she had come to Paris with an English family, and was the bearer of a commission from the Duchess of St. Leu to M. de Houdetot.

M. de Houdetot responded to her request, and came to the *Hôtel de Hollande* to see Mlle. Massuyer. With surprise and emotion, he recognized in the supposititious English lady the Duchess of St. Leu, who was believed by all the world to be on the way to Malta, and for whom her friends (who feared the fatigue of so long a journey would be too much for Hortense in her weak state of health) had already taken steps to obtain for her permission to pass through France on her way to England.

Hortense informed Count Houdetot of the last strokes of destiny that had fallen upon her, and expressed her desire to see the king, in order to speak with him in person about the future of her son.

M. de Houdetot undertook to acquaint the king with her desire, and came on the following day to inform the duchess of the result of his mission. He told the duchess that the king had loudly lamented her boldness in coming to France, and the impossibility of his seeing her. He told her, moreover, that, as the king had a responsible ministry at his side, he had been compelled to inform the premier of her arrival, and that Minister Casimir Perrier would call on her during the day.

A few hours later, Louis Philippe's celebrated minister arrived. He came with an air of earnest severity, as it were to sit in judgment upon the accused duchess, but her artless sincerity and her gentle dignity disarmed him, and soon caused him to assume a more delicate and polite bearing.

"I well know," said Hortense in the course of the conversation, "I well know that I have broken a law, by coming hither; I fully appreciate the gravity of this offence; you have the right to cause me to be arrested, and it would be perfectly just in you to do so!"—Casimir Perrier shook his head slowly, and replied: "Just, no! Lawful, yes!" *

CHAPTER VIII.

LOUIS PHILIPPE AND THE DUCHESS OF ST. LEU.

THE visit which Casimir Perrier had paid the duchess seemed to have convinced him that the fears which the king and his ministry had entertained had really been groundless, that the step-daughter of Napoleon had not come to Paris to conspire and to claim the still somewhat

* La Reine Hortense: Voyage en Italie, etc., p. 110.