

promise, said to me, 'Think they then, I have need of their protection to arrive at power? Egregious mistake! They will all be but too happy one day should I condescend to grant them mine. My sword is by my side, and with it I will go far.'

"What say you to this security of success? Is it not a proof of confidence springing from an excess of vanity? A general of brigade protect the heads of government! That, truly, is an event highly probable! I know not how it is, but sometimes this waywardness gains upon me to such a degree, that almost I believe possible whatever this singular man may take it into his head to attempt; and with his imagination, who can calculate what he will not undertake?"

"Here, we all regret you and console ourselves for your prolonged absence only by thinking of you every minute, and by endeavoring to follow you step by step through the beautiful country you are now traversing. Were I sure of meeting you in Italy, I would get married to-morrow, upon condition of following the general; but we might perhaps cross each other on the route; thus I deem it more prudent to wait for your reply before taking my determination. Speed, then, your answer—and your return still more.

"Madame Tallien gives me in commission to tell you, that she loves you tenderly. She is always beautiful and good; employing her immense influence only to obtain pardon for the unfortunate who address themselves to her; and adding to her acquiescence an air of satisfaction, which gives her the appearance of being the person obliged. Her friendship for me is ingenuous and affectionate. I assure you that the love I bear toward her resembles my affection for you. This will give you an idea of the attachment I feel for her. Hortense becomes more and more amiable; her

charming figure develops itself: and I should have fitting occasion, if so inclined, to make troublesome reflections upon villainous Time, which merely adorns one at the expense of another. Happily, I have got quite a different crotchet in my head at present, and skip all dismals in order to occupy my thoughts solely with a future which promises to be happy, since we shall soon be reunited, never again to be separated. Were it not for this marriage, which puts me out, I should, despite of all, be gay; but while it remains to be disposed of, I shall torment myself; once concluded, *come what may*, I shall be resigned. I am habituated to suffering; and if destined to fresh sorrows, I think I can endure them, provided my children, my aunt, and you were spared me. We have agreed to cut short the conclusions of our letters, so adieu, my friend."

It is very apparent, that Josephine was more deeply interested in her admirer than she would have her friend believe; and asking counsel was only declaring both her passion and intention to marry. The months departed, and Napoleon, though environed with duties which attended his appointment, retired at evening to the mansion of Madame Beauharnais, to hear the melody of her voice, and enjoy an interlude for romantic pleasure, amid the stormy scenes that opened before his feet the path of glory. With a few select friends, among whom Madame Tallien was conspicuous, there were frequent meetings of the parties, and brilliant entertainments, which extended the friendship and influence of the commander-in-chief, among the very class the most available in carrying forward his ambitious schemes, already towering above Alpine summits, and embracing thrones which had withstood the flow of centuries.

Josephine has left her testimony respecting the fine

conversational powers of her lover—which is proof of his ability in this department, whenever he chose to indulge the *abandon* of wit, and compliment in the society of women, for whom, it is well known, he entertained but a light opinion; owing doubtless to the frivolous character and easy virtue of the majority of those he met in the gay society of the metropolis.

The spring-time spread beauty again over the valleys of unhappy France, while the tocsin of war fell on the eager ear of Napoleon. How the waving foliage nourished by the decaying dead, the bending sky, and the harmonies of nature filling it, mocked the mournful dwellings and breaking hearts, whose trampled vineyards were a symbol of what madness had wrought, and an index of future desolation by the shock of contending armies! But Napoleon listened only to the ravishing tones of love, and the sweeter notes of fame's shrill trumpet; for his pulse never beat so wildly with hope and enthusiasm before.

He led Josephine to the altar according to revolutionary form, which was a simple presentation before the proper magistrate, March 9th, 1796. Barras and Tallien witnessed the ceremony, and signed with Lemarois, an aid-de-camp, and Calmelet, a lawyer, the act recorded in the state register of Paris.

Twelve days later he bade adieu to his bride and was on his way to the plains of Italy—a parting that blended in one tide of strong emotion, the affection of an ardent, impetuous spirit, and the glowing desire to encircle his brow with laurels, that

“———would burn
And rend his temples in return ”



Empress Josephine.