

“What an extraordinary commotion reigned at that time in the contracted circle of the city of Erfurth, now so deserted! What an epoch was that in which the all-powerful will of the extraordinary man who for a number of years reposed on the rock of St. Helena, in a marvelous dream of life, brought together as by a stroke of the magician’s wand, emperors, kings, and other distinguished men. What a clatter of brilliant equipages, among which crowds of spectators, attracted by curiosity, were hustled to and fro at the risk of being crushed to death. Citizens, peasants, foreigners, from every country; courtiers in richly embroidered costumes; Polish Jews, statesmen, officers covered with ribbons and crosses, citizen’s wives, and elegantly dressed ladies, porters, hod-carriers, all squeezing and struggling to open a passage for themselves. From time to time French troops marching by, with bands playing, added to the confusion in the streets. The streets were insufficient to contain the crowds which flowed into Erfurth. The principal inhabitants were driven from their apartments, and took refuge in their servants’ rooms, in order to accommodate the retinue of the French Emperor. In the most remote streets, the owners of houses reaped a golden harvest by the hire of rooms. The hotels were filled to overflowing. Napoleon had caused the principal performers of the French theater to be present: Talma, Mesd’s. Duchesnois, Mars, the beautiful Georges, the charming Bourgoin, appeared many times a week in their most brilliant characters before the august assembly. A small theater had been fitted up in the Jesuits’ college for this purpose, with a promptitude and elegance truly French. Box tickets were distributed for each representation to the native and foreign ladies, but it was no easy matter to obtain them. After urgent solicitation

myself and friends had the good fortune to obtain tickets for the representation of *Œdipus*, in which Madame Raucort and Talma were to appear. At the top of the stairs we were received by a fierce looking soldier of the guard, who distributed us in several boxes, almost empty at the time. I was quite fortunate at being seated with two friends, in the front of a box near the stage, whence we could easily see all that was passing in the parquet. We congratulated ourselves at being so comfortably seated, but our joy was premature. The box adjoining ours was filled to excess. The door of ours was quickly opened, ‘How is this?’ cried a soldier or policeman, I know not which, ‘how is this—three women on three chairs in place of six!’ At the same time he placed two ladies between us, with whom we were, fortunately, acquainted. Every box, as well as ours, was closely packed; we could scarcely move. The heat was oppressive, but we had no time to think of it. The interest of the grand display which was forming under our eyes in the parquet, so occupied our attention that we thought but little of the inconvenience of our position.

“Immediately in front of the stage were placed two armchairs for the emperors: at each side were ranges of common chairs, for the kings and reigning princes. The space behind the seats began to be occupied. There were present statesmen and generals from most of the European powers—men whose names were then celebrated, and have become a part of history. The French were distinguished from the more serious and modest Germans, by their richly embroidered uniforms, and an air of vivacity and confidence. There were Berthier, Soult, Caulaincourt, Savary, Lannes, Duroc, and many others equally celebrated. It seemed as if the greatness of the master was reflected from the



countenance of each of them. There was Goethe, calm and full of dignity; the venerable Weiland. The grand duke of Weimar had invited them to Erfurth, The Duke of Gotha, several German princes, reigning or allied to reigning families, were grouped around the two veterans of German literature.

“Drums were heard from without. ‘It is the emperor,’ was heard from every box. ‘Fools, what do you mean?’ cried the officer in command to the drummers, ‘it is only a king!’ In fact, a German king entered, and soon after three others. The kings of Saxony, Bavaria, and Wirtemberg entered without any parade; the King of Westphalia, who came in later, eclipsed all by the brilliancy of his rich embroidery and jewelry. The Emperor Alexander, majestically tall, then entered. The state box opposite the stage, dazzled the eyes with its brilliancy. The Queen of Westphalia, covered with diamonds, sat in the center; next to her, the charming Stephanie, grand duchess of Baden, was conspicuous by her graces rather than by the splendor of her apparel. Some German princesses sat near the two reigning princesses; the gentlemen and ladies of the court occupied the back part of the box.

“At this time, Talleyrand appeared in a box fitted up for him on a level with the parquet near the stage, on account of his lameness at that time preventing him from occupying a place in the parquet. The emperor and kings stood before the box, to converse with the ministers conveniently seated. Everybody had arrived. He alone who had collected this magnificent assembly was yet wanting. All, for a long time, awaited his presence.

“At length, a loud beating of drums was heard, all eyes were directed with a restless curiosity to the en-

trance. At length, appeared the man, the most incomprehensible of this incomprehensible era. Dressed, according to his custom, in the simplest manner, he hastily bowed to the sovereigns present, who had been obliged to wait so long for him, and seated himself in the armchair at the right of the Emperor of Russia. His appearance poorly contrasted with that of the superb Alexander. The four kings were seated on common chairs, and the play commenced.

“In vain Talma displayed all his art, the parquet before us occupied our whole attention. In the mean time, the *gens d'armes* at the door of our box, exerted themselves to complete our lacking education, and to inform us between the acts of the *etiquette* to be observed in the presence of the master of the world. ‘Take away that *lorgnette*; the emperor does not like it!’ cried one of them, in leaning over the ladies who sat behind us. ‘Sit upright. Do not stretch out your neck; it is disagreeable to the emperor!’ cried another. The impertinence was great; but we took example from the kings and princesses before us, and patiently endured what we could not change.

“Immediately after the opening of the tragedy, which Napoleon had, probably, seen a hundred times, he put himself at his ease, and slept profoundly. It was well known that at any hour of the day or night he could sleep when he wished. Ocular witnesses assure us that in the midst of a battle, he purposely gave himself up to sleep, to recruit his strength, and could awake at any moment he wished. On the day of this representation at Erfurth, he was fatigued in exercising his troops for many successive hours.

“It was a singular spectacle to us, to see this terrible man give himself up to gentle sleep, whose vast plans caused happiness or unhappiness to half the world.



We continued to contemplate with an astonishment mixed with fear this profile of a fine antique, for which the dark uniform of Alexander served as a background.

“Twenty years have rolled away since—in 1828—scarcely the third part of the life of man, yet how many changes have happened in this short space of time! What a lofty flight has the world taken in this fifth part of an age! At that time one could scarcely have dreamed what has actually occurred. With what fury has the scythe of time raged, and what a terrible harvest it has mown in so short a period. Where are the kings, the potentates, the grandees who were assembled in this theater? Where is he, even he who had collected them together? He reposes forever upon the rock round which dash the ocean’s waves! The short and fair life of Alexander is finished. The kings of Saxony, Bavaria, and Wirtemberg lie in their marble tombs. The late king Jerome alone survives, but his renown has vanished with his fantastic royalty, like a dream of the morning.

“The grand duchess of Baden, the beautiful Stephanie, for a long time lamented her husband who was taken away in the flower of his age. The Duke of Gotha, who needed not the title of prince to charm the world, is dead, and with him, his race is extinct. The Duke Charles Augustus of Weimar, lives only in the remembrance of his friends. How many imposing names might be added to this melancholy list!”

The divorce of Josephine came into the prospective securities of the throne, which were discussed during this royal conference with the sovereigns of Europe. With this cruel resort of ambition before his mind, he repaired again to Paris. Napoleon gave Josephine no intimation of his design, but continued to treat her with

all the cordiality he had ever manifested. Her disposition was naturally joyous. She was inclined to find a brighter view in every picture of life, and it was doubtless this which supported her so well under the sad apprehension of Napoleon’s intentions toward her. Her *hopefulness*, also, led her at times fondly to trust that the storm would retire, while reason persuaded her that the emperor would not allow her happiness to thwart the plan which she knew he cherished. What was she in comparison with him? What was her poor human heart worth, and what availed the treasure of its affection to him, who made them subordinate to a throne, and the inscription of his name on its columns? Bleeding affections, blasted hopes, and tears, never bowed the will of Napoleon. Josephine perfectly understood that such trifles in his path would be swept away like chaff before the resistless march of the whirlwind.

Let not Napoleon, however, be misunderstood. As we have said before, he loved Josephine, and this, probably, with a stronger affection than he ever gave to any other object. But he would not let one of the purposes or plans which he had formed go unaccomplished, though the world were to perish. “All, or nothing,” was his motto when a boy in Corsica, and it was the one feeling of his heart when he became a man. No plan which he made was a trivial one with him, for it affected himself. Everything, in his estimation, should be subservient to him, and everything over which he had the control was made so. With this view, we can easily see that his love for Josephine would not endure for a moment, if it conflicted with any of his designs for self-aggrandizement. The empress understood it, and knowing that one of his cherished schemes was for the perpetuity of his empire, she now clearly saw that her own sacrifice was inevitable. The Prince of Holland



had died; the viceroy, Eugene, though adopted by Napoleon, Josephine knew could never be the successor to the empire. Upon no living member of his own family would the emperor fix his choice, and there was thus left no alternative to his seeking a wife who might bring him up an heir to the throne.

It is not at all unnatural, that Napoleon should have so strong a desire for posterity. Aside from political motives, and inordinate self-love, such a desire belongs to every man. It is in a certain degree the outgoing of every one's natural affection. The owner of a single hut, or of a petty farm, is unhappy if he have

"No son of his succeeding"

to whom he can leave his solitary estate. No one quits the world without desiring that there should be some link to connect him still to it; that there remain behind him some stream of influence which has risen in himself, and which, when he is gone, shall flow on and move mankind. It is a wish natural to universal humanity, and there are few to which men cling with such sincere attachment. It belonged to Napoleon in common with his race, and was stronger in him than in any other man, because his power was more extensive, and his influence vaster; it was a desire commensurate with his own greatness, which grew with every victory, and strengthened with every increase of his power, winding itself more and more closely about his heart with every step taken in his ascending career; and which accompanied every thought of glory, and held a power over him only equaled by that which he himself swayed so tremendously over the minds of other men.

The purpose, which was ripening, now disappeared from the surface of affairs, before the stormy events crowding upon him. Spain was in revolt and revolu-

tion. England had formed an alliance with that kingdom, and her troops were on its soil, while her fleet swept the coasts. The mountain fastnesses were filled with armed men—Joseph was compelled to flee from Madrid—and the butchery of French soldiers was terrible. Dupont, Moncey, and Duchesne, had been defeated, and the siege of Saragossa, by Lefebvre, was abandoned. Napoleon hastened to Vittoria, where the French legions lay encamped, awaiting his arrival. Immediately the enthusiasm rose, and the forces were in motion.

"Marshals Victor and Lefebvre, with forty thousand men, were commanded to march upon the Spanish troops who were waiting for a junction with the approaching English army, in Biscay. Soult was ordered to put to rout Count de Belvidere in Estremadura, while Napoleon himself, taking the main strength of his army, hastened with the rapidity and resistlessness of an avalanche against the whole left wing of the Spanish host, as it lay stretched from Bilboa to Burgos. Everywhere, he was successful. The Spanish armies melted away like dew before him, and the fate of all those upon the Ebro was finally sealed, almost before the English forces had heard that Napoleon had arrived in Spain. Following up his successes, the emperor marched at once upon Madrid, which he entered upon the 4th of December, after a stern but ineffectual resistance. Leaving the capital he joined the division under Soult, which was in rapid pursuit of Sir John Moore and the English army. Perceiving, however, that Moore was no longer worthy of his own attention, he intrusted the consummation of his ruin to Soult, and returned with his utmost haste to Paris, riding on post-horses, on one occasion, not less than seventy-five English miles in five hours and a half. The



cause of this sudden change and extraordinary haste, was a sufficient one ; and it ere long transpired."

He had received despatches from France apprising him that Austria, improving his absence in Spain, with his army, was uniting with England to advance upon him from the north, to regain the lost glory of Austerlitz. Joseph, not apprised of these decisive indications of a continental war, sent him upon the first of January, with his fraternal salutations, warm expressions of his desire for peace. The emperor replied :

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

"BENEVENTO, January 6, 1809.

"MY BROTHER,—I thank you for your new-year's day wishes. I have no hopes of peace in Europe for this year at least. I expect it so little, that I signed yesterday a decree for raising one hundred thousand men. The fierce hatred of England, the events at Constantinople, all betoken that the hour of peace and repose has not yet struck. As for you, your kingdom seems to be settling into tranquillity. The provinces of Leon, of the Asturias, and of New Castile, desire nothing but rest. I hope that Galicia will soon be at peace, and that the country will be evacuated by the English.

"Saragossa must fall before long, and General St. Cyr, who has thirty thousand men, ought to settle the affairs of Catalonia."

On the 15th he ordered the seizure of paintings for the Louvre :

"I think that I wrote to advise you to make your entry into Madrid on the 14th. Denon is anxious for some pictures ; I wish you to seize all that you can find in the confiscated houses and suppressed convents,

and to make me a present of fifty chef's d'œuvre, which I want for the Museum in Paris. At some future time I will give you others in their places. Consult Denon for this purpose. He may make proposals to you. You are aware that I want only what is really good, and it is supposed that you are richly provided."

Napoleon reached the capital January 22, 1809.

Meanwhile, Soult had chased the enemy to the hills near Corunna, with one of the most ruinous, sanguinary, horrible defeats in the annals of war. It was in this campaign that Sir John Moore, the brave leader of the retreating columns, fell. Joseph returned to Madrid, to continue a short time his troubled reign, uncheered by the willing, grateful homage of his subjects.

The condition of the unhappy king, of whom Napoleon had complained that he "was changing the government, and becoming too indulgent ;" and the dictatorial policy of the emperor, are vividly portrayed in the affecting protest of Joseph.

JOSEPH TO NAPOLEON.

"February 19, 1809.

"SIRE—It grieves me to infer from your letter of the 6th of February that, with respect to the affairs at Madrid, you listen to persons who are interested in deceiving you. I have not your entire confidence, and yet without it my position is not tenable. I shall not repeat all that I have frequently written on the state of the finances. I devote to business all my faculties from seven in the morning till eleven at night. I have not a farthing to give to anybody. I am in the fourth year of my reign, and my guards are still wearing the coats which I gave to them four years ago. All complaints are addressed to me ; all



prejudices are opposed to me. I have no real power beyond Madrid, and even at Madrid I am every day counteracted by people who grieve that things are not managed according to their own system. They accuse me of being too mild; they would become infamous if I were more severe and left them to the judgment of the tribunals.

“You thought proper to sequester the property of ten families; more than twice that number have been thus treated. Officers are in possession of every habitable house; two thousand servants belonging to the sequestered families have been turned into the streets. All beg; the boldest try to rob and to assassinate my officers. All those who with me sacrificed their positions in the kingdom of Naples are still billeted on the inhabitants. Without any capital, without any revenue, without any money, what can I do? This picture, dark as it is, is not exaggerated. I am not dismayed; I shall surmount these difficulties. Heaven has given to me qualities which will enable me to triumph over obstacles and enemies, but what Heaven has not given to me is a temper capable of bearing the opposition and the insults of those who ought to serve me, and, above all, a temper capable of enduring the displeasure of one whom I have too much loved to be able ever to hate him.

“If, then, Sire, my whole life does not entitle me to your perfect confidence; if you think it necessary to surround me by poor creatures who make me blush for myself; if I must be insulted even in my own capital; if I am denied the right of naming the governors and the commanders who are always before me, and make me contemptible to the Spaniards and powerless to do good; if, instead of judging me by results, you put me on my trial in every detail—under such

circumstances, Sire, I have no alternative. I am King of Spain only through the force of your arms; I might be so through the love of the Spanish people, but for that purpose I must govern them in my own way. I have often heard you say, every animal has its instinct and ought to follow it. I will be such a king as the brother and the friend of your majesty ought to be, or I will return to Mortefontaine, where I ask for no happiness but to live without humiliation and to die with a good conscience.

“Only a fool remains long in a false position. In forty years of life I have learned only what I knew almost at the beginning, that all is vanity except a good conscience and self-esteem.

“A Spaniard has let me know that he has been ordered to give to Marshal Duroc, day by day, an exact account of all that I do. I am complained of for having allowed five counselors of Castile to return, while fifteen more were free. Why did I do so? Because advantage had been taken of their absence to pillage their houses. Sire, my misery is as much as I can bear; what I deserve and what I expect from you is consolation and encouragement; without them the burden becomes intolerable: I must slip from under it before it crushes me.

“If there is on earth a man whom you esteem or love more than you do me, I ought not to be King of Spain, and my happiness requires me to cease to be so.

“I write to you my whole thoughts, for I will not deceive you or myself.

“I do not choose to have an advocate with you; as soon as that becomes necessary, I retire. During my whole life I shall be your best, perhaps your only, friend. I will not remain King of Spain unless you



can think this of me. Many illusions have left me ; I cling a little to that of your friendship ; necessary as it is to my happiness, I ought not to continue to risk losing it by playing the part of a dupe."

April 6th, Austria issued a declaration of hostilities, and three days later, Archduke Charles crossed the Inn with one hundred and eighty thousand troops. With so large an army in Spain, Napoleon could hope for victory only by the concentrated and rapid action which before had won the field. Sending out couriers to summon his battalions beyond the Alps and on the Rhine to the conflict, without escort or equipage, he rode with his unequaled speed when events demanded his presence, accompanied by the devoted Josephine, to Strasburg. He was at the head of the army, April 13th, and on the 17th ordered Davoust and Massena commanding the two wings of the army, to advance upon the enemy, while he led the center, hemming in completely the divisions of Charles. After a battle at Abensburg, on the 20th, a decisive, wasting conflict occurred at Landshut on the following day. The archduke lost nine thousand men, thirty guns, and his stores. Then mustering his entire strength he fell upon the enemy at Eckmuhl, where an army of two hundred thousand men presented, as they believed, a resistless barrier to the weakened forces of the victor.

The struggle began at two o'clock in the afternoon, and continued with fierce activity till night came down upon the Golgotha of battle. The Austrians were driven from the field and retreated toward Ratisbon. The stupendous work was done by falling upon the foe in full force at selected points, like the direct and crushing descent of the red bolts from the echoing cloud upon the shivered oak. Napoleon took twenty

thousand prisoners, fifteen imperial standards, and a large number of cannon. At Ratisbon, Charles, besides attempting to defend the town, again gave the French battle, and was overwhelmed with their impetuous legions, and compelled to flee into Bohemia, abandoning Vienna to the mercy of the conqueror.

The emperor, who seemed to have a charmed existence, and had stood unharmed amid the hail of conflict, was wounded in this deadly encounter in one of his feet, which was hastily dressed and forgotten. Five days had given him another triumph over Austria ; an incredible result to his paralyzed foes.

On the 24th of April, he reviewed his army, and lavished rewards of heroism upon his elated troops. Davoust was created Duke of Eckmuhl. May 10th, he was before the walls of Vienna.

"The emperor had already quitted it, with all his family, except his daughter, the archduchess Maria Louisa, who was confined to her chamber by illness. The archduke Maximilian, with the regular garrison of ten thousand men, evacuated it on Napoleon's approach ; and though the inhabitants had prepared for a vigorous resistance, the bombardment soon convinced them that it was hopeless. It perhaps deserves to be mentioned, that on learning the situation of the sick princess, Bonaparte instantly commanded that no fire should be directed toward that part of the town. On the 10th a capitulation was signed, and the French troops took possession of the city, and Napoleon once more established his headquarters in the imperial palace of Schönbrunn."

The "sick princess" afterward became the bride of the besieging emperor.

Charles, recruiting his army, had advanced down the Danube, and taken his position in order of battle op-