

posite Vienna. Napoleon was willing to accept as the archduke was to give another battle. But the majestic river was swollen with a freshet, the bridges gone, and a thousand yards of turbulent waters between them. The emperor selected the channel below the capital, intersected by small islands, among which the largest was Lobau, for the perilous transit. Boats were prepared and anchored with chests of cannon-balls, planks laid, bridges erected, and May 19th, a large portion of his army was on the island, and the following day, passed over to meet the hostile host. He entered the villages of Asperne and Essling, and waited the movement of the Austrians. On the 21st, they appeared upon the rising outline of an extensive plain, spreading away from the French encampment. At four o'clock in the afternoon, the battle opened with an assault upon Asperne, which rapidly changed hands till night closed the slaughter, leaving it under the opposing flags of the French and the Austrian commanders; the latter occupying the church and burial-ground. The Austrians were animated with their partial success; and the next morning the conflict was renewed with fiery courage. The French regained possession of Asperne, and Essling remained unyielding under the protection of its batteries. At this crisis the fire-ships of the enemy carried away the bridge connecting the right bank of the river with Lobau. To regain connection with his reserve now separated from him, he must retreat to the island, intrench himself there, and reconstruct the demolished bridge. Just then the brave Lannes was struck with a ball, and both legs carried away. The disaster brought tears to Napoleon's eyes, while the poor marshal turned to him, his deity, for aid, dwelling till death upon his name. During the night, the em-

peror's troops who survived the carnage safely landed on Lobau, and the islands near. Charles claimed the victory; but the undecisive advantage was too dearly purchased to admit of following up the blow. Napoleon felt that the issue would shake the fearful power of his magical name, and resolved to profit by the interlude. "On the fourth of July he had at last re-established thoroughly his communication with the right bank, and arranged the means of passing to the left at a point where the archduke had made hardly any preparation for receiving him. The Austrians having rashly calculated that Asperne and Essling must needs be the objects of the next contest as of the preceding, were taken almost unawares by his appearance in another quarter. They changed their line on the instant and occupied a position, the center and key of which was the little town of Wagram."

Here, on the sixth of July, the final and decisive battle was fought. The archduke had extended his line over too wide a space; and this old error enabled Napoleon to ruin him by his former device of pouring the full shock of his strength on the center. The action was long and bloody: at its close there remained twenty thousand prisoners besides all the artillery and baggage, in the hands of Napoleon. The archduke fled in great confusion as far as Znaim in Moravia. The imperial council perceived that further resistance was vain: an armistice was agreed to at Znaim; and Napoleon, returning to Schönbrunn, continued occupied with the negotiation until October.

A few days after he returned, he escaped narrowly the dagger of a young man, who rushed upon him in the midst of all his staff, at a grand review of the imperial guard. Berthier and Rapp threw themselves upon the regicide, and disarmed him at the moment

when his knife was about to enter the emperor's body. Napoleon demanded what motive had actuated the assassin. "What injury," said he, "have I done to you?" "To me, personally none," answered the youth, "but you are the oppressor of my country, the tyrant of the world; and to have put you to death would have been the highest glory of a man of honor." This enthusiastic youth, by name Stabbs, son of a clergyman of Erfurth, was—justly, no doubt—condemned to death, and he suffered with the calmness of a martyr.

It was during his residence at Schönbrunn that a quarrel, of no brief standing, with the pope, reached its crisis. The very language of the consular concordat sufficiently indicated the reluctance and pain with which the head of the Romish church acquiesced in the arrangements devised by Bonaparte, for the ecclesiastical settlement of France; and the subsequent course of events, but especially in Italy and in Spain, could hardly fail to aggravate those unpleasant feelings. In Spain and in Portugal, the resistance to French treachery and violence was mainly conducted by the priesthood; and the pope could not contemplate their exertions without sympathy and favor. In Italy, meantime, the French emperor had made himself master of Naples, and of all the territories lying to the north of the papal states; in a word, the whole of that peninsula was his, excepting only that narrow central strip which still acknowledged the temporal sovereignty of the Roman pontiff. This state of things was necessarily followed by incessant efforts on the part of Napoleon to procure from the pope a hearty acquiescence in the system of the Berlin and Milan decrees; and thus far he at length prevailed. But when he went on to demand that his holiness should take an active part in the war against England, he was met by

a steady refusal. Irritated by this opposition, and, perhaps, still more by his suspicion that the patriots of the Spanish peninsula received secret support from the Vatican, Bonaparte did not hesitate to issue a decree in the following words: "Whereas the temporal sovereign of Rome has refused to make war against England, and the interests of the two kingdoms of Italy and Naples ought not to be intercepted by a hostile power, and whereas the donation of Charlemagne, *our illustrious predecessor*, of the countries which form the Holy See, was for the good of *Christianity*, and not for that of *the enemies of our holy religion*, we therefore declare that the duchies of Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, and Camarino be forever united to the kingdom of Italy."

On the 17th of May, Napoleon issued, from Vienna, his final decree, declaring the temporal sovereignty of the pope to be wholly at an end, incorporating Rome with the French empire, and declaring it to be *his* second city; settling a pension on the holy father in his spiritual capacity—and appointing a committee of administration for the civil government of Rome. The pope, on receiving the Parisian senatus-consultum, ratifying this imperial rescript, instantly fulminated a bull of excommunication against Napoleon. Shortly after, some unauthentic news from Germany inspired new hopes into the adherents of the holy father; and, disturbances breaking out, Miollis, on pretense that a life sacred in the eyes of all Christians might be endangered, arrested the pope in his palace, at midnight, and forthwith despatched him, under a strong escort, to Savona.

The intelligence of this decisive step reached Napoleon soon after the battle of Wagram, and he was inclined to disapprove of the conduct of Miollis as too

precipitate. It was now, however, impossible to recede; the pope was ordered to be conveyed across the Alps to Grenoble. But his reception there was more reverential than Napoleon had anticipated, and he was soon reconducted to Savona.

This business would, in any other period, have been sufficient to set all Catholic Europe in a flame; and even now Bonaparte well knew that his conduct could not fail to nourish and support the feelings arrayed against him openly in Spain and southern Germany, and suppressed, not extinguished, in the breasts of a great party of the French clergy at home. He made, therefore, many efforts to procure from the pope some formal relinquishment of his temporal claims—but Pius VII. remained unshaken; and the negotiation at length terminated in the removal of his holiness to Fontainebleau, where he continued a prisoner, though treated personally with respect, and even magnificence, during more than three years.

The treaty with Austria was at length signed at Schönbrunn on the 14th of October. The emperor Francis purchased peace by the cession of Saltzburg, and a part of Upper Austria, to the Confederation of the Rhine; of part of Bohemia to the King of Saxony, and of Cracow and western Galicia to the same prince, as grand duke of Warsaw; of part of eastern Galicia to the czar; and to France herself, of Trieste, Carniola, Friuli, Villach, and some part of Croatia and Dalmatia. By this act, Austria gave up, in all, territory to the amount of forty-five thousand square miles, and a population of nearly four millions; and Napoleon, besides gratifying his vassals and allies, had completed the connection of the kingdom of Italy with his Illyrian possessions, obtained the whole coast of the Adriatic, and deprived Austria of her last seaport.

Yet, when compared with the signal triumphs of the campaign of Wagram, the terms on which Napoleon signed the peace were universally looked upon as remarkable for moderation; and he claimed merit with the Emperor of Russia on the score of having spared Austria in deference to his personal intercession.

Bonaparte quitted Vienna on the 16th of October; was congratulated by the public bodies of Paris on the 14th of November, as the greatest of heroes, who never achieved victories but for the happiness of the world.

On his return to Paris, Napoleon proudly proclaimed to his senate, that no enemy opposed him throughout the continent of Europe—except only a few fugitive bands of Spanish rebels, and the “English leopard” in Portugal, whom ere long he would cause to be chased into the sea. “I and my house,” said he, “will ever be found ready to sacrifice everything, even our own dearest ties and feelings, to the welfare of the French people.”

This was the first public intimation of a measure which had for a considerable period occupied much of Napoleon’s thoughts, and which, regarded at the time (almost universally) as the very master-stroke of his policy, proved in the issue no mean element of his ruin.

An incident occurred upon his approach to the capital, which foreshadowed sadly the hastening event. At Munich he stopped and despatched a courier to the empress at St. Cloud, apprising her that he should arrive at Fontainebleau on the 27th, and directing the court to proceed thither to receive him. So rapid, however, was his progress, that he reached Fontainebleau at ten o’clock on the morning of the 26th, and of course found no preparations made for his reception. This threw him into a rage, though he could not have forgotten that his arrival was a day earlier than he had

fixed, and cursing their tardiness, ordered a courier to gallop immediately to St. Cloud, and announce to the empress his arrival. Fontainebleau is forty miles distant, and it was one o'clock before Josephine received the intelligence. Aware of the emperor's disposition, she set off hastily, with a feeling of dismay, fearing he might charge the consequences of his own haste upon her.

Toward evening, Josephine arrived; Bonaparte was writing in his library, and when an attendant told him the empress had come, he took no notice of the announcement. It was the first time he had failed to welcome her after absence, and not only Josephine, but all, marked so strange a mood. Inquiring after him, the empress ran to the library, threw open the doors, and, unheralded, stepped forward to greet him. At her first salutation, the emperor raised his eyes, and without rising from his seat, gave her a look that was like the touch of death. "Ah! so you are come, madam," said he, "'Tis well; I was just about to set out for St. Cloud." Josephine attempted to answer, but her emotions choked her, and she burst into tears. Was this the reception which was to requite her love, her fears for his safety, her efforts for his success? As she stood sobbing there, Napoleon's heart smote him, and rising, he apologized for his rudeness. "Forgive me," he said, tenderly embracing her—"I own I was wrong. Let us be friends again." Josephine was ready for a reconciliation, but she could not at once dry her tears. Retiring to dress, they flowed afresh, and for several moments she freely indulged them. What meant his coldness, and then his returning favor? Was his kindness real, or did he show it only to give her a false hope, as the boa is said to loosen its folds and look brightly in the eye of its victim, as a prelude to the last struggle?

When Josephine and the emperor again met, it was with mutual smiles, and apparent cordiality. Each seemed to have forgotten the previous misunderstanding, and mainly desirous of treating the other with affection.

When at Paris, everything appeared in its accustomed way, and Josephine was ever glad of a pretext which called them there, for at the palace, life was irksome and full of disquiet. Napoleon had told her that she stood in the way of his prosperity; that he needed not only an heir, but that to render his power stable, he must seek an alliance with one of the great reigning houses of Europe; that she lay as ever near his heart, but bade her ask herself the question, if it would be a pleasing reflection, that the great empire to whose formation she had essentially contributed, was to crumble away at his death. "What a glorious sacrifice," he would say, "you can make, not only to myself but to our empire." Josephine would answer sometimes by tears, then by supplications, and again by arguments, to which even Napoleon could not reply. She would appeal by turns to his generosity, to his former love, and to his superstition. She would talk to him of that mysterious influence which had bound them together, and against which he might not rashly sin. "See there," said she to him one starlight evening as they sat alone at a window of the palace—"Bonaparte, behold that bright star; it is mine! and remember, to mine, not to thine, has sovereignty been promised. Separate, then, our fates, and your star fades!"

Nothing, however, could swerve the emperor from his purpose, and Josephine saw from day to day that her influence over him was declining.

Bonaparte endeavored to act his part without betraying his emotion, but it was in vain. The strong man who

had smiled in the face of danger and death, trembled as he drew near the closing scenes of this strange drama. Some have represented him as appearing to act a comedy, and pass with perfect calmness through the ordeal; but this is only an outside view of the picture. It was no farce that made Napoleon Bonaparte weep in his chamber, while his whole frame shook with the emotions which were wildly struggling in his breast. But the iron hand of destiny was upon him—destiny which had impelled him on in the career of glory, and still pointed to a brighter eminence beyond—and he could not resist it. He looked before him, but the abyss which was already yawning at his feet was covered, and like a bed of flowers, upon which his star shone undimmed. The die was cast, his resolution was irrevocably taken, and though, while he should carry it into action, clouds might gather upon his sky, they would roll away, leaving his path the clearer and brighter, in contrast with a transient eclipse.

It was the last day of November, that he formally announced his purpose to Josephine. He had previously urged her to consent to the divorce, but had never before positively told her that she must cease to be his wife. Upon this day, dinner had been served as usual, to which the emperor and empress sat down. Josephine had been weeping all the morning, and to conceal the tears which were still falling, she appeared at the dinner-table, wearing a head-dress which completely shaded the upper part of her face. The dinner was one merely of form. The viands were brought on and removed, but neither Josephine nor Bonaparte tasted the luxuries or uttered a word. Once or twice their eyes met, but were instantly averted, each fearing to read the look which revealed the spirit's struggle.

Josephine saw that her sunlight had passed away, and felt that the storm would quickly spend its wrath upon her.

The dinner ceremony concluded, the emperor rose, and Josephine followed him mechanically into the adjoining saloon. Napoleon ordered all the attendants to retire, and for a few moments they were alone, and both were silent. Josephine instinctively apprehended her fate, but as she watched the changing expression of Bonaparte's countenance, and read through these the struggles of his soul, a single ray of hope darted athwart the gloom. Approaching her with trembling steps, the emperor gazed at her for a moment, then took her hand and laid it upon his heart, as he said—"Josephine! my good Josephine, you know how I have loved you; it is to you, to you alone, that I owe the few moments of happiness I have known in the world. Josephine, my destiny is more powerful than my will; my dearest affections must yield to the interests of France." "Say no more," said the empress; "I expected this; I understand and feel for you, but the stroke is not the less mortal." Josephine stopped; she tried to say more, but the appalling vision of her doom choked her utterance. She endeavored to command her feelings, but they were too strong to be restrained, and sobbing out, "Oh, no, you cannot surely do it! you would not kill me?" she sunk upon the floor, overcome with the weight of her calamity. Napoleon, alarmed for her safety, threw open the doors of the saloon and called for help. The court physician was instantly summoned, and committing the hapless empress to his care, the author of her misery shut himself up in his cabinet, with feelings known only to Him, whose Omniscient eye "*searches the hearts* of the children of men."

Josephine remained in her swoon for three hours.

Again and again, the emperor came to inquire after her, and would hang over her couch with an expression of the deepest anxiety. Corvisart, the physician, and Hortense, watched eagerly for tokens of returning animation; but when the empress opened her eyes again in consciousness, it was with a look so full of sadness, that those who stood around, almost wished that she could then bury her sorrows in the forgetfulness of death.

"I cannot describe," she afterward writes, "the horror of my condition during that night! Even the interest which *he* affected to take in my sufferings, seemed to me additional cruelty. Oh, *mon Dieu!* how justly had I reason to dread becoming an empress!" When she recovered, she made no effort to change Napoleon's resolution, but simply expressed to him her acquiescence. A day or two afterward she wrote the following letter to the emperor, which, as it illustrates her peculiar feelings in relation to this event, we have inserted:

"My presentiments are realized. You have pronounced the word which separates us: the rest is only a formality. Such is the reward—I will not say of so many sacrifices (they were sweet, because made for you)—but of an attachment unbounded on my part, and of the most solemn oaths on yours. But the state, whose interests you put forward as a motive, will, it is said, indemnify me, by justifying you! These interests, however, upon which you feign to immolate me, are but a pretext; your ill-dissembled ambition, as it has been, so it will ever continue, the guide of your life—a guide which has led you to victories and to a throne, and which now urges you to disasters and to ruin.

"You speak of an alliance to contract—of an heir to be given to your empire—of a dynasty to be founded!

But with whom do you contract that alliance? With the natural enemy of France—that insidious house of Austria—which detests our country from feeling, system, and necessity. Do you suppose that the hatred, so many proofs of which have been manifested, especially during the last fifty years, has not been transferred from the kingdom to the empire; and that the descendants of Maria Theresa, that able sovereign, who purchased from Madam Pompadour the fatal treaty of 1756, mentioned by yourself only with horror; think you, I ask, that her posterity, while they inherit her power, are not animated also by her spirit? I do nothing more than repeat what I have heard from you a thousand times; but then your ambition limited itself to humbling a power which now you propose to elevate. Believe me, so long as you shall be master of Europe, Austria will be submissive to you; but never know reverse.

"As to the want of an heir, must a mother appear to you prejudiced in speaking of a son? Can I—ought I to be silent respecting him who constitutes my whole joy, and on whom once centered all your hopes? The adoption of Eugene was, then, a political falsehood? But there is one reality, at least; the talents and virtues of my Eugene are no illusion. How many times have you pronounced their eulogium! What do I say? Have you not deemed them worthy the possession of a throne: as a recompense, and often said they deserved more? Alas! France has repeated the same; but what to you are the wishes of France?

"I do not here speak of the person destined to succeed me, nor do you expect that I should mention her. Whatever I might say on the subject would be liable to suspicion. But one thing you will never suspect—the vow which I form for your happiness. May that:

felicity at least recompense me for my sorrows. Ah! great it will be if proportionate to them!"

The empress was not a woman that yielded to despair, though to appear cheerful, or even calm, at this time, cost her a struggle that shook the throne of reason. But she was empress still, and while her moments of solitude were consumed in weeping and unavailing regret, she lost none of her dignity or ease when subjected to the curious gaze of the officers of the court, or the ladies who had a more immediate access to her person. She even went to Paris, and presided at some of the splendid fêtes given in honor of Napoleon's late victories; but in all her movements, no one detected a step less light, an air less gay, a mien less commanding, than had distinguished her in the palmiest days of her imperial happiness. Hortense was at Fontainebleau when Napoleon made his announcement to the empress, and Eugene left Italy and hastened to cheer his mother by his presence, as soon as the first tidings of her calamity reached him. Both of her children desired immediately to withdraw from further association with Napoleon. Eugene tendered his resignation as viceroy of Italy, and asked to be excused from future service. Said he, "The son of her who is no longer empress, cannot remain viceroy. I will follow my mother into her retreat. She must now find her consolation in her children." Napoleon was much affected at this declaration, and urged Eugene not to relinquish hastily his honors. He told him that it was necessity, and not inclination, which urged the sacrifice of Josephine; that he still loved her, and lavished the same affections upon her children as before. "Should you leave me," said he, "and should I have a son, who would watch over the child when I am absent? If I die, who will prove to him a father? who will bring him up? who is

to make a man of him?" Josephine also heroically pleaded Napoleon's request. "The emperor," said she to Eugene, "is your benefactor, your more than father, to whom you are indebted for everything, and, therefore, owe a boundless obedience." History hardly shows a stronger instance of self-denying devotion than that which the empress exhibited during the whole of these scenes.

That "fatal day" was not to be averted. It came, and notwithstanding her previous fortitude, the blow fell with a crushing weight upon her soul. A stupor, as though death were fastening his arrow in her heart, came over her. She was the gay and lovely Josephine no longer. She lost the self-control which she had with so much conflict gained, and was again a weak, broken-hearted woman, helpless and comfortless; a vine reaching forth in vain its tendrils for the support whence it was rudely torn.

The 15th of December had been announced as the day for the intended separation. Napoleon had caused to assemble at the Tuilleries the different members of his own family, the Arch-chancellor of France, and all the high officers of state who composed the imperial council. It was a magnificent assembly, but each countenance wore a shade of gloom, as if some terrible blow were impending over the dearest prospects of every heart. Napoleon first addressed them and told them the object of his calling them together. "The political interests of my monarchy," said he, "the wishes of my people, which have constantly guided my actions, require that I should leave behind me, to heirs of my love for my people, the throne on which Providence has placed me. For many years I have lost all hopes of having children by my beloved spouse the Empress Josephine: this it is which induces me to