

## CHAPTER IX.

Caulaincourt secures an interview with the Czar of Russia.—Scenes in the capital.—Correspondence between Napoleon and Joseph.—The abdication.—The royal debate upon the disposal of the fallen emperor.—Marmont's treachery.—The conditions of the allies.—Joseph urges peace.—Napoleon's anguish.—Attempts suicide.—Adieu to his army.—Josephine and Maria Louise.—Napoleon embarks for Elba.—The return of Louis XVIII.—His reign.—Napoleon at Elba.—His return to France.—The tidings reach Talleyrand on the eve of a ball.—Vain attempt to regain the empress and her son.—Letters.—The exile again on the throne.—The allies enter the field.—Napoleon leads the French army.—The plan of the campaign.—The battles of Ligny and Quatre-Bras.—Waterloo.—The charge of the Old Guard.—The victory of Wellington.—The flight of Napoleon.—He reaches the Elysée.—The meeting of the Chambers.—The debates.—The abdication.

THE same night in which the emperor was alone at Fontainebleau, Caulaincourt rode in the lurid light of the camp-fires around the capital, towards the headquarters of the allied kings. It was the first of April, when the dawn broke upon the tumultuous city. The Duke of Vicenza was repulsed, and an audience with Alexander, who retained some show of interest in Napoleon, seemed impossible, when unexpectedly meeting the Grand Duke Constantine, the czar's brother, with whom he was familiar at St. Petersburg, he was conveyed in disguise to the royal presence. With Alexander he passed several hours. He was awhile alone in the apartment of the palace of the Elysée, occupied by Napoleon for sleeping, where he found private papers, plans, and maps left by his sovereign, and committed them to the flames. During three hours the triumphal procession was moving through Paris; fifty thousand troops—cavalry and in-

fantry, all finely equipped, and surrounding the monarchs and princes in splendid array—marched along the Boulevards.

Strengthened by the influence of Talleyrand, and the tract of Chateaubriand, entitled "Of Bonaparte and the Bourbons," the royalists rallied at the entrance of the allies, and from the moving, mighty throng of excited people, were heard the shouts, "Vive l'Empereur Alexander!" "Vive le Roi de Prusse!" "Vive le Roi!" "Vive Louis XVIII!" "Vivent les Bourbons!" The white cockades of the Bourbons, were scattered through the multitude, while silent groups on every hand, declared the grief of the many hearts still devoted to the fallen idol of France.

As night came down, the scene was grotesque and wild in the extreme. Every tongue, and people, and costume were mingled in the uncertain light, while in the Elysian Fields, the Cossacks held their savage jubilee around their bivouac fires. It was midnight when Caulaincourt returned to Fontainebleau, and informed Napoleon that the only promise of peace, was in the surrender of his crown in favor of his son—in a word nothing short of abdication would be accepted by the monarchs who had battled for the restoration of the dethroned dynasty swept away on the volcanic tide of revolution.

The two brothers, who continued their friendship in these calamitous times, exchanged messages, which present them in an unenviable, less imposing aspect than when viewed in the turmoil of public events:

## NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

"FONTAINEBLEAU, April 2, 1814.

"I desired the grand marshal to write to you on the necessity of not crowding into Blois. Let the

King of Westphalia go to Brittany or toward Bourges. I think that Madame had better join her daughters at Nice, and Queen Julie and your children proceed to Marseilles. The Princess of Neufchâtel and the marshals' wives should go and live on their estates. It is natural that King Louis, who has always liked hot climates, should go to Montpellier. As few persons as possible should be on the Loire, and let every one settle himself quietly, without attracting attention. A large colony always excites a sensation in the neighborhood. The Province road is now open—it may not remain so for one day. Among the other ministers you do not mention the minister of police. Has he reached you? I do not know whether the minister of war has his cipher. I have none with you, and as this is the case I cannot write to you on important subjects.

“Advise everybody to observe the strictest economy.”

JOSEPH TO NAPOLEON.

“BLOIS, April 3, 1814.

“SIRE—I have received your letter of the 2d. Mamma and Louis are ready to fulfil your wishes. Mamma is in want of money; six months of her pension is due. Neither has Jerome any money. My wife has no longer any friends at Marseilles. What occasions our train to appear so large is the number of empty carriages belonging to the court. I have received no letter from the grand marshal on this subject or on any other. The minister of police has returned hither from Tours. The council to-day were unanimous in its opinions and wishes. We are waiting for your majesty's decision as to the place of residence. May the fears which have been excited by the Duke of Vicenza's report never be realized! The

minister of war has no cipher with your majesty, nor have I. The ministers of the treasury and of finance know no longer how to discharge their duties. M. de la Bouillerie asks for orders to ensure the safety of his convoy. One of his fourgons, containing two millions, has reached Orleans; it was left in Paris when the empress went away. Might not Jerome be sent to command the army at Lyons?”

Talleyrand joined with all his heart the cause of Louis XVIII., and was placed at the head of the provisional government. Nesselrode, the czar's minister, was decidedly in favor of a regency, securing the crown to the young King of Rome. The Senate followed the treacherous Talleyrand, and passed a decree deposing Napoleon. The emperor reviewed his troops on the 3d of April, amid the shouts, “To Paris—to Paris!” A council of officers, civil and military, dispelled the last illusion from his mind. They declared that any further struggle was fruitless—all was lost. With words of mournful rebuke, he retired to his room, and, after hours of agonizing deliberation, he summoned Caulaincourt, and handed him the following abdication, saying, with the air of a conqueror chained, but not submitting, “Depart, Caulaincourt; depart immediately.”

“The allied forces having proclaimed that the emperor Napoleon is the sole obstacle to the reestablishment of peace in Europe, he, faithful to his oath, declares that he is ready to descend from the throne, to quit France, and even to relinquish life, for the good of his country, which is inseparable from the rights of his son, from those of the regency in the person of the empress, and from the maintenance of

the laws of the empire. Done at our palace of Fontainebleau, April 4th, 1814.

“NAPOLEON.”

In the hotel of Talleyrand the abdication was discussed, and Alexander expressed his astonishment that there were no conditions in behalf of Napoleon personally, and added, “But I have been his friend, and I will willingly be his advocate. I propose that he should retain his imperial title, with the sovereignty of Elba, or some other island.” The counsel of the czar prevailed against the wishes of the Bourbons, who desired a more secure and remote prison for the illustrious successor of the murdered Louis.

Marmont had forsaken the fortunes of Napoleon—the final blow of unpitying misfortune upon his crownless brow. The marshal concealed the plot from his men until the morning of the 5th, when they commenced their march toward Paris; “and for the first time suspected the secret views of their chief, when they found themselves in the midst of the allied lines, and watched on all sides by overwhelming numbers in the neighborhood of Versailles. A violent commotion ensued; some blood was shed; but the necessity of submission was so obvious, that ere long they resumed the appearance of order, and were cantoned in quiet in the midst of the allies.

“This piece of intelligence was followed by more of like complexion. Officers of all ranks began to abandon the camp at Fontainebleau, and present themselves to swear allegiance to the new government. Talleyrand said wittily, when some one called Marmont a traitor, ‘His watch only went a little faster than the others.’”

The allies sent their acceptance of nothing less than an unconditional abdication, with these concessions :

1st. The imperial title to be preserved by Napoleon, with the free sovereignty of Elba, guards, and a navy suitable to the extent of that island, and a pension, from France, of six millions of francs annually. 2d. The duchies of Parma, Placentia, and Guastalla to be granted in sovereignty to Maria Louisa and her heirs; and 3d. Two millions and a half of francs annually to be paid by the French government, in pensions to Josephine and the other members of the Bonaparte family. Napoleon was still undecided whether to yield all, when he received the subjoined and suggestive letter :

JOSEPH TO NAPOLEON.

“ORLEANS, April 10, 1814.

“SIRE—I wrote to you yesterday that we should be here to-day, and here we actually are. General Schuwaloff, aide-de-camp to the Emperor of Russia, accompanied the empress. He came to Blois yesterday with M. de Saint-Aignan, who said nothing on the subject of his mission. If what is reported should prove true, and the Bourbons should be called to the throne, I am most anxious not to be obliged to ask anything from them. I could not possibly live in France, nor could I take my wife and children to the island of Elba. If sad necessity should force your majesty thither, I will go to visit you, and to prove to you my attachment; but it will not be until I have placed my wife and children in safety on the continent.

“All that takes place, sire, justifies my old and fatal predictions. You must take a decided course, and put an end to this cruel agony. Why not appeal to Austria if necessary? Your son is the grandson of Francis. Why not speak the truth openly to France, and at length proclaim peace, abolish the conscription

and the droits réunis, issue a general amnesty, and adopt a real constitutional monarchy? France wishes for peace and a liberal monarchy, but she does not wish for Bourbons. She prefers them to perpetual war, but she receives them only as a punishment, to which she resigns herself because she is beaten.

“M. Foyoult has just returned from Italy; the army there is in excellent order; the viceroy is quietly at Mantua; the King of Naples prays for your success, if you desire universal peace and the independence of Italy. A single effort might perhaps extricate France from the abyss into which she is falling. An immediate decision with regard both to military affairs and to politics may perhaps repair all in favor of your son; be bold enough to try it. Save the state from imminent danger by getting rid of princes who will revive old hatreds, and inflict a fresh injury upon the country by internal disturbances, brought on by the pride of the old nobility and the vanity of the new, and the character of the people raised by the revolution to a level at which we may lament that it was not left.

“The Cossacks have appeared on the road from Beaugency to Orleans, and robbed some of the carriages belonging to the convoy.”

The next day, when the allies were threatening Fontainebleau, Napoleon gave his signature to the dreaded instrument; renouncing for himself and his heirs the thrones of France and of Italy. His anguish at the moment is described as intense beyond expression. But why such agony, if in the conscientious devotion of his energies to the disinterested work of elevating the people, with no care for personal glory, he had been overwhelmed, and his mission prematurely closed?

He grieved for France, but a heart of vast ambition was writhing under the deeper wounds to his pride, and the dark eclipse of his radiant star of destiny.

That he attempted suicide in his despair, is a charge that cannot be intelligently denied. To evade this unpleasant fact, a late historian omits the part of Caulaincourt's testimony which proves it. In regard to Napoleon's alarming illness at this time, Caulaincourt adds in his narrative: “He refused all assistance poor Constance strove to give him. Ivan\* was called. When the emperor saw him, he said: ‘Ivan, the dose was not strong enough.’ *Then it was they acquired the sad certainty that he had taken poison.*”

April 20th, he summoned his officers about him, to give his sad farewell. He thus addressed them: “For you, gentlemen, I am no longer to be with you;—you have another government; and it will become you to attach yourselves to it frankly, and serve it as faithfully as you have served me.”

He then called before him the relics of the Old Guard. He surveyed them as they were drawn up in the courtyard of the castle, with tears. Dismounting, he advanced toward them, and said, with strong emotion: “All Europe has armed against me. France herself has deserted me, and chosen another dynasty. I might, with my soldiers, have maintained a civil war for years—but it would have rendered France unhappy. Be faithful to the new sovereign whom your country has chosen. Do not lament my fate: I shall always be happy while I know that you are so. I could have died—nothing was easier—but I will always follow the path of honor. I will record with my pen the deeds we have done together. I cannot embrace you all, but I embrace your general. Bring hither the

\* The physician.

eagle. Beloved eagle! may the kisses I bestow on you long resound in the hearts of the brave! Farewell, my children—farewell, my brave companions—surround me once more—farewell!”

This adieu touched every heart, and amid the silent but profound grief of these brave men, submitting like himself to the irresistible force of events, Napoleon placed himself in his carriage, and drove rapidly from Fontainebleau.

Of all that lamented the fall of this extraordinary man, there was perhaps no one who shed bitterer tears than the neglected wife of his youth. Josephine had fled from Paris on the approach of the allies; but being assured of the friendly protection of Alexander, returned to Malmaison ere Napoleon quitted Fontainebleau. The czar visited her frequently, and endeavored to soothe her affliction. But the ruin of “her Achilles,” “her Cid” (as she now once more, in the day of misery, called Napoleon), had entered deep into her heart. She sickened and died before the allies left France.

Maria Louisa, meanwhile, and her son, were taken under the personal protection of the Emperor of Austria, and had begun their journey to Vienna some time ere Bonaparte reached Elba.

Four commissioners, one from each of the great allied powers, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and England, accompanied Bonaparte on his journey. He was attended by Bertrand, grand master of the palace, and some other attached friends and servants; and while fourteen carriages were conveying him and his immediate suite toward Elba, seven hundred infantry and about one hundred and fifty cavalry of the imperial guard, all picked men, and all volunteers, marched in the same direction, to take on them the military duties of the exiled court.

The journey of seven hundred miles to Frejus, the port of embarkation, was performed in seven days, amid demonstrations of affection from the people.

On the evening of the 28th, on board the British frigate the *Undaunted*, he was bound for Elba; and May 3d, at sunset, the island rose from the haze of the distant horizon upon his view. Distributing a purse to the crew, he landed under a salute from the battery, at Porto Ferrajo, the chief town of his sea-girdled land of exile. With a circumference of sixty miles, mountainous, rocky, and much of it barren, Elba lies solitary on the bosom of the Mediterranean, two hundred miles from France. Napoleon immediately explored every valley and ravine, and with his restless energies planned manifold improvements. He often reviewed the few hundred veteran soldiers who attended him to the island, and frequented his farm a few miles from Ferrajo. Thousands from Europe visited Elba, attracted thither by the presence of the illustrious captain.

Louis XVIII., the brother of the slain monarch, an aged gouty man, from his exile in England, went to the throne of France, by a decree of the Senate. The policy of Napoleon was formally continued in the conditions of his restoration; but soon the ancient order of things was apparent, and the cherished principle of the *divine right of kings*, was declared in all his acts. Whatever the privileges secured, they were his *sovereign* gift, and not the inalienable right of the people. He blotted out in the date of his royal edicts, the recognition of any legitimate authority from the dawn of the revolution to the abdication. The allies in their triumph released unconditionally the prisoners of war, giving to France one hundred and fifty thousand veteran troops, with the memory of former victories,

and answering to the story of disaster they heard on every hand, "These things would never have happened had we been here." The corpulent old king made a most unfortunate contrast to himself, with the manly, energetic, fascinating Napoleon. And during the summer of 1814, the murmurs of discontent rose round the Bourbon throne, and reached the mightier prince, even in exile.

The mother of the emperor, and his sister Pauline joined him, and cheered his captivity. Between him and Sir Neil Campbell, the English commissioner, from a pleasant intercourse at first, there arose a cold and formal distance—his government refusing to acknowledge the imperial title, while his office became essentially that of reporter to his cabinet at home. Napoleon hated both.

In February, 1815, Baron Chaboulon, once a member of Napoleon's Council of State, visited Elba, in disguise, to confer with him respecting affairs in the realm. After long conversations, the Baron assured him that France was ripe for revolution, and would receive him back with exultation. The 27th came, and with it the hasty preconcerted embarkation of the emperor, with his thousand followers, in the brig *Inconstant* and three small merchant vessels.

It is a significant circumstance, that the *Undaunted*, an English ship, bore him to Elba, and the *Inconstant* restored him to the transient smiles of fortune.

Upon the last day of February, the *Zephyr*, a French brig of war, was seen sailing directly for the *Inconstant*. The captain inquired after the emperor's health. Napoleon, taking the trumpet from the officer's hand, shouted back, "He is marvelously well." Other vessels passing in sight awakened momentary fears; but March 1st he landed at Cannes, where he first reached

the coast of France from the campaign in Egypt, and at which he embarked for Elba, ten months before.

"Wherever he passed he was greeted with acclamations. He went on triumphantly from point to point—his army augmenting at every step till he reached Grenoble, which threw open its gates; and reviewing seven thousand men, he pressed on toward Lyons, which held at that moment a powerful force under Marshal Macdonald, and Monsieur, the heir of the empire.

"Meantime, the Congress of Vienna that had been so long in session they had begun to fight over the division of the spoils of conquered nations, were astounded by the news that Napoleon had landed in France and was marching on Paris!

"The emperor resumed at Lyons the administration of his empire, having already by his eloquent proclamations electrified France. To the soldiers he said—'Take again the eagles you followed at Ulm, Austerlitz, Jena, and Montmirail. Come range yourselves under the banners of your old chief. Victory shall march at every charging step. The eagle with the national colors, shall fly from steeple to steeple—on to the towers of Nôtre Dame! In your old age, surrounded and honored by your fellow-citizens, you shall be heard with respect when you recount your noble deeds. You shall then say with pride—'I also was one of that great army which twice entered the walls of Vienna, took Rome, Berlin, Madrid and Moscow—and which delivered Paris from the stain of domestic treason and the occupation of strangers.'"

"And thus from village to village and city to city, the swelling tide rolled on toward Paris. On the night of the 19th the emperor once more slept at his palace of Fontainebleau. The next evening he made his

public entry into his capital, and amid the shouts of hundreds of thousands the conqueror of kingdoms entered the Tuilleries, and was borne in triumph on the shoulders of the Parisians to the magnificent *salon*, now crowded by the beauty and chivalry of Paris, and from which Louis XVIII. had but a few hours before fled. Acclamations wilder than had ever proclaimed his greatest victories, rang through Paris, and all night the cannon of Austerlitz and Marengo sent their reverberations over the illuminated city.

“Europe—astounded by the intelligence wherever it spread—was now marshaled for the last struggle against Napoleon. The great powers signed a final treaty, in which they proclaimed Bonaparte *an outlaw*, and pledged their faith to exterminate him from the face of the earth. Once more every nation on the continent rang with the clangor of warlike preparation, and before sixty days had passed, a million of armed men were marching to the scene of the final struggle.

“Before the close of May, Napoleon had upwards of three hundred thousand soldiers ready for battle, besides an imperial guard of nearly forty thousand chosen veterans; while the last scion of the Bourbon race had been driven from the soil, and the tri-color, which had waved in triumph over so many subject nations, was now unfurled again from the Rhine to the Pyrenees—and from the British Channel to the shores of the Mediterranean.”

The force and fascination of Napoleon's mind, and his thorough knowledge of all the avenues to the soldier's heart, were never more sublimely illustrated than in this bloodless march of seven hundred miles over a country from which he had been driven an exile, amid the acclamations of the army and the people.

The tidings of the astounding event went before the triumphal cavalcade.

Talleyrand was making his toilet, preparatory to a magnificent ball given by his niece the Princess of Courland, when she brought a note from Metternich. He bade her open and read it. Trembling, she exclaimed, “Heavens! Bonaparte has left Elba! What is to become of my ball this evening?” Talleyrand assured her coolly it should take place; but the consternation which followed the announcement in the royal saloon at Vienna, could not be concealed.

The Duchess of Angouleme, whose husband had been surrounded by General Gill, and capitulated, was at Bordeaux; a city with one hundred thousand inhabitants and an army of ten thousand men. She was the daughter of Louis XVI., and a brave and energetic woman. She appealed with tears to the troops in this hour of peril, but gained only a faint response, and was compelled to fly. Napoleon said of her caustically, “She is the only man of her race.”

The tri-color rose on tower and bulwark, till in a few weeks, it waved again over the hills and valleys of France.

Around Napoleon were the allied powers of Europe. In vain he endeavored to open a negotiation with them, presenting as reasons for his return and invasion, the detention of Maria Louisa and his son by Austria, the non-payment of his pension, and the voice of the nation, inviting him to take again the scepter. His foes were inflexible in their purpose, and could bring no less than a million of troops against a force which could not reach half that number.

An attempt to secure the restoration of the empress and her son to the Tuilleries failed, leaving the only