

stored to liberty, and could now hasten to her children, but she came back to them as a poor widow, for the seals of the "one and indivisible republic" were on hers and her children's property as well as on that of all other aristocrats.

CHAPTER III.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVOLUTION.

FRANCE drew a breath of relief; the Reign of Terror was at an end, and a milder and more moderate government wielded the sceptre over the poor land that had so lately lain in the agonies of death. It was no longer a capital offence to bear an aristocratic name, to be better dressed than the *sans-culottes*, to wear no Jacobin-cap, and to be related to the emigrants. The guillotine, which had ruled over Paris during two years of blood and tears, now rested from its horrid work, and allowed the Parisians to think of something else besides making their wills and preparing for death.

Mindful of the uncertainty of the times, the people were disposed to make the most of this release from the fear of immediate death, and to enjoy themselves to the utmost while they could.

They had so long wept, that they eagerly desired to laugh once more; so long lived in sorrow and fear, that they now ardently longed for amusement and relaxation. The beautiful women of Paris, who had been dethroned

by the guillotine, and from whose hands the reins had been torn, now found the courage to grasp these reins again, and reconquer the position from which the storm-wind of the revolution had hurled them.

Madame Tallien, the all-powerful wife of one of the five directors who now swayed the destinies of France; Madame Récamier, the friend of all the eminent and distinguished men of that period; and Madame de Staël, the daughter of Necker, and the wife of the ambassador of Sweden, whose government had recognized the republic—these three ladies gave to Paris its drawing-rooms, its reunions, its *fêtes*, its fashions, and its luxury. All Paris had assumed a new form, and, although the Church had not yet again obtained official recognition, the belief in a Supreme Being was already re-established. Robespierre had already been bold enough to cause the inscription, "There is a Supreme Being," to be placed over the altars of the churches that had been converted into "Temples of Reason." Yes, there is a Supreme Being; and Robespierre, who had first acknowledged its existence, was soon to experience in himself that such was the case. Betrayed by his own associates, and charged by them with desiring to make himself dictator, and place himself at the head of the new Roman-French Republic as a new Cæsar, Robespierre fell a prey to the Tribunal of Terror which he himself had called into existence. While engaged in the Hôtel de Ville in signing death-sentences which were to furnish fresh victims to the guillotine, he was arrested by the Jacobins and Na-

tional Guards, who had stormed the gates and penetrated into the building, and the attempt to blow out his brains with his pistol miscarried. Bleeding, his jaw shattered by the bullet, he was dragged before Fouquier-Tainville to receive his sentence, and to be conducted thence to the scaffold. In order that the proceeding should be attended with all formalities, he was, however, first conducted to the Tuileries, where the Committee of Public Safety was then sitting in the chamber of Queen Marie Antoinette. Into the bedchamber of the queen whom Robespierre had brought to the scaffold, the bleeding, half-lifeless dictator was now dragged. Like a bundle of rags he was contemptuously thrown on the large table that stood in the middle of the room. But yesterday Robespierre had been enthroned at this table as almighty ruler over the lives and possessions of all Frenchmen; but yesterday he had here issued his decrees and signed the death-sentences, that lay on the table, unexecuted. These papers were now the only salve the ghastly, groaning man could apply to the wound in his face, from which blood poured in streams. The death-sentences signed by himself now drank his own blood, and he had nothing but a rag of a tricolor, thrown him by a compassionate *sans-culotte*, with which to bind up the great, gaping wound on his head. As he sat there in the midst of the blood-saturated papers, bleeding, groaning, and complaining, an old National Guard, with outstretched arms, pointing to this ghastly object, cried: "Yes, Robespierre was right. There is a Supreme Being!"

This period of blood and terror was now over; Robespierre was dead; Théroigne de Méricourt was no longer the Goddess of Reason, and Mademoiselle Maillard no longer Goddess of Liberty and Virtue. Women had given up representing divinities, and desired to be themselves again, and to rebuild in the drawing-rooms of the capital, by means of their intellect and grace, the throne which had gone down in the revolution.

Madame Tallien, Madame Récamier, and Madame de Staël, reorganized society, and all were anxious to obtain admission to their parlors. To be sure, these entertainments and reunions still wore a sufficiently strange and fantastic appearance. Fashion, which had so long been compelled to give way to the *carmagnole* and red cap, endeavored to avenge its long banishment by all manner of caprices and humors, and in doing so assumed a political, reactionary aspect. *Coiffures à la Jacobine* were now supplanted by *coiffures à la victime* and *au repentir*. In order to exhibit one's taste for the fine arts, the draperies of the statues of Greece and ancient Rome were now worn. Grecian *fêtes* were given, at which the black soup of Lycurgus was duly honored, and Roman feasts which, in splendor and extravagance, rivalled those of Lucullus. These Roman feasts were particularly in vogue at the palace of Luxembourg, where the directors of the republic had now taken up their residence, and where Madame Tallien exhibited to the new French society the new wonders of luxury and fashion. Too proud to wear the generally-adopted costume of the Gre-

cian republic, Madame Tallien chose the attire of the Roman patrician lady; and the gold-embroidered purple robes, and the golden tiara in her black, shining hair, gave to the charming and beautiful daughter of the republic the magnificence of an empress. She had also drawn around her a splendid court. All eagerly pressed forward to pay their respects to and obtain the good will of the mighty wife of the mighty Tallien. Her house was the great point of attraction to all those who occupied prominent positions in Paris, or aspired to such. While in the parlors of Madame Récamier, who, despite the revolution, had remained a zealous royalist, the past and the good time of the Bourbons were whispered of, and witty and often sanguinary *bon mots* at the expense of the republic uttered—while in Madame de Staël's parlors art and science had found an asylum—Madame Tallien and court lived for the present, and basked in the splendor with which she knew how to invest the palace of the dictators of France.

In the mean while, Viscountess Josephine Beauharnais had been living, with her children, in quiet retirement, a prey to sad memories. A day came, however, when she was compelled to tear herself from this last consolation of the unhappy, the brooding over the sorrows and losses of the past, or see her children become the victims of misery and want. The time had come when she must leave her retirement, and step, as a petitioner, before those who had the power to grant, as a favor, that which was hers by right, and restore to her, at

least in part, her sequestered estate. Josephine had known Madame Tallien when she was still Madame de Fontenay, and it now occurred to her that she might assist her in her attempt to recover the inheritance of her father. Madame Tallien, the "Merveilleuse de Luxembourg," also called by her admirers, "Notre-dame de Thermidor," felt much flattered at being called on by a real viscountess, who had filled a distinguished position at the court of King Louis. She therefore received her with great amiability, and endeavored to make the charming and beautiful viscountess her friend. But Josephine found that estates were more easily lost than recovered. The republic, one and indivisible, was always ready to take, but not to give; and, even with the kindly offices of Madame Tallien freely exerted in her behalf, it was some time before Josephine succeeded in recovering her estate. In the mean time, she really suffered want, and she and her children were compelled to bear the hardships and mortifications which poverty brings in its train. But true friends still remained to her in her misery; friends who, with true delicacy, furnished her with the prime necessities of life—with food and clothing for herself and children. In general, it was characteristic of this period that no one felt humiliated by accepting benefits of this kind from his friends. Those who had lost all had not done so through their own fault; and those who had saved their property out of the general wreck could not attribute their fortune to their own merit or wisdom, but merely to chance. They therefore consid-

ered it a sacred duty to divide with those who had been less fortunate; and the latter would point with pride to the poverty which proved that they had been true to themselves and principle, and accept what friendship offered. This was the result of a kind of community of property, to which the revolution had given birth. Those who had possessions considered it their duty to divide with those who had not, and the latter regarded this division rather as a right than as a benefit conferred.

Josephine could, therefore, accept the assistance of her friends without blushing; she could, with propriety, allow Madame de Montmorin to provide for the wardrobe of herself and daughter; and she and Hortense could accept the invitation of Madame Dumoulin to dine with her twice a week. There, at Madame Dumoulin's, were assembled, on certain days, a number of friends, who had been robbed of their fortunes by the storms of the revolution. Madame Dumoulin, the wife of a rich army-contractor, gave these dinners to her friends, but each guest was expected to bring with him his own white-bread. White-bread was, at that time, considered one of the greatest dainties; for, there being a scarcity of grain, a law had been proclaimed allotting to each section of Paris a certain amount of bread, and providing that no individual should be entitled to purchase more than two ounces daily. It had, therefore, become the general custom to add the following to all invitations: "You are requested to bring your white bread with you," for the reason that no more than the allotted two

ounces could be had for money, and that amount cost the purchaser dearly.* Josephine, however, had not even the money to buy the portion allowed her by law. An exception to this rule was, however, made in favor of Josephine and Hortense; and at Madame Dumoulin's dinners the hostess always provided white bread for them, and for them alone of all her guests. Viscountess Beauharnais was soon, however, to be freed from this want. One day when she had been invited by Madame Tallien to dinner, and had walked to the palace with Hortense, Tallien informed her that the government had favorably considered her petition, and was willing to make some concessions to the widow of a true patriot who had sealed his devotion to principle with his blood; that he had procured an ordinance from the administration of domains, pursuant to which the seals were at once to be removed from her furniture and other personal property, and that the republic had remitted to her, through him, an order on the treasury for her relief, until the sequestration of her landed estates should be annulled, which he expected would soon take place.

Josephine found no words in which to express her thanks. She pressed her daughter to her heart and cried out, her face bathed in tears: "We shall at last be happy! My children shall no longer suffer want!" This time the tears Josephine shed were tears of joy, the first in long years.

* Mémoires de Monsieur de Bourrienne sur Napoleon, etc., vol. i., p. 80.

Care and want were now over. Josephine could now give her children an education suitable to their rank; she could now once more assume the position in society to which her beauty, youth, amiability, and name entitled her. She no longer came to Madame Tallien's parlor as a suppliant, she was now its ornament, and all were eager to do homage to the adored friend of Madame Tallien, to the beautiful and charming viscountess. But Josephine preferred the quiet bliss of home-life in the circle of her children to the brilliant life of society; she gradually withdrew from the noisy circles of the outer world, in order that she might, in peaceful retirement, devote herself to the cultivation of the hearts and minds of her promising children.

Eugene was now a youth of sixteen years, and, as his personal security no longer required him to deny his name and rank, he had left his master's carpenter-shop, and laid aside his blouse. He was preparing himself for military service under the instruction of excellent teachers, whom he astonished by his zeal and rare powers of comprehension. The military renown and heroic deeds of France filled him with enthusiasm; and one day, while speaking with his teacher of the deeds of Turenne, Eugene exclaimed with sparkling eyes and glowing countenance: "I too will become a gallant general, some day!"

Hortense, now a girl of twelve years, lived with her mother, who was scarcely thirty years old, in the sweet companionship of an elder and younger sister. They were inseparable companions; Nature had given Hor-

tense beauty with a lavish hand; her mother gave to this beauty grace and dignity. Competent teachers instructed her daughter's intellect, while the mother cultivated her heart. Early accustomed to care and want, this child had not the giddy, thoughtless disposition usually characteristic of girls of her age. She had too early gained an insight into the uncertainty and emptiness of all earthly magnificence, not to appreciate the littleness of those things upon which young girls usually place so high an estimate. Her thoughts were not occupied with the adornment of her person, and she did not bend her young head beneath the yoke of capricious fashion: for her, there were higher and nobler enjoyments, and Hortense was never happier than when her mother dispensed with her attendance at the entertainments at the house of Madame Tallien or Madame Barras, and permitted her to remain at home, to amuse herself with her books and harp in a better and more useful, if not in a more agreeable manner, than she could have done in the brilliant parlors to which her mother had repaired. Early matured in the school of experience and suffering, the girl of twelve had acquired a womanly earnestness and resolution, and yet her noble and chaste features still wore the impress of childhood, and in her large blue eyes reposed a whole heaven of innocence and peace. When she sat with her harp at the window in the evening twilight, the last rays of the setting sun gilding her sweet countenance, and surrounding as with a halo her beautiful blond hair, Josephine imagined she saw before her one of those angel-forms of

innocence and love which the poet and painter portray. In a kind of trance she listened to the sweet sounds and melodies which Hortense lured from her harp, and accompanied with the silvery tones of her voice, in words composed by herself, half-childish prayer, half rhapsody of love, and revealing the most secret thoughts of the fair young being who stood on the threshold of womanhood, bidding adieu to childhood with a blissful smile, and dreaming of the future.

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL BUONAPARTE.

WHILE Josephine de Beauharnais, after the trials of these long and stormy years, was enjoying blissful days of quiet happiness and repose, the gusts of revolution kept bursting forth from time to time in fits of fury, and tranquillity continued far from being permanently restored. The clubs, those hot-beds of the revolution, still exercised their pestilential influence over the populace of Paris, and stirred the rude masses incessantly to fresh paroxysms of discontent and disorder.

But already the man had been found who was to crush those wild masses in his iron grasp, and dash the speakers of the clubs down into the dust with the flashing master-glance of his resistless eye.

That man was Napoleon Buonaparte. He was hardly

twenty-nine years of age, yet already all France was talking of him as a hero crowned with laurels, already had he trodden a brilliant career of victory. As commander of a battalion he had performed prodigies of valor at the recapture of Toulon; and then, after being promoted to the rank of general, had gone to the army in Italy on behalf of the republic. Bedecked with the laurels of his Italian campaign, the young general of five-and-twenty had returned to France. There, the government, being still hostile and ill-disposed toward him, wished to remove him from Paris, and send him to La Vendée as a brigadier-general. Buonaparte declined this mission, because he preferred remaining in the artillery service, and, for that reason, the government of the republic relieved him of his duties and put him on half-pay.

So, Buonaparte remained in Paris and waited. He waited for the brilliant star that was soon to climb the firmament for him, and shed the fulness of its rays over the whole world. Perhaps, the secret voices which whispered in his breast of a dazzling future, and a fabulous career of military glory, had already announced the rising of his star.

So Buonaparte lived on in Paris, and waited. He there passed quiet, retired, and inactive days, associating with a few devoted friends only, who aided him, with delicate tact, in his restricted circumstances. For Buonaparte was poor; he had lost his limited means in the tempests of the revolution, and all that he possessed consisted of the laurels he had won on the battle-field, and his half