

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

pay as a brigadier-general. But, like the Viscountess de Beauharnais, Napoleon had some true friends who deemed it an honor to receive him as a guest at their table, and also, like Josephine, he was too poor to bring his wheaten loaf with him to the dinners that he attended, as was then the prevailing custom. He often dined, in company with his brother Louis, at the house of his boyhood's friend Bourrienne, and his future secretary was at that time still his host, favored of the gods. The young general, instead of, like his brother, bringing his wheaten loaf, brought only his ration, which was rye-bread, and this he always abandoned to his brother Louis, who was very fond of it, while Madame Bourrienne took care that he should invariably find his supply of white-bread at his plate. She had managed to get some flour smuggled into Paris from her husband's estate, and had white-bread made of it secretly, at the pastry-cook's. Had this been discovered, it would inevitably have prepared the way for all of them to the scaffold.

Thus, then, young General Buonaparte, or, as he subsequently wrote the name himself, "Bonaparte," passed quiet days of expectation, hoping that, should the existing government, so hostile to him, be suppressed by another, his wishes might be at last fulfilled. These wishes were, by the way, of a rather unpretending character. "If I could only live here quietly, at Paris," he once remarked to his friend Bourrienne, "and rent that pretty little house yonder, opposite to my friends, and keep a carriage besides, I should be the happiest of men!"

He was quite seriously entertaining the idea of renting the "pretty little house" in common with his uncle Fesch, afterward the cardinal, when the important events that soon shook Paris once more prevented him, and the famous 13th Vendémiaire, 1795, again summoned the young general away from his meditations to stern practical activity. It was on that day, the 13th Vendémiaire (October 5th), that there came the outburst of the storm, the subterranean rumblings of which had been so long perceptible. The sections of Paris rose against the National Convention which had given France a new constitution, and so fixed it that two thirds of the members of the Convention should reappear in the new legislative body. The sections of Paris, however, were prepared to accept the new constitution only when it provided that the legislative body should spring from fresh elections entirely. The Convention, thus assailed in its ambitious hankering for power, was resolved to stand its ground, and called upon the representatives who commanded the armed forces, to defend the republic of their creation. Barras was appointed the first general commanding the Army of the Interior, and Bonaparte the second. It was not long before a ferocious conflict broke out in the streets between the army and the insurgent sections. At that time the populace were not always so ready, as they have been since then, to tear up the pavements for barricades, and the revolvers, put to flight by the terrible fire and the fierce onset of the artillery, made the Church of St. Roch and the Palais Royal their defensive points; but

they were driven from them also; the struggle in the streets recommenced, and streams of blood had to flow ere it was over.

After the lapse of two days order was restored, and Barras declared to the triumphant National Convention that the victory over the insurgents was chiefly due to the comprehensive and gallant conduct of General Bonaparte.

The National Convention, as a token of gratitude, conferred upon the latter the permanent position of second general of the Army of the Interior, which had been allotted to him temporarily, only on the day of peril. From that moment, Bonaparte emerged from obscurity; his name had risen above the horizon!

He now had a position, and he could better comprehend the whispering voices that sang within his bosom the proud, triumphant song of his future career. He was now already conscious that he had a shining goal before his gaze—a goal to which he dared not yet assign a title, that flitted about him like a dazzling fairy tale, and which he swore to make reality at last.

One day, there came to the headquarters of the young general-in-chief a young man who very pressingly asked to see him. Bonaparte had him admitted, and the dignified form, the courageous, fiery glance, the noble, handsome countenance of the stranger, at once prepossessed him in the young man's favor, and he forthwith questioned him in gentle, friendly tones, concerning the object of his visit.

“General,” said the young man, “my name is Eugene Beauharnais, and I have served the republic on the Rhine. My father was denounced before the Committee of Public Safety as a *suspect*, and given over to the Revolutionary Tribunal, who had him murdered, three days before the fall of Robespierre.”

“Murdered!” exclaimed Bonaparte, in threatening tones.

“Yes, general, murdered!” repeated Eugene, with resolution. “I come now to request, in the name of my mother, that you will have the kindness to bring your influence to bear upon the committee, to induce them to give me back my father's sword. I will faithfully use it in fighting the enemies of my country and defending the cause of the republic.”

These proud and noble words called up a gentle, kindly smile to the stern, pale face of the young general, and the fiery flash of his eyes grew softer.

“Good! young man, very good!” he said. “I like this spirit, and this filial tenderness. The sword of your father—the sword of General Beauharnais—shall be restored to you. Wait!”

With this, he called one of his adjutants, and gave him the necessary commands. A short time only had elapsed, when the adjutant returned, bringing with him the sword of General Beauharnais.

Bonaparte himself handed it to Eugene. The young man, overwhelmed with strong emotion, pressed the weapon—the sole, dear possession of his father—to his

lips and to his heart, and tears of sacred emotion started into his eyes.

Instantly the general stepped to his side, and his slender white hand, which knew so well how to wield the sword, and yet was as soft, as delicate, and as transparent as the hand of a duchess, rested lightly on Eugene's shoulder.

"My young friend," said he, in that gentle tone which won all hearts to him, "I should be very happy could I do anything for you or your family."

Eugene gazed at him with an expression of childish amazement. "Good general!" he managed to say; "then mamma and my sister will pray for you."

This ingenuousness made the general smile; and, with a friendly nod, he desired Eugene to offer his respects to his mother, and to call upon him soon again.

This meeting of Eugene and General Bonaparte was the commencement of the acquaintanceship between Bonaparte and Josephine. The sword of the guillotined General Beauharnais placed an imperial crown upon the head of his widow, and adorned the brows of his son and his daughter with royal diadems.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE MARRIAGE.

A FEW days after this interview between Bonaparte and Eugene, Josephine met Bonaparte at one of the brilliant *soirées* given by Barras, the first general-in-chief. She asked Barras to introduce her to the young general, and then, in her usual frank manner, utterly the opposite of all prudery, yet none the less delicate and decorous, extending her hand to Bonaparte, she thanked him, with the tender warmth of a mother, for the friendliness and kindness he had manifested to her son.

The general looked with wondering admiration at this young and beautiful woman, who claimed to be the mother of a lad grown up to manhood. Her enchanting face beamed with youth and beauty, and a sea of warmth and passion streamed from her large, dark eyes, while the gentle, love-enticing smile that played around her mouth revealed the tender feminine gentleness and amiability of her disposition. Bonaparte had never mastered the art of flattering women in the light, frivolous style of the fashionable coxcomb; and when he attempted it his compliments were frequently of so unusual and startling a character that they might just as well contain an affront as a tribute of eulogy.

"Ah! ah! How striking that looks!" he once said, while he was emperor, to the charming Duchess de Chevreuse. "What remarkable red hair you have!"