

diately, for Josephine had been able to set herself right, and Bonaparte had joyfully become convinced that the accusations of his jealous brothers had been unjust.

Hence it was that Bonaparte's brothers wished to remove Hortense, since they knew that she was her mother's main stay; that she, with her gentle, amiable disposition, her tact and good sense, her penetrating and never-failing sagacity, stood like a wise young Mentor at the side of her beautiful, attractive, impulsive, somewhat vain, and very extravagant mother.

It would be easier to set Josephine aside were Hortense first removed; and Josephine they wanted to get out of the way because she interfered with the ambitious designs of Bonaparte's brothers. Since they could not become great and celebrated by their own merits, they desired to be so through their illustrious brother; and, in order that they might become kings, Bonaparte must, above all things, wear a crown. Josephine was opposed to this project; she loved Bonaparte enough to fear the dangers that a usurpation of the crown must bring with it, and she had so little ambition as to prefer her present brilliant and peaceful lot to the proud but perilous exaltation to a throne.

For this reason, then, Josephine was to be removed, and Bonaparte must choose another wife—a wife in whose veins there should course legitimate royal blood, and who would, therefore, be content to see a crown upon the head of her consort.

CHAPTER II.

LOUIS BONAPARTE AND DUROC.

THE brothers of Bonaparte went diligently to work then, above all things, to get Hortense out of the way. They told Bonaparte of the burning love of the young couple, of the letters which they sent to each other, and proposed to him that Duroc should be transferred to the Italian army with a higher command, and that Hortense should then be given to him. They persuaded the unsuspecting, magnanimous hero, who was easy to deceive in these minor matters and thus easy because he was occupied with grand designs and grand things; they persuaded him to keep the proposed union a secret for the present, and then on Duroc's early return to surprise the young couple and Josephine alike.

But Josephine had, this time, seen through the plans of her hostile brothers-in-law. She felt that her whole existence, her entire future, was imperilled, should she not succeed in making friends and allies in the family of Bonaparte itself. There was only one of Bonaparte's brothers who was not hostile to her, but loved her as the wife of his brother, to whom he was, at that time, still devoted with the most enthusiastic and submissive tenderness.

This one was Bonaparte's brother Louis, a young man of serious and sedate disposition, more of a scholar than a warrior, more a man of science than fit for the council-

chamber and the drawing-room. His was a reserved, quiet, somewhat timid character, which, notwithstanding its apparent gentleness, developed an inflexible determination and energy at the right, decisive moment, and then could not be shaken by either threats or entreaties. His external appearance was little calculated to please, nay, was even somewhat sinister, and commanded the respect of others only in moments of excitement, through the fierce blaze of his large blue eyes, that seemed rather to look inward than outward.

Louis Bonaparte was one of those deep, self-contained, undemonstrative, and by no means showy natures which are too rarely understood, because, in the noisy bustle of life, we have not the time and do not take the pains to analyze them. Only a sister or a mother is in a position to comprehend and love men of this stamp, because the confidential home relations of long years have revealed to them the hidden bloom of these sensitive plants which shrink back and close their leaves at every rude contact of the world. But rarely, however, do they find a loving heart outside, for, since their own hearts are too timid to seek for love, no one gives himself the trouble to discover them.

The young brother of her husband, now scarcely twenty-four, was the one who seemed destined in Josephine's eyes to afford her a point of support in the Bonaparte family.

Madame Letitia loved him more tenderly than she did any of them, next to her Napoleon, since he was the

petted darling of the whole family of brothers, who had no fear of him, because he was neither egotistical nor ambitious enough to cross their plans, but quietly allowed them to have their way, and only asked that they would also leave him undisturbed to follow out his own quiet and unobtrusive inclinations. He was the confidant of his young and beautiful sisters, who were always sure to find in him a discreet counsellor, and never a betrayer. Finally, he was the one of the whole circle of brothers toward whom Napoleon felt the sincerest and warmest inclination, because he could not help esteeming him for his noble qualities, and because he was never annoyed by him as he was by his other brothers; for the ambition and the avarice of Jerome, Joseph, and Lucien, were even then a source of displeasure and chagrin to Bonaparte.

"Were any one to hear with what persistency my brothers demand fresh sums of money from me, every day, he would really think that I had consumed from them the inheritance their father left," said Bonaparte, one day, to Bourrienne, after a violent scene between him and Jerome, which had ended, as they all did, in Jerome getting another draft on the private purse of the first consul.

Louis, however, never asked for money, but always appeared thankfully content with whatever Bonaparte chose to give him, unsolicited, and there never were any wranglings with tradesmen on his account, or any debts of his to pay.

This last circumstance was what filled Josephine with

a sort of respectful deference for her young step-brother. He understood how to manage his affairs so well as never to run up debts, and this was a quality that was so sorely lacking in Josephine, that she could never avoid incurring debt. How many bitter annoyances, how much care and anxiety had not her debts cost her already; how often Bonaparte had scolded her about them; how often she had promised to do differently, and make no more purchases until she should be in a condition to pay at once!

But this reform was to her thoughtless and magnanimous nature an impossibility; and however greatly she may have feared the flashing eyes and thundering voice of her husband when he was angered, she could not escape his wrath in this one point, for in that point precisely was it that the penitent sinner continually fell into fresh transgression—and again ran into debt!

Louis, however, never had debts. He was as cautious and regular as her own Hortense, and therefore, thought Josephine, these two young, careful, thoughtful temperaments would be well adapted to each other, and would know how to manage their hearts as discreetly as they did their purses.

So she wished to make a step-son of Louis Bonaparte, in order to strengthen her own position thereby. Josephine already had a premonitory distrust of the future, and it may sometimes have happened that she took the mighty eagle that fluttered above her head for a bird of evil omen whose warning cry she frequently fancied that she heard in the stillness of the night.

The negress at Martinique had said to her, "You will be more than a queen." But now, Josephine had visited the new fortune-teller, Madame Villeneuve, in Paris, and she had said to her, "You will wear a crown, but only for a short time."

Only for a short time! Josephine was too young, too happy, and too healthful, to think of her own early death. It must, then, be something else that threatened her—a separation, perhaps. She had no children, yet Bonaparte so earnestly desired to have a son, and his brothers repeated to him daily that this was for him a political necessity.

Thus Josephine trembled for her future; she stretched out her hands for help, and in the selfishness of her trouble asked her daughter to give up her own dreams of happiness, in order to secure the real happiness of her mother.

Yet Hortense was in love; her young heart throbbed painfully at the thought of not only relinquishing her own love, but of marrying an unloved man, whom she had never even thought of, and had scarcely noticed. She deemed it impossible that she could be asked to sacrifice her own beautiful and blessed happiness, to a cold-blooded calculation, an artificial family intrigue; and so, with all the enthusiasm of a first love, she swore rather to perish than to forego her lover.

"But Duroc has no fortune and no future to offer you," said Josephine. "What he is, he is only through the friendship of Bonaparte. He has no estate, no im-

portance, no celebrity. Were Bonaparte to abandon him, he would fall back into nothingness and obscurity again."

Hortense replied, smiling through her tears: "I love him, and have no other ambition than to be his wife."

"But he? Do you think that he too has no other ambition than to become your husband? Do you think that he loves you for your own sake alone?"

"I know it," said the young girl, with beaming eyes; "Duroc has told me that he loved me, and me only. He has sworn eternal fidelity and love to me. Both of us ask for nothing more than to belong to each other."

Josephine shrugged her shoulders almost compassionately.

"Suppose," she rejoined, "that I were to affirm that Duroc is willing to marry you, only because he is ambitious, and thinks that Bonaparte would then advance him the more rapidly?"

"It is a slander—it is impossible!" exclaimed Hortense, glowing with honest indignation; "Duroc loves me, and his noble soul is far from all selfish calculation."

"And if I were to prove the contrary to you?" asked Josephine, irritated by her daughter's resistance, and made cruel by her alarm for her own fortunes.

Hortense turned pale, and her face, which had been so animated, so beautiful, a moment before, blanched as though the icy chill of death had passed over it.

"If you can prove to me," she said, in a hollow tone, "that Duroc loves me only through ambitious motives, I am ready to give him up, and marry whom you will."

Josephine triumphed. "Duroc gets back to-day from his journey," she replied, "and in three days more I will give you the proof that he does not love you, but the family alliance which you present."

Hortense had heard only the first of her mother's words: "Duroc returns to-day." What cared she for all the rest? She should see him again—she should read consolation and love's assurance in his handsome manly face; not that she needed this to confirm her confidence, for she believed in him, and not the shadow of a doubt obscured her blissful greeting.

Meanwhile, Josephine's pretty hands were busy drawing the meshes of this intrigue tighter every moment. She absolutely required a supporting ally in the family, *against* the family itself; and for this reason Louis must become the husband of Hortense.

Bonaparte himself was against this union, and was quite resolved to marry Duroc to his step-daughter. But Josephine managed to shake his resolve, by means of entreaties, representations, caresses, and little endearments, and even succeeded in such eloquent argument to show that Duroc did not cherish any love whatever for Hortense, but wanted to make an ambitious speculation out of her, that Bonaparte resolved, at least, to put his friend to the test, and, if Josephine turned out to be right, to marry Hortense to his own brother.

After this last interview with Josephine, Bonaparte went back into his office, where he found Bourrienne, as ever, at the writing-desk.

"Where is Duroc?" he hastily asked.

"He has gone out—to the opera, I think."

"So soon as he returns tell him that I have promised him Hortense—that he shall marry her. But I want the wedding to take place in two days, at the farthest. I give Hortense five hundred thousand francs, and I appoint Duroc to the command of the eighth military division. On the day after his wedding he shall start with his wife for Toulon, and we shall live apart. I will not have a son-in-law in my house; and, as I want to see these matters brought to an end, at last, let me know to-day whether Duroc accepts my propositions."

"I don't think that he will, general."

"Very good! Then, in that case, Hortense shall marry my brother Louis."

"Will she consent?"

"She will have to consent, Bourrienne."

Duroc came in at a late hour that evening, and Bourrienne told him, word for word, the ultimatum of the first consul.

Duroc listened to him attentively; but, as Bourrienne went on with his communication, his countenance grew darker and darker.

"If such be the case," he exclaimed at last, when Bourrienne had got through, "if Bonaparte will do nothing more than that for his son-in-law, I must forego a marriage with Hortense, however painful it may be to do so: and then, instead of going to Toulon, I can remain in Paris." And, as he ceased to speak, Duroc

took up his hat, without a trace of excitement or concern, and departed.

That same evening, Josephine received from her husband his full consent to the marriage of her daughter to Louis Bonaparte.

On that very evening, too, Josephine informed her daughter that Duroc had not withstood the test, and that he had now relinquished her, through ambition, as, through ambition, he had previously feigned to love her.

Hortense gazed at her mother with tearless eyes. She had not a word of complaint or reproach to utter; she was conscious merely that a thunder-bolt had just fallen, and had forever dashed to atoms her love, her hopes, her future, and her happiness.

But she no longer had the strength and the will to escape the evil that had flung its meshes around her; she submitted meekly to it. She had been betrayed by love itself; and what cared she now for her future, her embittered, bloomless, scentless life, when *he* had deceived her—*he*, the only one whom she had loved?

The next morning Hortense stepped, self-possessed and smiling, into Josephine's private cabinet, and declared that she was ready to fulfil her mother's wishes and marry Louis Bonaparte.

Josephine clasped her in her arms, with exclamations of delight. She little knew what a night of anguish, of wailing, of tears, and of despair, Hortense had struggled through, or that her present smiling unconcern was nothing more than the dull hopelessness of a worn-out heart.

She did not see that Hortense smiled now only in order that Duroc should not observe that she suffered. Her love for him was dead, but her maidenly pride had survived, and it dried her tears, and conjured up a smile to her struggling lips; it, too, enabled her to declare that she was ready to accept the husband whom her mother might present to her.

Thus, Josephine had accomplished her purpose; she had made one of Bonaparte's brothers her son. Now there remained the question whether she should attain her other aim through that son, and whether she should find in him a support against the intrigues of the other brothers of the first consul.

CHAPTER III.

CONSUL AND KING.

THERE was only two days' interval between the betrothal of the young couple and their wedding; and on the 7th of January, 1802, Hortense was married to Louis Bonaparte, the youngest brother but one of the first consul. Bonaparte, who contented himself with the civil ceremony, and had never given his own union with Josephine the sanction of the Church, was less careless and unconcerned with regard to this youthful alliance, which had, indeed, great need of the blessing of Heaven, in order to prove a source of any good fortune to the young

couple. Perhaps he reasoned that the consciousness of the indissoluble character of their union would lead them to an honorable and upright effort for a mutual inclination; perhaps it was because he simply wished to render their separation impossible. Cardinal Caprara was called into the Tuileries, after the civil ceremony concluded, and had to bestow the blessing of God and of the Church upon the bride and bridegroom.

Yet, not one word or one glance had thus far been interchanged by the young couple. It was in silence that they stepped, after the ceremonies were over, into the carriage that bore them to their new home, in the same small residence in the Rue de la Victoire which her mother had occupied in the first happy weeks of her youthful union with Bonaparte.

Now, another young, newly-married pair were making their entry into this dwelling, but love did not enter with them; affection and happiness did not shine in their faces, as had been the case with Bonaparte and Josephine. The eyes of Hortense were dimmed with tears, and the countenance of her young husband was dark and gloomy. For, on his side, he, too, felt no love for this young woman; and, as she never forgave him for having accepted her hand, although he knew that she loved another, he, in like manner, could never forgive her having consented to be his wife, although he had not been the one to solicit it, and although he had never told her that he loved her. Both had bowed to the will of him who gave the law, not merely to all France, but also to