

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

his own family, and who had already become the lord and master of the republic. Both had married through obedience, not for love; and the consciousness of this compulsion rose like an impassable wall between these two otherwise tender and confiding young hearts. In the consciousness of this compulsion, too, they would not even try to love one another, or find in each other's society the happiness that they were forbidden to seek elsewhere.

Pale and mournful, in splendid attire, but with a heavy heart, did Hortense make her appearance at the *fêtes* which were given in honor of her marriage; and it was with a beclouded brow and averted face that Louis Bonaparte received the customary congratulations. While every one around them exhibited a cheerful and joyous bearing, while parties were given in their honor, and people danced and sang, the young couple only, of all present, were dull and sad. Louis avoided speaking to Hortense, and she turned her gaze away from him, possibly so that he might not read in it her deep and angry aversion.

But she had to accept her lot; and, since she was thus indissolubly bound up with another, she had to try to live with that other. Hortense, externally so gentle and yielding, so full of maiden coyness and delicacy, nevertheless possessed a strong and resolute soul, and, in the noble pride of her wounded heart, was unwilling to give any one the right to pity her. Her soul wept, but she restrained her tears and still tried to smile, were it

only that Duroc might not perceive the traces of her grief upon her sunken cheeks. She had torn this love from her heart, and she rebuked herself that it had left a wound. She laid claim to happiness no more; but her youth, her proud self-respect, revolted at the idea of continuing to be the slave of misfortune henceforth, and so she formed her firm resolve, saying to herself, with a melancholy smile, "I must manage to be happy, without happiness. Let me try!"

And she did try. She once more arrayed herself in smiles, and again took part in the festivities which now were filling the halls of St. Cloud, Malmaison, and the Tuileries, and which, too, were but the dying lay of the swan of the republic, or, if you will, the cradle-song of reviving monarchy.

For things were daily sweeping nearer and nearer to that great turning-point, at which the French people would have to choose between a seeming republic and a real monarchy. France was already a republic but in name; the new, approaching monarchy was, indeed, but a new-born, naked infant as yet, but only a bold hand was wanting, that should possess the determined courage to clothe it with ermine and purple, in order to transform the helpless babe into a proud, triumphant man.

That courage Bonaparte possessed; but he had, also, the higher courage to advance carefully and slowly. He let the infant of monarchy, that lay there naked and helpless at his feet, shiver there a little longer; but, lest it should freeze altogether, he threw over it, for the time

being, the mantle of his "consulship for life." Beneath it, the babe could slumber comfortably a few weeks longer, while waiting for its purple robes.

Bonaparte was now, by the will of the French people, consul for life. He stood close to the steps of a throne, and it depended only upon himself whether he would mount those steps, or whether, like General Monk, he would recall the fugitive king, and restore to him the sceptre of his forefathers. The brothers of Bonaparte desired the first; Josephine implored Heaven for the latter alternative. She was too completely a loving woman only, to long for the chilly joys of mere ambition; she was too entirely occupied with her personal happiness, not to fear every danger that menaced it. Should Bonaparte place a crown upon his head, he would also have to think of becoming the founder of a dynasty; and in order to strengthen and fortify his position, he would have to place a legitimate heir by his side. Josephine had borne her husband no children; and she knew that his brothers had, more than once, proposed to him to dissolve his childless union, and replace it with the presence of a young wife. Hence, Bonaparte's assumption of royal dignity meant a separation from her; and Josephine still loved him too well, and too much with a young wife's love, to take so great a sacrifice upon her.

Moreover, Josephine was at heart a royalist, and considered the Count de Lille, who, after so many agitations and wanderings, had found an asylum at Hartwell, in England, the legitimate King of France.

The letters which the Count de Lille (afterward King Louis XVIII.) had written to Bonaparte, had filled Josephine's heart with emotion, and, with a kind of apprehensive foreboding, she had conjured her husband to, at least, give the brother of the beheaded king a mild and considerate answer. Yes, she had even ventured to beseech Bonaparte to comply with the request that Louis had made, and give him back the throne of his ancestors. But Bonaparte had laughed at this suggestion, as he would at some childish joke; for it had never entered into his head that any one could seriously ask him to lay his laurels and his trophies at the foot of a throne, which not he, but a member of that Bourbon family whom France had banished forever, should ascend.

Louis had written to Bonaparte: "I cannot believe that the victor at Lodi, Castiglione, and Arcola—the conqueror of Italy and Egypt—would not prefer real glory to mere empty celebrity. Meanwhile, you are losing precious time. *We* can secure the glory of France; I say *we*, because I have need of Bonaparte in the work, and because he cannot complete it without me."

But Bonaparte already felt strong enough to say, not "we," but "I," and to complete his work alone. Therefore, he replied to the Count de Lille: "You cannot desire your return to France, for you would have to enter it over a hundred thousand corpses; sacrifice your personal interests to the tranquillity and happiness of France. History will pay you a grateful acknowledgment."

Louis had said in his letter to Bonaparte, "Choose your own position, and mark out what you want for your friends." And Bonaparte did choose his position; but, unfortunately for the Count de Lille, it was the very one which the latter had wished to reserve for himself.

Josephine would have been glad to vacate the king's place for him, could she but have retained her husband by so doing. She had no longings for a diadem which, by-the-way, her beautiful head did not require in order to command admiration.

"You cannot avoid being a queen or an empress, one of these days," said Bourrienne to her, on a certain occasion.

Josephine replied, with tears: "*Mon Dieu!* I am far from cherishing any such ambition. So long as I live, to be the wife of Bonaparte—of the first consul—is the sum total of my wishes! Tell him so; conjure him not to make himself king."*

But Josephine did not content herself with requesting Bourrienne to tell her husband this; she had the courage to say so to him herself.

One day she went into Napoleon's cabinet, and found him at breakfast, and unusually cheerful and good-humored. She had entered without having been announced, and crept up on tiptoe to her husband, who sat with his back turned toward her, and had not yet noticed her. Lightly throwing her arm around his neck, and letting herself sink upon his breast, and then stroking his

* Bourrienne, vol. v., p. 47.

pale cheeks and glossy brown hair, with an expression of unutterable love and tenderness, she said:

"I implore you, Bonaparte, do not mount the throne. Your wicked brother Lucien will urge you to it, but do not listen to him."

Bonaparte laughed. "You are a little goose, poor Josephine," he said. "It's the old dowagers of the Faubourg St. Germain, and your La Rochefoucauld, more than all the rest, who tell you these wonderful stories; but you worry me to death with them. Come, now, don't bother me about them any more!"

Bonaparte had put off Josephine with a laugh and a jesting word, but he nevertheless conversed earnestly and seriously with his most intimate personal friends on the subject of his assuming the crown. In the course of one of these interviews, Bourrienne said to him:

"As first consul, you are the leading and most famous man in all Europe; whereas, if you place the crown upon your head, you will be only the youngest in date of all the kings, and will have to yield precedence to them."

Bonaparte's eyes blazed up with fiercer fire, and, with that daring and imposing look which was peculiar to him in great and decisive moments, he responded:

"The youngest of the kings! Well, then, I will drive *all* the kings from their thrones, and found a new dynasty: then, they will have to recognize me as the oldest prince of all."