

spoken the truth. With deep indignation he spurns the calumny with which it has been attempted to sully the memory of Bonaparte and Hortense, even down to our time; and, in his anger, he even forgets the elegant and considerate language of the courteous diplomat, which is elsewhere always characteristic of his writings.

“He lies in his throat,” says Bourrienne, “who asserts that Bonaparte entertained other feelings for Hortense than those a step-father should entertain for his step-daughter! Hortense entertained for the first consul a feeling of reverential fear. She always spoke to him tremblingly. She never ventured to approach him with a petition. She was in the habit of coming to me, and I then submitted her wishes; and only when Bonaparte received them unfavorably did I mention the name of the petitioner. ‘The silly thing!’ said the first consul; ‘why does she not speak to me herself? Is she afraid of me?’ Napoleon always entertained a fatherly affection for her; since his marriage, he loved her as a father would have loved his child. I, who for years was a witness of her actions in the most private relations of life, I declare that I have never seen or heard the slightest circumstance that would tend to convict her of a criminal intimacy. One must consider this calumny as belonging to the category of those which malice so willingly circulates about those persons whose career has been brilliant, and which credulity and envy so willingly believe. I declare candidly that, if I entertained the slightest doubt with regard to this horrible calumny, I would say so. But Bona-

parte is no more! Impartial history must not and shall not give countenance to this reproach; she should not make of a father and friend a libertine! Malicious and hostile authors have asserted, without, however, adducing any proof, that a criminal intimacy existed between Bonaparte and Hortense. A falsehood, an unworthy falsehood! And this report has been generally current, not only in France, but throughout all Europe. Alas! can it, then, be true that calumny exercises so mighty a charm that, when it has once taken possession of a man, he can never be freed from it again?”

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## CHAPTER V.

### KING OR EMPEROR.

JOSEPHINE's entreaties had been fruitless, or Bonaparte had, at least, only yielded to them in their literal sense. She had said: “I entreat you, do not make yourself a king!” Bonaparte did not make himself king, he made himself emperor. He did not take up the crown that had fallen from the head of the Bourbons; he created a new one for himself—a crown which the French people and Senate had, however, offered him. The revolution still stood a threatening spectre behind the French people; its return was feared, and, since the discovery of the conspiracy of Georges, Moreau, and Pichegru, the people anxiously asked themselves what was to become



of France if the conspirators should succeed in murdering Bonaparte; and when the republic should again be sent adrift, without a pilot, on the wild sea of revolution. The people demanded that their institutions should be securely established and maintained, and believed that this could only be accomplished by a dynasty—by a monarchical form of government. The consulate for life must therefore be changed into an hereditary empire. Had not Bonaparte himself said: "One can be emperor of a republic, but not king of a republic; these two terms are incompatible!" They desired to make Napoleon emperor, because they flattered themselves that in so doing they should still be able to preserve the republic.

On the 18th of May, of the year 1804, the plan that had been so long and carefully prepared was carried into execution. On the 18th of May, the Senate repaired to St. Cloud, to entreat Bonaparte, in the name of the people and army, to accept the imperial dignity, and exchange the Roman chair of a consul for the French throne of an emperor.

Cambacérès, the late second consul of the republic, stood at the head of the Senate, and upon him devolved the duty of imparting to Bonaparte the wishes of the French people. Cambacérès—who, as a member of the Convention, had voted for the condemnation of Louis XVI., in order that royalty should be forever banished from French soil—this same Cambacérès was now the first to salute Bonaparte with "imperial majesty," and with the little word, so full of significance, "sire." He

rewarded Cambacérès for this by writing to him on the same day, and appointing him high constable of the empire, as the first act of his imperial rule. In this letter, the first document in which Bonaparte signed himself merely Napoleon, the emperor retained the republican style of writing. He addressed Cambacérès as "citizen consul," and followed the revolutionary method of reckoning time, his letter being dated "the 20th Floréal, of the year 12."

The second act of the emperor, on the first day of his new dignity, was to invest the members of his family also with new dignities, and to confer upon them the rank of Princes of France, with the title "imperial highness." Moreover, he made his brother Joseph prince elector, and his brother Louis connétable. On the same day it devolved upon Louis, in his new dignity, to present the generals and staff officers to the emperor, and then to conduct them to the empress—the Empress Josephine.

The prophecy of the negress of Martinique was now fulfilled. Josephine was "more than a queen." But Josephine, in the midst of the splendor of her new dignity, could only think, with an anxious heart, of the prophecy of the clairvoyante of Paris, who had told her, "You will wear a crown, but only for a short time." She felt that this wondrous fortune could not last long—that the new emperor would have to do as the kings of old had done, and sacrifice his dearest possession to Fate, in order to appease the hungry demons of vengeance and envy; and that he would, therefore, sacrifice her,



in order to secure the perpetuity of his fortune and dynasty.

It was this that weighed down the heart of the new empress, and made her shrink in alarm from her new grandeur. It was, therefore, with a feeling of deep anxiety that she took possession of the new titles and honors that Fate had showered upon her, as from an inexhaustible horn of plenty. With a degree of alarm, and almost with shame, she heard herself addressed with the titles with which she had addressed the Queen of France years before, in these same halls, when she came to the Tuileries as Marquise de Beauharnais, to do homage to the beautiful Marie Antoinette. She had died on the scaffold and now Josephine was the "majesty" that sat enthroned in the Tuileries, her brilliant court assembled around her, while in a retired nook of England the legitimate King of France was leading a lonely and gloomy life.

Josephine, as we have said, was a good royalist; and, as empress, she still mourned over the fate of the unfortunate Bourbons, and esteemed it her sacred duty to assist and advise those who, true to their principles and duties, had followed the royal family, or had emigrated, in order that they might, at least, not be compelled to do homage to the new system. Her purse was always at the service of the emigrants; and, if Josephine continually made debts, in spite of her enormous monthly allowance, her extravagance was not alone the cause, but also her kindly, generous heart; for she was in the habit of

setting apart the half of her monthly income for the relief of poor emigrants, and, no matter how great her own embarrassment, or how pressing her creditors, she never suffered the amount devoted to the relief of misfortune and the reward of fidelity to be applied to any other purpose.\*

Now that Josephine was an empress, her daughter, the wife of the High Constable of France, took the second position at the brilliant court of the emperor. The daughter of the beheaded viscount was now a "Princess of France," an "imperial highness," who must be approached with reverence, who had her court and her maids of honor, and whose liberty and personal inclinations, as was also the case with her mother, were confined in the fetters of the strict etiquette which Napoleon required to be observed at the new imperial court.

But neither Josephine nor Hortense allowed herself to be blinded by this new splendor. A crown could confer upon Josephine no additional happiness; glittering titles could neither enhance Hortense's youth and beauty, nor alleviate her secret misery. She would have been contented to live in retirement, at the side of a beloved husband; her proud position could not indemnify her for her lost woman's happiness.

But Fate seemed to pity the noble, gentle being, who knew how to bear misery and grandeur with the same smiling dignity, and offered her a recompense for the

\* Mémoires sur la reine Hortense, par le Baron van Schelten, vol. i., p. 145.



overthrow of her first mother's hope—a new hope—she promised to become a mother again.

Josephine received this intelligence with delight, for her daughter's hope was a hope for her too. If Hortense should give birth to a son, the gods might be reconciled, and misfortune be banished from the head of the empress. With this son, the dynasty of the new imperial family would be assured; this son could be the heir of the imperial crown, and Napoleon could well adopt as his own the child who was at the same time his nephew and his grandson.

Napoleon promised Josephine that he would do this; that he would rather content himself with an adopted son, in whom the blood of the emperor and of the empress was mixed, than be compelled to separate himself from her, from his Josephine. Napoleon still loved his wife; he still compared with all he thought good and beautiful, the woman who shed around his grandeur the lustre of her grace and loveliness.

When the people greeted their new emperor with loud cries of joy and thunders of applause, Napoleon, his countenance illumined with exultation, exclaimed: "How glorious a music is this! These acclamations and greetings sound as sweet and soft as the voice of Josephine! How proud and happy I am, to be loved by such a people!"\*

But his proud ambition was not yet sated. As he had once said, upon entering the Tuileries as first consul,

\* Bourrienne, vol. iv., p. 228.

"It is not enough to *be* in the Tuileries; one must also *remain* there"—he now said: "It is not enough to have been made emperor by the French people; one must also have received his consecration as emperor from the Pope of Rome."

And Napoleon was now mighty enough to give laws to the world; not only to bend France, but also foreign sovereigns, to his will.

Napoleon desired for his crown the papal consecration; and the Pope left the holy city and repaired to Paris, to give the new emperor the blessing of the Church in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. This was a new halo around Napoleon's head—a new, an unbounded triumph, which he celebrated over France, over the whole world and its prejudices, and over all the dynasties by the "grace of God." The Pope came to Paris to crown the emperor. The German emperors had been compelled to make a pilgrimage to Rome, to receive the papal benediction, and now the Pope made a pilgrimage to Paris to crown the French emperor, and acknowledge the son of the Revolution as the consecrated son of the Church. All France was intoxicated with delight at this intelligence; all France adored the hero, who made of the wonders of fiction a reality, and converted even the holy chair at Rome into the footstool of his grandeur. Napoleon's journey with Josephine through France, undertaken while they awaited the Pope's coming, was, therefore, a single, continuous triumph. It was not only the people who received him with shouts of joy, but the



Church also sang to him, everywhere, her *sanctus, sanctus*, and the priests received him at the doors of their churches with loud benedictions, extolling him as the savior of France. Everywhere, the imperial couple was received with universal exultation, with the ringing of bells, with triumphal arches, and solemn addresses of welcome, the latter partaking sometimes of a transcendental nature.

“God created Bonaparte,” said the Prefect of Arras, in his enthusiastic address to the emperor—“God created Bonaparte, and then He rested.” And Count Louis of Narbonne, at that time not yet won over by the emperor, and not yet grand-marshal of the imperial court, whispered, quite audibly: “God would have done better had He rested a little sooner!”

Finally, the intelligence overran all France, that the wonder, in which they had not yet dared to believe, had become reality, and that Pope Pius VII. had crossed the boundaries of France, and was now approaching the capital. The Holy Father of the Church, that had now arisen victoriously from the ruins of the revolution, was everywhere received by the people and authorities with the greatest honor. The old royal palace at Fontainebleau had, by order of the emperor, been refurnished with imperial magnificence, and, as a peculiarly delicate attention, the Pope's bedchamber had been arranged in exact imitation of his bedchamber in the Quirinal at Rome. The emperor, empress, and their suite, now repaired to Fontainebleau, to receive Pope Pius VII. The whole

ceremony had, however, been previously arranged, and understanding had with the Pope concerning the various questions of etiquette. In conformity with this prearranged ceremony, when the couriers announced the approach of the Pope, Napoleon rode out to the chase, to give himself the appearance of meeting the Pope accidentally on his way. The equipages and the imperial court had taken position in the forest of Nemours. Napoleon, however, attired in hunting-dress, rode, with his suite, to the summit of a little hill, which the Pope's carriage had just reached. The Pope at once ordered a halt, and the emperor also brought his suite to a stand with a gesture of his hand. A brief interval of profound silence followed. All felt that a great historical event was taking place, and the eyes of all were fastened in wondering expectation on the two chief figures of this scene—on the emperor, who sat there on his horse, in his simple huntsman's attire; and on the Pope, in his gold-embroidered robes, leaning back in his equipage, drawn by six horses.

As Napoleon dismounted, the Pope hastened to descend from his carriage, hesitating a moment, however, after he had already placed his foot on the carriage-step; but Napoleon's foot had already touched the earth. Pius could, therefore, no longer hesitate; he must make up his mind to step, in his white, gold-embroidered satin slippers, on the wet soil, softened by a shower of rain, that had fallen on the previous day. The emperor's hunting-boots were certainly much better adapted to this



meeting in the mud than the Pope's white satin slippers.

Emperor and Pope approached and embraced each other tenderly; then, through the inattention of the coachmen, seemingly, the imperial equipage was set in motion, and, in its rapid advance, interrupted this tender embrace. It seemed to be the merest accident that the emperor stood on the right, and the Pope on the left side of the equipage, that had now been brought to a stand again. The two doors of the carriage were simultaneously thrown open by the lackeys; at the same time, the Pope entered the carriage on the left, and the emperor on the right side, both seating themselves side by side at the same time. This settled the question of etiquette. Neither had preceded the other, but the emperor occupied the seat of honor on the Pope's right.

The coronation of the imperial pair took place on the 2d of December, 1804, in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. Not only all Paris, but all France, was in motion on this day. An immense concourse of people surged to and fro in the streets; the windows of all the houses were filled with richly-adorned and beautiful women, the bells were ringing in all the churches, and joyous music, intermixed with the shouts of the people, was heard in every direction. For a moment, however, these shouts were changed into laughter, and that was when the papal procession approached, headed by an ass led by the halter, in accordance with an ancient custom of Rome. While the Pope, with the high dignitaries of the Church,

repaired to the cathedral to await there the coming of the imperial couple, Napoleon was putting on the imperial insignia in the Tuileries, enveloping himself in the green velvet mantle, bordered with ermine, and thickly studded with brilliants, and arraying himself in the whole glittering paraphernalia of his new dignity. When already on the point of leaving the Tuileries with his wife, who stood at his side in her imperial attire, Bonaparte suddenly gave the order that the notary Ragideau should be called to the palace, as he desired to see him at once.

A messenger was at once sent, in an imperial equipage, to bring him from his dwelling, and in a quarter of an hour the little notary Ragideau entered the cabinet of the empress, in which the imperial pair were alone, awaiting him in their glittering attire.

His eyes beaming, a triumphant smile on his lips, Napoleon stepped forward to meet the little notary. "Well, Master Ragideau," said he, gayly, "I have had you called, merely to ask you whether General Bonaparte really possesses nothing besides his hat and his sword, or whether you will now forgive Viscountess Beauharnais for having married me;" and, as Ragideau looked at him in astonishment, and Josephine asked the meaning of his strange words, Bonaparte related how, while standing in Ragideau's antechamber on a certain occasion, he had heard the notary advising Josephine not to marry poor little Bonaparte; not to become the wife of the general, who possessed nothing but his hat and his sword.



The notary's words had entered the ambitious young man's heart like a dagger, and had wounded him deeply. But he had uttered no complaint, and made no mention of it; but to-day, on the day of his supreme triumph, to-day the emperor remembered that moment of humiliation, and, arrayed with the full insignia of the highest earthly dignity, he accorded himself the triumph of reminding the little notary that he had once advised Josephine not to marry him, because of his poverty.

The poor General Bonaparte had now transformed himself into the mighty Emperor Napoleon. Then he possessed nothing but his hat and his sword, but now the Pope awaited him in the cathedral of Notre-Dame, to place the golden imperial crown on his head.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### NAPOLEON'S HEIR.

HORTENSE had not been able to take any part in the festivities of the coronation; but another festivity had been prepared for her in the retirement of her apartments. She had given birth to a son; and in this child the happy mother found consolation and a new hope.

Josephine, who had assumed the imperial crown with a feeling of foreboding sadness, received the intelligence of the birth of her grandson with exultation. It seemed to her that the clouds that had been gathering over her

head were now dissipated, and that a day of unclouded sunshine now smiled down upon her. Hortense had assured her mother's future; she had given birth to a son, and had thus given a first support to the new imperial dynasty. There was now no longer a reason why Napoleon should entertain the thoughts of a separation, for there was a son to whom he could one day bequeath the imperial throne of France.

The emperor also seemed to be disposed to favor Josephine's wishes, and to adopt his brother's son as his own. Had he not requested the Pope to delay his departure for a few days, in order to baptize the child? The Pope performed this sacred rite at St. Cloud, the emperor holding the child, and Madame Letitia standing at his side as second witness. Hortense now possessed an object upon which she could lavish the whole wealth of love that had until now lain concealed in her heart. The little Napoleon Charles was Hortense's first happy love; and she gave way to this intoxicating feeling with the most intense delight.

Josephine's house was now her home in the fullest sense of the word; she no longer shared her home with her husband, and could now bestow her undivided love and care upon her child. Louis Napoleon, the Grand-Constable of France, had been appointed Governor of Piedmont by Napoleon; and Hortense, owing to her delicate health, had not been compelled to accompany him, but had been permitted to remain in her little house in Paris, which she could exchange when sum-