

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-

mer came for her husband's new estate, the castle of Saint-Leu.

But the tranquillity which Josephine enjoyed with her child in this charming country-resort was to be of short duration. The brother and sister-in-law of the emperor could not hope to be permitted to lead a life of retirement. They were rays of the sun that now dazzled the whole world; they must fulfil their destiny, and contribute their light to the ruling sun.

An order of Napoleon recalled the constable, who had returned from Piedmont a short time before, and repaired to Saint-Leu to see his son, to Paris. Napoleon had appointed his brother to a brilliant destiny; the Constable of France was to become a king. Delegates of the Republic of Batavia, the late Holland, had arrived in Paris, and requested their mighty neighbor, the Emperor Napoleon, to give them a king, who should unite them with the glittering empire, through the ties of blood. Napoleon intended to fulfil their wishes, and present them with a king, in the person of his brother Louis.

But Louis was rather appalled than dazzled by this offer, and refused to accept the proposed dignity. In this refusal he was also in perfect harmony with his wife, who did all in her power to strengthen his resolution. Both felt that the crown which it was proposed to place on their heads would be nothing more than a golden chain of dependence; that the King of Holland could be nothing more than the vassal of France; and

their personal relations to each other added another objection to this political consideration.

In Paris, husband and wife could forget the chain that bound them together; there they were in the circle of their friends, and could avoid each other. The great, glittering imperial court served to separate and reconcile the young couple, who had never forgiven themselves for having fettered each other in this involuntary union. In Paris they had amusements, friends, society; while in Holland they would live in entire dependence on each other, and hear continually the rattling of the chain with which each had bound the other to the galley of a union without love.

Both felt this, and both were, therefore, united in the endeavor to ward off this new misfortune that was suspended over their heads, in the form of a kingly crown.

But how could they resist successfully the iron will of Napoleon? Hortense had never had the courage to address Napoleon directly on the subject of her wishes and petitions, and Josephine already felt that her wishes no longer exercised the power of earlier days over the emperor. She therefore avoided interceding where she was not sure of being successful.

At the outset, Louis had the courage to resist his brother openly; but Napoleon's angry glance annihilated his opposition, and his gentle, yielding nature was forced to succumb. In the presence of the deputation of the Batavian Republic, that so ardently longed for a sceptre and crown, Napoleon appealed to his brother Louis to ac-

cept the crown which had been freely tendered him, and to be to his country a king who would respect and protect its liberties, its laws, and its religion.

With emotion, Louis Bonaparte declared himself ready to accept this crown, and to be a good and true ruler to his new country.

And to keep this oath faithfully was from this time the single and sacred endeavor to which he devoted his every thought and energy. The people of Holland having chosen him to be their king, he was determined to do honor to their choice; having been compelled to give up his own country and nationality, he determined to belong to his new country with his whole heart and being—to become a thorough Hollander, as he could no longer remain a Frenchman.

This heretofore so gentle and passive nature now developed an entirely new energy; this dreamer, this pale, silent brother of the emperor, was now suddenly transformed into a bold, self-reliant man of action, who had fixed his gaze on a noble aim, and was ready to devote all the powers of his being to its attainment. As King of Holland, he desired, above all, to be beloved by his subjects, and to be able to contribute to their welfare and happiness. He studied their language with untiring diligence, and made himself acquainted with their manners and customs, for the purpose of making them his own. He investigated the sources of their wealth and of their wants, and sought to develop the former and relieve the latter. He was restless in his efforts to provide for his

country, and to merit the love and confidence which his subjects bestowed on him.

His wife also exerted herself to do justice to her new and glittering position, and to wear worthily the crown which she had so unwillingly accepted. In her drawing-rooms she brought together, at brilliant entertainments, the old aristocracy and the new nobility of Holland, and taught the stiff society of that country the fine, unconstrained tone, and the vivacious intellectual conversation of Parisian society. It was under Hortense's fostering hand that art and science first made their way into the aristocratic parlors of Holland, giving to their social reunions a higher and nobler importance.

And Hortense was not only the protectress of art and science, but also the mother of the poor, the ministering angel of the unhappy, whose tears she dried, and whose misery she alleviated—and this royal pair, though adored and blessed by their subjects, could not find within their palaces the least reflection of the happiness they so well knew how to confer upon others without its walls. Between these two beings, so gentle and yielding to others, a strange antipathy continued to exist, and not even the birth of a second, and of a third, son could fill up the chasm that separated them.

And this chasm was soon to be broadened by a new blow of destiny. Hortense's eldest, the adopted son of Napoleon, the presumptive heir to his throne, the child that Napoleon loved so dearly that he often played with him for hours on the terraces of St. Cloud, the child Jo-

sephine worshipped, because its existence seemed to assure her own happiness, the child that had awakened the first feeling of motherly bliss in Hortense's bosom, the child that had often even consoled Louis Bonaparte for the unenjoyable present with bright hopes for the future—the little Napoleon Charles died in the year 1807, of the measles.

This was a terrific blow that struck the parents, and the imperial pair of France with equal force. Napoleon's eyes filled with tears when this intelligence was brought him, and a cry of horror escaped Josephine's lips.

"Now I am lost!" she murmured in a low voice; "now my fate is decided. He will put me away."

But after this first egotistical outburst of her own pain, she hastened to the Hague to weep with her daughter, and bring her away from the place associated with her loss and her anguish. Hortense returned with the empress to St. Cloud; while her husband, who had almost succumbed to his grief, was compelled to seek renewed health in the baths of the Pyrenees. The royal palace at the Hague now stood desolate again; death had banished life and joy from its halls; and, though the royal pair were subsequently compelled to return to it, joy and happiness came back with them no more.

King Louis had returned from the Pyrenees in a more gloomy and ill-natured frame of mind than ever; a sickly distrust, a repulsive irritability, had taken possession of his whole being, and his young wife no longer

had the good-will to bear with his caprices, and excuse his irritable disposition. They were totally different in their views, desires, inclinations, and aspirations; and their children, instead of being a means of reuniting, seemed to estrange them the more, for each insisted on considering them his or her exclusive property, and in having them educated according to his or her views and wishes.

But Hortense was soon to forget her own household troubles and cares, in the greater misery of her mother. A letter from Josephine, an agonized appeal to her daughter for consolation, recalled Hortense to her mother's side, and she left the Hague and hastened to Paris.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### PREMONITIONS.

JOSEPHINE's fears, and the prophecies of the French clairvoyante, were now about to be fulfilled. The crown which Josephine had reluctantly and sorrowfully accepted, and which she had afterward worn with so much grace and amiability, with such natural majesty and dignity, was about to fall from her head. Napoleon had the cruel courage, now that the dreamed-of future had been realized, to put away from him the woman who had loved him and chosen him when he had nothing to offer her but his hopes for the future. Josephine, who,