

## CHAPTER X.

## JUNOT, THE DUKE D'ABRANTES.

WHILE the faithful were rallying around Napoleon to render assistance to the hero in his hour of peril—while even his brother Louis, forgetting the mortifications and injuries he had sustained at the emperor's hands, hastened to his side, there was one of the most devoted kept away from him by fate—one upon whom the emperor could otherwise have depended in life and death.

This one was his friend and comrade-in-arms, Junot, who, descended from an humble family, had by his merit and heroism elevated himself to the rank of a Duke d'Abrantes. He alone failed to respond when the ominous roll of the war-drum recalled all Napoleon's generals to Paris. But it was not his will, but fate, that kept him away.

Junot—the hero of so many battles, the chevalier without fear and without reproach, the former governor of Madrid, the present governor of Istria and Illyria—Junot was suffering from a visitation of the most fearful of all diseases—his brain was affected! The scars that covered his head and forehead, and testified so eloquently to his gallantry, announced at the same time the source of his disease. His head, furrowed by sabre-strokes, was outwardly healed, but the wounds had affected his brain.

The hero of so many battles was transported into a

madman. And yet, this madman was still the all-powerful, despotic ruler of Istria and Illyria. Napoleon, in appointing him governor of these provinces, had invested him with truly royal authority. Knowing the noble disposition, fidelity, and devotion of his brother-in-arms, he had conferred upon him sovereign power to rule in his stead. There was, therefore, no one who could take the sceptre from his hand, and depose him from his high position. Napoleon had placed this sceptre in his hand, and he alone could demand it of him. Even the Viceroy of Italy—to whom the Chambers of Istria appealed for help in their anxiety—even Eugene, could afford them no relief. He could only say to them: "Send a courier to the emperor, and await his reply."

But at that time it was not so easy a matter to send couriers a distance of a thousand miles; then there were no railroads, no telegraphs. The Illyrians immediately sent a courier to the emperor, with an entreaty for their relief, but the Russian proverb, "Heaven is high, and the emperor distant," applied to them also! Weeks must elapse before the courier could return with the emperor's reply; until then, there was no relief; and until then, there was no authority to obey but the Duke d'Abrantes, the poor madman!

No other authority, no institution, had the right to place itself in his stead, or to assume his prerogatives for an instant even, without violating the seal of sovereignty that Napoleon had impressed on the brow of his governor!



Napoleon, whose crown was already trembling on his head, who was already so near his own fall, still possessed such gigantic power that its reflection sufficed to protect, at a distance of a thousand miles from the boundaries of France, the inviolability of a man who had lost his reason, and no longer had the power of reflection and volition.

How handsome, how amiable, how chivalrous, had Junot been in his earlier days! How well he had known how to charm beautiful women in the drawing-rooms, soldiers on the battle-field, and knights at the tourney! In all knightly accomplishments he was the master—always and everywhere the undisputed victor and hero. These accomplishments had won the heart of Mademoiselle de Premont. The daughter of the proud baroness of the Faubourg St. Germain had joyfully determined, in spite of her mother's dismay, to become the wife of the soldier of the republic, of Napoleon's comrade-in-arms. Although Junot had no possession but his pay, and no nobility but his sword and his renown, this nevertheless sufficed to win him the favor of the daughter of this aristocratic mother—of the daughter who was yet so proud of being the last descendant of the Comneni. Napoleon, who loved to see matrimonial alliances consummated between his generals and his nobility and the old legitimist nobility of France, rewarded the daughter of the Faubourg St. Germain richly for the sacrifice she had made for his comrade-in-arms, in giving up her illustrious name, and her coat-of-arms, to be-

come the wife of a general without ancestors and without fortune. He made his friend a duke, and the Duchess d'Abrantes had no longer cause to be ashamed of her title; the descendant of the Comneni could content herself with the homage done her as the wife of the governor of Lisbon, contented with the laurels that adorned her husband's brow—laurels to which he added a new branch, but also new wounds, on every battle-field.

The consequences of these wounds had veiled the hero's laurels with mourning-rape, and destroyed the domestic happiness of the poor duchess forever. She had first discovered her husband's sad condition, but she had known how to keep it a secret from the rest of the world. She had, however, refused to accompany the duke to Illyria; and had remained in Paris, still hoping that the change of climate and associations might restore him to health.

But her hopes were not to be realized. The attacks of madness, that had hitherto occurred at long intervals only, now became more frequent, and were soon no longer a secret. All Illyria knew that its governor was a madman, and yet no one dared to oppose his will, or to refuse to obey his commands; all still bowed to his will, in humility and silent submissiveness, hopefully awaiting the return of the courier who had been dispatched to Napoleon at Paris.

“But heaven is high, and the emperor distant!” And much evil could happen, and did happen, before the courier returned to Trieste, where Junot resided.



The poor duke's condition grew worse daily; his attacks of madness became more frequent and more dangerous, and broke out on the slightest provocation.

On one occasion a nightingale, singing in the bushes beneath his window, had disturbed his rest; on the following morning he caused the general alarm to be sounded, and two battalions of Croats to be drawn up in the park, to begin a campaign against the poor nightingale, who had dared to disturb his repose.

On another occasion, Junot fancied he had discovered a grand conspiracy of all the sheep of Illyria; against this conspiracy he brought the vigilance of the police, all the means of the administration, and the whole severity of the law, into requisition for its suppression.

At another time, he suddenly became desperately enamoured of a beautiful Greek girl, who belonged to his household. Upon her refusal to meet his advances favorably, a passionate desperation took possession of Junot, and he determined to set fire to his palace, and perish with his love in the flames. Fortunately, his purpose was discovered, and the fire he had kindled stifled at once.

He would suddenly be overcome with a passionate distaste for the grandeur and splendor that surrounded him, and long to lay aside his brilliant position, and fly to the retirement of an humble and obscure life.

It was his dearest wish to become a peasant, and be able to live in a hut; and, as there was no one who had the right to divest him of his high dignities and grant

his desire, he formed the resolution to divest himself of this oppressive grandeur, by the exercise of his own fullness of power, and to withdraw himself from the annoyances imposed upon him by his high position.

Under the pretence of visiting the provinces, he left Trieste, to lead for a few weeks an entirely new life—a life that seemed, for a brief period, to soothe his excited mind. He arrived, almost incognito, in the little city of Gorizia, and demanded to be conducted to the most unpretending establishment to which humble and honest laborers were in the habit of resorting for refreshment and relaxation. He was directed to an establishment called the Ice-house, a place to which poor daily laborers resorted, to repose after the labors of the day, and refresh themselves with a glass of beer or wine.

In this Ice-house the governor of Illyria now took up his abode. He seldom quitted it, either by day or night; and here, like Haroun-al-Raschid, he took part in the harmless merriment of happy and contented poverty. And here this poor man was to find a last delight, a last consolation; here he was to find a last friend.

This last friend of the Duke d'Abrantes—this Py-lades of the poor Orestes—was—a madman!—a poor simpleton, of good family, who was so good-humored and harmless that he was allowed to go at large, and free scope given to his innocent freaks. He, however, possessed a kind of droll, pointed wit, which he sometimes brought to bear most effectively, sparing neither rank nor position. The half-biting, half-droll remarks of this



Diogenes of Istria was all that now afforded enjoyment to the broken-down old hero. It was with intense delight that he heard the social grandeur and distinctions that had cost him so dear made ridiculous by this half-witted fellow, whose peculiar forte it was to jeer at the pomp that surrounded the governor, and imitate French elegance in a highly-burlesque manner; and when he did this, his poor princely friend's delight knew no bounds.

On one occasion, after the poor fellow had been entertaining him in this manner, the Duke d'Abrantes threw himself, in his enthusiasm, in his friend's arms, and invested him with the insignia of the Legion of Honor, by hanging around his neck the grand-cross of this order hitherto worn by himself. The emperor had given Junot authority to distribute this order to the deserving throughout the provinces of Illyria and Istria, and the governor himself having invested this mad Diogenes with the decoration, there was no one who was competent to deprive him of it. For weeks this mad fool was to be seen in the streets of Gorizia, parading himself like a peacock, with the grand-cross of the honorable order of the Emperor Napoleon, and, at the same time, uttering the most pointed and biting *bon mots* at the expense of his own decoration. The duke often accompanied him in his wanderings through the town, sometimes laughing loudly at the fool's jests, sometimes listening with earnest attention, as though his utterances were oracles. Thus this strange couple passed the time, either lounging through the streets together, or seated side by side on a

stone by the way, engaged in curious reflections on the passers-by, or philosophizing over the emptiness of all glory and grandeur, and over the littleness and malice of the world, realizing the heart-rending, impressive scenes between Lear and his fool, which Shakespeare's genius has depicted.

After weeks of anxious suspense, the imperial message, relieving Junot of his authority, and placing the Duke of Otranto in his place, at last arrived. The poor Duke d'Abrantes left Illyria, and returned to France, where, in the little town of Maitbart, after long and painful struggles, he ended, in sadness and solitude, a life of renown, heroism, and irreproachable integrity.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### LOUIS NAPOLEON AS A VENDER OF VIOLETS.

GRADUALLY, the brilliancy of the sun that had so long dazzled the eyes of all Europe began to wax pale, and the luminous star of Napoleon to grow dim among the dark clouds that were gathering around him. Fortune had accorded him all that it could bestow upon a mortal. It had laid all the crowns of Europe at his feet, and made him master of all the monarchies and peoples. Napoleon's antechamber in Erfurt and in Dresden had been the rendezvous of the emperors, kings, and princes of Europe, and England alone had never disguised its