

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

hostility beneath the mask of friendship, and bent the knee to a hated and feared neighbor. Napoleon, the master of Europe, whom emperors and kings gladly called "brother," could now proudly remember his past; he had now risen so high that he no longer had cause to deny his humble origin; this very lowliness had now become a new triumph of his grandeur.

On one occasion, during the congress at Erfurt, all the emperors, kings, and princes, were assembled around Napoleon's table. He occupied the seat between his enthusiastic friend the Emperor of Russia, and his father-in-law, the Emperor of Austria. Opposite them sat the King of Prussia, his ally, although Napoleon had deprived him of the Rhine provinces; and the Kings of Bavaria and Würtemberg, to whom Napoleon had given crowns, whose electorate and duchy he had converted into kingdoms, and of whom the first had given his daughter in marriage to Napoleon's adopted son, Eugene, and the second his daughter to Napoleon's brother Jerome. There were, further, at the table, the King of Saxony and the Grand-duke of Baden, to the latter of whom Napoleon had given the hand of Josephine's niece, Stephanie de Beauharnais. All these were princes, "by the grace of God," of brilliant and haughty dynasties; and in their midst sat the son of the advocate of Corsica—he, the Emperor of France—he, upon whom the gaze of all these emperors and kings was fastened in admiration and respect. Napoleon's extraordinary memory had just been the topic of conversation, and the emperor

was about to explain how he had brought it to such a state of perfection.

"While I was still a sub-lieutenant," began Napoleon, and instantly his hearers let fall their gaze, and looked down in shame at their plates, while a cloud of displeasure passed over the brow of the emperor of Austria at this mention of the low origin of his son-in-law. Napoleon observed this, and for an instant his eagle glance rested on the embarrassed countenances that surrounded him; he then paused for a moment. He began again, speaking with sharp emphasis: "When I still had the honor of being a sub-lieutenant," said he, and the Emperor Alexander of Russia, the only one of the princes who had remained unembarrassed, laid his hand on the emperor's shoulder, smiled approvingly, and listened with interest and pleasure to the emperor's narrative of the time when he "still had the honor of being a sub-lieutenant." \*

Napoleon, as we have said, had already mounted so high that for him there was no longer a summit to be attained, and now his heart's last and dearest wish had been granted by destiny. His wife, Marie Louise, had given birth to a son on the 20th of May, 1811, and the advent of the little King of Rome had fulfilled the warmest desires of Napoleon and of France. The emperor now had an heir; Napoleon's dynasty was assured.

Festivities were therefore held in honor of this event, in the Tuileries, at the courts of the Queen of Naples, of

\* Bossuet, Mémoires, vol. v.

the Grand-duchess de Guastalla, of all the dukes of the empire, and of the Queen of Holland.

Hortense was ill and in pain; a nervous headache, that she had been suffering from for some time, betrayed the secret of the pain and grief she had so long concealed from observation. Her cheeks had grown pale, and her eyes had lost their lustre. Her mother wept over her lost happiness in Malmaison, and, when Hortense had wept with and consoled her mother, she was compelled to dry her eyes and hasten to the Tuileries, and appear, with a smiling countenance, before her who was now her empress and her mother's happy rival.

But Hortense had accepted her destiny, and was determined to demean herself as became her own and her mother's dignity. She endeavored to be a true and sincere friend to the young empress, and fulfil the emperor's wishes, and to give brilliant entertainments in honor of the King of Rome, in spite of the pain it must cost her. "The emperor wills it, the emperor requires it;" that was sufficient for all who were about him, and it was sufficient for her. Her mother had gone because it was his will, she had remained because it was his will, and she now gave these entertainments for the same reason. But there was an element of sadness and gloom even in these festivities of the carnival of 1813; the presence of so many cripples and invalids recalled the memory of the reverses of the past year. At the balls there was a great scarcity of young men who could dance; incessant wars had made the youth of France old



*Reproduced from a painting.*

QUEEN HORTENSE.

before their time, and had converted vigorous men into cripples.

Her heart filled with dark forebodings, Hortense silently prepared herself against the days of misfortune which she knew must inevitably come. When these days should come, she wished to be ready to meet them with a brave heart and a resolute soul, and she also endeavored to impress on the minds of her two beloved sons the inconstancy of fortune, in order that they might look misfortune boldly in the face. She had no compassion with the tender youth of these boys, who were now eight and six years old; no compassion, because she loved them too well not to strive to prepare them for adversity.

One day the Duchess of Bassano gave a ball in honor of the queen, and Hortense, although low-spirited and indisposed, summoned her resolution to her aid, and arrayed herself for the occasion. Her blond hair, that reached to her feet when unbound, was dressed in the ancient Greek style, and adorned with a wreath of flowers, not natural flowers, however, but consisting of Hortensias in diamonds. Her dress was of pink-crape embroidered with Hortensias in silver. The hem of her dress and its train was encircled with a garland of flowers composed of roses and violets. A bouquet of Hortensias in diamonds glittered on her bosom, and her necklace and bracelets consisted of little diamond Hortensias. In this rich and tasteful attire, a present sent her by the Empress Josephine the day before, Hortense

entered the parlor where the ladies and gentlemen of her court awaited her, brilliantly arrayed for the occasion.

The parlor, filled with these ladies glittering with diamonds, and with these cavaliers in their rich, gold-embroidered uniforms, presented a brilliant spectacle. The queen's two sons, who came running into the room at this moment to bid their "bonne petite maman" adieu, stood still for an instant, dazzled by this magnificence, and then timidly approached the mother who seemed to them a queen from the fairy-realm floating in rosy clouds. The queen divined the thoughts of her boys, whose countenances were for her an open book in which she read every emotion.

She extended a hand to each of her children, and led them to a sofa, on which she seated herself, taking the youngest, Louis Napoleon, who was scarcely six years old, in her lap, while his elder brother, Napoleon Louis, stood at her side, his curly head resting on Hortense's shoulder, gazing tenderly into the pale, expressive face of his beautiful mother.

"I am very prettily dressed to-day, am I not, Napoleon?" said Hortense, laying her little hand, that sparkled with diamonds, on the head of her eldest son. "Would you like me less if I were poor, and wore no diamonds, but merely a plain black dress? Would you love me less then?"

"No, *maman!*" exclaimed the boy, almost angrily, and little Louis Napoleon, who sat in his mother's lap, repeated in his shrill little voice: "No, *maman!*"

The queen smiled. "Diamonds and dress do not constitute happiness, and we three would love each other just as much if we had no jewelry, and were poor. But tell me, Napoleon, if you had nothing, and were entirely alone in the world, what would you do for yourself?"

"I would become a soldier," cried Napoleon, with sparkling eyes, "and I would fight so bravely that I should soon be made an officer."

"And you, Louis, what would you do to earn your daily bread?"

The little fellow had listened earnestly to his brother's words, and seemed to be thinking over them still. Perhaps he felt that the knapsack and musket were too heavy for his little shoulders, and that he was, as yet, too weak to become a soldier.

"I," said he, after a pause, "I would sell bouquets of violets, like the little boy who stands at the gates of the Tuileries, and from whom we buy our flowers every day."

The ladies and cavaliers, who had listened to this curious conversation in silence, now laughed loudly at this naive reply of the little prince.

"Do not laugh, ladies," said the queen, earnestly, as she now arose; "it was no jest, but a lesson that I gave my children, who were so dazzled by jewelry. It is the misfortune of princes that they believe that everything is subject to them, that they are made of another stuff than other men, and have no duties to perform. They know nothing of human suffering and want, and do not believe that they can ever be affected by anything of the kind."

And this is why they are so astounded, and remain so helpless, when the hand of misfortune does strike them. I wish to preserve my sons from this." \*

She then stooped and kissed her boys, who, while she and her brilliant suite were driving to the Tuileries, busied their little heads, considering whether it was easier to earn one's bread as a soldier, or by selling violets at the gates of the Tuileries, like the little beggar-boy.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE DAYS OF MISFORTUNE.

THE round of festivities with which the people of France endeavored to banish the shadow of impending misfortune, was soon to be abruptly terminated. The thunder of the cannon on the battle-fields of Hanau and Leipsic silenced the dancing-music in the Tuileries; and in the drawing-rooms of Queen Hortense, hitherto devoted to music and literature, the ladies were now busily engaged in picking lint for the wounded who were daily arriving at the hospitals of Paris from the army. The declaration of war of Austria and Russia had aroused France from its haughty sense of invincibility. All felt that a crisis was at hand. All were preparing for the ominous events that were gathering like storm-clouds over France. Each of the faithful hastened to assume

\* The queen's own words.

the position to which honor and duty called him. And it was in response to such an appeal that Louis Bonaparte now returned from Grätz to Paris; he had heard the ominous tones of the voice that threatened the emperor, and wished to be at his side in the hour of danger.

It was not as the wife, but in the spirit of a Frenchwoman and a queen, that Hortense received the intelligence of her husband's return. "I am delighted to hear it," said she; "my husband is a good Frenchman, and he proves it by returning at the moment when all Europe has declared against France. He is a man of honor, and if our characters could not be made to harmonize, it was probably because we both had defects that were irreconcilable.

"I," added she, with a gentle smile, "I was too proud, I had been spoiled, and was probably too deeply impressed with a sense of my own worth; and this defect is not conducive to pleasant relations with one who is distrustful and low-spirited. But our interests were always the same, and his hastening to France, to enroll himself with all his brother Frenchmen, for the defence of his country, is worthy of the king's character. It is only by doing thus that we can testify our gratitude for the benefits the people have conferred upon our family." \*

In the first days of January, 1814, the news that the enemy had crossed the boundaries of France, and that the Austrians, Russians, and Prussians, were marching on Paris, created a panic throughout the entire city. For

\* Cochelet, Mémoires sur la reine Hortense, vol. i., p. 167.