At this threat, the queen sprang up like an enraged lioness from her lair. With glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes she commanded that her children should be at once brought to her, and then, pressing her two boys to her heart with passionate tenderness, she exclaimed: "Tell the king that I shall leave the city within the hour!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ALLIES IN PARIS.

The anxiety of motherly love had effected what neither the departure of the empress nor the news of the approach of the Cossacks could do. Hortense had taken her departure. She had quitted Paris, with her children and suite, which had already begun to grow sensibly smaller, and arrived, after a hurried flight, endangered by bands of marauding Cossacks, in Novara, where the Empress Josephine, with tears of sorrow and of joy alike, pressed her daughter to her heart. Although her own happiness and grandeur were gone, and although the misfortunes of the Emperor Napoleon—whom she still dearly loved—oppressed her heart, Josephine now had her daughter and dearest friend at her side, and that was a sweet consolation in the midst of all these misfortunes and cares.

At Novara, Hortense received the intelligence of the fall of the empire, of the capitulation of Paris, of the

entrance of the allies, and of the abdication of Napoleon.

When the courier sent by the Duke of Bassano with this intelligence further informed the Empress Josephine that the island of Elba had been assigned Napoleon as a domicile, and that he was on the point of leaving France to go into exile, Josephine fell, amid tears of anguish, into her daughter's arms, crying: "Hortense, he is unhappy, and I am not with him! He is banished to Elba! Alas! but for his wife, I would hasten to his side, to share his exile!"

While the empress was weeping and lamenting, Hortense had silently withdrawn to her apartments. She saw and fully appreciated the consequences that must ensue to the emperor's entire family, from his fall; she already felt the mortifications and insults to which the Bonapartes would now be exposed from all quarters, and she wished to withdraw herself and children from their influence. She formed a quick resolve, and determined to carry it out at once. She caused Mademoiselle de Cochelet, one of the few ladies of her court who had remained faithful, to be called, in order that she might impart to her her resolution.

"Louise," said she, "I intend to emigrate. I am alone and defenceless, and ever threatened by a misfortune that would be more cruel than the loss of crown and grandeur—the misfortune of seeing my children torn from me by my husband. My mother can remain in France—her divorce has made her free and independent:

but I bear a name that will no longer be gladly heard in France, now that the Bourbons are returning. I have no other fortune than my diamonds. These I shall sell, and then go, with my children, to my mother's estate in Martinique. I lived there when a child, and have retained a pleasant remembrance of the place. It is undoubtedly hard to be compelled to give up country, mother, and friends; but one must face these great strokes of destiny courageously. I will give my children a good education, and that shall be my consolation."

Mademoiselle de Cochelet burst into tears, kissed the queen's extended hand, and begged so earnestly that she might be permitted to accompany her, that Hortense at last gave a reluctant consent. It was arranged between them that Louise should hasten to Paris, in order to make the necessary preparations for the queen's long journey; and she departed on this mission, under the protection of the courier, on the following morning.

How changed and terrible was the aspect Paris presented on her arrival! At the gate through which they entered Cossacks stood on guard; the streets were filled with Russian, Austrian, and Prussian soldiery, at whose side the proud ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain were to be seen walking, in joyous triumph, bestowing upon the vanquishers of France as great a devotion as they could have lavished upon the beloved Bourbons themselves, whose return was expected in a few days.

A Swedish regiment was quartered in the queen's dwelling; her servants had fled; her glittering drawing-

rooms now sheltered the conquerors of France; and in the Tuileries preparations were already being made for the reception of the Bourbons.

No one dared to pronounce the name of Napoleon. Those who were formerly his most zealous flatterers were now the most ready to condemn him. Those upon whom he had conferred the greatest benefits were now the first to deny him, hoping thereby to wipe out the remembrance of the benefits they had received. The most zealous Napoleonists now became the most ardent royalists, and placed the largest white cockades in their hats, in order that they might the sooner attract the attention of the new rulers.

But there was still one man who pronounced the name of Napoleon loudly, and with affectionate admiration, and publicly accorded him the tribute of his respect.

This one was the Emperor Alexander of Russia. He had loved Napoleon so dearly, that even the position of hostility which policy compelled him to assume could not banish from his heart friendship for the hero who had so long ruled Europe.

Napoleon's fate was decided; and it was attributable to the zealous efforts of the czar that the allies had consented to the emperor's demands, and appointed him sovereign of the island of Elba. Now that Alexander could do nothing more for Napoleon, he desired to make himself useful to his family, at least, and thereby testify the admiration which he still felt for the fallen Titan.

The Empress Marie Louise and the little King of

Rome had no need of his assistance. The empress had not availed herself of the permission of the allies to accompany her husband to Elba, but had placed herself and son under the protection of her father, the Emperor of Austria.

The Emperor Alexander therefore bestowed his whole sympathy upon Napoleon's divorced wife and her children, the Viceroy of Italy and the Queen of Holland. He took so great an interest in the queen, that he declared his intention, in case Hortense should not come to Paris, of going to Novara to see her, in order to learn from her own lips in what manner he could serve her, and how she desired that her future should be shaped.

Count Nesselrode, the emperor's minister, was also zealous in his endeavors to serve the queen. The count had long been the intimate friend of Louise de Cochelet; and, desirous of giving her a further proof of his friendship, he knew of no better way of doing so than by rendering a service to Queen Hortense and her children. Louise informed the count of the queen's intended departure for Martinique. Count Nesselrode smiled sadly over this desperate resolve of a brave mother's heart, and instructed Louise to beg the queen to impart to him, through her confidante, all her wishes and demands, in order that he might lay them before the emperor.

The queen's fate was the subject of great sympathy in all quarters. When, in one of the sessions of the ministers of the allies, in which the fate of France, of the Bourbons, and of the Bonapartes, was to be the subject

of deliberation, the question of making some provision for the emperor's family came up for consideration, the Prince of Benevento exclaimed: "I plead for Queen Hortense alone; for she is the only one for whom I have any esteem." Count Nesselrode added: "Who would not be proud to claim her as a countrywoman? She is the pearl of her France!" And Metternich united with the rest in her praise.*

But it was in vain that Louise de Cochelet imparted this intelligence to the queen; the entreaties and representations of her friends were powerless to persuade Hortense to leave her retirement and come to Paris.

The following letter of the queen, written to Louise, concerning her affairs, will testify to her beautiful and womanly sentiments. This letter is as follows:

"My dear Louise,—You and all my friends write me the same questions: 'What do you want? What do you demand?' I reply to all of you: I want nothing whatever! What should I desire? Is not my fate already determined? When one has the strength to form a great resolution, and when one can firmly and calmly contemplate the idea of making a journey to India or America, it is unnecessary to demand any thing of any one. I entreat you to take no steps that I should be compelled to disavow; I know that you love me, and this might induce you to do so. I am really not to be pitied; it was in the midst of grandeur and splendor that I have suffered! I

* Cochelet, vol. i., p 279.

shall now, perhaps, learn the happiness of retirement, and prefer it to all the magnificence that once surrounded me. I do not believe I can remain in France; the lively interest now shown in my behalf might eventually occasion mistrust. This idea is annihilating; I feel it, but I shall not willingly occasion sorrow to any one. My brother will be happy; my mother can remain in her country, and retain her estates. I, with my children, shall go to a foreign land, and, as the happiness of those I love is assured, I shall be able to bear the misfortune that strikes only at my material interests, but not at my heart. I am still deeply moved and confounded by the fate that has overtaken the Emperor Napoleon and his family. Is it true? Has all been finally determined? Write me on this subject. I hope that my children will not be taken from me; in that case I should lose all courage. I will so educate them that they shall be happy in any station of life. I shall teach them to bear fortune and misfortune with equal dignity, and to seek true happiness in contentment with themselves. This is worth more than crowns. Fortunately, they are healthy. Thank Count Nesselrode for his sympathy. I assure you there are days that are properly called days of misfortune, and that are yet not without a charm; such are those that enable us to discern the true sentiments people hold toward us. I rejoice over the affection which you show me, and it will always afford me gratification to tell you that I return it. HORTENSE." *

* Cochelet, vol. i., pp. 275–277.

CHAPTER XIV.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE QUEEN AND LOUISE DE COCHELET.

IN the meanwhile, Hortense was still living with her mother in Novara, firmly resolved to remain in her retirement, sorrowing over the fate of the imperial house, but quite indifferent as to her own fate.

But her friends—and even in misfortune Hortense still had friends—and above all her truest friend, Louise de Cochelet, busied themselves all the more about her future, endeavoring to rescue out of the general wreck of the imperial house at least a few fragments for the queen.

Louise de Cochelet was still sojourning in Paris, and the letters which she daily wrote to the queen at Novara, and in which she informed her of all that was taking place in the city, are so true a picture of that strange and confused era, that we cannot refrain from here inserting some of them.

In one of her first letters Louise de Cochelet relates a conversation which she had had with Count Nesselrode, in relation to the queen's future.

"The Bourbons," she writes, "have now been finally accepted. I asked Count Nesselrode, whom I have just left: 'Do you believe that the queen will be permitted to remain in France? Will the new rulers consider this proper?' 'Certainly,' he replied, 'I am sure of it, for