

and not allow her sons to be deprived of their rights as Frenchmen, by going into a compulsory exile.

While the Duchess of St. Leu was being accused of conspiring in favor of Napoleon, her whole soul was occupied with the one question, which was to decide whether one of her sons could be torn from her side or not; and, if she conspired at all, it was only with her lawyer in order to frustrate her husband's plans.

But the calumnies and accusations of the press were nevertheless continued; and at last her friends thought it necessary to lay before the queen a journal that contained a violent and abusive article against her, and to request that they might be permitted to reply to it.

With a sad smile, Hortense read the article and returned the newspaper.

"It is extremely mortifying to be scorned by one's countrymen," said she, "but it would be useless to make any reply. I can afford to disregard such attacks—they are powerless to harm me."

But when on the following morning the same journal contained a venomous and odious article levelled at her husband, Louis Bonaparte, her generous indignation was aroused, and, oblivious of all their disagreements, and even of the process now pending between them, she remembered only that it was the father of her children whom they had dared to attack, and that he was not present to defend himself. It therefore devolved upon her to defend him.

"I am enraged, and I desire that M. Després shall re-

ply to this article at once," said Hortense. "Although paternal love on the one side, and maternal love on the other, has involved us in a painful process, it nevertheless concerns no one else, and it disgraces neither of us. I should be in despair, if this sad controversy were made the pretext for insulting the father of my children and the honored name he bears. For the very reason that I stand alone, am I called on to defend the absent to the best of my ability. Therefore let M. Després come to me; I will instruct him how to answer this disgraceful article!"

On the following day, an able and eloquent article in defence of Louis Bonaparte appeared in the journal—an article that shamed and silenced his accusers—an article which the prince, whose cause it so warmly espoused, probably never thought of attributing to the wife to whose maternal heart he had caused such anguish. *

CHAPTER IX.

THE BURIAL OF LOUIS XVI. AND HIS WIFE.

THE earnest endeavors of the Bourbon court to find the resting-place of the remains of the royal couple who had died on the scaffold, and who had expiated the crimes of their predecessors rather than their own, were at last successful. The remains of the illustrious martyrs had

* Cochelet, vol. i., p. 303.

been sought for in accordance with the directions of persons who had witnessed their sorrowful and contemptuous burial, and the body of Louis XVI. was found in a desolate corner of the grave-yard of St. Roch, and in another place also that of Queen Marie Antoinette.

It was the king's wish, and a perfectly natural and just one, to inter these bodies in the royal vault at St. Denis, but he wished to do it quietly and without pomp; his acute political tact taught him that these sad remains should not be made the occasion of a political demonstration, and that it was unwise to permit the bones of Louis XVI. to become a new apple of discord.

But the king's court, even his nearest relatives, his ministers, and the whole troop of arrogant courtiers, who desired, by means of an ostentatious interment, not only to show a proper respect for the beheaded royal pair, but also to punish those whom they covertly called "regicides," and whom they were nevertheless now compelled to tolerate—the king's entire court demanded a solemn and ceremonious interment; and Louis, who, as he himself had said, "was king, but not master," was compelled to yield to this demand.

Preparations were therefore made for an ostentatious interment of the royal remains, and it was determined that the melancholy rites should take place on the 21st of January, 1815, the anniversary of painful memories and unending regret for the royal family.

M. de Chateaubriand, the noble and intelligent eulogist and friend of the Bourbons, caused an article to be in-

serted in the *Journal des Débats*, in which he announced the impending ceremony. This article was then republished in pamphlet form; and so great was the sympathy of the Parisians in the approaching event, that thirty thousand copies were disposed of, in Paris alone, in one day.

On the 20th of January the graves of the martyrs were opened, and all the princes of the royal house who were present, knelt down at the edge of the grave to mingle their prayers with those of the thousands who had accompanied them to the church-yard.

But the king was right. This act, that appeared to some to be a mere act of justice, seemed an insult to others, and reminded them of the dark days of error and fanaticism, in which they had allowed themselves to be drawn into the vortex of the general delirium. Many of those who in the Assembly had voted for the death of the king, were now residing at Paris, and even at court, as for instance Fouché, and to them the approaching ceremony seemed an insult.

"Are you aware," exclaimed Descourtis, as he rushed into the apartment of Cambacérès, who was at that moment conversing with the Count de Pere, "have you already been informed that this ceremony is really to take place to-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow is the fated day. To-morrow we are to be delivered over to the daggers of fanatics."

"Is this the pardon that was promised us?"

"As for that," exclaimed the Count de Pere (a good

royalist), "I was not aware that there was an article in the constitution forbidding the reinterment of the mortal remains of the royal pair. The proceeding will be perfectly lawful."

"It is their purpose to infuriate the populace," exclaimed Descourtis, pale with inward agitation. "Old recollections are to be recalled and a mute accusation hurled at us. But we shall some day be restored to power again, and then we will remember also!"

Cambacérès, who had listened to this conversation in silence, now stepped forward, and, taking Descourtis's hand in his own, pressed it tenderly.

"Ah, my friend," said he, in sad and solemn tones, "I would we were permitted to march behind the funeral-car in mourning-robcs to-morrow! We owe this proof of repentance to France and to ourselves!"

The solemn funeral celebration took place on the following day. All Paris took part in it. Every one, even the old republicans, the Bonapartists as well as the royalists, joined the funeral procession, in order to testify that they had abandoned the past and were repentant.

Slowly and solemnly, amid the ringing of all the bells, the roll of the drum, the thunders of artillery, and the chants of the clergy, the procession moved onward.

The golden crown, which hung suspended over the funeral-car, shone lustrously in the sunlight. It had fallen from the heads of the royal pair while they still lived; it now adorned them in death.

Slowly and solemnly the procession moved onward; it had arrived at the Boulevards which separates the two streets of Montmartre. Suddenly a terrible, thousand-voiced cry of horror burst upon the air.

The crown, which hung suspended over the funeral-car, had fallen down, touching the coffins with a dismal sound, and then broke into fragments on the glittering snow of the street.

This occurred on the 21st of January; two months later, at the same hour, and on the same day, the crown of Louis XVIII. fell from his head, and Napoleon placed it on his own!

CHAPTER X.

NAPOLEON'S RETURN FROM ELBA.

A CRY of tremendous import reverberated through Paris, all France, and all Europe, in the first days of March, 1815. Napoleon, it was said, had quitted Elba, and would soon arrive in France!

The royalists heard it with dismay, the Bonapartists with a delight that they hardly took the pains to conceal.

Hortense alone took no part in the universal delight of the imperialists. Her soul was filled with profound sadness and dark forebodings. "I lament this step," said she; "I would have sacrificed every thing to prevent his return to France, because I am of the belief that no