

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

good can come of it. Many will declare for, and many against him, and we shall have a civil war, of which the emperor himself may be the victim." *

In the meanwhile the general excitement was continually increasing; it took possession of every one, and at this time none would have been capable of giving cool and sensible advice.

Great numbers of the emperor's friends came to the Duchess of St. Leu, and demanded of her counsel, assistance, and encouragement, accusing her of indifference and want of sympathy, because she did not share their hopes, and was sad instead of rejoicing with them.

But the spies of the still ruling government, who lay in wait around the queen's dwelling, did not hear her words; they only saw that the emperor's former generals and advisers were in the habit of repairing to her parlors, and that was sufficient to stamp Hortense as the head of the conspiracy which had for its object the return of Napoleon to France.

The queen perceived the danger of her situation, but she bowed her head to receive the blows of Fate in silent resignation. "I am environed by torments and perplexities," said she, "but I see no means of avoiding them. There is no resource for me but to arm myself with courage, and that I will do."

The royal government, however, still hoped to be able to stem the advancing tide, and compel the waves of

* Cochelet, vol. ii., p. 348.

insurrection to surge backward and destroy those who had set them in motion.

They proposed to treat the great event which made France glow with new pulsations, as a mere insurrection, that had been discovered in good time, and could therefore be easily repressed. They therefore determined, above all, to seize and render harmless the "conspirators," that is to say, all those of whom it was known that they had remained faithful to the emperor in their hearts.

Spies surrounded the houses of all the generals, dukes, and princes of the empire, and it was only in disguise and by the greatest dexterity that they could evade the vigilance of the police.

The Duchess of St. Leu was at last also compelled to yield to the urgent entreaties of her friends, and seek an asylum during these days of uncertainty and danger. She quitted her dwelling in disguise, and, penetrating through the army of spies who lay in wait around the house and in the street in which she resided, she happily succeeded in reaching the hiding-place prepared for her by a faithful servant of her mother. She had already confided her children to another servant who had remained true to her in her time of trouble.

The Duke of Otranto, now once more the faithful Fouché of the empire, was also to have been arrested, but he managed to effect his escape. General Lavalette—who was aware that the dwelling of the Duchess of St. Leu was no longer watched by the police, who had dis-

covered that the duchess was no longer there—Lavalette took advantage of this circumstance, and concealed himself in her dwelling, and M. de Dandré, the chief of police, who had vainly endeavored to catch the so-called conspirators, exclaimed in anguish: "It is impossible to find any one; it has been so much noised about that these Bonapartists were to be arrested, that they are now all hidden away."

Like a bombshell the news suddenly burst upon the anxious and doubting capital: "The emperor has been received by the people in Grenoble with exultation, and the troops that were to have been led against him have, together with their chieftain, Charles de Labedoyère, gone over to the emperor. The gates of the city were thrown open, and the people advanced to meet him with shouts of welcome and applause; and now Napoleon stood no longer at the head of a little body of troops, but at the head of a small army that was increasing with every hour."

The government still endeavored, through its officials and through the public press, to make the Parisians disbelieve this intelligence.

But the government had lost faith in itself. It heard the old, the hated cry, "Vive l'empereur!" resounding through the air; it heard the fluttering of the victorious battle-flags of Marengo, Arcola, Jena, and Austerlitz! The Emperor Napoleon was still the conquering hero, who swayed destiny and compelled it to declare for him.

A perfect frenzy of dismay took possession of the

royalists; and when they learned that Napoleon had already arrived in Lyons, that its inhabitants had received him with enthusiasm, and that its garrison had also declared for him, their panic knew no bounds.

The royalist leaders assembled at the house of Count de la Pere, for the purpose of holding a last great discussion and consultation. The most eminent persons, men and women, differing widely on other subjects, but a unit on this point, assembled here with the same feelings of patriotic horror, and with the same desire to promote the general welfare. There were Madame de Staël, Benjamin Constant, Count Lainé, and Chateaubriand; there were the Duke de Némours, and Count de la Pere, and around them gathered the whole troop of anxious royalists, expecting and hoping that the eloquent lips of these celebrated personages who stood in their midst would give them consolation and new life.

Benjamin Constant spoke first. He said that, to Napoleon, that is, to force, force must be opposed. Bonaparte was armed with the love of the soldiers, they must arm themselves with the love of the citizens. His appearance was imposing, like the visage of Cæsar; it would be necessary to oppose to him an equally sublime countenance. Lafayette should, therefore, be made commander-in-chief of the French army.

M. de Chateaubriand exclaimed, with noble indignation, that the first step to be taken by the government was to punish severely a ministry that was so shortsighted, and had committed so many faults. Lainé de-

clared, with a voice tremulous with emotion, that all was lost, and that but one means of confounding tyranny remained; a scene, portraying the whole terror, dismay, and grief of the capital at the approach of the hated enemy, should be arranged. In accordance with this plan, the whole population of Paris—the entire National Guard, the mothers, the young girls, the children, the old and the young—were to pass out of the city, and await the tyrant; and this aspect of a million of men fleeing from the face of a single human being was to move or terrify him who came to rob them of their peace!

In her enthusiastic and energetic manner, Madame de Staël pronounced an anathema against the usurper who was about to kindle anew, in weeping, shivering France, the flames of war.

All were touched, enthusiastic, and agitated, but they could do nothing but utter fine phrases; and all that fell from the eloquent lips of these celebrated poets and politicians was, as it were, nothing more than a bulletin concerning the condition of the patient, and concerning the mortal wounds which he had received. This patient was France; and the royalists, who were assembled in the house of Count de la Pere, now felt that the patient's case was hopeless, and that nothing remained to them but to go into exile, and bemoan his sad fate!*

* Mémoires d'une Femme de Qualité, vol. i., p. 99.

CHAPTER XI.

LOUIS XVIII.'S DEPARTURE AND NAPOLEON'S ARRIVAL.

WHILE the royalists were thus considering, hesitating, and despairing, King Louis XVIII. had alone retained his composure and sense of security. That is to say, they had taken care not to inform him of the real state of affairs. On the contrary, he had been informed that Bonaparte had been everywhere received with coldness and silence, and that the army would not respond to his appeal, but would remain true to the king. The exultation with which the people everywhere received the advancing emperor found, therefore, no echo in the Tuileries, and the crowd who pressed around the king when he repaired to the hall of the *Corps Législatif* to hold an encouraging address, was not the people, but the royalists—those otherwise so haughty ladies and gentlemen of the old nobility, who again, as on the day of the first entrance, acted the part to which the people were not disposed to adapt themselves, and transformed themselves for a moment into the people, in order to show to the king the demonstrations of his people's love.

The king was completely deceived. M. de Blacas told the king of continuous reverses to Napoleon's arms, while the emperor's advance was in reality a continuous triumph. They had carried this deception so far that they had informed the king that Lyons had closed its gates to Napoleon, and that Ney was advancing to meet