

hurried forward to meet her sons. She still hoped to be in time to save them; she fancied she saw her sons in every approaching carriage—but in vain!

They had written that they would meet her on the road, but they were not there!

Perhaps they had listened to the representations of their father; perhaps they had remained in Florence, and were awaiting their mother's arrival there.

Tormented by fear and hope, Hortense arrived in Florence and drove to the dwelling in which her son Louis Napoleon had resided. Her feet could scarcely bear her up; she hardly found strength to inquire after her son—he was not there!

But he might be with his father, and Hortense now sent there for intelligence of her sons. The messenger returned, alone and dejected: her sons had left the city!

The exultant hymn of liberty had struck on their delighted ear, and they had responded to the call of the revolution.

General Menotti had appealed to them, in the name of Italy, to assist the cause of freedom with their name and with their swords, and they had neither the will nor the courage to disregard this appeal.

A servant, left behind by her younger son, delivered to the duchess a letter from her son Louis Napoleon, a last word of adieu to his beloved mother.

“Your love will understand us,” wrote Louis Napoleon. “We cannot withdraw ourselves from duties that devolve upon us; the name we bear obliges us to listen

to the appeal of unhappy nations. I beg you to represent this matter to my sister-in-law as though I had persuaded my brother to accompany me; it grieves him to have concealed from her one action of his life.”*

CHAPTER V.

THE DEATH OF PRINCE NAPOLEON.

THAT which Hortense most dreaded had taken place: the voice of enthusiasm had silenced every other consideration; and the two sons of the Duchess of St. Leu, the nephews of the Emperor Napoleon, now stood at the head of the revolution. From Foligno to Civita Castellano, they organized the defence, and from the cities and villages the young people joyously hurried forth to enroll themselves under their banners, and to obey the Princes Napoleon as their leaders; the crowds which the young princes now led were scarcely armed, but they nevertheless advanced courageously, and were resolved to attempt the capture of Civita Castellano, in order to liberate the state prisoners who had been languishing in its dungeons for eight years.

This was the intelligence brought back by the couriers whom Hortense had dispatched to her sons with letters entreating them to return.

It was too late—they neither would nor could return.

* La Reine Hortense, p. 78.

Their father wrung his hands in despair, and conjured his wife, he being confined to his arm-chair by illness and the gout, to do all in her power to tear their sons from the fearful danger that menaced them. For the revolution was lost; all who were cool and collected felt and saw this. But the youth refused to see it; they still continued to flock to the revolutionary banners; they still sang exultant hymns of freedom, and, when their parents endeavored to hold them back, they fled from the parental house secretly, in order to answer the call that resounded on their ear in such divine notes.

One of the sons of the Princess of Canino, the wife of Lucien Bonaparte, had fled from his father's castle in order to join the insurgents. They succeeded in finding, and forcing him to return, and as the family were under obligations to the pope for having created the principalities of Canino and Musignano, for Lucien Bonaparte and his eldest son, the most extreme measures were adopted to prevent the young prince from fighting against the troops of the pope.

The Princess of Canino, as a favor, requested the Grand-duke of Tuscany to confine her son in one of the state prisons of Tuscany; her request was granted, and her son taken to a prison, where he was kept during the entire revolution. It was proposed to the Duchess of St. Leu to adopt this same means of prevention, but, in spite of her anxiety and care, and although, in her restlessness and feverish disquiet, she wandered through her rooms day and night, she declined to take such a course. She

was not willing to subject her sons to the humiliation of such compulsion; if their own reason, if the prayers and entreaties of their mother, did not suffice, force should not be resorted to, to bring them back. The whole family was, however, still employing every means to induce the two Princes Napoleon to withdraw from the revolution, which must inevitably again draw down upon the name Napoleon the suspicion of the angry and distrustful princes of Europe.

Cardinal Fesch and King Jerome conjured their nephews, first in entreating, and then in commanding letters, to leave the insurgent army.

With the consent of their father, Louis Bonaparte, they wrote to the provisional government at Bologna that the name of the two princes was injuring the cause of the revolution, and to General Armandi, the minister of war of the insurgent government, entreating him to recall the princes from the army. Every one, friend and foe, combined to neutralize the zeal and efforts of the two princes, and to prove to them that they could only injure the cause to which they gave their names; that foreign powers, considering the revolution a matter to be decided by Italy alone, would perhaps refrain from intervening; but that they would become relentless should a Bonaparte place himself at the head of the revolution, in order perhaps to shake the thrones of Europe anew.

The two princes at last yielded to these entreaties and representations; they gave up their commands, and resigned the rank that had been accorded them in the insur-

gent army; but, as it was no longer in their power to serve the revolution with their name and with their brains, they were at least desirous of serving it with their arms: they resigned their commands, but with the intention of remaining in the army as simple soldiers and volunteers without any rank.

And when their father and their uncles, not yet satisfied with what they had done, urged them still further, the two princes declared that, if these cruel annoyances were continued, they would go to Poland, and serve the revolution there.*

Hortense had taken no part in these attempts and efforts of her family; she knew that it was all in vain; she understood her sons better than they, and she knew that nothing in the world could alter a resolution they had once formed. But she also knew that they were lost, that the revolution must be suppressed, that they would soon be proscribed fugitives, and she quietly prepared to assist them when the evil days should come. She armed herself with courage and determination, and made her soul strong, in order that she might not be overwhelmed by the misfortune that was so near at hand.

While all about her were weeping and lamenting, while her husband was wringing his hands in despair, and complaining of the present, Hortense quietly and resolutely confronted the future, and prepared to defy it.

That which she dreaded soon took place. An Austrian fleet sailed into the Adriatic; an Austrian army was

* *La Reine Hortense*, p. 93.

marching on the insurrectionary Italian provinces. Modena had already been reconquered; the insurgents were already flying in crowds before the Austrian cannon, whose thundering salvos were destined to destroy once more the hopes of the youth of Italy.

Like an enraged lioness glowing with enthusiasm and courage, Hortense now sprang up. The danger was there, and she must save her sons! She had long considered how it was to be done, and whither she was to go with them. She had first resolved to go with them to Turkey, and to take up her residence in Smyrna, but the presence of the Austrian fleet which ruled the Adriatic made this plan impracticable. At this moment of extreme danger, a volume of light suddenly beamed in upon her soul, and pointed out the way to safety. "I will take them by a road," said she to herself, "on which they will be least expected. I will conduct them through France, through Paris. The death-penalty will there hang suspended over them, but what care I for that? Liberty, justice, and humanity, still exercise too much control over France to make me apprehend such severe measures. I must save my sons; the way through France is the way of safety, and I shall therefore follow it!"

And Hortense immediately began to carry her plan into execution. She requested an Englishman residing in Florence, to whose family she had once rendered important services in France, to call on her, and begged him to procure her a passport for an English lady and her two sons through France to England.

The lord understood her, and gladly consented to assist her and her two sons.

On the following day he brought her the required passport, and Hortense, who well knew that the best way to keep a secret was to have no confidants, now declared to her husband, as well as to her family and her friends, that she was resolved to find her sons, and to embark with them from Ancona for Corfu!

For this purpose she demanded a passport of the government of Tuscany, and it was accorded her.

Her sons were still in Bologna, but it was known that this city must fall into the hands of the Austrians in a few days, and all was lost unless Hortense arrived there before them. She sent a trusty servant to her sons to announce her coming. Then, at nightfall, she herself departed, accompanied by one of her ladies only. She was courageous and resolute, for she knew that the safety of her sons, her only happiness, was at stake.

Her rapidly-driven carriage had soon passed without the city, and she now found herself in a part of the country still occupied by the insurgents. Here all still breathed courage, joyousness, and confidence. The entire population, adorned with cockades and three-colored ribbons, seemed happy and contented, and refused to believe in the danger that threatened.

Festivals were everywhere being held in honor of the revolution and of liberty, and those who spoke of the advancing Austrians and of dangers were ridiculed. Instead of making preparations for their defence, the insur-

gents folded their hands in contentment, rejoicing over that which they had already attained, and blind to the tide that was rolling down upon them.

In the mean while, the insurgent army was in position near Bologna, and also still occupied the two cities of Terni and Soleta, which they had courageously defended against the papal troops. Every one expected that a decisive battle would soon take place, and every one looked forward to it with a joyous assurance of victory.

Hortense was far from participating in this general confidence. In Foligno, where she had remained to await her sons, she passed several sorrowful days of expectancy and suspense, alarmed by every noise, and ever looking forward with an anxiously-throbbing heart to the moment when her sons should come to her as fugitives, perhaps covered with wounds, perhaps dying, to tell her that all was lost! Her anxiety at last became so great, that she could no longer remain in Foligno; she must be nearer her sons, she must view the dangers that encompassed them, and, if need be, share them. Hortense, therefore, left Foligno, and started for Ancona.

On her arrival at the first station, she saw a man descend from a carriage and approach her. He was unknown to her, and yet she felt a dark foreboding at his approach. The mother's heart already felt the blow that awaited her.

This man was a messenger from her sons. "Prince Napoleon is ill," said he.

Hortense remembered that she had heard that a con-

tagious disease was ravaging the vicinity. "Is he indeed ill?" cried she, in dismay.

"Yes; and he earnestly desires to see you, madame!"

"Oh," exclaimed Hortense, in terror, "if he calls for me, he must be very ill indeed!—Forward, forward, with all possible speed; I must see my son!"

And onward they went with the speed of the wind from station to station, approaching nearer and nearer to their destination; but as they neared their destination, the faces they met grew sadder and sadder. At every station groups of people assembled about her carriage and gazed at her sorrowfully; everywhere she heard them murmur: "Napoleon is dead! Poor mother! Napoleon is dead!" Hortense heard, but did not believe it! These words had not been spoken by men, but were the utterances of her anxious heart! Her son was not dead, he could not be dead. Napoleon lived, yes, he still lived! And again the people around her carriage murmured, "Napoleon is dead!"

Hortense reclined in her carriage, pale and motionless. Her thoughts were confused, her heart scarcely beat.

At last she reached her destination; her carriage drove up to the house in Pesaro, where her sons were awaiting her.

At this moment a young man, his countenance of a deathly pallor, and flooded with tears, rushed out of the door and to her carriage. Hortense recognized him, and stretched out her arms to him. It was her son Louis

Napoleon, and on beholding his pale, sorrowful countenance, and his tear-stained eyes, the unhappy mother learned the truth. Yes, it was not her heart, it was the people who had uttered the fearful words: "Napoleon is dead! Poor mother! Napoleon is dead!"

With a heart-rending cry, Hortense sank to the ground in a swoon.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FLIGHT FROM ITALY.

BUT Hortense now had no leisure to weep over the son she had so dearly loved; the safety of the son who remained to her, whom she loved no less, and on whom her whole love must now be concentrated, was at stake.

She still had a son to save, and she must now think of him—of Louis Napoleon, who stood in sorrow at her side, lamenting that Fate had not allowed him to die with his brother.

Her son must be saved. This thought restored Hortense to health and strength. She is informed that the authorities of Bologna have already tendered submission to the Austrians; that the insurgent army is already scattering in every direction; that the Austrian fleet is already to be seen in the distance, approaching, perhaps with the intention of landing at Sinigaglia, in order to surround the insurgents and render flight impossible.

This intelligence aroused Hortense from her grief