Louis XVIII., the administration is exclusively in their hands."

"Ah, the traitors!" cried Napoleon. "They have dared to proclaim such sentiments! to carry their impudence so far! See what venal creatures those men are! As long as fortune was faithful to me, they, who now call themselves the provisional government and senate, in the name of France, were my most sycophantic servants. A sign from me was an order for the senate, who always did more than was desired of them, and not a whisper was heard against the abuses of power. Ah, they charge me with despising them—tell me, Caulaincourt, will not the world see now whether or not I had reasons for my opinion?" *

"Sire, it is true, your majesty has met with many ingrates during your career, and will still meet with them," said Caulaincourt, sighing. "Perfidy seems to have become an epidemic."

"Ah, I see you have not yet told me every thing. Speak! In the first place, what was the result of your negotiations with the Emperor Alexander?"

"Sire, if your majesty agrees to renounce, for yourself and your heirs, the throne of France, the allied sovereigns offer Corsica or Elba as a sovereign principality, and France will pay your majesty an annual pension of two million francs."

"I am to renounce the throne, too, for my son—my dear little King of Rome?" cried Napoleon, mournfully. "No, never! I cannot deprive my son of his inheritance. This is too much. I will put myself at the head of my army and run the risk of any calamities, rather than submit to a humiliation worse than them all!"

"Your majesty has no army. Treason has infected your marshals."

"What do you mean? Ah, it is true, you come alone! Where are the marshals? Where is Ney? Where is Macdonald?"

"Sire, they have remained in Paris."

"Ah, I understand," exclaimed Napoleon, with a scornful laugh; "they are waiting there for King Louis XVIII., in order to offer him their services. But where is Marmont? You know well that I am greatly attached to Marmont, and I long to see him. Why does he not come?"

"Sire, Marshal Marmont has passed over to the allies with a corps of ten thousand men."

* Fain, "Manuscrit de 1814," p. 225.

"Marmont!" cried Napoleon, almost with a scream—"Marmont a traitor! That is false—that is impossible! Marmont cannot have betrayed me!"

"Sire, he did betray you. He marched the troops, notwithstanding their undisguised reluctance, to Versailles, in order there to join the allies, after receiving from them the solemn promise that the French soldiers should be treated as friends."

"Marmont has betrayed me!" murmured Napoleon. "Marmont, whom I loved as a son—who owes me all—who—" His voice faltered; his heart was rent, and, sinking on a chair, he buried his quivering face in his hands.

CHAPTER LIV.

A SOUL IN PURGATORY.

It was the 11th of April. Napoleon, at Fontainebleau, sat at his desk and stared at the paper before him. It contained an absolute resignation of his throne for himself and his family. After signing this document, he was no more Emperor of France, nor his son King of Rome, nor his consort empress—perhaps, no longer even his wife. By signing this paper, he accepted all the conditions imposed on him by the allies; that is to say, he descended from the sovereignty of all his states and went to the little island of Elba, to live there a pensioner of Europe; his consort wore no longer, like him, the imperial title, but became Duchess of Parma; and the King of Rome became not the heir of his father, the Emperor of Elba, but the heir of his mother, the Duchess of Parma, and the title of "Duke de Reichstadt" was to be given him. He renounced not only France, but his wife and his son!

Napoleon was fondly and sincerely attached to Maria Louisa, and he loved the King of Rome with passionate tenderness. Before consenting, therefore, to affix his signature to this act of abdication, he wished to know whether Maria Louisa agreed to it, and whether she would not at least ask the allies, one of whom was her own father, to permit her to reside with her son and her husband on the island of Elba, sharing the emperor's exile. For some time he had not heard from his consort; he wrote to her every day, but for six days past no answers came. He did not, however, distrust her; he knew that Maria Louisa loved him. His heart longed for

her and his child. He had sent Berthier to Orleans the day before with a letter for Maria Louisa. He was to tell him what his consort was thinking and wishing. If she was courageous enough to claim her rights, and desired to do so, Berthier was to convey her to the emperor, and, at Fontainebleau, Maria Louisa was to declare to her father that she insisted on her sacred right of staying with her husband. Napoleon expected this, and he was nervous and anxious, waiting for the return of his general, and in hope that Maria Louisa would accompany him.

He contemplated the paper, and, while reading the words of despair, he thought of the past—of the days when Europe had been at his feet, and when he himself showed no mercy. The door of the cabinet was softly opened, and the Duke de Bassano entered. "Maret," he exclaimed, "you come to inform me that Berthier has returned, do you not?"

"Yes, sire."

"And he—he is alone?"

"Yes, sire, he is alone."

Napoleon sighed. "Admit Berthier," he said, "but stay here."

Maret stepped to the door and opened it. The Prince of Neufchatel entered, mournful and silent. A single glance told Napoleon that his mission had failed.

"Well, Berthier, you have seen the empress?"

"I have, sire. I met the empress leaving Orleans."

"Ah, then, she is coming!" exclaimed Napoleon.

"No, sire. Prince Metternich had paid her a visit on the preceding day, and delivered to her autograph letters from her father the Emperor of Austria. He had asked his daughter to repair to Rambouillet, where he would meet her."

"And Louisa consented?"

"She did, sire. Her majesty told me with tears in her eyes that nothing remained for her but to submit to the will of her father, because only his intercession could secure her own future and that of her son. She deplored that she was not at liberty to come to Fontainebleau, but stated she had solemnly pledged her word to Prince Metternich, who, in the emperor's name, had required a pledge neither to see nor to correspond with your majesty."

"And she did not indignantly reject this base demand?" cried the emperor. "She did not remember that she is my wife, and that she plighted her faith to me?"

"Sire, the empress said that, for her son's sake, she was allowed now only to consider herself a princess of Austria, and the Austrian princesses were all educated in unconditional and unmurmuring obedience to the orders of the emperor their father.* Hence, she obeyed her father now, in order to enjoy at a later time the happiness of belonging to your majesty. For, as soon as her future was secured, as soon as the duchy of Parma was settled upon her, and her son declared its heir, nothing would prevent her from rejoining her beloved husband; and if your majesty agreed to accept the island of Elba, the empress would certainly soon repair thither. She proposed that, prohibited from directly corresponding with your majesty, you might have intercourse through your private secretaries; your majesty might have Baron Fain write to her all you wished her to know, and she would do the same through Baron de Meneval."

"A genuine woman's stratagem," murmured Napoleon, gloomily, to himself. "She is destitute of courage, and does not love me enough to brave her father.—Berthier," he then asked aloud, "did you see my son?"

"No, sire, they would not let me see the prince; they feared lest it would excite him too much, and remind him of the past. For the King of Rome is constantly longing for his father."

"And his father cannot see him—cannot call him to his side! Oh, Berthier, this is painful, very painful!"

"But your majesty will soon be reunited with him," said Maret, feelingly. "Sign the act of abdication; go to Elba, sire, and no one can prevent the empress from coming to you with her son. She wishes and has a right to do so."

"Well, then, be it so," said the emperor, drawing a deep breath. "I will sign every thing. I will abdicate; I will sign this second treaty, which makes me Emperor of Elba! My wife and my son must be restored to me!" He quickly stepped to the desk, and signed the two papers with a steady hand.

"Well," he said, flinging the pen into a corner of the room, "now I am no longer Emperor of France, but at the same time no longer a prisoner at Fontainebleau. At Elba I shall be free, at least; I shall be surrounded by the brave soldiers of my Old Guard; I shall see again my wife and my son. That is to say," he gloomily murmured to himself, "if her

*Meneval, "Mémoires," etc., vol. ii., p. 80.

father permits them to rejoin me; for without his permission she will not come. Louisa is a princess of Austria, and has, therefore, been brought up in obedience. Oh, how I longed for the consolation of her presence! She ought not to have left me alone in these days!" His lips murmured softly, "Josephine would not have done so! She would have gone with me into exile!" He sat a long time absorbed in his reflections, which whispered to him of the past, and of Josephine. He felt that they moved him too deeply, and, with an impetuous gesture, he jumped up, and, proudly throwing back his head, exclaimed: "Well, then, I have submitted to my fate, and shall bear it manfully. We shall go to Elba, then! You will accompany me, my friends, and I shall not be alone? Maret and Berthier, you will not leave me, I hope?"

"Sire, I would follow your majesty to the end of the world!" said Maret, tenderly.

"I know of no more glorious destiny than to remain your majesty's faithful servant," exclaimed Berthier, emphatically. "I thank you for permitting me to go with you to Elba, and I joyfully accept this permission; but as I have to make some necessary preparations, I request two days' leave of absence of your majesty."

While Berthier was speaking, the emperor contemplated him with painful astonishment; now he quickly came near him, and, laying his hand on his shoulder, he fixed his keen eyes on him, as if he wished to read his most secret thoughts. "Berthier," he said, in a gentle, imploring voice, "you see how much I have need of consultation; how necessary it is for me to have true friends about me. You will, therefore, return to-morrow, will you not?"

"Sire, certainly," faltered Berthier.

Napoleon's eyes still rested on the pale, confused face of the prince. "Berthier," he said, after a pause, if you wish to leave me, tell me so frankly and sincerely."

"I leave you!" exclaimed Berthier. "Your majesty knows well that I am devoted to you with immovable fidelity—that my heart can never forget you, and that I shall always be your obedient servant."

"Words, words!" said Napoleon, shaking his head. "Well, then, it is your will: go, therefore, to Paris. Attend to the affairs which you have more at heart than my wishes. Go, and—if you can, come back soon!"

Berthier wished to grasp the emperor's hand and press it to his lips, but he hastily withdrew it, and, lifting it up, pointed with an imperious glance at the door. Berthier bowed, and, walking backward, approached the door with bent head, and departed. The emperor looked after him long and gloomily; then he slowly turned his head toward the Duke de Bassano. "Maret," he said, slowly, "Berthier will not come back."

"What, sire!" exclaimed Maret, in dismay. "Your majesty believes—"

"I know it," said Napoleon, slowy, "Berthier will not come back!" He threw himself into an easy-chair, at times heaving a sigh, but without uttering a single complaint; and thus he sat all day. From time to time the few faithful men who had remained with him dared to speak, but the emperor, starting from his meditations, only stared at them, and then slowly dropped his head again on his breast. At dinner-time Maret endeavored to induce him to go to the table; but he only responded by indignantly shaking his head, and waving him toward the door.

Evening had come, and the emperor still sat alone in his cabinet, motionless and sad. He did not hear the door behind him softly open; he did not see a dark, veiled female form that had slowly entered, and now, as if overwhelmed by grief, leaned against the wall. Her veil prevented her, perhaps, from seeing Napoleon; she threw it back, and now Josephine's pale, quivering face was seen. She fixed her eyes on him with an expression of boundless tenderness, and then lifted them to heaven with an imploring air, softly raising her arms, and her lips moving in inaudible prayer.

The emperor did not yet notice her. Josephine stepped noiselessly across the carpet, and laid her hand gently on his head. "Napoleon," she whispered, "Napoleon!"

He uttered a cry and jumped up. "Josephine," he exclaimed, "my Josephine! Oh, now I am no longer alone!" He clasped her with impassioned tenderness in his arms; he kissed her quivering lips, and held her streaming face between his hands, gazing at it with the tender expression of a lover. Encircling her with his arms, and no longer able to restrain his heart, he laid his head on her shoulder, and wept bitterly. Recovering, his face resumed its inscrutable expression. "Josephine," he said, "I have wrung many tears from you, but Fate has avenged you; I have wept, too; and what is worse than tears is that which is gnawing at my heart.

I thank you, Josephine, for coming to me. All have deserted me!"

"I know it, Napoleon," whispered Josephine, smiling amid tears, "and that is why I am here. You will not go all alone to Elba; I shall go with you. No, Bonaparte, no! do not shake your head; do not reject me! I have a right to accompany you; for, whatever men may say, I was your wife, and am your wife, and what God has joined together no man can sunder. My soul is one with yours. I love you to-day as tenderly as I did on the day when I stood with you before the altar and plighted my fidelity to you; I love you now even more intensely, for you are unfortunate, and have need of my love. Bid me, therefore, not go any more. *She* is not here, and her place by your side, which she has deserted, belongs to me!"

"No," said Napoleon, gravely, "let her absence remind her of her duty. I will not give my son's mother a pretext for staying away from me; she shall not say that she cannot rejoin me because I have yielded to another woman the place that belongs to her. No, Josephine, she must not be able to reproach me. I thank you for coming, but you have come to take leave of me. I have seen you—your faithful love has been a balm to my heart. Now, farewell!"

"Then, you bid me go already?" cried Josephine, reproachfully; "oh, Bonaparte, let me stay here at least till your departure. No one will betray to *her* that I am here."

"It would remain no secret, Josephine, and it would be used to excuse her, and to accuse me. Go, then, and take with you the consciousness that you have afforded me the last joy of my life."

"Oh, Bonaparte, you break my heart!" murmured Josephine, leaning her head on his shoulder. "I cannot leave you, I cannot bear to see you go alone into exile."

"Fate has decreed it, and so has the evil star that arose upon my path when I left you, Josephine! Let this be my farewell. Now, go!"

"No, Bonaparte," she cried, passionately; "tell me not to go if you do not wish me to die! Your misfortunes have pierced my heart. My only hope of life is by your side, for sorrow at the remembrance of your misfortunes will kill me."

A strange smile played around the emperor's lips. "I do not pity those who die," he said; "death is a kind friend, and pray God that He may soon send this friend to me!" He

kissed her forehead and conducted her gently to the door. "Go, my Josephine," he said; "this is the last sacrifice which I shall ask of you!"

"I go!" she sighed. "Farewell, Bonaparte, farewell!" She fixed on him a look full of love and grief. "We shall never meet again!"

"Yes," he said, slowly and solemnly, lifting his hand toward heaven, "we shall meet again!"

"I shall await you there!" she said, with an expression of intense love and sorrow.

The door closed; Napoleon was again alone; he stood in the middle of the room, as if still beholding her pale, smiling face, and hearing her sweet voice. "She will await me there!" he murmured. "But why should she await me? Why should she die, and I live? And why must I live?" he asked, in a loud, and almost joyful tone. "Why shall I suffer these mean, cowardly creatures, who formerly lay in the dust before me, now to enjoy their triumph? Why must I live?" He sank into his chair, thinking of the disgrace soon to be brought upon him, remembering that each of the allied sovereigns would send an envoy to Fontainebleau, and that he was to be transported to Elba—escorted, like a caged lion, by Russian, Prussian, and Austrian commissioners! His heart for a moment grew strong in his anguish. He jumped up, rushed to his desk, pulled out the drawers, and opened a secret compartment. There lay a small black silken bag. Taking it out, he cut it open, and drew a package from it. "Ha!" he exclaimed, joyfully, "now I have the kind friend that will deliver me! They want to drag me through the country as a prisoner! But thou, blessed poison, wilt release me!"

In the night of the 13th of April, Constant, Napoleon's valet de chambre, was awakened by an extraordinary groaning proceeding from Napoleon's bedroom, whither Constant hastened. Yes, it was the emperor who was suffering. His face was deadly pale; his limbs were quivering; a paper lay on the floor in front of him; on the table by his side stood a glass, in which were still seen some drops of a whitish color. Constant rushed toward him. He gazed at his servant with fixed looks, and murmured, "I suffer dreadfully! Fire is consuming my bowels; but it does not kill me!"

Uttering a cry, and hastening from the room, Constant went for the domestic surgeon, Dr. Ivan, Maret, and Caulaincourt. They appeared in the utmost consternation, and sur-

rounded the easy-chair on which the emperor still sat. Dr. Ivan felt his forehead, which was covered with clammy perspiration; and his pulse was feeble and sluggish, but still throbbing. He recognized his physician, and his livid lips murmured almost inaudibly, "Ivan, I have taken poison, that which you gave me one day in Russia; but it has lost its efficacy! It does not kill, while it causes me excruciating pain."

Ivan went weeping out of the room to prepare a remedy.

Napoleon turned his eyes with an expression of agony toward Maret and Caulaincourt, who were kneeling before him. "My friends," he said, "I sought death! But you see God did not will it! He commands me to live and suffer." *.

On the morning after this night of terror, the emperor rose from his couch, and his face, which for the last few days had been so gloomy, assumed now a serene expression. "Providence has spared me for other purposes," he murmured to himself. "Well, then, I shall live! To the living belongs the future!" †

A week afterward, on the 20th of April, Napoleon left Fontainebleau for Elba. In the court-yard of the palace the Old Guard was drawn up in the splendor of their arms, with their eagles and banners. Near the ranks of the soldiers, in front of the main portal, stood Bonaparte's travelling-carriage, and beside it the foreign commissioners. Before setting out, he wished to take leave of his faithful soldiers. Advancing into the midst of the Old Guard, he addressed them in a firm voice: "Soldiers of my Old Guard, I bid you adieu! During twenty years I have ever found you in the path of honor. In the last days, as in those of our prosperity, you have never ceased to be models of bravery and fidelity. With such men as you our cause could never have been lost; but the war would never end; it would have become a civil war, and France must daily have been more unhappy. I have, therefore, sacrificed all our interests to those of our country: I depart; but you remain to serve France. Her happiness was my only thought; it will always be the object of my fervent wishes. Lament not my destiny: if I have consented to survive myself, it was because I might contribute to your glory. Adieu, my children! I would I could press you all to my heart; but I will, at least, press your eagle!" At these words,

* Constant's "Mémoires," vol. vi., p. 88. Fain, "Manuscrit."
† Bausset's "Mémoires," vol. ii., p. 244.

General Petit advanced with the eagle; Napoleon received the general in his arms, and, kissing the standard, he added: "I cannot embrace you all, but I do so in the person of your general! Adieu, once again, my old companions!"

The veteran soldiers had no reply but tears and sobs, and, stretching out their hands toward Napoleon, they implored him to stay. But the carriage rolled rapidly across the court-yard, bearing into exile, or at best to the sovereignty of an insignificant island, a man who, in aiming at the empire of the world, had subdued almost all the kingdoms of Europe.

THE END.