

Doubtless Napoleon, educated in the midst of those convulsions which had shaken all the foundations of Christian morality, did not clearly perceive the extent of the wrong. He unquestionably felt that he was doing right; that the interests of France demanded the sacrifice. But the penalty was none the less inevitable. The laws of God can not be violated with impunity, even though the violation be a sin of ignorance.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEATH OF JOSEPHINE.

FROM the sad scenes described in the last chapter, Eugene returned to Italy. Hortense, in the deepest state of dejection, remained for a short time in Paris, often visiting her mother at Malmaison. About five months after the divorce, Napoleon was again married to Maria Louisa, daughter of the Emperor of Austria. The marriage ceremony was first celebrated with great pomp in Vienna, Napoleon being represented by proxy; and again the ceremony was repeated in Paris. It devolved upon Hortense, as the daughter of Napoleon, and the most prominent lady of his household, to receive with smiles of welcome and cordiality of greeting the princess who took the place of her mother. Seldom has it been the lot of a woman to pass through a more painful ordeal. Josephine, that she might be far removed from the tumult of Paris, rejoicing upon the arrival of Maria Louisa, retired from Malmaison to the more distant

Hortense goes to Navarre.

palace of Navarre. Soon after the marriage, Hortense hastened to join her mother there. There was at this time but little sympathy between Hortense and her husband. The power of a great sorrow in the death of their eldest son had for a short time brought them more closely together. There was, however, but little compatibility in their tastes and dispositions; and Hortense, deeming it her duty to comfort her mother, and finding more congeniality in her society than in that of her husband, made but brief visits to Holland.

It is easy for the prosperous and the happy to be amiable. Hortense was in a state of great physical debility, and almost every hope of her life had been crushed out. The letters of Hortense to Josephine have not been made public. We can only judge of their character from the replies which her mother made. From these it would appear that scarcely did a ray of joy illumine the gloomy path which she was destined to tread. On the 4th of April, 1810, Josephine wrote to Hortense from Navarre:

"I am touched, my dear Hortense, with all the griefs which you experience. I hope that there is no more question of your return to

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Holland, and that you will have a little repose. I know how much you must suffer from these disappointments, but I entreat you not to allow yourself to be affected by them. As long as any thing remains to me you shall be mistress of your destiny; grief and happiness—you know that I share all with you.

"Take, then, a little courage, my dear daughter. We both of us have much need of it. Often mine is too feeble, and sorrow makes me sick. But I seek fortitude all the time, and with my utmost efforts."

Soon after this Hortense, taking her two children with her, rejoined her husband, King Louis, in Holland. Josephine wrote to her on the 10th of May, from Navarre:

"I have received your letter, my dear Hortense, and I see, with much pain, that your health is not good. I hope that repose will re-establish it; and I can not doubt that the king will contribute to it every thing in his power, by his attentions and his attachments. Every day will lead him to see more and more how much you merit. Take care of yourself, my dear daughter; you know how much I have need of you. My heart has suffered to a degree which has somewhat impaired my

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health. But fortitude triumphs over sorrow, and I begin to be a little better."

Again, on the 15th, the Empress wrote to Hortense, who was still in Amsterdam:

"I have been extremely anxious on account of your health, my dear Hortense. I know that you have experienced several attacks of fever, and I have need to be tranquilized.

"Your letter of the 10th has just reached me, but it has not given me the consolation I had hoped for. I see in it an abandonment of yourself, which gives me great pain. How many ties are there which should bind you to life! And if you have so little affection for me, is it then, when I am no longer happy, that you can think, with so much tranquillity, of leaving me?

"Take courage, my daughter, and especially be careful of your health. I am confident, as I have already sent you word, that the waters which have been prescribed for you will do you good. Speak of it to the king with frankness. He certainly will not refuse you any thing which may be essential to your health. I am making all my arrangements to go to the springs in the month of June. But I do not think that I shall go to Aix-la-Chapelle,

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but rather to Aix in Savoy, which place I prefer.

"Diversion of mind is necessary for my health, and I have more hope of finding that in a place which I have never seen, and whose situation is picturesque. The waters of Aix are particularly efficacious for the nerves. I earnestly recommend you to take them instead of those of Plombières. We can pass the time together. Reply to me immediately upon this subject. We can lodge together. It will not be necessary for you to take many companions with you. I shall take but very few, intending to travel incognito. To-morrow I go to Malmaison, where I shall remain until I leave for the springs. I see with pleasure that the health of Louis Napoleon is good, and that he has not suffered from the change of air. Embrace him for me, my dear Hortense, and love me as tenderly as I love you.

"JOSEPHINE.

"P. S.—Remember me to the king."

For some unexplained reason, Hortense repaired first to the waters of Plombières. Her youngest son, Louis Napoleon, was sent to Malmaison, to be with Josephine, who so fondly

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loved the child that she was quite unwilling to be separated from him. Hortense took her elder child, Napoleon Louis, with her to the springs. Here she was taken very sick. On the 14th of June Josephine wrote her from Malmaison :

"I did not know how much you had suffered, my dear Hortense, until you were better; but I had a presentiment of it, and my anxiety induced me to write to one of your ladies, to indicate to her the telegraph from Nancy, as a prompt resource to call a physician. You ask me what I am doing. I had yesterday a day of happiness. The Emperor came to see me. His presence made me happy, although it renewed my grief. These are emotions such as one could wish often to experience.

"All the time he remained with me I had sufficient fortitude to restrain the tears which I felt were ready to flow. But after he had left, I had no longer power to restrain them, and I found myself very unhappy. He was kind to me, and amiable as ever; and I hope that he will have read in my heart all the affection and all the devotion with which I cherish him.

"I spoke to him of your situation, and he listened to me with interest. He is of opinion

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that you should not return to Holland, the king not having conducted as he would wish to have him. The opinion of the Emperor is that you should take the waters for the necessary time; that you should then write to your husband that it is the opinion of your physicians that you should reside in a warm climate for some time, and that consequently you are going to Italy. As to your son, the Emperor will give orders that he is not to leave France.

"I hope to see you, perhaps at Aix in Savoy, if the waters at Plombières do not agree with you; perhaps in Switzerland, where the Emperor has permitted me to journey. We shall be able to appoint for ourselves a rendezvous where we may meet. Then I will relate to you with the living voice those details which it would require too much time to write. I intend to leave next Monday for Aix in Savoy. I shall travel incognito, under the name of Madame d'Aubery. Your son (Louis Napoleon), who is now here, is very well. He has rosy cheeks and a fair skin."

Immediately upon Josephine's arrival at Aix, she wrote again to Hortense, who was still at Plombières, a letter expressive of great anxiety for her health and happiness, and entreating

Louis Bonaparte abdicates.

her to come and join her at Aix. "How I regret," she wrote, "not having known, before my departure, the true state of your health. I should have been at Plombières to take care of you, and I should not have experienced the anxiety which tortures me at this great distance. My only consolation is to think that you will soon come here. Let me soon see you. Alone, desolate, far from all my friends, and in the midst of strangers, you can judge how sad I am, and all the need I have of your presence."

In July, Louis Bonaparte abdicated the throne of Holland. Hortense wrote to her mother all the details of the event. Josephine engaged a cottage at Aix for herself and Hortense. She wrote to Hortense on the 18th of July:

"I am delighted with the resolution you have taken to come here. I am occupied, in preparing your lodgings, more pleasantly than I could have hoped. A gentleman here has relinquished his house. I have accepted it, for it is delightfully situated, and the view is enchanting. The houses here are very small, but that which you will inhabit is larger. You can ride anywhere in a calèche. You will be

Madame Broc.

very glad to have your own. I have mine, and I ride out in it every day. Adieu, my dear Hortense. I am impatient for the moment when I can embrace you."

As it was not deemed proper for the young princes, the sons of Hortense, to leave France, they were both left at the chateau of St. Cloud, while Hortense visited her mother at Aix. The devoted friend of Hortense, Madame Broc, to whom we have previously alluded, accompanied the ex-queen to Aix. The two friends frequently enjoyed long walks together in that region full of picturesque scenery. Hortense had a very keen appreciation of the beauties of nature, and had attained much excellence as a landscape painter. Aix, from its deep retirement and physical grandeur, became quite a favorite retreat. She had but little heart for any society but that of the solitudes of nature.

About the first of October Hortense returned, by the advice of the Emperor, to Fontainebleau, where she was reunited to her two sons. Josephine was, in the mean time, taking a short tour in Switzerland. We have previously spoken of Hortense's taste for music, and her skill as a composer. One of the airs, or *romances*, as they were called, composed by Hor-

"Partant pour la Syrie."

tense still retains in Europe perhaps unsurpassed popularity. It was termed familiarly *Beau Dunois*, or the Knight Errant. Its full title was "*Partant pour la Syrie, le jeune et beau Dunois*."*

Josephine, writing from Geneva to Hortense at Fontainebleau, says: "I have heard sung all over Switzerland your romance of Beau Dunois! I have even heard it played upon the piano with beautiful variations." Josephine soon returned to Navarre, which at that time she preferred to Malmaison, as it was farther removed from the capital, and from the tumult of joy with which the birth of the child of Maria Louisa would be received. On the 20th of March, 1811, all France resounded with acclamations at the birth of the young King of Rome. Hortense, devoting herself to her children, remained in Paris and its environs. In the autumn of this year Josephine left Navarre, and returned to Malmaison to spend the winter there. Hortense and her husband, though much estranged from each other, and living most of the time apart, were still not

* The writer remembers that forty years ago this was a favorite song in this country. At Bowdoin College it was the popular college song. It is now, in France, one of the favorite national airs.

Illness of Napoleon Louis.

formally separated, and occasionally dwelt together. The ostensible cause of the frequent absence of Hortense from her husband was the state of her health, rendering it necessary for her to make frequent visits to the springs, and the griefs of her mother requiring often the solace of her daughter's presence.

Louis Bonaparte owned a very beautiful estate, called St. Leu, in France. Early in May, 1812, Napoleon left Paris for the fatal campaign to Moscow. Just before his departure, he called at Malmaison and took an affectionate leave of Josephine. Hortense was at St. Leu, with her children. After a short visit which Josephine made to St. Leu, and which she describes as delightful, she returned to Malmaison, and Hortense went to the springs of Aix-la-Chapelle, taking her two children with her. Here Napoleon Louis was attacked with scarlet fever, which caused his mother and the Empress great anxiety.

Josephine wrote to her, on the 28th of July: "You are very kind not to have forgotten me in the midst of your anxiety for your son. Embrace for me that dear child, and my little *Oui Oui*" (yes, yes).*

* *Oui Oui* was the pet name given to little Louis Napoleon.

Letter from Eugene.

after: "I hope that our dear Napoleon continues to improve, and that the little *Oui Oui* is doing well." Eugene, leaving his amiable and much-loved wife and little family at Milan, had accompanied Napoleon on his Russian campaign. During his absence Josephine visited Milan, and there, as everywhere else, won the love of all who saw her. Hortense, with her children, was most of the time in Paris: Eugene, immediately after the terrible battle of Borodino, wrote as follows to Josephine. His letter was dated September 8, 1812.

"MY GOOD MOTHER,—I write you from the field of battle. The Emperor has gained a great victory over the Russians. The battle lasted thirteen hours. I commanded the right, and hope that the Emperor will be satisfied.

"I can not sufficiently thank you for your attentions and kindness to my little family. You are adored at Milan, as everywhere else. They write me most charming accounts of you, and you have won the love of every one with whom you have become acquainted. Adieu! Please give tidings of me to my sister. I will write her to-morrow. Your affectionate son,
"EUGENE."

Napoleon arrives in Paris.

The latter part of October of this year, 1812, Napoleon commenced his awful retreat from Moscow. Josephine and Hortense were much of the time together in a state of indescribable suspense and anguish. At midnight, on the 18th of December, Napoleon arrived in Paris. The disasters in Russia had caused a new coalition of all the dynasties against France. The Emperor of Austria, unmindful of the marriage of his daughter with Napoleon, had joined the coalition with all the military powers of his empire. The majestic army with which Napoleon had invaded Russia was almost annihilated, and nearly two millions of bayonets were now directed against the Republican Empire.

All France rose with enthusiasm to co-operate with Napoleon in his endeavors to resist the thronging foes. By the middle of April, nearly three hundred thousand men were on the march from France towards Germany, gallantly to meet the onswelling flood of more than a million of bayonets. On the 15th of April, 1813, at four o'clock in the morning, Napoleon left St. Cloud for the seat of war. The terrific campaign of Lutzen, Bautzen, Dresden, and Leipsic ensued.

Letter from Josephine.

Days of darkness were lowering around the Empire. The health of Hortense rendered it necessary for her to go to the springs of Aix in Savoy. Her two children were left with her mother at Malmaison. Under date of June 11, 1813, the Empress wrote to her daughter:

"I have received your letter of the 7th, my dear Hortense. I see with pleasure that you have already been benefited by the waters. I advise you to continue them, in taking, as you do, a few days of repose. Be very tranquil respecting your children. They are perfectly well. Their complexion is of the lily and the rose. I can assure you that since they have been here they have not had the slightest indisposition. I must relate to you a very pretty response on the part of *Oui Oui*. The Abbé Bertrand caused him to read a fable where there was a question about *metamorphosis*. Being called to explain the word, he said to the abbé:

"'I wish I could change myself into a little bird, I would then fly away at the hour of your lesson; but I would return when M. Hase (his teacher of German) arrived.'

"'But, princé,' remarked the abbé, 'it is not very polite for you to say that to me.' 'Oh,'