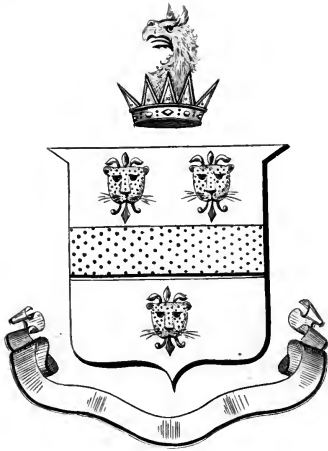


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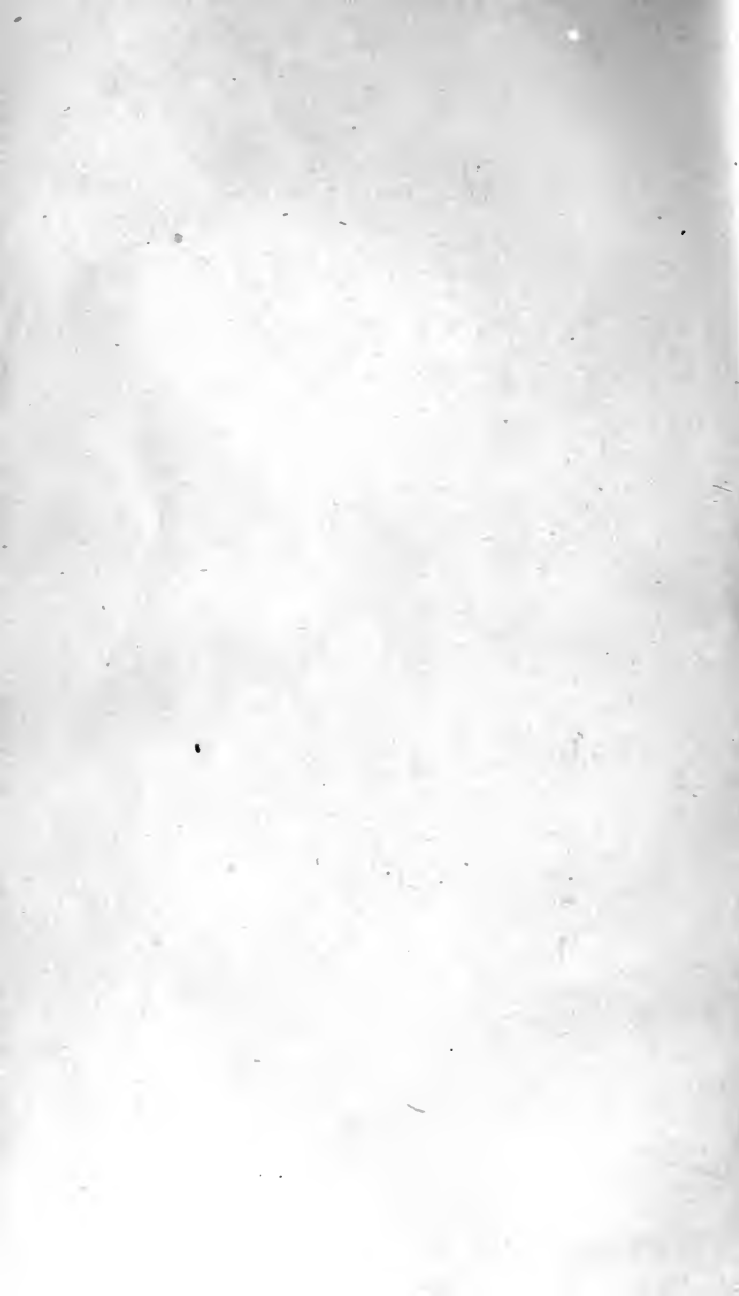
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RECOLLECTIONS



OF

CAULINCOURT,

DUKE OF VICENZA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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“ I HAVE now arrived,” observed the Duke de Vicenza, “ at the most disastrous epoch of the reign of Napoleon. If I felt any very great anxiety for the ease of the short span of life which still remains to me, I should, instead of reviving the memory of the period to which I am now about to allude, banish all recollection of those moments of torment which no words have

power to describe. But I have by sad experience learned how much a man can bear, when he is resolved rather to die, struggling against obstacles, than to desert the cause he has embraced.

“ Whilst the Emperor was proceeding to Fontainebleau, I pursued my route to Paris, in fulfilment of the mission with which I was entrusted to the Emperor Alexander.

“ My wearied horse proceeded slowly, and I refrained from urging him on. The high spirit which had sustained me during my recent toilsome journeys, was now succeeded by a frightful depression. The vivid emotions which I had experienced for the last twenty-four hours, seemed to have exhausted all my moral strength. My head was all vagueness and confusion. I had only one distinct idea, and that had reference to the Emperor's last words, ‘ I have no longer hope, except in you, Caulincourt.’ Still it required a very powerful mental effort to enable me to discover the meaning of this expression, and to perceive all its consequences.

“ To return to the head quarters of the Allies was to me a mission of humiliation and disgust. All my feelings of dignity and pride rebelled against the duty which was imposed on me. But there are certain necessities before which every

sensation of repugnance fades away; and we feel bound to attain the end which we have in view, let our personal sacrifices be what they may. To the word *honour*, a man's destiny is inseparably attached.

“The road which I took was crowded with the remains of different regiments, which marched as chance directed them. A *chef-d'escadron* of the guards of honour, who had received a wound in his head, and who with difficulty kept his seat on his horse, came up to me and asked me to direct him to the head quarters. In an instant I was surrounded by a multitude of these fugitives. ‘Where is the Emperor?’ they cried, ‘we wish to rejoin him.’ ‘We have no commanders.’ ‘Where shall we go?’ ‘The Emperor does not know what is going on at Paris. We fought well; we are ready to fight again; and yet we have been made to yield to the enemy!’ In the countenances of these men was expressed a sort of wild grief; while their mouths uttered imprecations and furious menaces against the traitors; for they looked upon themselves as betrayed, and not conquered. In masses of men there is an instinctive sagacity which enables them to take just views of great events. I was much struck with the words uttered by a cuirassier of the old guard with a feeling of fierce indigna-

tion. 'We defeated them in every point,' said he, raising his head with a look of pride, 'and we might still have gained the battle. Neither we nor the Emperor quitted the field; we did not capitulate. There is treason, but no capitulation. Lead us back to Paris, and the foreigners will never enter it without first passing over the body of the last French soldier,' *** 'Where is our Emperor? If he is dead, all is over! still let us know the sad truth.' He spoke these last words in a tone of the most poignant sorrow, while the tears dropped from his eyes.

"I endeavoured to soothe the exasperation of these brave men, and directed their officers to proceed in good order on Fontainebleau, where they would find the Emperor. At this magic name, loud shouts and 'vivas' burst from the multitude. As much enthusiasm—as much affection for Napoleon, as ever had been felt during his most prosperous days, was then manifested. At that moment, when a few miserable individuals in their gilded saloons were, by their agreement to disgraceful treaties, sealing the ruin of France, a handful of poor soldiers, worn out by fatigue and famine, wounded and abandoned on the high roads, still found strength to march forward, for the purpose of shedding all their remaining blood in their country's defence.

Their confidence in the Emperor—their devotion to his person, existed in all its force ; now, when he was so shamefully deserted by those whom he had raised up. Good Heaven ! what has become of that fine army, so national, so devoted. At every step I met parties of troops. They asked the same questions, and expressed the same indignation. I directed them to proceed to Fontainebleau.

“The Russian army, divided into several corps, covered the roads to Chartres, Orleans, Melun, and Essonne, by the latter of which I travelled. The day was breaking when I perceived the bivouacs of our enemies. With them there was nothing but triumph and rejoicing. This contrast with the scenes of the preceding night was horrible. The Russian troops destined for the military occupation of Paris were parading about in their best uniforms, and indulging in all the boisterous joy of victory. The officers collected at the head of their regiments seemed, by their exulting looks, to defy both heaven and earth. Every countenance was radiant with satisfaction. Acclamations and hurras were raised as each corps filed off for the march. The aspect of the scene,—the movement of the camp,—the exultation,—the sound of trumpets, almost drove me mad. Impelled by an emotion

which every man of feeling will easily understand, I convulsively grasped the hilt of my sword. The blush of shame covered my forehead—the blood boiled in my veins. The idea that these men were about to enter Paris in triumph, under my very eyes, maddened me. In my delusion I inwardly debated the possibility of engaging them one by one, and of not allowing them to enter our capital unless they passed over my body. I thought that true honour consisted in offering such a resistance much more than in discharging the duty consigned me of imploring the conqueror.’ * * * ‘This over-excitement—this fever of the soul—passed away; reason returned, and I perceived that it was more magnanimous to meet misfortune than to seek a useless death.

“ But how is it possible for cold reasoning to prevail against those emotions which excite in us the most ardent passions. I saw that it was necessary for me to turn from this scene, and burying my spurs in my horse’s flanks, I galloped off in another direction.

“ After riding a league, I alighted at the door of a farm-house, where I passed a portion of the day. About six o’clock I returned to the advanced posts, and signified that I was the bearer of a message for the Emperor of Russia. I was informed

by the commanding officer that the most positive orders had been issued not to allow any individual belonging to the French army to enter Paris. At this moment a Russian general officer made his appearance. I mentioned my name, and said, that being intrusted by the Emperor Napoleon, my master, with an important despatch, I desired to be conducted to the Emperor Alexander, to whom the despatch was addressed. The officer replied, that he could not take upon him the responsibility of complying with my request; because he had received orders of the most positive description to allow no one coming from the Emperor Napoleon to enter Paris; and that a special direction had been given not to admit me, the Duke de Vicenza, under any pretext whatsoever. But, General, replied I, somewhat sharply, you take upon yourself an immense responsibility in refusing admission into the city to an Envoy (whatever other rank he may possess) intrusted with official communications for your Sovereign.* * * Do these orders emanate directly from the Emperor of Russia? 'Sir,' returned the General, 'I have received my instructions. I am not in any way bound to satisfy your curiosity; but I have no objections to inform your Excellency that these orders were agreed on at a council of

the Allied Monarchs, assembled at the house of Prince de Talleyrand Perigord, where the Emperor Alexander alighted. This very night they were forwarded to me by an estafette, sent from the Prince's mansion.'

"You are certain, General, I observed, with some indignation, that the Emperor Alexander alighted at M. de Talleyrand's. * * * 'Quite certain.' Oh, I exclaimed, this surpasses any anticipation that could have been formed of human turpitude! This man—this Talleyrand—received the Emperor's orders to escort the Empress to the bank of the Loire; and it is he, this very Talleyrand, who is doing the honours of Paris to the Allies! Infamous!

"I inquired for several Russian generals—Woronsoff, Csernichoff, Onwarrow, and others with whom I was personally acquainted. They had, however, accompanied the Emperor Alexander to Paris.

"I will not attempt to describe to you," continued the Duke, "all that I suffered at the sight of these foreign soldiers, who guarded our barrières, and forbade me admission into Paris. I drank the cup of bitterness even to the very dregs! Indignation and anger excited me, and I felt a sort of mad desire to challenge one of these victorious chiefs, and demand satisfaction

for the humiliation of my country. During these few short moments I experienced all the misery reserved for the conquered partisans of a great and noble cause. Suddenly I heard a general movement around me—all eyes were turned towards a carriage which had just driven up. The drums were beat, and I mechanically went in front of the carriage, and found myself near the coach door, at the moment when the individual whom it contained stepped out of it. This was the Grand Duke Constantine !

“ ‘ What do you want, Sir ? Who are you ? ’ he asked, in a tone of severity. Prince, I am the Duke de Vicenza, replied I, trembling with rage. The Duke regarded me with a look of profound astonishment. ‘ Excuse me, Sir, ’ he observed, ‘ I did not at first recognise your Excellency ; ’ and taking my arm, he led me away in the direction of Essonne. ‘ In what way can I personally be of service to you ? ’ he inquired. Prince, admission into Paris is refused me, and yet I must enter the capital,—I must ! I repeated, with an air of exasperation, which, spite of all my efforts, I was unable to dissemble.

“ ‘ Be calm, Duke, ’ said Constantine. ‘ Do you look upon me only as an enemy ? Is, then, the recollection of St. Petersburg so utterly effaced ? ’

“ Prince, I rejoined, overcome by the kind tone of Constantine, deign to excuse me. I am so unfortunate that I distrust all * * *

“ ‘ Distrust not me, my dear Duke, you know well enough that in our family you will find none but friends.’

“ Well, then, Prince ! I exclaimed, in the name of that precious friendship with which you honour me, I claim a favour of you—allow me to enter Paris.

“ ‘ What do you mean to do there?’

“ To plead the cause of my Sovereign—the cause of my country.

“ ‘ My dear Duke, nothing can be done for Napoleon—the powers will listen to no proposition coming from him.’

“ Prince, the Emperor, my master, has entrusted me with a secret message for the Emperor Alexander, and I am bound to discharge this sacred duty, and at the peril of my existence I will enter Paris.

“ ‘ It grieves me greatly to add to your disappointment by refusing your request; but I cannot take upon myself to break orders which have been formally given; that would be a terrible responsibility.’

“ I withdrew my arm from Constantine’s. ‘ My dear Duke,’ said he, grasping my hand,

‘hear what I have to say; you oblige me to tell you that a promise not to receive you has been exacted from the Emperor Alexander.’

“What baseness! I exclaimed; but I am determined to make my way into Paris, dead or alive. I should be vile indeed, if I deserted the cause which has been entrusted to my honour. Prince, no power shall withhold me from advancing. Every man has his destiny.

“I turned to go away, but the Grand Duke detained me. ‘Duke de Vicenza,’ he said, ‘I should never forgive myself were I to leave you in this distressed state of feeling. Be the consequences what they may, you shall go with me. That is the only possible way in which you can gain access to the capital. Attend to my instructions, my dear Duke. Leave me; remount your horse, pass our last posts, and be at hand on the road. The rest is my business. Leave me coolly and immediately.’

“I took leave of the Prince, and passed through the camp at a gallop. When out of sight, I ordered my servant to wait for me at the first village; and on foot, like a malefactor, avoiding public roads, I turned and went back, threading my way behind the trees. At a short distance I saw the Grand Duke’s carriage, which had stopped on one side of the road.

“ Harassed by fatigue, but still more by the violent emotions which I had suffered during twenty-four hours, I sat myself down beside a bush, and kept looking in the direction in which I expected the Prince would come. I spent a sad, tedious hour, in a horrible fever of expectation, anxiety, and bitter reflections. The most painful recollections arose in my mind. My imagination carried me through the immeasurable distance which separated my Russian embassy from the day in which the ruin of the empire was consummated. I thought of the time I had passed in the palace of St. Petersburg, when the glory of the great Napoleon reflected lustre on his ambassador, and assured to him the most brilliant position that the ambition of man could desire. During those four years all had been happiness and splendor. Ages had not passed away since that period of poetic existence. Three short years, and all was gone! Three years had undone twenty years of conquests, of miracles, of every sort. Death and destruction marked the distance which separated St. Petersburg from Paris, and nothing remained of the most powerful, of the most colossal, empire of modern times, except its immortal founder, a prisoner at Fontainebleau.

“ My memory recalled, with fatal tenacity,

places, dates, and melancholy coincidences.— Thus I recollected that precisely six years previously, on the night of March 31, I gave a magnificent fête at St. Petersburg. This date I could not forget; a memorial of the heart rendered it ineffaceable. Ah! had any one in the palace of the Embassy then sketched out the frightful course through which I have since travelled, I should have thought him fit for the *Hopital des Fous*.

“ Night having set in, I quitted my resting place, where the painful recollection of the pleasures of the past had only rendered the present more wretched. I advanced towards the carriage, and the Grand Duke soon arrived. The door was opened, and I jumped in; the Prince followed me. ‘ To Paris,’ said he, and we rolled along with rapidity.

“ When we had passed the barrier, Constantine said,—‘ My dear Duke, this is quite a romantic elopement. The prettiest woman in France would not make my heart beat quicker than you make it at this moment. In the name of Heaven, tell me what I am to do with you?’ added he, laughing heartily.

“ In my state of vexation his gaiety was distressing. The merry laugh falls coldly on the afflicted heart. However, I could not fail to

reflect that he was acting the part of a good and generous friend, and that the day so unfortunate for me was for him a happy one. When age shall have blunted his sensations—when time, which wears out the deepest impressions, shall have extinguished in him the joys of early life, the old man may feel proudly gratified at the recollection of his entrance into the capital of the formidable empire of France.

“ ‘ My dear Duke, assist me,’ continued he, with vivacity, ‘ I well know that I shall have rendered you only a useless service if I do not introduce you to my brother ; but how is that to be done?’

“ Tell him, Prince, that Caulincourt invokes the recollections of four years of kindness and interest ; that in the name of misfortune he solicits a few moments conversation ; tell him that the favour I seek is more to me than life.

“ ‘ He must receive you. He must become my accomplice, for if our plot should be discovered, I know not what strange suspicions I shall be exposed to. There is much distrust amongst us. But never mind, the die is cast, so we’ll leave the result to Providence.’

“ I was in a sad perplexity. I felt that, setting aside the political position of the Grand Duke, the most profound secrecy was necessary

to the success of my mission, more than doubtful as it was. If my presence should be suspected, the other sovereigns, instigated by Napoleon's enemies, would urge upon the Emperor Alexander my immediate dismissal, and the work of hatred would be completed before I could have the opportunity of saying a word in favour of the Imperial cause.

“Several plans were suggested and rejected. At last we agreed that I should remain in the carriage while the Grand Duke went to tell Alexander what had been done. We stopped in the Allée de Marigny. Constantine having desired me to muffle myself up with his travelling cap and fur pelisse, alighted, shut the carriage door himself, and gave strict orders to his servants to allow nobody to come near the carriage.

“At this moment a neighbouring clock struck ten. I should in vain endeavour to relate what I felt during the three long hours I passed in the carriage. The most bitter reflections were accompanied by those stinging touches, which, like the tortures of the inquisition, seem to take life by fragments.

“A festive air reigned around the Palais Elysée. The lamps at the principal entrance shed a brilliant light; carriages arrived and drove off in rapid succession. The neighing of

the horses, the loud talking of the drivers, the noisy hurras of the Russian Imperial guard, were to me tormenting discordant sounds. At this moment, thought I, while I was waiting for an audience, perhaps the ruin of him who formerly reigned master here is decided. It was at the Elysée that the Emperor, then so powerful, formed his gigantic plan against Russia. From these terrible contrasts I drew a bitter reflection both on men and things.

“One o’clock struck, when the Grand Duke came and put an end to this torment of recollections. He said, ‘the saloons were full, and the Emperor, being in conference with the sovereigns, did not leave his cabinet until midnight. I had therefore to wait until every one was gone. The Emperor Alexander is in despair at our prank, but he will receive you as a friend. Wear my cloak, and put on this uniform hat.’

“Constantine took my arm, and we proceeded on foot. We ascended by the interior staircase to Alexander’s bed-room. The Czar received me with open arms. He had a truly noble heart.”

CHAPTER II.

Conversation between the Emperor Alexander and the Duke de Vicenza—Determination of the Allied Sovereigns not to treat with Napoleon—Proposition for a regency—The idea of restoring the Bourbons—Suggestions for putting the question to the vote of the nation—Familiar gossip with the Emperor Alexander—Napoleon's bed-chamber—Private papers left in his cabinet at the Elysée—The Duke de Vicenza destroys them—A breakfast with the Grand Duke Constantine—A crown in exchange for a handsome face—Friendly assurances of the Emperor Alexander—The Duke de Vicenza proceeds to Fontainebleau.

“ ‘My dear Duke,’ said the Emperor Alexander, clasping both my hands in his, ‘I feel for you with all my heart. You are the man I most esteem in all France. You may rely upon me as upon a brother. But what is your wish? What can I do for you?’

“ ‘For me, Sire, nothing,—but for the Emperor, everything.

“ ‘This is precisely what I dreaded,’ resumed Alexander, ‘for I must refuse, I must afflict you. I can do nothing for the Emperor Napoleon.

I am under engagements with the Allied Sovereigns.'

"But your Majesty's wish must have an immense weight in the balance of European interests; and if Austria should, as all considerations require, also interpose decidedly in behalf of France, it is still possible to conclude a peace which may insure general tranquillity.

" 'Austria, my dear Duke, Austria will not second me in any proposition having for its object to leave Napoleon on the throne of France.'

"But the Emperor Francis surely does not wish to dethrone his daughter and his grandson?

" 'The Emperor of Austria will sacrifice all his personal affections for the repose of Europe. The Allied Sovereigns have resolved—irrevocably resolved—to be for ever done with the Emperor Napoleon. Any endeavour to change this decision would be useless.'

"I was struck dumb. This formal declaration left me no hope. I expected to have to discuss very severe conditions; but the idea of the Emperor being dethroned never had crossed my mind. It was only then that I perceived the magnitude of the danger which threatened the empire. Alas! we were no longer in a situation to attempt to enforce our demands.

“ Events crowded upon us with overwhelming rapidity, and we had no power to evade any terms the conqueror might choose to exact. One proposition might still succeed, and I ventured to start the question of the Regency.

“ Be it so, replied I; but is it justice and equity to include in the same sentence of proscription the Empress Maria Louisa and her son, the King of Rome? The latter at least, surely, is not an object of fear to the Allied Powers. It will be easy to preserve the incontestible rights of the son of Napoleon to the throne of France. A Regency——

“ ‘ We have had that under consideration,’ said the Emperor Alexander, interrupting me, ‘ but what should we do with Napoleon? The father is an invincible object to the recognition of the son.’

“ Sire, the Emperor will make every sacrifice in favour of his son which the unfortunate circumstances of France demand.

“ ‘ My dear Duke, you deceive yourself. At the present moment, doubtless, Napoleon will yield to the inflexible law of necessity. But restless ambition will soon rouse all the energy of his character, and Europe will be once more in flames.’

“ I see, said I, deeply grieved, that the Emperor’s ruin has been resolved on.

“ ‘ Whose fault is it ? ’ eagerly resumed the Emperor Alexander. ‘ What have I not done to prevent these terrible extremities ? Do me the justice to allow that I did all in my power to open his eyes to the inevitable consequences of his unjust aggression on Russia. In the imprudent sincerity of youth, I said to him—“ The Powers, wearied with insults and outrages, are forming alliances among themselves against your domination. One signature only is wanting to the compact, and that is mine.” In reply to this frank communication, he declared war against me. He broke the bond of that pure and enthusiastic friendship which I had pledged to him.’

“ A heavy sigh escaped my breast. I had not a word to reply to these accusations, which were uttered without vindictiveness or animosity.

“ ‘ Still,’ continued Alexander, ‘ even yet I cannot find in my heart to cherish any unkind feeling towards him ; I wish his fate depended on me alone.’

“ Noblest of monarchs ! I exclaimed ; I feel assured that I do not vainly invoke your support for so great a man in adversity. Be his defender, Sire ; that noble part is worthy of you.

“ ‘ I would wish so to be; on my honour, I wish it; but I cannot succeed. To restore the Bourbons is the wish of a very influential party here. With that family we should have no fear of the renewal of war.’

“ You are misinformed, Sire; if some persons have dreamed of recalling the Bourbons, it is with a view to their own private interests, and not as a means of tranquillizing Europe. The new generations can feel neither affection nor interest for that family. The Bourbons have nothing in common with France of 1814; time has consecrated the immense work of the revolution; the past now belongs to us no longer But, on the other hand, painful recollections remain with those whom the revolution overthrew. They will bring back from exile, court traditions and pretensions, hostile to the new interests of France. Believe me, Sire, from this monstrous junction of incompatible elements there will arise new torments and new misfortune for Europe.’

“ ‘ Your arguments would be perfectly correct, my dear Duke, were it our intention to impose the Bourbons on the French people; but I at once declared against that. I do not make war on France. I am opposed only to

the enemy of general tranquillity. My declaration secures full liberty for France to choose a sovereign. I am assured that the French nation desires the Bourbons, and if the public voice recalls them——’

“ If your Majesty means by the public voice the machinations of a party of intriguers——

“ ‘ It is difficult to be judge and party in one’s own cause. You are warm, my dear Duke.’

“ Sire, misfortune is susceptible, and——

“ ‘ Listen to me; hear me. Do not look upon me as the Emperor of Russia, but as a friend, willing to discuss the subject with perfect fairness; one who admires your attachment and the efforts you make in favour of your unfortunate Sovereign. Be assured, then, that if I advance arguments adverse to your views, it is not with the sake of controversy, but for the purpose of placing the question on its true basis.’

“ I cannot doubt your good faith, Sire, nor your wish to be impartial; but your Majesty is, against your will, subject to influences——

“ ‘ In short,’ said he, interrupting me hastily, ‘ the Prince of Benevento attaches great importance to the assent of the senate of the great constituted bodies, and of the leaders of the army. This unanimity of wishes is of enormous weight

in existing circumstances. It is said, and it appears to be true, that all have had *enough of Bonaparte*. I use the common expression. 'They wish at all hazards to insure tranquillity.'

“ Fortunately, Sire, those ungrateful men who owe everything to the Emperor, and who now wish to get rid of him at all hazards, are not the nation. Will your Majesty be pleased to cause registers to be opened in all the municipalities of France? The true sense of the country would then be made manifest, and the Allies would see clearly whether the Bourbons are preferred to Napoleon, or to his son. If the Allied Sovereigns make it part of their policy to respect the rights of a great nation, an appeal to the majority of votes is the only means whereby they can prove that intention, and place the new government on solid bases. Europe took up arms to obtain peace. Be cautious, Sire, lest ill-considered measures do not again endanger a dearly-purchased peace.

“ The Emperor Alexander walked about for a quarter of an hour absorbed in deep thought. Then turning to me—‘ My dear Duke, I am struck with what you have said to me. The method you suggest is, perhaps, the best for gaining the object we desire—a solid peace. But the course you propose would be attended

with much delay, and circumstances hurry us on. We are urged, driven, tormented, to come to a decision. Moreover, the provisional government which is established reigns *de facto*. It is a real power round which ambition is rallying. Between ourselves, it is long since the schemes for this state of things began to work. The Allied Sovereigns are constantly surrounded, flattered, pressed and teased to decide in favour of the Bourbons; in fine, they have serious personal injuries to avenge. The cause you are defending includes a complication of interests which contribute to its ruin. On the other hand, the absence of the Emperor of Austria is a fatality, and were I to attempt anything in favour of Napoleon's son, I should be left alone: none would second me.'

"Alas, Sire, the absence of the Emperor of Austria is indeed a fatality; but your generous influence will suffice to counteract it. Declare yourself for the vanquished, and the cause of Napoleon's son will triumph.

" 'They had good reason, my dear friend,' said Alexander, kindly giving me his hand— 'they had good reason for making me promise not to see you. This warmth of heart, which renders you so distressed, is infectious. You have roused every generous feeling within

my heart. Well, I will try. To-morrow, at the council, I will revert to the question of the Regency; every other proposition is impossible, so do not deceive yourself; and, *let us hope.*'

"This conversation," continued the Duke de Vicenza, "took place precisely as I have related it. That expression, *let us hope*, still vibrates in my ear, because in the mouth of Alexander it had a powerful meaning. I felt all its force, and my mind was filled with hope. Our serious dialogue was followed by a familiar conversation after the manner of former times. No one knew better than Alexander how to infuse into his manner that gracious ease which at once removes all embarrassment in interviews between persons of different ranks. Laying aside his Imperial bearing, he kept up a light conversation in his wonted lively style. We spoke of the coquettish and delightful Antona,—still beloved, and still rebellious. 'She takes advantage of my weakness,' said he; 'I come to the best resolutions in the world, but they are all forgotten whenever I see her; in a word, my dear Duke, I lose my senses.' Alexander was still distractedly in love with her, but there was a distance of seven hundred leagues between them; and Paris presented so many attractions, so many points of seduction, that I clearly foresaw that the reign of the fasci-

nating Antona would shortly close. Alexander told me all that had taken place in his private circle since my departure. He recounted numerous anecdotes of the *elegants* of St. Petersburg; and I, though overwhelmed with sorrow, listened to these sprightly stories, in order that I might the more surely reach the heart of the only friend that was left me.

“It was now four o'clock in the morning, and Alexander seemed ready to fall asleep. Your Majesty, said I, would be glad to be rid of me; but that is no easy matter, for I have not the power to render myself invisible.

“‘My dear Duke,’ said he, ‘having entered secretly and in disguise, you cannot leave without compromising me; therefore stretch yourself in this easy chair.’

“I am no stranger here, Sire, said I, and I will go into the next chamber and remain there until your Majesty may be pleased to drive me out of it.

“The chamber in which I had the interview with Alexander,” continued the Duke de Vicenza, “and in which the Emperor was to repose, was the bed-chamber of Napoleon when he inhabited the Elysée. The room into which I retired had been his study. It contained a sofa, on which I flung myself, and during a short and disturbed slumber the events of the last two days recurred to my

mind. I endeavoured from time to time to open my eyes in order to escape from painful slumber, but without success; and when at eight o'clock I found myself really awake, I fancied that I had lost possession of my senses. I had, indeed, passed a most frightful night."

The Duke de Vicenza here paused, apparently overcome by the recollection of his sufferings.

"I can conceive nothing more dramatic," I observed, "than the extraordinary position in which the Grand Equerry of the Empire, the envoy of the Emperor Napoleon, formerly so much feared, was placed. I can imagine all that you suffered, when concealed by the Emperor of Russia in the Palais of the Elysée. How difficult would it be to give credence to such mysterious decrees of destiny, if they were not connected with that great and solemn catastrophe which has been accomplished under our very eyes."

"Doubtless," continued the Duke, "the hidden causes which led the way to the fall of the empire have been kept concealed by the promoters of that event. Narrow-minded people regard it merely as a just punishment for the insatiable ambition of Napoleon; but it is always very convenient to judge of facts by results. I do not mean to deny that the Emperor may have committed faults, but who was better qualified

than himself to repair them? Is it possible to forget in a moment his vast glory, his great and noble actions? Ought France to have abandoned her hero at the moment of his misfortune? That fault exceeded any committed by Napoleon. When a few years shall have passed away, the conduct of the French people, during the terrible crisis of April, 1814, will be a problem incapable of solution. But to resume my narration:—

“I heard several persons passing in and out of the chamber of the Emperor of Russia. I stepped up to a window, and, looking through the curtains, I perceived that the garden was filled with troops, bivouacing, as they also were in our squares and in our streets. I could not bear this sight; and, retiring from the window, I again threw myself on the sofa, on which I had slept so restlessly. I reflected on the conversation which had taken place on the preceding evening, and endeavoured to find in it some cause of consolation. After a severe mental agitation, my powers of suffering seemed exhausted; and I was obliged to banish all thought from my mind to avoid falling into that feverish state of irritation which not unusually ends in madness.

“I occupied myself in examining the room in which I was. Nothing had been changed, not even the table, which was covered with maps of

Russia, plans, and unfinished writings. Perhaps no one had entered the room since the departure of its Imperial occupant. I approached the table, and, impelled by an indescribable feeling, I pushed back the easy-chair, cut with a penknife in all directions, and concealed it behind the rest of the furniture. I then arranged the maps, and locked them up in the bookcase. The new occupants of the Elysée might have there found matter for jests, and for mortifying comparisons between projects and results. The plans and writings were quickly made to disappear, for I tore them in a thousand bits, and buried them under the ashes in the fireplace. This being done, I seemed to breathe more freely. In the midst of the greatest trouble a mere trifle may afford relief to the anxious mind. If it only saves self-love from being wounded, it seems like a victory gained over misfortune. These details have, I am aware, no real interest, and I certainly shall not commit them to writing. Historical narrative demands conciseness, and affords little opportunity for the effusion of a suffering imagination. But, in talking with you, when in point of fact I only think aloud, I should find it quite impossible not to yield to the recollection of my emotions.

“ About eleven o'clock I heard a knocking at

my door. I opened it, and Constantine entered. 'Duke,' said he, 'the Emperor sends you his compliments. He was unable to see you before leaving the palace; but in the meantime we will breakfast together. I have given orders to have it prepared in Alexander's room. We will shut ourselves up there, and endeavour to pass the time until his return.'

"Only those who have sojourned at the Russian Court can form a just idea of the simplicity, of the familiarity, (never exceeding the limits of good taste,) which characterize the princes of the Imperial family in the relations of private life. At the French Court the etiquette is strict and formal. There we might suppose it likely for the Sovereign to be complaisant with the functionary; but we never could imagine the possibility of the former cordially offering his hand to the latter. But at the Court of Russia, excepting on days of state and ceremony, the distinctions between the princes and the individuals whom they honour with their friendship are only observed by the latter.

"The manners of the Grand Duke Constantine are frank, natural, and easy. If his knowledge be superficial, his conversation is always agreeable and without pretension. He combines with a good deal of finesse the simplicity of a child.

I recollect that one day in the Empress's private circle we were bantering him on the elegance of his form, on the fine cut of his clothes, and a thousand other things. 'You may joke as much as you please,' said he, laughing; 'I have something in my favour reckoning from my neck down to my heels; and if Nicholas would only give me his head (Nicholas is handsome), I would give him in return all my rights of seniority.'

" 'Would you indeed, Constantine?' said the Empress, in her soft tone of voice.

" 'I would sign the contract at the feet of your Majesty.'

" 'Poor fool!' said Alexander; 'people do not exchange a crown for a handsome face.'

" 'I would, though,' replied he, emphatically. This remark, and the naive manner in which it was uttered, diverted us during the whole evening.

" Constantine subsequently surrendered his right of seniority on the sole condition of being allowed to be happy in his own manner.

" But I must not wander back to the Empress' parties," said the Duke. "After breakfast, the Grand Duke and I returned and shut ourselves up in the cabinet: all these mysteries diverted Constantine greatly. Constantine said he wished to share the hardships and the dangers

of my captivity. He related everything remarkable that had passed at St. Petersburg since I left it. I knew all the Russian society, and I was never done with questioning him. The war had made great voids among the many gay and happy young men whom I had known. In return, he wished to know everything about the Emperor Napoleon; his tastes, his habits, the most minute details of his camp life, were eagerly listened to. He paid a striking homage to the extraordinary genius of the great warrior, and cautiously avoided the slightest allusion that could be interpreted into direct blame. He spoke about my negotiations with the Emperor Alexander, who, he said, had only made me half his confidant, and though the result of the affair was to him, I must believe, a very indifferent matter, he had at least the courtesy to wish well to my efforts. I was unfortunate; he was affectionate and kind. These are the delicate shades by which a man is characterized.

“The Emperor of Russia did not return until six in the evening. ‘My dear Caulincourt,’ said he, while entering, ‘I have been busy about your affairs. For your sake I have acted the diplomatist,—that is to say, I have been reserved and artful. I have avoided entering

into serious discussion with the view of leaving matters pending. When pressed, I gave that sort of replies which bind to nothing. I intrenched myself behind certain powerful considerations, which did not permit us to decide rashly on a matter so important as the choice of a sovereign. Finding myself safe on that ground, I next made Schwartzenburg give way, and I resumed the question of the Regency. We had a warm discussion. I do not play the diplomatist with you, my dear Duke, but I cannot tell you everything. Hasten back to the Emperor Napoleon, give him a faithful account of what has passed here, and return as quickly as possible; you understand me—as the official bearer of Napoleon's abdication in favour of his son.'

“Sire, said I, earnestly, what is to be done with the Emperor?”

“I hope you know me well enough to be certain that I shall never suffer any insult to be offered to him. In whatsoever manner his destiny may be fixed, the Emperor Napoleon shall be properly treated. I give you my word for it.’

“When all was afterwards lost, I claimed this promise, and claimed it not in vain. It was to Alexander solely that Napoleon was indebted for the sovereignty of the Isle of Elba.

“Sire, I shall not endeavour to express my gratitude to you, it would be impossible for me to do it otherwise than by prostrating myself at your feet.

“‘In my arms, my dear friend,’ and he embraced me like a brother. ‘Had I not wished to serve you, Caulincourt, I would have said so at once. Now we must part; I have my reasons for urging you. Return to Fontainebleau as fast as possible.’

“The Grand Duke went down stairs to give orders about my departure; for it was necessary that I should leave Paris with the same precautions as I had entered it. At twilight we went out on foot, and found the carriage in the Champs-Elysées. An hour and a half afterwards we separated on the road to Essonne.

“Prince, said I, on leaving him, I carry with me a recollection which neither time nor circumstances can efface. The service you have rendered me is one which must bind a man of honour for ever and to death. In all places, in all circumstances, dispose of me, of my fortune, and of my life. . . .

“‘Yes, my dear Duke, I rely on you, do you also rely on your Russian friends. Courage! you have my brother’s support, so do not despair. Adieu, and return speedily.’

“ Ill-informed persons, who have contracted unjust prejudices against the Russian Sovereign, will tax me with partiality for Alexander and his family. But I speak in truth and sincerity, and I fulfil an obligation of honour in rendering them that justice which is their due. The base alone disavow benefactors and benefits.

“ Eighteen leagues separated me from the Emperor ; but I performed the journey in five hours. In proportion as I approached Fontainebleau I felt my courage fail. Heavens ! what a message had I to bear ! In the mission which I had just executed, I had experienced all the disgust that could be endured by pride and self-love ; but in the present business my heart bled for the pain I was about to inflict on the Emperor, who rose in my affections in proportion as the clouds of misfortune gathered around him.”

CHAPTER III.

The approaches to Fontainebleau—Spirit of the troops—The Prince of Wagram — Napoleon's altered looks — His indignation on learning the propositions of the Allied Powers—He enumerates the obstacles to the return of the Bourbons—His prophetic words—Anxiety of the army to march to Paris—The last stake—Diversity of opinions and feelings—An express from the Duke de Ragusa—Napoleon's abdication—Departure of Caulincourt, Ney, and Macdonald, from Fontainebleau.

“ THE environs of Fontainebleau were filled with troops, who were bivouacing, full of impatience for battle. I know not how I was recognised, but I was surrounded and followed to the gate of the chateau, and cries of ‘ *Vive l'Empereur!* ’ ‘ To Paris ! to Paris ! ’ resounded on all sides. The shouts of these brave men distressed me.

“ When I alighted I saw the Prince of Wagram, who came eagerly up to me. ‘ Well, my dear friend,’ said he, ‘ whereabouts are we now ? ’

“ This question, and the tone in which it was uttered, displeased me. Where is the Emperor ?

was my reply, uneasy at seeing the grand apartments all shut up.

“ I found the Emperor in the small apartments in the first story, that run along by the gallery of Francis I.

“ When I entered the cabinet he was writing. He rose instantly, and came to me. Ten years seemed to have passed over his noble head since last we parted. A slight contraction of the lips gave to his countenance an expression of indescribable suffering.

“ ‘ What has been done? Have you seen the Emperor of Russia? What did he say?’ And, doubtless observing distress in my looks, he took my hand and pressed it convulsively, saying, ‘ Speak, Caulincourt, speak; I am prepared for everything.’

“ Sire, I have seen the Emperor Alexander; I have passed twenty-four hours concealed in his apartments.

“ ‘ Ah, bah! Well?’

“ The Emperor of Russia is not your Majesty’s enemy (he made gestures expressive of doubt); no, Sire, in him alone your cause has a supporter.

“ ‘ To the facts—what is his wish? what do they intend?’

“ Sire, I replied, in a voice scarcely intelli-

gible, your Majesty is required to make great sacrifices to secure to your son the crown of France.

“ ‘That is to say,’ replied he, in an accent terribly impressive, ‘that they will not treat with me; that they mean to drive me from the throne which I conquered by my sword; that they would make a helot of me—an object of derision, destined to serve as an example to those who, by the sole ascendancy of genius and superiority of talent, command men, and make legitimate kings tremble on their worm-eaten thrones.’ He walked about for some instants in the greatest agitation. Then, turning to me, and crossing his arms—‘And is it you, Caulincourt, who are charged with such a mission to me? ah!’ He threw himself exhausted into a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

“ I remained silent.

“ He turned towards me. ‘Have you not the courage to go on? Let me hear what it is your Alexander has desired you to say.’

“ Sire, said I, quite grieved and disheartened, your Majesty has no mercy. The stroke which is now felt by you lacerated my heart before it reached yours. For these forty-eight hours the torture has rankled in a thousand manners in my breast.

“ ‘ I am to blame, Caulincourt—I am to blame, my friend,’ he said, with an irresistible accent. ‘ There are moments,’ lifting his hand to his forehead, ‘ there are moments when I feel my brain beating within my head. . . . So many misfortunes assail me at once. That powerful organization, which so often sustained me amidst battles and perils, sinks under the repeated strokes which overwhelm me. I cannot doubt your fidelity, Caulincourt. Of all about me, you, perhaps, are the only one in whom I place implicit faith: it is only among my poor soldiers, it is only in their grief-expressing eyes, that I still find written fidelity and devoted attachment. When happy, I thought I knew men; but I was destined to know them only in misfortune.’ He paused, and remained plunged in deep thought, his eyes fixed on the floor.

“ For my part, I was exhausted in body and mind. I happened to turn my eyes on a mirror in front of me, and I was appalled by my own looks.

“ Sire, said I, I request permission to take a little rest. I am beyond measure fatigued. I have important communications to make to your Majesty. You must be correctly informed of the difficulties of your position before you can decide on the course to be adopted, and I feel

that in my present state I am incapable of giving those detailed explanations which the importance of the subject demand.

“ ‘ You are right, Caulincourt ; go and take some rest. I have a presentiment of the subject about which we shall have to discourse, and it is necessary for me to prepare myself for the consequences. Go and repose awhile ; I will take care to have you called at ten o'clock.’ ”

“ On reaching my chamber I fell down in a fainting fit. When I recovered my senses, I perceived Ivan near my bed-side. He wished to bleed me, but I would not permit him. Had I not a reply to take back to Paris, where every instant a portion of the plank cast out for the shipwrecked was being carried away ? I took a bath, and before ten o'clock I was in the Emperor's presence.

“ He was calm, but the look of care in his countenance bore witness to the anxiety of which he was the victim. ‘ Take a seat, Caulincourt,’ said he, ‘ and tell me what they require—what is exacted from me.’ ”

“ I gave him a faithful account of my long conversation with the Emperor of Russia. Indignant exclamations frequently burst from his lips on hearing the baseness which I was obliged to describe. But when I came to the question

which had been debated in the council of the Allied Sovereigns, relative to the restoration of the Bourbons, he sprung from his chair, and pacing rapidly up and down the room, ‘Enough! enough!’ he cried, ‘they are mad! Restore the Bourbons! It will not last for a single year. . . . The Bourbons are the antipathy of nine-tenths of the French nation:—and the army, whose leaders have fought against the emigrants—what will they do with the army? My soldiers will never consent to be theirs! It is the height of folly to think of melting down the empire into a government formed out of elements so heterogeneous. Can it ever be forgotten that the Bourbons have lived twenty years on the charity of foreigners in open war with the principles and the interests of France? Restore the Bourbons! It is not merely madness, but it shews a desire to inflict on the country every species of calamity. . . . Is it true that such an idea is seriously entertained?’

“ I acquainted him unreservedly with all the machinations which were being carried on with that view.

“ ‘ But,’ he observed, ‘ the senate, the grand dignitaries, can never consent to see a Bourbon on the throne. Setting aside the baseness of agreeing to such an arrangement, what place, I should like

to know, could be assigned them in a court from which they or their fathers dragged Louis XVI. to the scaffold ! As for me, I was a new man, unsullied by the excesses which defiled the French revolution. In me there was no motive for revenge. I had every thing to reconstruct, and I should never have dared to sit on the vacant throne of France had not my brow been bound with laurels. The French people elevated me because I had executed with them, and for them, great and noble works. But the Bourbons ! what have they done for France ?—What portion of the victories, of the glory, of the prosperity, of France, belongs to them ? What could they do to promote the interests or independence of the people—when, restored by foreigners, they will be forced to yield to all their demands, and, in a word, to bend the knee before their masters ? Advantage may be taken of the stupor into which foreign occupation has thrown the capital to abuse the power of the strongest by proscribing me and my family ; but to ensure tranquillity to the Bourbons in Paris ! Never ! Bear in mind my prophecy, Caulincourt.’

“ How frequently,” said the Duke de Vicenza, “ have I for the last dozen years, as events successively passed before my eyes, reflected on the

prescience of that mind, so prompt to perceive all the consequences of political changes.

“ ‘ Now,’ resumed the Emperor, after a pause, and in a more tranquil tone, ‘ let us return to the matter in question. My abdication is insisted on. Upon this condition the regency will be given to the Empress, and the crown acquired for my son. I do not know that I have the right to resign the sovereign authority—that I should be justified in taking such a step until all hope was lost. I have fifty thousand men at my disposal. My brave troops still acknowledge me for their sovereign. Full of ardour and devotedness, my soldiers loudly call on me to lead them to Paris. The sound of my cannon would electrify the Parisians, and rouse the national spirit—insulted by the presence of foreigners parading in our public places. The inhabitants of Paris are brave; they would support me: and after the victory,’ he added, assuming a more animated tone,—‘ after the victory, the nation should choose between me and the Allies, and I never would descend from the throne, unless driven from it by the French people. Come with me, Caulincourt; it is now twelve o’clock. I am going to review the troops.’

“ Time will fail him, thought I; all is lost!

and I followed him, a prey to the cruellest anxiety.

“The Emperor inspected the line of his advanced posts, and at every moment the army was reinforced by the junction of dispersed bodies of troops, which were continually arriving. The artillery was directed on Orleans. The soldiers, delighted at again seeing the Emperor in the midst of them, received him with acclamations of the most unbounded joy. ‘Paris! Paris!’ was the cry, and the officers, brandishing their sabres in the air, surrounded Napoleon, exclaiming, ‘Sire, lead us on to Paris.’ ‘Yes, my friends,’ replied the Emperor, ‘we will fly to the succour of Paris; to-morrow we will commence our march.’ At these words *vivas* and shouts of all kinds rent the air.

“I confess,” observed the Duke, “that my heart beat quickly. At that moment I shared all the hopes of the Emperor, and though success was far from sure, yet at least there seemed to exist some chances in its favour. Reduced as Napoleon was to such an extremity, it was necessary to attempt this *coup-de-main*.

“‘Well?’ said he to me, on dismounting from his horse in the court-yard of the chateau.

“ Sire, I replied, this is your last stake ; your Majesty ought alone to decide.

“ ‘ You approve of my determination,’ said he, with a smile, ‘ that is clear ;’ and with an easy air he passed through the crowd of embroidered uniforms which still encumbered the saloons.

“ There, various and conflicting comments were made upon passing events. The young generals, full of ardour, and regardless of fresh toils, embraced with delight the design of delivering the capital from the enemy ; but among other groups, composed of persons who no longer had to make their fortune, dissatisfaction, though not loudly expressed, was plainly manifested. With them the idea of the misery which might result to individuals from a battle in Paris created alarm. The disposition displayed by the troops to go headlong forward, excited any feeling but confidence in those persons who were cool enough to reason. This *coup-de-tête*, for such was the expression used, might, it was said, in the event of success, save one individual, but it would be at the expense of all the rest.

“ I was made acquainted with these observations by some persons distinguished by their generous feelings, and with whom honour had far greater influence than any personal con-

siderations—men who never thought of balancing their fortune, or even their existence, against their duty to their country. I was tortured by anxiety, for I could not inform the Emperor of these things, and yet on the following day the movement on Paris was to begin. In the evening, rumours of the abdication began to circulate. Napoleon, who had still something to learn of the perfidy and baseness of men, had confidentially disclosed to an old friend the communication I made him on the part of the Emperor of Russia. ‘The abdication is an advisable measure; it is the only means of putting an end to these eternal wars; it is now time to think of peace.’ Such were the sentiments expressed by many, and in the event of Napoleon refusing to consent to the proposition, the expediency of forcing him was already spoken of by some. Be assured,” continued the Duke, “that all that I am relating is correct in every particular; at any rate, I speak with reserve rather than exaggeration. My heart swells with indignation at the recollection of those deplorable scenes; and it is with difficulty that I can persuade myself not to name those illustrious but ungrateful individuals; but it would not be right to put a brand on our former national glory. After this, events

succeeded each other with irresistible rapidity.

“ In the night, the Emperor received an express from the Duke of Ragusa, who was encamped with his army at Essonne, communicating the *senatus consultum*, dated the evening before. The Senate had pronounced the forfeiture of Napoleon. The aide-de-camp who brought this intelligence had not been discreet, for it was at once known by every observing person at Fontainebleau; and it was the subject of conversation during the morning of the 4th.

“ On the 3rd, orders were given to remove, on the following day, the imperial head quarters, which were to be fixed between Ponthierry and Essonne. Still it was easy to see that not a single dignitary was making any preparations to follow the movement. Napoleon was too much occupied to perceive, or at any rate he affected not to perceive, this absence of all activity. He went out as usual at 12 o'clock to review the troops, and all who had heard the news of the preceding night anxiously watched his movements; but Napoleon did not revoke the orders which he had before given.

“ After the parade he was ushered into his apartments by all the marshals and dignitaries

present. Then began at first insinuations; representations followed; then warm remonstrances; and at last a declaration that they would not march on Paris. It is impossible to describe what Napoleon suffered.

A few hours afterwards the Emperor sent for me. His countenance was fearfully altered; but his expression was calm and his bearing firm. He took from off his desk a paper written entirely with his own hand, and presented it to me. He said,—‘ Here is my abdication, Caulincourt; carry it to Paris.’ Never did Napoleon appear to me so truly grand as at that moment. Overcome by grief, the tears glistened in my eyes. ‘ Brave, brave friend,’ cried he; ‘ but those ungrateful men!’ he added, with strong emotion, ‘ they will live to regret me.’ He then threw himself into my arms, and pressed me several times to his agitated breast. ‘ Depart, Caulincourt! depart immediately!’ said he.

“ Sire, I observed, upon an occasion of so much solemnity and importance, charged as I am to bear the official act of your Majesty’s abdication, I request you to appoint two grand officers of the empire to accompany me.

“ He reflected awhile. ‘ Ney and Ragusa—Marmont is my oldest companion in arms.’

“ Sire, the Duke of Ragusa is not here : the Duke of Tarento will be a worthy representative of the army.

“ The Emperor was undecided, but the Duke de Bassano was consulted. He observed, that whatever might be the opinions of the Duke of Tarento, he was a man of honour, and would honourably execute his mission. Maret's opinion was well-founded ; the demeanour and conduct of Macdonald were perfect.

“ The powers were drawn up. A sombre melancholy was apparent on every countenance. Having given his last instructions, the Emperor returned to his cabinet. I shall never forget the last look which he cast on me. Ney, Macdonald, and I, immediately stepped into a carriage ; Rayneval and Rumigny accompanied us as secretaries.”

“ Alas !” said I to the Duke de Vicenza, who was rising to take leave, “ what a sad termination of the bold project of marching on Paris !”

“ All is not yet told. I was reserved for other sorrows ; a few days after I was destined to support him expiring in my arms. * * * *
You will now understand how my life has been worn out with his.”

“ Ah !” thought I, “ it may be easily foreseen that a few years hence you will both die the same death.”*

* The Duke de Vicenza, like the Emperor Napoleon, died of a cancer in the stomach.

CHAPTER IV.

The Duke de Vicenza's arrival in Paris—His interview with the Emperor Alexander — Treason of the Duke de Ragusa—Mean conduct of Marshal Sout—Alexander's reasons for changing his intentions with respect to Napoleon—The Abbé de Pradt—His *pirouette*—His revelations—The Duke de Vicenza at the council—The King of Prussia and General Beurnonville—Schwartzenberg, Nesselrode, Lichtenstein, and Pozzo di Borgo—Marshal Macdonald pleads the cause of the Empress and the King of Rome—The Duke joins the council—His appearance and manner—Curious remark of the Emperor Alexander—The French and the Tartars—The Duke de Vicenza again returns to Fontainebleau—The unconditional abdication proposed — Napoleon rejects all further negotiation with the Allies.

“ We arrived at Paris on the evening of the 4th, and I obtained a few moments' conversation with the Emperor Alexander before the meeting of the council of the Allied Sovereigns. ‘ Ah,’ cried he, perceiving me, ‘ you have returned very tardily.’

“ Sire, it did not depend on me.

“ ‘ It is a great misfortune !’

“ ‘ Has your Majesty, then, changed your intentions ?’

“ ‘ I gave you my word, my dear Duke ; but events are beyond my control, and they proceed with such rapidity, that what was possible yesterday is to-day impossible.’

“ ‘ But, Sire, I am the bearer of the act of abdication of the Emperor Napoleon in favour of the King of Rome. Marshals Ney and Macdonald accompany me as the plenipotentiaries of his Majesty. All the formalities are prepared ; nothing can now impede the conclusion of the treaty.

“ ‘ My dear Duke, when I told you to use haste I had my reasons for so doing. I knew the ground beneath your feet was slipping away. When you departed, the position of the Emperor Napoleon was still imposing, and might even become perplexing to us. The successive rallying of troops round Fontainebleau, their devotion to the person of the Emperor, his address, his courage, were of a nature to create alarm. A *coup-de-main* might be boldly attempted on Paris, and a population of 700,000 or 800,000 souls was to be kept in check ; all these things rendered our position difficult. These were grave

considerations, and I gave them their proper value. But to-day the position of the Emperor Napoleon is not the same.'

"Your Majesty deceives yourself; the Emperor Napoleon has at his command, within, at most, the circle of a few leagues, 80,000 men, who loudly demand to be marched upon Paris, who will suffer themselves to be cut in pieces to the last man, and whose example will electrify the capital.

" 'My dear Duke,' interrupted Alexander, 'I am truly sorry to cause affliction to you. You are in complete ignorance as to what is going on. The senate has declared the forfeiture of Napoleon.'

"I know it, Sire; but the army?"

" 'The army! the adherence of the commanders of corps are pouring in from all parts. They disguise, under the pretext of submission to the mandates of the great body of the state, their eagerness to absolve themselves from allegiance to a Sovereign who is unfortunate. Thus to their personal interests is united the legality of the act. Such are mankind, my dear Duke.'

"Sire, I blush for those of my countrymen who have thus tarnished the honour of their past lives. But, Sire, these shameful exceptions will

find no echo in the army, which remains devoted and faithful to its Sovereign.

“ ‘ Again you are mistaken, Duke. At the very moment in which we speak, Fontainebleau is uncovered, and the person of Napoleon is in our power.’ ”

“ What say you, Sire? cried I. Still fresh treasons? ”

“ ‘ They who are anxious for the triumph of a different cause from yours, my dear Duke, have the power in their hands. They labour to detach from the party of Napoleon the most influential generals; and as every man looks to his own fortune, every man is eager to secure it. The camp of Essonne is raised.’ I recoiled in dismay.

“ ‘ The camp of Essonne is raised,’ repeated Alexander; ‘ the Duke of Ragusa has sent in his adherence, and that of his division of the army. The troops which compose it, commanded by General Souh . . . , are in full march towards Versailles—what more shall I tell you? ’ ”

“ In spite of the many bitter deceptions I had witnessed,” added the Duke, “ this intelligence struck me like a thunderbolt. A most singular fact was connected with it. The man who thus deserted, who was marching his troops

on the road to Versailles, and delivering the Emperor to the mercy of the enemy; this General Souh . . ., had come the evening before to Fontainebleau, and, under pretexs of losses and pecuniary embarrassments, extorted from the Emperor two thousand crowns.

“ I need scarcely tell you,” pursued the Duke de Vicenza, “ that the secret of this base conduct did not escape from my lips. A feeling of national honour withheld me from betraying to a foreigner such base conduct on the part of a Frenchman.

“ Sire, I replied, in the face of such facts, I foresee but too plainly the dispositions I shall find in the council. I have no hope but in the magnanimity of your Majesty.

“ ‘ I am hurried along by circumstances,’ replied Alexander. ‘ The abdication has been too long delayed. In politics, three days are three ages. As long as the Emperor Napoleon found himself supported by an army united in resolution to march to Paris, powerful considerations balanced the schemes proposed by the adversaries of the Imperial cause. But now, when the army appears to abandon its chief; when the marshals and generals are leading away the soldiers under their command—now, I repeat, the question is entirely changed. Fontainebleau is no longer an

imposing military position. In addition to this, all the persons of note at Fontainebleau have sent their submissions, and have here in Paris an emissary who treated in their names? Now, judge for yourself what I could do.'

"I raised my hand to my burning brow, and in the stupor into which this communication had thrown me I had no power to express a single thought.

"'During your absence,' continued Alexander, 'a discussion arose on the subject of the regency. Recriminations go for little when an idea arises in my mind, and the carrying it into execution appears just; but, my dear Duke, your antagonists are skilful persons. Some very curious things have taken place. A droll sort of comedy was acted in our presence the day before yesterday. Whether anything had transpired which took place at our conference; whether the Emperor Napoleon had made any confidants at Fontainebleau, I know not; but the fact is, that the affair of the regency and your promised arrival were known, and everything around us was in motion. The day before yesterday, Messrs. de Talleyrand, d'Albert, de Jaucourt, the Abbés Louis and de Montesquiere, introduced the question of the regency, and contended against it with all their might. There was no

want of complaints and accusations against your Emperor ; and M. de Pradt declared, that neither Bonaparte or his family had any partisans ; that all France earnestly demanded the Bourbons. I made some observations. Then General Dessolles, addressing me personally, said, in an impressive tone :—“ Sire, you promised, on your arrival in Paris, not to treat with Bonaparte, and, acting on that promise, we have not hesitated to declare him deposed, and to recal the Bourbons. Now to declare for the regency would be to decree the continuation of the men and the dynasty of the empire. The members of the provisional government would then have nothing to do but to demand of the Allied Powers an asylum in their dominions.” I tell you, my dear friend, the men who manage the affairs of your country are very clever, they manœuvre well. The adherences of the civil and military bodies are pouring in. Amidst the manifestations, whether spontaneous or advised, my position is the more difficult, because, instead of being supported by my allies, I meet on their part an active resistance.

“ ‘ It is not,’ added Alexander, with kindness, ‘ it is not with the intention of breaking my word, Caulincourt, that I present to your eyes so many miseries ; it is to make you appreciate the diffi-

culties, or, let us speak plainly, the impossibilities which masters my good wishes.'

"The Emperor Napoleon, I exclaimed, is betrayed, basely abandoned, delivered to the enemy by the very men who ought to have made for him a rampart of their bodies and their swords! This, Sire, is horrible! horrible!

"Alexander's countenance assumed an expression of bitter disdain, and, placing his hand on my arm, he said—'And add, Duke, that he is betrayed by men who owe him everything, everything—their fame, their fortune. What a lesson for us Sovereigns! Take courage, Caulincourt, I will be at the council before you. We shall see what can be done.'

"In leaving the house of the Emperor Alexander, I met in the court-yard M. de Pradt. He was incessantly hovering around the Sovereigns, and never left the saloons of the Allies. I knew his underhanded practices, and did not wish to speak to him. He, however, came up to me, and, with the easiest air in the world, said, 'I'm charmed to see you, Duke.' I looked at him without returning his salutation. 'Duke,' added he, rubbing his hands, (you know that is a habit he has got), 'your affairs are not going on very well. You are sinking fast!' I was no longer master of myself. You are a villain, said I,

seizing him by the collar and shaking him roughly. But what could I do with a grey-headed Abbé? I comprehended how ridiculous it would be to vent my fury on this man, and I satisfied myself with pushing him from me and making him pirouette. And," added the Duke, shrugging his shoulders, "That was as much vengeance as he was worth."

"The Abbé de Pradt," said I, "has not revealed this episode in his famous revelations of April, 1814; and yet I must do him the justice to own that he has shewn great candour of cynicism in the account he has given of his own feats."

"He neither forgot nor forgave the *pirouette*," continued the Duke, "and when all was lost, he pursued me with his venom and malice. It was a matter of glory and profit to him to persecute the advocate of the Bonapartes. It was a title by which favours were to be obtained; and, apropos of that, is it not one of the most revolting scandals inflicted by the restoration, that the dignity of Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour should have been conferred on the Abbé de Pradt?—The Abbé de Pradt, perjured in all his oaths, become the most bitter enemy of his benefactors! The Abbé de Pradt, in short, is Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour! But let us leave these miserable

creatures. It is really impossible to touch upon that epoch without exhumating something disgraceful to human nature.

“ Whilst yet excited by this absurd rencontre,” continued the Duke, “ I rejoined Macdonald and Ney ; I did not tell them what I had learned from the Emperor of Russia. Our mission was sufficiently thorny, and I refrained from lacerating the feelings of two men charged with me to defend the interests of Napoleon.

“ We betook ourselves to the council ; I wish I could carry you with me into the saloon of the Allies ; give you an exact idea of the assembly, composed of our enemies, and of those base Frenchmen who, having mounted the cockade of foreigners, aided them in their efforts to enslave France. But why should I attempt to describe that which is beyond all description : the mute play of the faces, the attitudes, the gestures of the different actors ; and yet, therein lies the whole spirit of a great drama.

“ When we entered, the Emperor of Russia was talking earnestly with the King of Prussia, in the embrasure of a window. On the left hand of William, and a little behind him, stood General Beurnonville. The discussion appeared animated. The King of Prussia, in replying to Alexander, appeared always to summon his aco-

lyte, who, with an obsequious bow, approved his words, spoken, doubtless, in opposition to those of the Czar. I understood afterwards that General Beurnonville, when he carried to the King of Prussia the important news of the defection of Marmont and of his division, prevailed on his Majesty to reject with firmness the regency which was about to be proposed to the council by the plenipotentiaries of Napoleon. Matters were so managed that each Sovereign, or each representative of a power, was circumvented, besieged, and harassed by one of those men whose names have acquired so miserable a celebrity.

“ A little further off, Schwartzenberg, Nesselrode, Lichtenstein, and Pozzo di Borgo, were grouped together. This last-mentioned personage made himself remarkable by the vivacity of his gestures; he talked with warmth, and this could only arise from his urging measures of rigour against Napoleon. Near this group the partizans of the royalists were buzzing about and fidgeting. From an air of joy on their faces, the arrogance and self-possession of their manner, it was easy to judge that they were well assured of the success of their intrigues, and had no doubt respecting the issue of the conference about to be opened.

“ Our arrival put an end to the separate con-

versations. The Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia approached a large table covered with a green cloth, which occupied the middle of the room. They sat down, and each person took his place.

“ I laid before the Emperor Alexander, in the name of the Emperor Napoleon, the act of abdication in favour of the King of Rome, and of the Empress Maria Louisa, Regent.

“ King William spoke first, and coolly observed that subsequent events no longer permitted the Powers to treat with the Emperor Napoleon. The wishes of France for the return of her ancient Sovereigns was manifest on all sides. The first body in the state, the senate, supported by the assent of the citizens, having declared Napoleon deposed from the throne, the Allied Sovereigns could not mix themselves up in the affairs of the French Government, and recognise, contrary to the declaration of the senate, the dethroned Emperor's right to dispose of the crown of France.

“ Marshal Macdonald exposed with force the high political considerations which ought to induce the Allied Powers to recognise the act of abdication in favour of the Empress and her son. ‘ The Emperor,’ said he, ‘ holds the crown from the French nation; he resigns it for the purpose of

obtaining general peace. The Allied Powers having declared that he was the only obstacle to peace, he does not hesitate to sacrifice himself when the interests of his country are concerned. But if they deny him the right of abdicating in favour of his son, great misfortunes may result therefrom. The army, entirely devoted to its chief, is still ready to shed the last drop of its blood in support of the rights of its Sovereign.'

“ A smile of disdain followed this declaration ; in a certain part of the room whisperings were heard ; at the same moment Marshal the Duke of Ragusa was announced. He entered holding his head erect, and with a smile upon his lips. Shaking of hands and congratulations were exchanged between him and some personages who went to meet him.

“ The effect which his presence produced is not to be described. There is, in the contemplation of a bad action, something revolting to generous minds. Thus a sensation of stupor pervaded the majority of the assembly. It may be said, that in the presence of this incarnate treason, there was not strength to add insult to the misfortunes which pursued the vanquished hero.

“ But personal interest soon banished these

generous emotions, and this was natural enough. The occasion was so favourable for the Allies ! France was surrendered, and delivered over to their mercy. Our very enemies had never dreamed of so easy a conquest. The Emperor Alexander said to me one day, ‘ I truly believe that if we had wished to place Kutusoff upon the throne of France, they would have cried out *Vive Kutusoff!* ’ ”

“ Really,” said I, to the Duke de Vicenza, “ in that idea the Tartar expressed a good deal of contempt for us.”

“ Alas ! there is no Tartar, be he serf or prince, who would not shrink from the baseness which dishonours this passage of our history. Recollect the noble blind peasant, Petrowisk ; think of Moscow and its magnificent palaces, burned as a sacrifice to the country, and between those savages, inspired with sublime patriotism, and ourselves, you will make a most sorrowful comparison.

“ I continually run away from my subject,” pursued the Duke ; “ it is because, when I talk on these matters, I feel, in spite of myself, those emotions revive over which years have rolled.

“ The arrival of Marmont rendered it unnecessary to resume the subject under discussion. The

considerations we had attempted to establish no longer existed, and on both sides explanations had become idle. In fact, the defection of the camp at Essonne, the advanced guard of the army of Fontainebleau, delivered the Emperor bound hand and foot to his enemies. Already one corps of the Russian army, by a movement combined with the retreat of the French troops, was echeloned from Paris upon Essonne, and covered all that bank of the Seine. In this state of things a conditional abdication was no longer to be thought of. Napoleon was said to be deposed from the throne by the wish of the nation and the army. The powers could not mix themselves up with the internal affairs of France in any thing. An unconditional abdication must be sent to Paris as quickly as possible. Such was in substance the declaration to which it was our business to submit. Every instant dispatches arrived, which were joyfully transferred from hand to hand—they were adherences. Thus to all the humiliations of defeat was added the inexpressible disgust caused by the presence of certain Frenchmen assisting as conquerors in the disasters of their country.

“ We retired in consternation. Our duty was not now to dispute for the throne, but to watch for the personal security of the Emperor.

This idea prevailed over every other : it pursued me without intermission. The only means of preserving the Emperor was to place him, by a treaty, under the safeguard of the Powers. What a sad alternative !

“ An unconditional abdication was the sacrifice for which the future fate of Napoleon, and that of his family, would be guaranteed. Time pressed. But, said I, who amongst us will take upon himself to be the bearer of this fresh blow ?

“ You,’ answered Ney, with a tone of sorrow, ‘ you are the friend of his heart, and you can, better than any other, soften the bitterness of this news. For my part, I have no courage but in the presence of an enemy. I can never, never go and say coldly to him ——’ (Poor Ney ! But his admirable military career, his lamentable end, should cover all his faults.)

“ Macdonald, filled with grief, kept a mournful silence. At length, taking my hand, which he pressed with affection,—‘ It is a sorrowful, a most sorrowful mission, but you only can fulfil it to the Emperor, whose entire confidence you possess.’

“ Macdonald appreciated the difficulties of this terrible task which devolved on me. He was of opinion that the Emperor, exasperated

by this last exigency, would resume the project of continuing the war.

“ I departed. The distance from Paris to Fontainebleau appeared to me so short, that when my carriage entered the court of the castle I was struck with it as with a thing unexpected. I remained, as it were, transfixed in my seat, the prey of despair. Was I, then, destined only to approach the Emperor to give him torture? I revolted at the misery of my destiny which forced upon me the office of inflicting pain on him whom with my blood I would have ransomed from his sufferings. For a week I had a hundred times defied fate to make me more wretched, and fate unrelenting appeared every hour to throw back my defiance. I sprang from my carriage, and reached the cabinet of the Emperor almost running. I know not how it happened that there was no one there to announce me. I opened the door. Sire, it is Caulincourt, said I, and I entered.

“ ‘ Already!’ and his penetrating and rapid glance appeared to wish to pluck my thoughts from my lips.

“ He was seated at a window looking out upon the gardens. His livid complexion, the disorder of his dress, made me fearful that he had been watching all night, and I could not find courage

to commence the sad subject which had brought me back. ‘The defection of Essonne,’ said he, with an effort, ‘has served as an excuse for new pretensions, is it not so? Now that I am abandoned, openly betrayed, there are other conditions? Let me see, what do they now demand?’

“I explained the changes which had taken place in his military and political position, through the defection of his troops. I related my conversation with Alexander, and all that had passed in the council, except the arrival of Marmont in the saloon of the Allies—Marmont, whom he called his oldest companion in arms, and whose name had sprung spontaneously from his lips when he was selecting plenipotentiaries to intrust with the care of defending his interests. I could not in truth speak of that man. Napoleon, too, disdained to pronounce a name now sullied with odious treason.

“I had ceased to speak, and the Emperor, struck with a stupor, remained absorbed in his reflections. ‘We must break off these negotiations, which have become so humiliating,’ said he, at length, in an altered tone. ‘War and its hazards offer nothing worse than such conditions. I will not accept them.’

“But it was not in the ardent and fiery organi-

zation of Napoleon to reason coolly, when he could pour forth the feelings of his heart. A first impression almost always found him master of himself, after that the lava which flowed in his veins made his imagination burst like a volcano, and cast forth fire and flames. Then his eyes flashed, the tones of his voice became awful, the expression of his face became lofty and terrible, and all the force, all the energy, all the power of human intelligence appeared concentrated within him in his nature in gigantic proportions.

“ All at once, thrusting aside with violence the stool on which one of his legs was resting, he arose and rushed towards his desk, on which were opened maps stuck full of pins.

“ ‘ Do they suppose,’ cried he, in a voice of thunder, ‘ do these arrogant conquerors suppose that they are masters of France because treason has opened to them the gates of Paris? If a handful of vile conspirators have planned my destruction, the nation has not ratified the infamous deed. I will summon my people around me. Fools! they cannot conceive that a man like me only ceases to be formidable when he is laid in the tomb. To-morrow, in one hour, I will shake off the fetters with which they have

bound me, and rise stronger and more terrible than ever, at the head of 130,000 warriors.

“Attend to my calculation, Caulincourt: I have here around me 25,000 men of my guards. Those giants, the terror of the legions of the enemy, shall form the nucleus round which I will rally the army of Lyons, 30,000 strong. These, with Grenier’s corps of 18,000 just arrived from Italy, Suchet’s 15,000, and the 40,000 scattered under the command of Soult, make altogether an army of 130,000 men. I am master of all the strong places in France and Italy, though I know not as yet whether they contain aught but felons and traitors. I am again upon my feet,’ said he, raising his head proudly, ‘assisted by this same sword which has opened to me every capital in Europe. I am still the chief of the bravest army in the whole world—of those French battalions of which no portion has suffered a defeat. I will exhort them to the defence of their country by the principles and in the name of liberty. Above my eagles shall be inscribed “Independence and our country,” and my eagles will again be terrible! If the chiefs of the army, who owe their splendour to my conquests, wish for repose, let them retire. I will find among those who

now wear worsted epaulettes, men fit to be generals and marshals.'

"During this vehement sally the Emperor strode up and down his cabinet with quick steps. All at once he stopped, and said, 'Be seated, Caulincourt; write to Ney and Macdonald to return directly; all is broken off.'

"Sire, I pray your Majesty to take time to reflect before you adopt an extreme measure.

"'All has been reflected upon,' replied he, drily; 'I have not the choice of means.'

"Your Majesty has given way to natural irritation; but, Sire, circumstances have acquired a weight which does not permit a step to be taken before having confronted in every aspect the chances which may ensue.

"'I renounce all negotiation. They have rejected the personal sacrifice which I imposed upon myself for the sake of purchasing the peace and the repose of France. They have insolently refused my abdication, and I retract it. I will prepare for the conflict; my place is marked out above or below the surface of a field of battle. May the French blood, which is again about to flow, fall upon the wretches who wish the ruin of their country!'

"It was useless at that moment to attempt to enter upon a calm and dispassionate discussion.

I knew the Emperor. He would firmly resist opposition long sustained ; but he would yield to a great misfortune, and attempt to resume at a later opportunity these distressing questions. I asked his leave to retire. ‘ We are most unfortunate, Caulincourt, for I and you are one. Go, and we will speak of this when I see you again.’ ”

CHAPTER V.

Reflections on the condition of France—Napoleon's imprudent confidence—Continued examples of ingratitude and desertion—Insinuations against the Duke de Vicenza—Dignified manner of the Duke—Fontainebleau surrounded by foreign troops—Napoleon consults with the marshals—He will not consent to the deposition of the Empress and the King of Rome—Napoleon signs the act of his abdication—Conferences of the Allies—Discussion on Napoleon's future place of residence—Messages from Napoleon to the Duke de Vicenza—Definitive treaty of the Allies—Napoleon's despair—A presentiment.

“WHEN I got to my own quarters,” said the Duke, “I threw myself upon my bed. All that the Emperor had uttered entered deeply into my heart. I could have shed tears on beholding the powerlessness to which such means and such energy were reduced; but there is at the bottom of our hearts something which revolts at the idea of insult offered to our country. I trembled at the resolutions of the Emperor. Doubtless he could for some time have prolonged the war, but the best blood of France would have been shed

in useless victories. Six hundred thousand foreigners covered the soil; their reserves, collected upon the frontiers, waited but the signal to pour themselves upon our provinces. Rebellion was in the heart of France, in the capital of which one hundred thousand bayonets protected treason, and supported an illegal government *de facto*. Though convinced by these considerations, so pregnant with misfortunes and disasters, yet I could not approve the projects of the Emperor. My duty imposed upon me the unpleasant task of opposing them,—of pointing out to him the dark picture of the calamities which he would bring upon our country by carrying into execution such desperate measures. I knew that I had but little time left. Hours and minutes were vanishing rapidly. Now that I am in cold blood, I cannot comprehend, I cannot conceive, how I resisted, during twenty days, the fatigue of body and the torment of mind which assailed me. My position in relation to Napoleon was completely different from that of others. No person partook, or could partake, his grief to the same degree as I did; and when he said ‘You and I are one,’ he expressed in a few words the communion of feeling between us.

“Nothing can describe the confusion which

reigned on all sides, and in all things, during this episode of the abdication. I will tell you at the proper time a very curious trait which relates to the brave General Leval; but let us return to the Castle of Fontainebleau, where so many sufferings were forged by evil passions.

“ The Emperor, who possessed great nobleness of sentiment, could not comprehend baseness and perfidy. Thus it never entered his thoughts that he was surrounded by people who waited with impatience to be released from their various obligations to him, to run to Paris to carry the assurances of their devotion to the new government. Napoleon confided in one or two of his old acquaintances, whom he thought devoted to him, the news which he had received, the bad success of our negotiations, and his projects: he unbosomed himself without distrust, and, in retiring from the cabinet of the Emperor, these confidants went and spread alarm and irritation amongst the impatient.

“ The rupture of the negotiations produced a general explosion of outcries, reproaches, and fury, throughout the gilded galleries of the palace. If the cabinet and the waiting hall were deserted, everybody had at his own abode his coterie and his adherents eager to hear news from Paris, and all were of one mind to reject

the determination of Napoleon, which tended to prolong the war. Since he had become unfortunate, he was only thought capable of committing errors.

“It was not to his regal circle that Napoleon should have confided his projects. He should have entered sword in hand the chamber in which his mournful and silent officers were grouped together, and have said to them, ‘To us, my friends, belongs the honour of avenging France!’ At a few paces distant, at the bottom of the staircase, he would have found his soldiers; and, saluted by their acclamations, he should have rushed with his cohorts from the Castle of Fontainebleau upon the field of battle. He would have hurried along with him all those brave men, whom the feelings of youth and pure courage render always ready to rally round their country’s banners!

“General Bonaparte would have done so. The Emperor Napoleon was influenced by the habits of a throne. He sought for support in the great functionaries of his crown, and these men, enervated, shrunk from adversity. The empire was falling to pieces! what matter if the commotion touched not their hotels and their chateaux!

“On my first return to Paris they were be-

ginning to murmur, but silently! They were, however, increasing; the time for caution was past. They were able to express their thoughts without danger, and they expressed them loudly. They had had enough of the empire. If Napoleon was unfortunate, who's fault was it? Was that a reason why men were to sacrifice themselves, their situations, the interests of their families, to extravagant projects? The new revolution was a grand event, affecting every French interest; and if one single person were sacrificed, there would be but a single misfortune to deplore. Others called to mind, that the Bourbons were old Frenchmen—that they reigned over our fathers. These particulars, which for a long time I had forgotten, came all at once into my recollection!

“ New vacancies were perceptible every hour. It was, who shall find a pretext to go to Paris. They quitted their posts without permission, forgetting the wants of the service, indifferent about pleasing or displeasing him from whom they no longer expected anything. But why, said they, is the abdication so long delayed? When will this end? At length each became master of his own actions. His indecisions, his slowness, his warlike notions, compromised the position of the whole world. The new government received

with welcome all who arrived from the army. What would be left for the last comer? This state of things was intolerable, and the burden of the song in every mouth was, 'This must come to an end.'

"These base feelings were openly expressed. The mask was raised; the regency was rejected; the son of Napoleon was expelled the throne. It was nonsense to remain in the ante-chambers of Fontainebleau when favours were showered down at Paris."

"Heavens!" I exclaimed; "what a hideous picture do you draw of the baseness of the world! In your place, Duke, I do believe I should have fled from Fontainebleau, and, avoiding every human being, have stopped not till I had reached the retirement of the forests."

"But," continued the Duke, sorrowfully, "this picture which brings the tears of indignation into your eyes, is but a sketch. Ask those men of honour who were still to be found at head quarters,—they will relate to you unheard of things.

"You will readily suppose that the time I did not pass with the Emperor I passed in my own quarters. I need scarcely assure you," added the Duke, with animation, "that no treasonable language was uttered within the threshold of my

door. I would have thrown out of the window the first person who should have dared to say a word hostile to the Emperor. They knew it: thus I was assailed by their anathemas and their rage. They pretended that if, through false pity, I could not soften to the Emperor the sentiments which prevailed in respect to him in Paris, yet if, in a few words, I should tell him the truth, and threaten no longer to mix myself in his affairs, he would soon hasten to sign the abdication. Thus they pretended that I was the indirect cause of the delays which deferred the abdication of Napoleon. They took it very ill of me, and as I was deeply compromised in the cause of the vanquished, and pleaded his cause with all and against all, I had already become a man whom they avoided; some through fear of being compromised, and others because they knew that in my presence they could not but blush. Thus, when we met face to face, the most generous of them affected an interest and a solicitude about my health—it seemed much altered by my continual fatigues and journeys. Some *esprits forts* carried their magnanimity so far as to offer me their hands. “You know me,” said he, laughing. “You can figure to yourself with what an air I received these marks of kindness.”

We all laughed. Those who knew the air of dignity, and the polished stateliness of the Duke de Vicenza, may form an idea of the manner with which he could reduce these poor fools to their proper places. The Duke de Vicenza, who was tall and erect, possessed an elegance and dignity of manner which rendered him imposing to his superiors, and amongst his equals classed him by himself. I know no one, not even the Emperor, who could have conceived the idea of treating him with anything approaching to disrespect.

“ Nevertheless,” continued the Duke, “ it was but too true that the refusal of the Emperor to abdicate rendered his personal position most critical. For my part, I felt a mortal inquietude. The provisional government, which wished the complete ruin of Napoleon, and the Allies, who feared some desperate enterprise on his part, were made acquainted with all that was passing in the cabinet of the Emperor. They dreaded one of those bold determinations which oftener than once had astonished Europe.

“ The time which had passed since my departure from Paris had been usefully employed. They had not lost an hour. When I arrived at Fontainebleau I directed a confidential officer to send out scouts. He returned in the evening,

and announced that foreign troops occupied all the avenues round Fontainebleau. The Russian army was spread over the right bank of the Seine, from Melun to Montereau; another force had taken up its position between Essonne (abandoned by our troops) and Paris; other divisions barricaded the roads to Chartres and Orleans; others, again, which had pursued us almost step by step upon the roads of Champagne and Burgundy, had formed military establishments in the whole country between the Yonne and the Loire. In short, a vast net was spread round Fontainebleau, and at the first signal one hundred and fifty thousand men could rush upon the little army which yet guarded Napoleon.

“ This information was correct. It was obtained by an intelligent officer, on whose fidelity I could rely. I ran to the Emperor. He reflected a few moments. ‘ Not an hour is lost by these people,’ said he; ‘ but a road which is closed against couriers can soon be opened by fifty thousand men. Ah, *parbleu!* this is what will give an advantage to the councillors of peace at any price. If this news be known, we shall see many more of them.’

“ This news, Sire, is as yet known only to yourself, and to two men of honour, who will

keep the secret. But, after all, its publicity would add nothing to the real dangers which surround your Majesty. I conjure you, Sire, decide—

“ ‘——— Dangers!’ he exclaimed, ‘I fear them not. A useless life is a heavy burden! I will not long support it. But before I decide, before I come to a terrible decision, Caulincourt, I wish to consult with the marshals; I wish to know if my cause, if that of my family, is no longer the cause of France, and then—then I will decide.’

“ At this moment the Prince de Neufchatel and several marshals entered. Their countenances were embarrassed. The conversation commenced with some commonplace expressions. Berthier, biting his nails, muttered some words. He had, he said, sent some orderly officers to several points. All their reports were unanimous; the enemy was advancing, and taking up his position round Fontainebleau.

“ ‘I know it,’ interrupted the Emperor, drily.

“ But they had not come merely to announce this bad news. Very soon each of them gave his opinion, and if they did not yet dare to give decisive advice, they discussed the dangers which menaced Fontainebleau. During this conversa-

tion the Emperor evinced admirable dignity. He adverted to the two conditions imposed by the Allies. The personal sacrifice which they required of him he was resigned to, but to consent to the deposition of his wife and son from the crown which he, Napoleon, had conquered by his own deeds,—that he refused.

“ A mournful silence succeeded this communication.

“ The Emperor calmly enumerated the forces which remained to him, and which he could make use of, not to render the war eternal, but to avenge the honour of France, to restore her independence, and enable him to treat for peace on conditions less humiliating. Should he be obliged to renounce the defence of France, Italy, he observed, still offered to the army and to its chief a retreat worthy their misfortunes and their glorious recollections.

“ I had taken no part in the general conversation. I had listened to the Emperor’s noble and dignified appeal to the hearts, to the honour, of his ancient lieutenants. But those hearts remained cold, and honour consisted only in repose. To this address of the Emperor they opposed the interests of France—a useless civil war,—the country ravaged by invasion.

But they found no word of sympathy for the frightful misfortune which fell upon the benefactor, the Sovereign, who during twenty years had been the glory of France.

“Woe to these ungrateful men! *

“Unable to repress my feelings, I was proceeding to leave the apartment. The noise I made attracted the attention of the Emperor. Our eyes met; we understood each other: and as I opened the door, he said:—‘Stop, Caulincourt.’ He sat down at his desk, and wrote at full length the act of his abdication, put his signature to it, and then, proudly raising his head, said, ‘I wish to be alone,’ and when all but myself had left the room, he added, ‘Those men have neither heart nor conscience. I am less conquered by fortune than by the egotism and ingratitude of my brothers in arms — this is hideous! Now all is consummated. Leave me, my friend.’

“I shall never,” added the Duke, in a tone of deep feeling, “forget those scenes at Fontainebleau.

“There is nothing in history,” said he, “to

* Berthier, Murat, Ney, Massena, Augereau, Lefevre, Brune, Serrurier, Kellerman, Perignon, Clarke, Beurnonville, and many others, preceded Napoleon in the tomb.

be compared to these last convulsions of the French empire, to the tortures of its chief, to this agony of hours, of days!

“ Six years have passed away, and the horrible rock of St. Helena has received the last breath of the greatest man of ancient or modern times.

“ ‘ And to our eternal shame,’ observed Colonel de R——, ‘ the horrible rock of St. Helena possesses the ashes of the hero of France.’ ”

We remained some minutes under the impression of these cruel thoughts. The Duke thus resumed:—

“ At six in the morning I entered Paris. In the course of the day we presented to the council of the Allies the abdication of the Emperor. I demanded that all hostilities should be suspended, and that the different army corps of the foreign troops should cease to move upon Fontainebleau. Orders were dispatched instantly to all points, and conferences were held to determine what should be done with the Emperor and his family.

“ I am bound in justice to acknowledge, that we were seconded with energy by the Allied Sovereigns in everything that we believed it was our duty to demand for the Imperial family. Alexander said, ‘ in the pecuniary arrangements

to be made with the Emperor Napoleon, it was proper that he should have sufficient to remunerate his military household, and secure the fortune of his servants. If, ultimately, these articles of treaty were evaded or forgotten, it is to those who inherited the empire that this odious violation of justice is to be attributed.'

“The question of the residence of the Emperor was discussed with great animation. The French councillors wished him to be sent to a distance. At length they named St. Helena; then they hesitated between Corfu and Corsica; they spoke of the isle of Elba, and eulogized its fine climate—that it was, in short, superior either to Italy or France! I seized this opening to make a special demand. Complaints and perfidious insinuations arose. Elba was too near. Italy was still under the spell of Napoleon. But the Emperor Alexander, with whom I spoke a few moments, supported me with spirit, and decided that the principality of the island of Elba should be conceded to the Emperor Napoleon, to enjoy for his life, with the title of sovereignty and proprietorship.

“Whilst these conventions were under stipulation, I received a courier from Fontainebleau; the Emperor wrote to me:—‘Bring me back my abdication—I am conquered—I yield to the

fortune of arms ; a simple cartel should be sufficient.'

" In another letter, brought in the evening, he said :—

" ' Why do you speak to me of conventions of a treaty ? I want none. Since they will not treat with me, and only employ themselves about the disposal of my person, to what purpose is a treaty ? This diplomatic negotiation displeases me ; let it cease.'

" About five in the morning I was awakened by a fresh courier. He was the bearer of the following message :—

" ' I order you to bring back to me my abdication. I will sign no treaty ; and in all cases I forbid you to make any stipulations for money—that is disgusting.'

" I received seven couriers in twenty-four hours. I was perfectly bewildered. I knew what he was ignorant of. I had a dreadful announcement to make. The emissaries of the provisional government were collecting around Fontainebleau. M. de Maubreuil, in 1817, at the time of his disgraceful process, had the incredible courage to reveal for what purpose they were there.

" It was, then, most urgent to bring matters to a conclusion, and I pressed, with all my might,

the completion of the conventions. On the evening of the 14th of April, all was ready. We returned to Fontainebleau, bearers of the definitive treaty, to present it to the Emperor. Clearly as I foresaw the difficulties of his accepting it, I hoped to conquer them by force of perseverance.

“The glance of Napoleon, when he perceived me, was like lightning.

“ ‘ Do you at length bring me back my abdication ?’

“ Sire, said I to him, I beseech your Majesty to hear me before you address to me unmerited reproaches. It was no longer in my power to send back to you that act. My first care, on my arrival at Paris, was to communicate it to the Allied Sovereigns, for the purpose of obtaining a cessation of hostilities. It has served as the basis to the negotiations of the treaty. The official document of the abdication of your Majesty is already inserted in the journals.

“ ‘ And what is it to me that they have made it public, that they have inserted it in the journals, if I do not choose to treat in these forms ?’

“ I endeavoured to inform him with exactness of what was passing at Paris. I was forced to recal to his recollection the circumstances by which he was surrounded. To all I said, he replied, ‘ I will not sign—I want no treaty.’

“ A part of the day was spent in these painful debates.

“ During this, all was rumour throughout the Castle. The saloon adjoining the Emperor’s cabinet was filled with groups who discussed the news received from Paris. They were indignant that Napoleon had not yet signed, since everything had been definitively concluded. ‘ What does he wait for ? ’ Every time the door of the cabinet opened, heads were thrust forward ; they were so near that they could hear what passed within. The asylum of misfortune was violated by the barbarous curiosity of courtiers.

“ When I quitted the Emperor, I left the treaty upon his desk. I had not even been able to prevail upon him to read the whole of it. I returned to my quarters. I had need of rest ; my energy was exhausted in this incessant struggle. I almost gave myself up to despair ; but my thoughts returned to the sufferings of this great and noble victim, and I found the will and the power to attempt to alleviate them. My efforts and my devotion were still necessary to him. In the evening I returned to the Emperor, and I found him profoundly dejected. The irritation of the day had produced a cruel apathy. I strove to rouse him from this state. He replied in monosyllables, but his thoughts were elsewhere.

“ Sire, said I to him, in the name of Heaven, in the name of your own glory, come to some determination, whatever it may be ; circumstances do not admit temporizing. Sire, I cannot express the agony which preys upon me ; but when Caulincourt, your faithful, your devoted friend, conjures you, begs of you on his knees, to consider the position in which your Majesty is placed, there must be reasons most imperative which urge his perseverance.

“ ‘ What would you have me do ?’

“ And as he uttered these words he looked mournfully at me.

“ I kept silence. He arose, and walked about slowly for a long time, his hands crossed behind his back ; at length, as if waking from a painful dream, he said to me, in a calm voice—‘ It must come to an end ; I feel it : my resolution is taken.’

“ These last words were pronounced with an inflection of voice which chilled my heart.

“ ‘ To-morrow, Caulincourt.’

“ My presentiments seldom deceive me ; they are the revelations of the soul, they are the reflections of what is to come. That evening, when I took leave of the Emperor, I felt an indescribable feeling of anxiety. I could not prevail on myself to leave him. As we separated, he

took me by the hand; his hand was burning, mine was like ice; and when the door of the cabinet shut upon me, with an inexplicable sensation, I seized the key. I wished for a pretence again to enter. At length I moved away. My heart felt heavy, my ideas were confused, and I sought sleep in vain. A few hours later this internal anguish was explained. I will recount to you this horrible scene, but at present—”

“No, no, not at present,” repeated I, as I remarked the altered expression which overspread the pale countenance of the Duke de Vicenza. Though weak, and suffering myself, I could have passed the whole night in listening to the sad narrative.

CHAPTER VI.

The Duke de Vicenza summoned to the bedside of Napoleon—Horrible scene—Alarming condition of Napoleon—Mysterious disappearance of Ivan—Traditions of Fontainebleau—Napoleon's fear of losing his senses—Ratification of the treaty with the Allies—The provisional government—Proposal to the Duke de Vicenza and Marshal Macdonald to desert Napoleon—Their answers—State of Paris in April, 1814—General Leval—An anecdote—A puzzling question—Talleyrand's mode of answering it—Napoleon's impatience to leave France—The Commissioners of the Allied Sovereigns—Deserted state of Fontainebleau—Base conduct of Berthier—Noble devotedness of a cuirassier of the guards—Preparations for leaving Fontainebleau—Separation of the Emperor from his wife and child—The Duke de Vicenza leaves Fontainebleau.

“YESTERDAY evening,” said the Duke, when we met together on the following day, “I could not describe to you the dreadful night at Fontainebleau. I found myself so ill, and the recollection of it is agonizing !

“I had not been long in bed when Pelard or Constant, I now forget which, knocked loudly at my door, telling me to come with all speed to the Emperor, who wished to see me. A fearful

presentiment shot through my heart ; and before five minutes elapsed I was by the bed on which the Emperor, a prey to frightful convulsions, seemed on the point of expiring. It was a horrible sight ! His face was of a livid paleness, his lips were contracted, his hair matted to his forehead by a cold perspiration, his eyes dull and fixed. Oh ! the rigidity of that look made me shudder !” (and the Duke by an involuntary movement covered his face with his hands, as if to avoid a fearful vision.)

“ Racked by a horrible suspicion,” continued the Duke, “ I wished, but I dared not, I could not, question him.

“ ‘ Duke,’ said Ivan to me, in a low voice, ‘ he is lost if he do not drink ; he refuses every thing ; but he must drink—he must vomit. In the name of Heaven, persuade him to drink.’

“ I snatched the cup from the hands of Ivan ; it contained tea, I believe. I presented it to the Emperor, who pushed it from him. ‘ I die, Caulincourt—to you I commend my wife and son ; defend my memory—I can no longer support life.’

“ I was choking ; I could not speak. I presented again and again the cup : he again and again pushed it aside : this struggle drove me

mad—‘ Leave me alone ! leave me alone !’ said he, in a dying voice.

“ Sire, said I, excited by my grief, in the name of your glory, in the name of France, renounce a death unworthy of you.”

“ A deep sigh escaped from his heaving breast. Sire, cannot Caulincourt obtain this favour of you ?

“ I was bending over the bed, my tears fell upon his face ; he fixed his eyes upon me with an indefinable expression. I held the cup to him ; at length he drank. A vomiting, accompanied with violent spasms, threw all of us into a mortal fear. Exhausted, he fell back almost lifeless on his pillow.

“ Ivan, with a distracted air, said ‘ He must, he must drink again ! he is lost—he is lost if he do not drink,’ I again commenced my entreaties, and he resisted them. At length, by dint of supplications and prayers, he drank at intervals, and repeated vomitings brought some relief. The cramp in the stomach became less violent, his limbs became more supple, the contraction of his features ceased by degrees. He was saved !

“ During the two hours that this alarming crisis lasted, not a single complaint escaped his lips. He smothered the cries which his agony drew

from him, by grinding a handkerchief between his teeth. What fortitude that man possessed!

“The interior of this chamber of death, this agony, by the pale light of the tapers, cannot be described. The silence was uninterrupted but by the sobbings of those present. There was no witness of this terrible scene present who would not have given his own life to have saved that of Napoleon, who in his domestic retirement was the best of men, the most indulgent of masters. The regrets of all who served him survive him.

“A short calm succeeded. He slept for half an hour. During that interval, Constant told me that whilst he was in bed in the entresol beneath, he had heard a noise in the chamber of the Emperor. He ran to him, and found him in violent convulsions, his face turned upon the pillow to stifle his cries. He refused all the assistance poor Constant strove to give him. Ivan was called. When the Emperor saw him, he said ‘Ivan, the dose was not strong enough.’ Then it was they acquired the sad certainty that he had taken poison. ‘Let the Duke de Vicenza,’ added he, in a voice scarcely intelligible, ‘be called.’ The fearful crisis seized him, and at that moment I arrived.

“Alarmed for the result of the action of the poison upon the health of the Emperor, I

turned to consult Ivan, whom I thought to be still in the chamber. He had disappeared. I sent in search of him; he was nowhere to be found. This disappearance at such a moment was inexplicable. I learned at length that Ivan, alarmed at the responsibility which the words of the Emperor — ‘The dose was not strong enough’—might bring upon him, had taken the first horse he found in the court-yard of the Castle, and set off for Paris. We saw no more of him. The Emperor was lying in pain. I threw myself upon a chair; my mind took a review of the series of disasters of all sorts, which, within a month, had succeeded each other without intermission. The palace of Fontainebleau had become hateful to me. It represented to me the scenes of horror and blood of which that place had been the theatre. I called to my recollection that these same walls had witnessed another murder, and I thought I still heard groans, imprecations, prayers, and death rattle, of another victim.

“The Emperor awoke. I drew towards his bed; the attendants retired—we were alone.

“His eyes, sunk and dull, seemed seeking to recognise the persons by whom he was surrounded; a world of tortures was revealed in their expression. ‘Heaven has forbidden it,’ said he,

as if applying to some inmost thought; ‘I could not die.’

“Sire, your son — France, in which your name will live for ever, impose upon you the duty of supporting adversity.

“‘My son! my son! What a sad inheritance I leave him—a child born a King; to-day without a country. Why did they not let me die?’

“In this scene there was a contrast that startled the imagination. Napoleon poisoned, deploring the destiny of his only child. That Napoleon—he, the Sovereign whose sway had extended from the north to the south—Napoleon, the giant of battle-fields, who had planted his victorious eagles on all the capitals of Europe!

“Sire, replied I, you must not die thus. France must deplore you living!

“‘France? She has abandoned me; and you, Caulincourt—you, in my place, would have done what I did. When fortune smiled on me, have I not often faced death in the field of battle?’

“Ah, the circumstances in which your Majesty is placed are deplorable; but——

“‘It is not the loss of the throne,’ interrupted he, with vehemence, ‘which renders my existence insupportable. My military career is suf-

ficient for the glory of a man; and,' added he with emphasis, raising himself on his side, 'a crown of laurel is less fragile than the jewelled diadem which encircles the brows of the most powerful monarch. . . . But do you know what is more hard to bear than the reverses of fortune? Do you know what it is that pierces the heart most deeply? It is the baseness, the hideous ingratitude of man. I turn my head in disgust from their cowardice and selfishness. I hold life in horror; death is repose—repose at last. What I have suffered for the last twenty days cannot be comprehended.'

“ Whilst he spoke I regarded him with an inexpressible regret. Exile was about to hide the meteor which then shone so brightly. Its first rays enlightened, vivified France; and France suffered it to disappear.

“ At this moment the clock struck five; the rays of the sun, shining through the red curtains, coloured with a deep tint the serene and expressive face of Napoleon. There was so much grandeur, so much power, in this man, that it seemed he could be destroyed but by a phenomenon.

“ He raised himself up, drew back the curtain, and said, passing his hand across his forehead—
' Caulincourt, there have been moments in

these last days when I thought I should go mad—when I have felt a devouring heat here. Madness is the last stage of human degradation ; better to die a thousand times. Do you remember our visit to Charenton ?

“ I trembled. The impression of that visit to Charenton, in 1807, was not effaced ; and from that day, perhaps, a fixed idea, unchangeable as his resolution, made him prefer death to the possibility of such a calamity. Sire, I cried, banish these dreadful thoughts. Your lofty mind will never bend. Your courage ought to equal your renown. The secret of this night must not pass these walls. Europe contemplates the great Napoleon on the pedestal of his high misfortunes.

“ ‘ I comprehend you. In resigning myself to life I accept tortures which are nameless : it matters not, I will support them.’ He remained thoughtful for some moments. At length he resumed—‘ I will sign the treaty to-day. Now I am well, my friend. Go and rest yourself, Caulincourt.’

“ He wished, in sending me away, to repossess himself of the energy of which he stood in need to finish the sacrifice. I was not deceived. He appeared calm, but the calm was fearful.

“ At ten o'clock the Emperor asked for me. I found him up and dressed. His face was greatly altered, but he had resumed his self-control, and nothing in his manner bespoke the convulsion of his mind. Every now and then he fixed his eyes on mine. This silent interrogation expressed his thoughts; he spoke them not—he uttered not a single word which had relation to the scenes of the past night.

“ We discoursed of many points relative to the treaty. ‘ These pecuniary clauses,’ said he, ‘ are humiliating: they must be cancelled. I am now nothing beyond a soldier: a louis a-day will be sufficient for me.’ We discussed warmly this question; I appreciated and approved his refinement of feeling; nevertheless, the maintenance of a military establishment, his state as a Sovereign, would not permit that the stipulations in question should be suppressed. He concluded by yielding, and resigned himself to ratify the treaty—that last link which yet united him to the sovereign power he had exercised with so much glory.

“ ‘ However,’ added he, ‘ hasten the conclusion of the whole; place the treaty in the hands of the Allied Sovereigns. Tell them, Caulincourt—tell them in my name, that I treat with a conquering enemy, and not with this pro-

visional government, in which I see nothing but a committee of factious men and traitors.'

“ The two plenipotentiaries, Ney and Macdonald, were directed to come to the cabinet of the Emperor. He affixed his signature to the treaty. His ruin was consummated. All that remained of the most powerful of monarchs was the immortal man !

“ With a firm voice he gave us his last instructions ; he then added, ‘ My abdication and my ratification of the treaty cannot be obligatory, unless the Allies shall keep the promises made to the army. Do not let the documents go out of your possession until that be done.’

“ Our return to Paris excited transports of joy amongst the contrivers of the enterprise. They were about to enjoy the fruit of their labours.

“ The Council assembled, the Sovereigns and members of the provisional government were present. We officially presented the abdication and the treaty of the 14th of April, ratified by the Emperor. The discussions were adjourned till next day for divers points to be established. After the exchange of congratulations and compliments, usual in such cases, at the moment we were about to retire, the members of the provisional government, with whom in every cir-

cumstance I had carefully avoided coming in contact, solicited our adherence. General Dessoles approached me, and begged me, in flattering terms, to adhere to the new order of things, inasmuch as all the dignitaries and nearly all the generals of the army had done so.

“ Sir, answered I, in a firm voice, I regulate not my conscience by that of others. I am the plenipotentiary and the subject of the Emperor Napoleon. I shall not cease to be so until he has no more occasion for my services, and has released me from my oaths. Macdonald, with noble firmness, made a similar reply to a request of the same sort addressed to him. Freed at length from the presence of certain persons, we retired.

“ On my return home, I felt something like an interval of happiness. After the cruel shocks my feelings had sustained, a respite was comfort. My mind was in a state of perplexity. The events of the few last days recurred successively to my thoughts, and I could scarcely put faith in their reality. I repeatedly fancied myself to be under the illusion of ideal events. I felt in my waking moments that peculiar sensation of anxiety and uneasiness which assails us in sleep, during troublesome dreams.

“ Paris, at that period, was a nameless some-

thing which baffles description — a scene of disorder which overthrows all received ideas, all rules of justice and injustice, of honour and dishonour. In times of re-action, men, characters, and events, suddenly rise up and appear to be exclusively the offsprings of the temporary commotion. Society seems to be in a state of dissolution. A vertigo assails the public mind ; and every one yields to the impulses of passion, without consulting either conscience or dignity. The convictions of to-day will not be those of to-morrow. A visionary state of existence usurps the place of reality, and imparts a false colouring to all opinions. When this over-excitement subsides, we blush to find that we have been espousing the cause of rogues or fools, and made ourselves parties in iniquitous intentions. We are astonished and indignant at discovering that we have been playing the part of dupes in a comedy, in which honest men are the tools of intriguers.

“ Nothing can better prove the absence of all governmental legality, and above all, the incredible confusion which prevailed in Paris in 1814, than the following anecdote, which was related to me by one of the actors in the burlesque scene. It is perfectly characteristic of the time.

“As soon as the abdication and treaty were signed, every individual of note who had accompanied the Emperor to Fontainebleau left him and proceeded to Paris. With the exception of the Duke de Bassano, who never for a moment quitted his post, I do not think that a single minister or great dignitary remained at Fontainebleau. It was advisable to ascertain whether the bulk of the army would, with equal complaisance, adopt the new order of things; accordingly, each of the Marshals was requested to obtain as many adherences as possible from the troops under his command. A wish expressed by the dispensers of favours and places then sufficed to stimulate zeal and *patriotism*; and the question was, who should be most active in enrolling under the new banner the Generals who yet remained faithful to their old colours.

“The brave General Leval commanded a division of ten thousand men, whom he had valiantly brought from Spain to the succour of France, when she was invaded by foreign troops. His division, which arrived in the course of February, had distinguished itself in several engagements on the plains of Champagne, and was now encamped within twelve leagues of Paris. It formed part of the army corps commanded by Marshal —.

“ Instead of following the example of many other military commanders, General Leval remained with his troops, and did not come to beg favours in Paris. You know the General,” pursued the Duke. “ He is not a man of elegant appearance, or showy manners ; on the contrary, he might, in a drawing-room, be considered vulgar. But in his military capacity he was a very distinguished man, and was highly esteemed by the Emperor. In short, General Leval, who was universally respected for his talents, integrity, and courage ; who was idolized by his troops, and who enjoyed the rank of Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour, was not a recruit to be disdained, and his silence perplexed the friends of the provisional government. They could not conceive why a man, having an endowment of one hundred thousand livres to preserve, should hold himself aloof, and not come forward to tender his allegiance and his services. At that time such conduct was perfectly inexplicable.

“ Marshal — dispatched one of his aides-de-camp to General Leval with a letter, advising him as a friend to delay no longer sending to the provisional government his adherence and that of his corps of officers.

“ The officer,” pursued the Duke, “ who was

sent with this errand to General Leval, was M. de C——, who gave me an amusing account of this affair.

“ General Leval read and re-read the Marshal’s letter. ‘ I cannot comprehend this,’ said he to himself. ‘ What is the meaning of it ?’ Then, with his accustomed coolness, addressing himself to M. de C ——, ‘ Pray, Sir, can you explain this ?’

“ ‘ Explain what, General ?’

“ ‘ The Marshal writes to request my adherence and that of my officers ; but he does not state what we are to adhere to ! Will you have the goodness, Sir, to tell the Marshal that I can only answer his letter by inquiring, what we are to adhere to, and why ? (*Adherer à quoi ? Adherer pourquoi ?*)’

“ ‘ You know,’ said M. de C——, when he related his story, ‘ that General Leval is not a man whom I should take the liberty of laughing at ; yet, on hearing this *à quoi ?* and *pourquoi ?* I confess I found it not a little difficult to restrain my risibility. Not that the words conveyed to me any other meaning than the General in his soldier-like honesty meant to imply ; but because I could not imagine any satisfactory answer that could be given to his questions. The truth was, I had never myself thought about the meaning

attached to the word *adherence*, which had been for some time resounding in my ears.'

"M. de C—— returned to Paris at full speed. 'Well,' said Marshal ——, 'you have lost no time,' and he held out his hand in expectation of receiving General Leval's letter.

" 'Marshal,' said M. de C——, 'I have brought only a verbal answer.'

" 'How !' said the Marshal, frowning ; 'does he refuse his adherence ?'

" 'The General read your Excellency's letter once or twice over—'

" 'Well ?'

" 'Well, Marshal, he says he does not understand it ; and he has desired me to ask your Excellency why he is to adhere, and what he is to adhere to ?'

" 'What he is to adhere to ?' repeated the Marshal, as if an idea had suddenly flashed across his mind. 'True—I never thought of that. General Leval's question is very natural. He is quite right—Hark ye ! M. de C—— ; go immediately to the Prince de Benevento, and tell him that I sent to solicit the adherence of General Leval. Repeat to him the answer which the General sent to my letter, and request him to give you the explanation which the Ge-

neral wishes. It is a singular affair! *à quoi? pourquoi?* I will be hanged if I can answer the question.'

"On arriving at Prince Talleyrand's hotel, M. de C—— sent in his name, and was immediately admitted.

" 'Prince,' said he, ' Marshal —— has sent me to consult your Excellency relative to General Leval's adherence.'

" 'What about it, Sir; I suppose the General has sent it——'

" 'Prince, the General declares that he does not understand what is required of him. When he read the Marshal's letter, he said, with astonishment—*Adhere to what?—Why are we to adhere?* The Marshal has now sent me to request your Excellency to——'

" 'You are the son of M. de C——, the master of the ceremonies, I believe,' said Prince Talleyrand, interrupting the young officer.

" 'I am, Prince ——. The Marshal requests that——'

" 'Ah! and how is your father? Is he in Paris?'

" 'He is very well, Prince ——. The Marshal begs——'

" 'I should be delighted to see him.'

“ With these words, Prince Talleyrand rose from his seat, and hobbled towards the door, with a cool *marquois* sort of air, peculiar to himself. ‘ Pray present my compliments to the Marshal.—Tell him the provisional government will profit by his advice—and is obliged to him.’

“ M. de C—— declared that he laughed all the way from the Rue Saint Florentin to the Marshal’s hotel. The answer I had now to deliver was almost as good as the General’s.

“ ‘ Well, what says the Prince ?’ inquired the Marshal, eagerly.

“ ‘ He sends you his compliments, and the thanks of the provisional government,’ replied M. de C——.

“ With this sort of levity,” added the Duke de Vicenza, “ affairs the most important to the country were frequently treated.”

“ It was truly pitiable,” observed I ; “ but nevertheless, the story you have just related is exceedingly amusing. Certainly M. de Talleyrand is the cleverest man in the world for getting out of a difficulty.”

“ A few days afterwards,” resumed the Duke de Vicenza, “ I heard the counter-part of the anecdote from General Leval himself. With

that blunt simplicity of manner which characterizes him, he thus narrated the affair :—

“ ‘ I was quietly established at head quarters, and instead of orders, the most absurd reports were transmitted to us from Paris. I could perceive that some fermentation was rising up ; but I remained firm at my post. I assembled my troops, and passing along the front ranks of each regiment, I declared that the first man, whether officer or private, who dared to flinch from his duty, I would run my sword through his body. Aye ! and they knew I would keep my word ; for every man kept firmly to his post, I assure you.

“ ‘ When Marshal —— wrote to me, I saw clearly how affairs were going on ; but would it have become me, overwhelmed as I was with the Emperor’s favours, to have put his cockade in my pocket, and have forsaken him. All my promotion, from the rank of serjeant, has, it is true, been earned by my blood on the field of battle ; but my titles and endowments, to whom do I owe them ? To the Emperor ; and certainly he never owed me anything. It would be the vilest ingratitude in me to have forgotten his benefits and betrayed him.

“ ‘ When the Emperor released us from our

oaths; and when his abdication was officially communicated, then I did as others had done. . . . Then, and not till then, I sent this much-talked of adherence. But tell me, Duke, don't you think I had good reason to be offended at the Marshal's letter?—Was it not a shameful proposition to make to a man of honour—an old General who has grown gray in the field of battle?

“There is something soothing to the feelings,” said the Duke de Vicenza, “in the admirable conduct of General Leval, contrasted as it is with the prevailing turpitude of the time. Unfortunately I had not to treat with the army, which offered more than one consolatory example; and the duties of another kind, which I continued to discharge till the Emperor's departure, have left behind them only afflicting recollections.

“However great the activity I used after my return to expedite the arrangements for the departure of the Emperor, I did not proceed sufficiently fast for his wishes. He sent courier after courier to me to hurry the arrangements. ‘Caulincourt,’ he wrote to me in one of his short notes, ‘I wish to depart. Who would have ever supposed that the air of France would become heavy and suffocating to me? The ingratitude of mankind kills more surely than steel or poison.

It has rendered my existence a burden. Hasten, hasten my departure.'

“ It was decided that the four great powers should each send a commissioner to the Emperor. Alexander sent General Schouwaloff, to whom he gave particular instructions; Austria, General Koller; England, Colonel Campbell; and Prussia, General Valdebourg Truchssefs.

“ As I did not fear the sight of these commissioners would be disagreeable to the Emperor, I had urgent reasons to wish they should immediately betake themselves to Fontainebleau. They arrived there on the 16th, in the morning. I put off other discussions relative to the treaty, and hastened to rejoin Napoleon. What a life was mine in those days of desolation!

“ When I arrived at Fontainebleau I passed through the small number of troops yet remaining with the Emperor. Nothing can express the grief which was depicted in the countenances of these soldiers. Their looks sought in mine the nature of the sentiments I felt for the Emperor. They had seen so many cowardly defections. When they beheld me, cries of ‘ Long live the Emperor!’ overwhelmed me. I comprehended their feelings, and this recompensed me for the many cruel and disgusting scenes I had witnessed. The sympathy which existed between

these brave men and me was highly gratifying. In the midst of the general perversity there were some who knew that honour consisted in fidelity to misfortune.

“ But this good impression was very soon superseded by one of a different nature. The galleries and the saloons adjoining the apartment of the Emperor were deserted. With the Marshals had disappeared the officers of their respective staffs. The blast of adversity had passed over, and the gilded mob had vanished. This solitude was striking. The redoubtable chief, who never moved without a magnificent retinue,—the great monarch, who had seen kings at his feet,—was now nothing more than a private individual, disinherited even of the friendship and care of his own friends! Everything in this splendid palace inflicted wounds and horror. I was in a fever of impatience to withdraw the Emperor as soon as possible from this torture.

“ On my arrival, I found him alone in the little garden, between the Galerie des Cerfs and the chapel. The sound of my footsteps roused him from his reverie. He turned his head quickly—a ray of joy brightened his countenance. When I got close to him, he took my arm, and, continuing his walk, said, ‘ Is all ready for my departure?’

“ I answered, Yes, Sire ; seeking to allay my emotion.

“ ‘ ’Tis well, Caulincourt. You exercise for the last time the functions of grand equerry near my person.’ (There was a most distressing allusion in this phrase.) ‘ Can you believe that Berthier has departed—departed without wishing me farewell ?’

“ Sire, said I, overcome by the indignation I had for many days repressed, Berthier has no importance but by the predilection of your Majesty. Under your orders any man of punctuality and memory would have made a good major-general. This is essentially the negative merit of Berthier. His conduct towards your Majesty in these last days will establish justly the part which belongs to him in the immortal campaigns of the grand army. The Prince of Neufchatel, Sire, has descended from the pedestal on which your friendship had mounted him.

“ ‘ Berthier,’ said the Emperor, ‘ was born a courtier. You will see him begging an employment of the Bourbons.’

“ He afterwards spoke to me with dignity of the shameful conduct which the great officers of the empire had shewn to him. ‘ I was,’ said he, ‘ mortified to see men whom I had raised so high in the eyes of Europe bringing them-

selves so low. What has become of the halo of glory which encircled them? What now must Sovereigns think of all these illustrations of my reign? I have done well,' added he, smiling bitterly, 'I have done well. Caulincourt, this France is mine; everything by which it is disfigured is to me a personal affront, I am so identified with it. But I must go in and sit down; I feel fatigued. Have you seen the commissioners?'

"No, Sire; I came immediately from my carriage to your Majesty.

"See them, Caulincourt. Hasten, hasten my departure. It is too long delayed.'

"Just as we left the garden, a cuirassier of the guard, in great agitation, came from the Galerie des Cerfs, where he had probably been watching an opportunity of speaking to the Emperor. He ran towards us.

"What do you want?'

"Please your Majesty, I demand justice,' said he, in a supplicating voice.

"What has happened?'

"An odious act of injustice has been done to me. I am thirty-six years old; twenty-two years I have been in the service. I have my decoration,' said he, striking roughly his broad breast, 'and yet I am not in the list of those who are to

go with your Majesty. If I am thus sent to the right about, blood shall flow for it. I will make a vacancy amongst the privileged. This affair shall not pass thus.'

" ' You have, then, a strong desire to go with me?'

" ' It is not a desire, my Emperor, it is my right, my honour, which I claim, and——'

" ' Have you well considered this?' said Napoleon, with kindness—' that you must quit France, your family, your promotion? You are a quarter-master.'

" ' I relinquish my promotion,' said he, bluntly. ' I have my *galons* and my cross; they will suffice. I will pass over the rest. In such a time as this, our country is our regiment, the steeple of the parish church our standard. As to my family, you have been my family these two-and-twenty years—you, my general. I was a trumpeter in Egypt, if you can but remember.'

" ' Very well, you shall go with me, my good man. I will arrange it.'

" ' Thanks, thanks to your Majesty! I should have done some mischief, that is certain, if I had not been permitted to go.' And the poor fellow retired with pride and happiness.

" ' Caulincourt,' said the Emperor, with emo-

tion, 'I can only take with me four hundred men, and the whole of my brave guard wish to follow me. Amongst those *courtiers*, the question is which shall be most ingenious in finding in the antiquity of his services, and the number of his armorial bearings, claims to share with me my exile? Brave, brave men! why cannot I take you all with me?' and he pressed my arm convulsively.

"His departure was fixed for the 20th; two days only remained. Every moment I could snatch from the business of preparation I passed with the Emperor, whose days flowed on in desponding uniformity. Not a visit of duty, not a recollection of gratitude, broke in upon this solitude. The Emperor did not complain; but he suffered. Every time the sound of a carriage interrupted the silence of the courts of the Palace anxiety was visible in his looks. He seemed to listen unconsciously. Some name escaped him — 'Molé,' 'Fontanes,' 'Berthier,' 'Ney,' and nobody, nobody came. Little disappointments thus continually repeated are dreadful—they wear out resignation and courage.

"Montholon, who had been on a military reconnoissance, arrived from the banks of the Haute Loire. He spoke with enthusiasm of the feeling which animated the people and the sol-

diers. ‘By rallying the troops of the South,’ said he, ‘a formidable force might still be assembled.’ ‘It is too late,’ replied the Emperor, with an indescribable expression, ‘they would not——’

“A second time this reproach fell from his lips, and in these words a terrible accusation was contained. But men and fortune would have been wearied before the genius of the hero !

“The preparations were completed by the morning of the 19th. The moving about, the occupation of looking to everything that could render the journey less painful—in fact, my agitation supported me. But when all was done, and I could no longer render myself insensible to the termination of these cares, I felt my heart rent at the idea of a separation so close at hand. I shut myself up and tried to calm myself. My grief could only increase the agonies of the Emperor. I had yet duties to fulfil, orders to receive; he relied on me, and it was not fit my courage should fail.

“In the morning he sent for me. He appeared resigned, but his air of dejection, the haughty expression of his eyes, the unusual slowness of his movements, evinced the violence of his efforts to smother his excruciating sorrow. As a man, he suffered a thousand deaths. What

matter? That was his secret; and he kept it to himself; he was to render to no one an account of it. As a Sovereign, it was his duty to shew himself dignified and composed in the presence of misfortune.

“ ‘Caulincourt, is all ready?’ I made a sign in the affirmative. ‘To-morrow, at twelve o’clock, I shall step into my carriage,’ he added, in a hurried tone.

“ I could not utter a word. He looked at me for a few moments, and held his hand to me. ‘Caulincourt, I am heart-broken. We ought never to part.’

“ Sire, cried I, in despair, I will go with you; France has become hateful to me!

“ ‘No, Caulincourt, you must not quit France with me: you may still be useful to me here. Who is to look to the interests of my family, and of my faithful servants? Who is to defend the cause of those brave and devoted Poles, of whom the 19th article of the treaty guarantees the rights acquired by honourable services! Think well. It would be a shame for France, for me, for all of us, Caulincourt, if the interests of the Poles were not irrevocably secured.

“ ‘In conformity to the right which the 19th article gives me, I have caused a statement to be prepared—I have fixed the sums which I wish

to be paid to my guard, my civil and military household, and to my attendants. Fidelity cannot be recompensed with money; but at present it is all I have to give. Tell them it is a remembrance which I leave to each individually, as an attestation of their good services. Be on the watch, Caulincourt, till these arrangements are fulfilled.'

“ I assured him his commands should be religiously obeyed.

“ ‘ In a few days, I shall be established in my sovereignty of the Isle of Elba,’ resumed he, with bitterness. ‘ I am in haste to get there. I have dreamed of great things for France. Time failed me—the concurrence of all was requisite—they have refused me. I told you, Caulincourt, at Duben, the French nation knows not how to support reverses. This people, the bravest and most intelligent in the world, has no pertinacity but in flying to the combat—defeat demoralizes them. During sixteen years the French have marched with me from victory to victory; a single year of disasters has made them forget everything!’

“ He sighed deeply. ‘ The way in which I have been treated is infamous—and, what!’ said he, with animation; ‘ they separate me violently from my wife and child! In what barbarous code

do they find the article which deprives a Sovereign of his rights as a father and a husband? By what savage law do they arrogate the power to separate those whom God has joined? History will avenge me! It will say "Napoleon, the soldier, the conqueror, was clement and generous in victory. Napoleon, when conquered, was treated with indignity by the monarchs of Europe." "

"Large drops of perspiration were on his forehead, his agitation increased every moment. He gave me the most dreadful pain. Sire, interrupted I, all my zeal, all my efforts, shall be exerted to put an end to this impious separation. It is the cause of all fathers and all citizens —

" — It is a planned thing. Do you not see, that because they dare not blow my brains out with a pistol, they assassinate me by slow degrees? There are a thousand means of causing death.'

"Sire, in the name of Heaven, be calm; your Majesty may rely on me. I will see the Emperor of Austria on his arrival at Paris. The Empress will second me; she will wish to rejoin you. Have hope, Sire, have hope.

"As I spoke, his aspect brightened. His heart, dead to soft emotions, began to resume hope.

“ ‘ You are right, Caulincourt, my wife loves me ; I believe it. She has never had cause to complain of me. It is impossible that I have become indifferent to her. Louise is amiable in her disposition, and simple in her tastes. She will prefer her husband’s home to a duchy granted in charity ; and in the Isle of Elba I can yet be happy with my wife and my son.’

“ The Emperor walked quickly up and down his cabinet ; a fixed idea was impressed upon his mind, and his impressions, always quick and ardent, readily adopted the projects to which his imagination gave birth. Who knows, if Napoleon had been united to his wife and son, that France would have had to deplore the misfortunes of the hundred days, and subsequently the captivity and death of the hero ?

“ But this hope, which for a moment soothed his grief, I shared not in. I tried the negotiation ; I pressed it ; I supplicated ; I was not seconded nor aided by any one.

“ The irritation of the Emperor was calmed ; he spoke to me without asperity of the state of affairs. He defined the difficulties which would render the stability of the new order of things impossible. He analysed what was likely to ensue from the absurd combination which would re-establish the Bourbons on the throne.

‘Between the old Bourbons,’ said he, ‘and the present generation of Frenchmen, there is an incompatibility of feeling. The future is big with events. Caulincourt, write often to me; your letters will make some amends for your absence from me. The remembrance of your conduct towards me will reconcile me to the human race. You are the most perfect of my friends.’ He held out his arms to me, I embraced him.

“‘My friend,’ pursued the Emperor, ‘we must separate. To-morrow I shall have occasion for all my courage to quit my soldiers. My brave guard! Faithful and devoted, in my good and in my bad fortune! To-morrow I take my last farewell. This is the final struggle that remains for me to make.’ He then added, with an accent broken with emotion, ‘Caulincourt, we shall meet again one day, my friend,’ and he rushed out of the cabinet.

“I was a league from Fontainebleau, on the high road to Paris,” continued the Duke de Vicenza, in a faltering voice, “before I felt conscious as to how and why I was there. On quitting the Emperor’s cabinet, scarcely knowing what I did, I threw myself into my carriage, which was waiting at the entrance to the grand staircase.

“I could no longer deceive myself; all was now over! At that moment I was a prey to the most poignant grief. It seemed to me as though I had never before measured the full depth of the abyss. Certainly I had never before so highly appreciated the personal merits of Napoleon;—he had never appeared to me more great than at the moment when he was about to depart in exile from France. . . . I regarded him as the expiatory victim, chosen from among us all to redeem the crime of our twenty years of glory and conquest. My thoughts followed him to his miserable sovereignty of Elba.

“I was independent in my fortune on the overthrow of the empire. I was tired of men and things. I wished for repose; but repose without him. . . . It was the ruin of all the delightful illusions which gave a value to life. I did not comprehend how I should henceforth drag out my colourless existence. I dreamed of travels into remote lands, of mental occupations, which should fill the measureless void of my days to come. I questioned the future, and in the future was written, in letters of blood, ‘ Waterloo.’ ”

CHAPTER VII.

Occupation of France by the Allies—Thoughts on the restoration—Entrance of Louis XVIII. into Paris—The Duchess d'Angouleme—The Prince de Condé and the Duke de Bourbon—A strange incongruity—The Imperial guards—Blue uniforms—Conversation between the Emperor Alexander and Louis XVIII.—The Duke de Vicenza's unpardonable fault—Execution of treaties—Napoleon's letters from Elba—The Bourbons—Their incapability to govern France—Napoleon's return from Elba—A courier from Lyons—The deserters of Fontainebleau in the saloons of the Tuileries—Queen Hortense and her children—Review on the Place du Carrousel—The Emperor and the old grenadier—The Duke de Vicenza appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs—His conversation with Napoleon—The Emperor's desire to secure peace—Plots against Napoleon's life—A love-letter.

“AFTER the departure of the Emperor, I devoted my attention to everything that could promote the immediate execution of the treaty. I even went beyond zeal in the fulfilment of this duty. In addition to the continued pertinacity with which I urged forward my melancholy task, I had an actual necessity for something to occupy

my thoughts. I felt that fever of the soul which only finds relief in an absorbing activity. My most doleful forebodings had not prepared me for the deplorable change of fortune which had annihilated the edifice reared by so many marvellous exploits!

“ For those who, through ambition or affection, attached themselves to the new government, there was no change in France beyond a name, a man. To me, this name, this man, were the personification of regenerated France. I could not understand a state of things in flagrant opposition to all our interests, to all our sympathies. I could not consider any longer as my country the land crowded with innumerable armed foreigners, who made themselves masters in our cities, in our streets, in our fields, in our villages, in our chateaus, in our cottages. This occupation of the country by six hundred thousand enemies banished the last illusion with respect to the opinion which had presided in the choice of the Bourbons to govern France. We were no longer anything but tributaries at the mercy of a coalition, intoxicated with their late easy successes. The government *de facto*, and that which had succeeded the empire, were but, according to my notions, a transition to I know not what kind of constituted

authority. In a word, it was difficult to regard in a serious light, this great comedy of the restoration.

“ I had on this subject some curious conversations with the Emperor of Russia. Alexander readily allowed the person with whom he conversed the liberty of expressing his opinion ; and we sometimes laughed heartily at the conceits given as food for the *gobemouches*. Unfortunately in this parade of government all was not a matter of joke.

“ The Emperor of Russia possessed an enlightened understanding. Moreover, he was young, and his ideas were suited to the age in which he lived. He had admired the good faith and the genius of Napoleon ; our army had been the model upon which he strove to form his own, and in the heart of Alexander, in spite of everything, a generous regret arose when he compared what he now saw with what he had seen.

“ Certainly, strange things were passing before our eyes. We saw Louis XVIII. make his entry into Paris in an open carriage. His dress was curious. It was a costume that belonged to no country : two enormous epaulettes, however, denoted a wish to give it somewhat of a military character. Beside the King sat the Duchess d'Angouleme. His feelings were powerfully

excited, and she was bathed in tears, evidently wrung from her by bitter recollections. On the opposite seat, were the Prince de Condé and the Duke de Bourbon, both in old-fashioned military uniforms, such as were worn at the time of their emigration. Heaven forbid that I should say anything which may seem to cast ridicule on old age or misfortune! If the carriage had passed through the streets of Paris escorted by the friends and servants of the restored family, the whole procession would have been perfectly consistent and in keeping. It would have presented to the eyes of the multitude a living tradition of the old regime personified by the Bourbons; there would have been no deviation from good taste and propriety. But the carriage being preceded, surrounded, and followed, by the Imperial guards, was one of those paradoxes, the explanation of which baffles common sense.

“ Louis XVIII. entered Paris escorted by the faithful and devoted guards of Napoleon, whose worn uniforms bore evidence of the toils and dangers they had encountered in the conflict in which they had fought so nobly to repel all that they were now forced to accept.

“ What dark and threatening looks they cast around them! What an expression of proud

disdain was depicted on those warlike countenances in answer to the frenzied demonstrations of Parisian inconstancy.

“ In ancient Rome the triumphal car of a conqueror, decorated with spoil, was oftener than once seen surrounded by the guards of a conquered foe. But we were not in Rome; we were in Paris, where the conqueror had conquered no one. At no very distant time, these facts will perhaps appear fabulous !

“ Alexander was struck with the incongruity between the places and the persons; the disparity between the old and the new, with the mixture of what was with what had been. Time, in a period of twenty-two years, had remodelled men, their opinions, their ideas, their interests, and their institutions. Thus the old King, when he awoke in Paris, gazed around with astonishment, recognising neither men, opinions, things, interests, or institutions. ‘ Give me,’ said he to himself, ‘ those good, old, well-beloved countenances, which do not regard me as a foreigner in my kingdom of France. Give me the good old uniforms, the *gardes de corps*, with their laced clothes, the noble livery of my ancestors, the red *mousquetaires*, or the gray, or the black, who were distinguished under my forefathers. Those splendid uniforms would bring repose to my

eyes, wearied with these blue satellites of the republic and the empire, who for twenty years have shut me out from my dominions.'

"The army, *en masse*, was dishonoured, ill-used, and disbanded. Its glory was repudiated; its best services forgotten: its noble wounds were despised. Those who had conquered millions for their country were delivered up to misery. Before the eyes of the fierce grenadiers of Napoleon, they paraded the gay household troops of the King.

"But in these indignant bosoms the hearts of lions were beating, and the month of March dispersed in its hurricance the gilded doves which served to ornament the Court of the old King!

"At the second entry of the Allies, in 1815, we often spoke of 1814, with the Emperor Alexander. 'Many faults were committed,' said he to me one day.

"Yes, Sire, replied I, quickly, and one person has paid for all.

"'My dear Duke,' interrupted he, with an air of solicitude, 'every one will pay his share, I fear. These people are incapables. We are deceived. May it please Heaven that the peace so dearly purchased be not again broken.'

"I have told you," continued the Duke, "that I owed to the Emperor of Russia, in

1814, and afterwards in 1815, my escape from the persecutions of which I was the object. I had never claimed his protection. It was known that he accorded me his favour and friendship, and they did not dare to pass certain bounds. He had on more than one occasion to explain himself bluntly with *qui de droit*, when after the hundred days violent measures were resolved upon against me.

“ ‘Sire,’ said he to Louis XVIII., ‘I have proposed to the Duke de Vicenza, in testimony of the peculiar esteem in which I hold him, a brilliant settlement in my dominions; he has declined it. “They will believe,” replied he, “that I flew from the dangers of my new position, and that after having devoted myself to the cause of Napoleon, I recoiled from the consequences of my conduct. I wish to live as I have done, to hold my head high among my fellow-citizens. Public approbation indemnifies me for the injustice of power.”’

“ ‘It is curious,’ said Louis XVIII., pretending to laugh, ‘that the grand equerry of Bonaparte (for so he always designated me) should believe that we owe him our acknowledgments.’

“ ‘Your Majesty,’ replied Alexander, piqued, ‘knows that the gospel informs us no man can serve two masters. The Duke is only ambitious

of the acknowledgments of the master to whom he has been faithful.'

" ' Much good may they do him, then,' replied the King, drily.

" I have been well attacked and well defended, said I, laughing, to the Emperor Alexander; and I begged that he would not, on my account, carry on this little warfare with his brother of France, of whom I sought neither favours nor good graces. Hereafter I will tell you how Alexander himself had reason to be dissatisfied with Louis XVIII.

" ' It is because, my dear Duke,' replied he, ' there is in me something that revolts against stupid prejudice. Are attachment and devotion to an unfortunate Sovereign such common things that we monarchs ought not to be profoundly moved by them?'

" Sire, your Majesty preaches in a desert; they do not comprehend you. My conduct during the proceedings at Fontainebleau is a fault which can never be overlooked. I have too much pride to seek an absolution which I do not require.

" But let us return," said the Duke, " to 1814, when, after disgusts and bickerings of all kinds, I obtained, step by step, the execution of those articles which were capable of being immediately acted upon, whether in respect to the brave

Poles, or in respect to Napoleon and his family. Besides this, I claimed such guarantees as I could get; but what were guarantees in opposition to dishonesty? Engagements the most sacred were basely violated.

“ I frequently received news from the Isle of Elba. The Emperor supported with heroic courage the loss of the greatest throne in the world. In one of his letters he said to me, ‘ It is less difficult than people think to accustom one’s self to a life of retirement and peace, when one possesses within one’s self some resource to make time useful. I employ myself much in my study, and when I go out I enjoy some happy moments in seeing again my brave grenadiers. Here my reflections are not continually coming in contact with painful recollections.’

“ In another letter I find the following passage, which bears the stamp of the wonderful nature of Napoleon:—

“ ‘ The lot of a dethroned king, who has been born a king, and nothing more, must be dreadful. The pomp of the throne, the gewgaws which surround him from his cradle, which accompany him step by step throughout his life, become a necessary condition of his existence. For me, always a soldier, and a sovereign by chance, the luxuries of royalty proved a heavy charge. The

toils of war and a rough camp life are best suited to my organization, my habits, and my tastes. Of all my past grandeur I alone regret my soldiers; and of all the jewels of my crown, the French uniforms which they allowed me to take with me are the most precious I have preserved.”

The Duke ceased speaking for a few moments. I understood the sacred impression of his recollections!

He resumed: “I was not in the secret of the intended return from Elba, and from the knowledge I have of the character of Napoleon, I am convinced that that daring project was executed as soon as it was conceived. The Emperor was deceived by statements, not wilfully false, but made without reflection, by persons who were not so situated as to be enabled to judge of the fitting opportunity for this extraordinary act.

“The Government took a false course. It lost its way amidst mixed institutions which were neither of the old or new regime. It ought to have been left to wear itself out in its own incapability. The Allies would have appreciated the dangers menaced to the tranquillity of Europe through the nullity of the rulers they had given to France.

“The Bourbons did not comprehend what

Henry IV. comprehended so completely, that they had nothing to fear from their friends, and everything to dread from their enemies ; and of these enemies they were every day, with incredible blindness, increasing the numbers.

“ I here express conscientiously my opinion, free from all resentment. As private men, the Bourbons possessed elevation of mind, nobleness, and a great fund of goodness. As sovereigns, their name is worn out, their race is exhausted.

“ Had the Bourbons been destined to reign in Holland or Germany, they might have reigned peaceably over a quiet and religious people. The Bourbon family, in the condition in which it finds itself placed, in reference to France, will never permanently establish itself there.

“ In 1814, I followed attentively the march of power, and it was easy to foresee that in a short time they must fall beneath their own blows. The news of the landing of the Emperor alarmed me. It was too early ! This fault destroyed my last hopes. The Emperor said to me on the 20th of March, at the Tuileries, ‘ that the success of his temerity was a return of that mysterious destiny which had spoiled him during so many years.’ I regarded it only as the accomplishment of those terrible decrees of fate which overthrew thrones, kings, and nations.

“ I received by a courier, who came in thirty-two hours from Lyons, a short note from the Emperor. It was as follows :—‘ Success has justified all. I have re-conquered France and the French. In eight days I shall be in Paris. Lyons, March 10.’

“ I must say, in spite of my sombre apprehensions, that I was happy, truly happy ! The triumphant march of Napoleon through France made the hearts of his friends swell with pride. He was still the chosen of the people ! the man of miracles, whose delusive presence worked prodigies !

“ History, in narrating this phasis of the life of Napoleon, can never rise to the height of the subject. In characters of fire must be recorded the magnificent popular ovation which bore the exiled monarch from the gulf of Juan to the palace of the Tuileries. Future ages will behold kings pass away without emotion. Love, devotion, admiration, whatever the French nation could render to its sovereign, is buried in the tomb with Napoleon !

“ I went to meet the Emperor, whom I rejoined near the barrier, at Fontainebleau. He was escorted by the population, and by the troops who had been sent to fight against him. It was a touching spectacle, that cortège for

which no preparation had been made, which was joined by all the military he met on his way. All faces were beaming with delight, and never did the physiognomy of Napoleon in the very last days of his triumphs express so much happiness. Perceiving me, he held out his hand quickly. 'Caulincourt! Well, you see me!' I could not speak. 'Go, and wait for me at the Tuileries,' added he, with emotion. 'Go, Caulincourt.'

"I joined the cortège, and a little before we arrived at the Carrousel I got before the Emperor. It was not easy to get through the mob, which rushed towards the chateau. He was carried by the multitude to the top of the great staircase.

"It was a curious thing to find in the saloons of the Tuileries the greater number of those persons who had deserted the saloons at Fontainebleau. Almost all the old ministers, almost all the marshals, thronged around the Emperor. Apart I reflected that in many circumstances impudence supplies the place of an impossible justification.

"I looked at the countenance of Napoleon; there was a cloud of disdain in its expression. yet his tongue uttered nothing but kind words.

His theme had been prepared, he had *forgotten* that which he could not pardon.

“ Queen Hortense and her lovely children met him at the chateau. Tears of joy inundated the face of the Queen. Amiable Hortense ! she united to the charming qualities of a mother, a quick and penetrating mind, and a powerful understanding. The Emperor tenderly cherished Hortense and Eugene—the noble Eugene, whose unblemished life, whose conduct towards Napoleon, before and after his reverses, ought to be cited as a model of dignity and propriety, opposed to so much base ingratitude.

“ After the first moments given to the effusion of feeling, the Emperor, with his usual activity, was occupied all night in expediting orders, re-organizing the offices, and composing his cabinet. This was prodigious ; but we were accustomed to find him indefatigable. When engaged in mental occupation he neither felt fatigue nor the want of sleep. He used to say that twenty-two hours out of twenty-four ought to be usefully employed.

“ At the moment I took my leave, he said, ‘ Early to-morrow, Caulincourt ; ’ and these words in a tone as if we had to terminate a business commenced the day before.

“ At nine o’clock in the morning, the garden, the courts, the staircases, the rooms, were filled with a joyful throng. There was a deafening clapping of hands. From without, the people with frantic acclamations called for the Emperor, who shewed himself from time to time; but there was something constrained in his countenance. He was not fond of these revolutionary parades.

“ The grenadiers of the Isle of Elba, who had marched nearly two hundred leagues in twenty days with Napoleon, arrived in succession at Fontainebleau, where the Emperor ordered them to rest, on the night of the 20th. They bivouaced in the court of the Tuileries, and nothing can paint the proud expression spread over the warlike faces of these men. The Emperor was to review them at noon, and although harrassed with fatigue, and for the most part without shoes or stockings, their feet lacerated, they were to be seen busying themselves to appear smart.

“ At this review a little episode occurred, which, though unnoticed by many, struck me very much by the local colouring which imparted to it an infinite charm.

“ All the neighbourhood of the palace was covered with troops. It seemed as if, by the

wand of some great magician, they had risen out of the earth. The regiments sent to oppose Napoleon, and which the day before were twenty or thirty leagues from the capital, arrived in succession every moment, with colours flying, and music playing. They took their places in the square of the Carrousel, now occupied by the army of Paris, which two days before was commanded by the Duke de Berry.

“ Napoleon, attended by an immense retinue of staff-officers, came down at twelve o'clock. He harangued the troops, and passed along the front of all the regiments assembled. He had for all of them those ready words which never fail to produce a marked impression on the persons to whom they are addressed. In one corner the grenadiers of Elba were grouped together, in their tattered uniforms. Exhaustion was imprinted on their manly countenances, as they awaited their turn to pass in review before their Emperor. When Napoleon drew near them, a burst of shouts impossible to describe overwhelmed him. He answered only with smiles, and with an affectionate nod of the head. An old soldier, whose eyes glistened beneath his worn-out cap, and who appeared to be dissatisfied with the silence of Napoleon, grumbled out, ‘ The devil ! this is short work ; he has grown so hoarse with

talking to the rest that he has nothing to say to us!

“ The Emperor heard him. He turned back, and stopped short, and with an air, an accent, and a manner which cannot be described, he said : ‘ What reason have you to complain? Have you not returned with me from the Isle of Elba?’ and he continued to walk on.

“ Caps were thrown up, and deafening shouts and hurras followed him till he was out of sight.

“ In this simple trait is shown the fabulous power which he exercised over the army, and the inexhaustible enthusiasm which is attached to the recollection of him.

“ The Emperor employed the whole day in dispatching couriers in re-constructing the government ; ‘ for,’ said he, ‘ they have overturned everything—everything is to be begun again.’

“ In the evening he was compelled by lassitude to take some repose. He shut himself up in his cabinet, and for the first time since his return we were alone. He sat close to the fire-place, with his feet upon the fender, and his arms crossed. He was in an excellent humour. He said, jokingly,

“ ‘ You must be astonished, Mr. Diplomatist.’

“ Yes, Sire.

“ ‘I am concerned for your Excellency ; my poor Caulincourt, you see ambassadors cost a good deal of money, and do very little good. It is better for a Sovereign to manage his affairs himself ;’ and he rubbed his hands together in a bantering manner.

“ I replied, laughing, Your method, Sire, is more expeditious.

“ ‘All is going on very well, but we have plenty of work upon our hands. First of all it is decided you must resume the portfolio of foreign affairs.’

“ Sire, I have requested to be employed in the army. I fear circumstances will place your Majesty under the necessity of——

“ ‘ You spoke to me of Molé,’ interrupted he, pursuing his idea, ‘ I do not wish to appoint him, and probably he himself does not care about it ; he is not sufficiently compromised in my cause to plunge himself into it up to the neck, at least up to the new order of things. He would in foreign affairs be good for nothing. He does not know the foreign cabinets, and they do not know him. That notion of yours is ridiculous.’

“ ‘ It is only you, Caulincourt, who can be of service to me in this post ; the last negotiations of Fontainebleau have in every respect placed you in a favourable light, and, *par dieu !* you

never really ceased to be my monitor for foreign affairs! Metternich must be written to; negotiations with Austria must be renewed. It is from that quarter we must expect some facilities in arranging our affairs with Europe.'

"Sire, you need my services. I will again take the portfolio, but I do not share your Majesty confidence with respect to the assistance which Austria will accord.

" 'Ah, bah; that is your hobby-horse,' said he, rising up impatiently; 'why should not Austria assist me? I have proclaimed peace throughout my march. I have promised peace, and as far as depends on me, my promise shall be fulfilled. Circumstances are imperative. I will recognise the treaty of Paris. I can now accept what I could not accept at Châtillon without tarnishing my glory. France was obliged to make sacrifices. The act is done; but it did not become me to strip France to preserve the crown. I take the affairs of the country as I find them; I wish the continuation of peace. It is the sound policy of the Powers not to rekindle the torch of war.'

" 'I have written to the Empress,' (I was surprised at this unusual designation from the mouth of the Emperor, who constantly said my wife or Louise;) 'she will prevail upon her father to

rejoin me—what reason can he have to oppose it? I do not return with hostile intentions. I have marched through France without firing a shot. I do not wish to re-commence war.’

“Sire, it will be necessary to impress this conviction on the minds of the Allied Sovereigns. This is the difficulty which prevails throughout the question, and Europe is still in arms.

He reflected. ‘I comprehend you—I comprehend you, Caulincourt. My return, believe me, is not the result of a sudden and unpremeditated whim. Certain persons thought I was too near to them—and the rock of St. Helena is a sure place. Did you know nothing of these projects?’

“No, Sire; and I will lay a wager that the atrocious idea took birth only in the heads of those miserable creatures whom nothing can convince. There is an atrocious design in the snare spread for your Majesty.

“— A snare! a snare!” As he repeated these words he walked hastily up and down the room. ‘Is France, then, become a den of thieves?’ After a few minutes of meditation he resumed, ‘The die is cast! I am not come back to overturn, but to restore. I wish to give France solid institutions, in harmony with modern ideas. Utopian visions have taken possession of the public mind during my absence, and it is re-

markable, that under the reign of the Bourbons the revolutionary factions have revived those fallacious theories which put words in the place of things. These English kings (*rois Anglaises*) have made me lose in ten months the ten years I employed in subduing the revolution; they have rendered all government in the hands of a single individual impossible, and yet it is only in that way that a sovereign, be he king, emperor, or dictator, can provide for the glory and the prosperity of the country. Is not that your opinion, Caulincourt?"

"Sire, your position is surrounded with great difficulties, the Bourbons have spoiled France, which you had fashioned for absolute domination, though it was skilfully concealed by the operation of the miracles you wrought. Now-a-days the prison which produced submission is broken, and, as your Majesty foresees, obstacles are to be overcome on those very points on which it was customary to decide the question without even the necessity of submitting it to public opinion.

"He replied quickly, 'He who takes the helm must support the weight of it; everything will be made right in a state of peace. We must attend to that which is more pressing. Write to Austria. Your participation in these negotiations is an authority. They know you were

always inclined to peace. It is neither your fault, nor mine, if things come to extremities.'

"This conversation," continued the Duke, "is very remarkable, inasmuch as it triumphantly refutes the absurd calumnies which you have read and heard of the warlike intentions of Napoleon on his entry into France. The recital I have given you is in the spirit, and I can almost say, the precise words, of the Emperor. When I left the cabinet I wished that I could have placarded them upon all the walls of Paris, that I could have published them by sound of trumpet through the squares and streets. If the whole nation had been convinced of the sincere desire of Napoleon for peace, it would have been impossible for the Allies to have refused it, under pain of having to contend against a population of 32,000,000 ! This is positive. Unfortunately, with the exception of the army and of the people, amongst those who count as nought the national interest when it opposes their private interests, nothing but the return of war was seen in the return of Napoleon. This panic, treacherously fomented by an anti-French party, established an incessant opposition of inertness, against which the energy and the devotion of the army were broken.

"In the interior of the cabinet some curious

things took place. The march of the Emperor had been so rapid, that many addresses to the King arrived at the same time as the addresses to the Emperor. Napoleon took a malicious pleasure in examining the signatures of prefects, and other authorities, who formerly had been loaded with benefits from him. 'Look at these men,' said he, with a smile of pity; 'one must laugh at them to avoid feelings of indignation and regret.'

"Independently of official correspondence, a great quantity of letters arrived, some filled with advice and warnings, others disclosing plots against the Emperor's life, others containing declarations of love. The first were, without pity, consigned to the waste paper baskets; Napoleon did not often attend to advice which he did not ask for. He took no heed of the denunciations of attempts against him. 'Whoever stakes his own life against mine will make no confidants,' said he, shrugging up his shoulders; 'the hour of my death is written above.'

"But when he was in good humour he would amuse himself with the *billets doux*. On one occasion, a little perfumed letter, elegantly written, with large armorial bearings on the seal, attracted his attention, and, *ma foi!* it had the honour to be read all through to the signature. In reading

it, the physiognomy of Napoleon assumed an air of irony, which excited my curiosity. I avow my indiscretion, and over the shoulder of my honoured master I read also. I will not tell you the name of the fair writer, and that is generous on my part, for afterwards her beautiful mouth uttered, in resentment, a shocking piece of blasphemy. I am assured, that on learning the death of the Emperor, Madame de — said, drily, ‘*Morte la bête, mort le venin.*’ This old proverb, by its forced application to circumstance, gained the lady great honour in certain saloons. If I had had the letter of 1815 in my hands, I will not say whether I might not have been tempted to have inserted it in the journals, in form of a corollary to the lady’s witty *jeu de mots*!

“ But I return to the Emperor, who, contrary to his custom, read and re-read the letter. He appeared flattered, but undecided: at last he threw it in the fire. ‘Ah, bah!’ said he, laughing, ‘I have not an hour to lose;’ and it was because the Emperor had not an hour to lose that a grudge was cherished against him.

CHAPTER VIII.

Negotiations with Austria—The decree of Lyons—Anticipated arrival of the Empress—Project of marching on Brussels—The Belgians—The *Acte Additionnel*—Remarks on constitutional government—The Duke d'Angoulême made prisoner—Napoleon's orders respecting him—Fouché's correspondence with Ghent—Baron Vincent—Discovery of a secret treaty—The Emperor Alexander and the Bourbons—The English cabinet and the prisoner of St. Helena—The declaration of the Congress—Liberty of the press—Pamphlets—Clubs and societies—Governmental programme—Review of the Parisian national guards—The royal volunteers—Threats of assassination—An unexpected body guard—Dinner to the national guards—The Emperor's bust.

“ I HAD sent the Emperor's propositions to Vienna,” said the Duke de Vicenza, “ and he impatiently looked for an answer to them. He was also anxious for a letter from Maria Louisa.

“ Napoleon and I were completely at variance with respect to the hopes he entertained in reference to Austria ; and he had great difficulty in repressing his displeasure at finding himself unable to bring me to his way of thinking. There was also another circumstance which annoyed him.

“After a very animated discussion on the subject of Austria, he exclaimed, ‘Well! I am on the right side in this dispute. He must be right who invokes peace for his country,—peace for Europe. If they reject my proposition, they must submit to condemnation at the tribunal of humanity.’

“Sire, observed I, since it is my task to proceed with these negotiations, permit me to call your Majesty’s attention to the decree, dated from Lyons. That decree orders the assembling of the Electoral Colleges in Paris, for the purpose of assisting at the coronation of the Empress and the King of Rome. The last paragraph in particular is very impolitic.

“‘What do you mean?’ said he, rising from his chair petulantly, ‘Do you constitute yourself a censor on my acts?’

“This is harsh language, Sire, to a man who has never feared honestly to speak his mind, even at the risk of displeasing your Majesty.

“‘What, then, is your opinion of this decree?’ said he, with an air of anxiety which he could not conceal.

“It appears to me, Sire, to place your Majesty in a false position. First, with respect to Austria, who cannot but feel compromised in reference to the Allied Powers, for they must suppose her to be on a footing of good under-

standing with you. Next, it places you in a false position with respect to France, if the Empress should not be in Paris at the expiration of a week.

“ ‘ Parbleu ! I know it. But do you imagine that in so bold an enterprise as that of reconquering a kingdom with six hundred men, something must not be left to chance—that Providence of adventurers ? A thousand reasons prompt me to maintain an appearance of perfect confidence in the arrival of the Empress. Can you not guess those reasons ?’

“ Pardon me, Sire. I admit the almost inevitable necessity which led you to risk this course ; but if it be not justified by success, it may be attended by fatal consequences.

“ ‘ Then,’ resumed he, hastily, ‘ To refuse me the Empress, would be equivalent to a declaration of deadly war between France and the Allied Powers. The French people will see that I am not the aggressor this time. They know too well what the first invasion cost them, and France, though momentarily degraded, will recover under my banner energy and courage to avenge her humiliation and her injuries. Do you know the idea that occurred to me on the very night of my arrival. I was thinking whether with thirty-six thousand men, whom I can

assemble in the twinkling of an eye in the north, I should not commence hostilities by marching straight on Brussels. The Belgian army awaits only a signal to rally round my eagles.'

"A gesture of incredulity escaped me.

" 'The accuracy of my information cannot be doubted,' pursued Napoleon. 'The old animosity of Belgium is roused against England. Holland is merely the instrument of England, whose policy has been to sequestrate Flushing and Antwerp, for the purpose of destroying them. Belgium also rises against Prussia, from old national antipathy. In this state of things, the Belgians will help me to drive those powers from the Rhenish provinces, and I shall maintain a position purely but redoubtably defensive behind the Rhine.'

"Do you recollect, Sire, the conduct of Belgium during the events of 1813? The Belgians had no ground of complaint against the French, with whom, for the space of twenty years, they had shared all public appointments and emoluments; yet in the days of our disasters they called Prussia *to their deliverance*, and opened for her an entrance into Flanders. The Belgians mercilessly drove the French inhabitants from their towns, insulted the French au-

thorities, and pursued them to the frontiers. Belgium basely renounced and forsook France. From time immemorial the Belgians have been a people devoid of nationality, always rebelling against their rulers, and without stability, either in their affections or their political opinions. Confidence in the fraternity of the Belgian nation was one of the generous errors of France. The natural turbulence and inconstancy of the Belgians render them dangerous auxiliaries in any cause in which they may be engaged. In the circumstances in which your Majesty is placed, I conceive that the alliance of Belgium would, at least, be of doubtful advantage. If the French army could subjugate the country without the aid of its inhabitants, then, indeed, those who might have refused to take part in the contest would gladly rally round the standard of victory. But to trust to this ephemeral alliance would, I fear, be an error.

“ The Emperor had allowed me to speak on without interruption, which was contrary to his usual custom when we were discussing any contested point. He seemed to reflect earnestly on the remarks which had fallen from me, and, after a pause, he said, ‘ You are right, Caulincourt; the Belgians behaved shamefully to me in 1813 and 1814, and, as you have justly ob-

served, I had done everything for their country. The public works executed in Belgium by my orders were worthy of ancient Rome. The dykes, Flushing, Middleburgh, the basin of Antwerp, on which such vast sums have been expended, are all due to France. I had attached to my court the principal families of the country, to prove that I regarded the Belgians as a portion of the great French family; and yet, in the days of our disasters, they basely forsook us. I have less reason to complain of the Dutch, for they owed me nothing. But we must look upon things as they are, and not as we would wish them to be. I am thoroughly convinced that Belgium would unite with us as a *pis-aller*, rather than with England or Prussia; and what does it signify if we profit by the alliance? Wellington is at Vienna, Blucher at Berlin; the English and Prussian forces are feeble, and scattered over the banks of the Rhine; they have neither commanders nor fortresses. There are chances, and very great chances, of success. I may enter Brussels on the 1st of April, and make myself master of all Belgium, before the Allies, thus taken by surprise, can be in a condition to resist me. . . . And, nevertheless, I sacrifice this grand scheme to the general wish. I offer peace. Future generations will decide whether my inspirations

or the cold calculations of positive prudence promised the best chance of extricating France from the embarrassments in which she has become involved.'

"The time was passed," added the Duke de Vicenza, "when Napoleon, the sovereign arbitrator of the affairs of France, could decide on them singly. He had now all the responsibility, but he had no longer the power of acting. His genius was cramped by the most insupportable of tyrannies—necessity. Necessity constrained him to sue for public approbation, so variable in its judgments; necessity obliged him to substitute the will and the intelligence of several individuals for the firm will and high intelligence of a single one.

"In the extraordinary circumstances in which he was placed in 1815, Napoleon, the dictator, the adored chief of the brave and most devoted army that ever existed, might have performed inconceivable prodigies. Napoleon, the constitutional Emperor, tied down by law, and held in check by the hesitation and lukewarm caution of secondary powers, was doomed to fall!

"The Emperor has often been reproached for having given only *an additional act* to the constitution of the empire, instead of the new constitution which he had promised along all his

route from Carnes to Paris. Nothing can be more absurd than this reproach. In the first place, on his arrival he had no time for legislating; and, even if he had, all the constitutions in the world could not have prevented fools from losing precious time in idle discussion, or knaves from betraying France a second time, whilst Napoleon and the army were making heroic efforts for her defence at Waterloo.

“ Experience will demonstrate the fallacy of all those theories whose practical application, in a universal sense, is impossible. Russia, Prussia, and Austria, are well governed states without constitutions. England and France are the very antipodes of each other in manners and character. Can a system of government suitable to the one country be equally appropriate to the other? Time will decide this great question.

“ I am well aware,” added the Duke, smiling, “ that this profession of faith will expose me to the charge of being an absolutist, an imperialist, and I know not what. The fact is, that the impressions I received from the Emperor corroborated my opinions, but did not form them. I found myself admirably situated for the opportunity of studying and judging governments; and I am convinced that the causes of their pros-

perity, of their stability, and of the happiness of nations, are to be traced, not in the form of their institutions, but in the wisdom which directs them.

“I was at the Tuileries when the telegraphic despatch arrived, announcing the capitulation of Pallu. Almost at the same moment a second despatch announced that the Duke d'Angoulême was a prisoner. It was said that the Emperor was with difficulty prevailed on to ratify the convention, because he wished to retain the Prince as a hostage. This is untrue. The Emperor, with his usual nobleness of feeling, wrote to Grouchy, directing him to watch over the safety of the Prince, and to protect him against any ill treatment until he embarked at Cette, whither he was proceeding. ‘I should be sorry,’ said Napoleon, ‘to hear that any harm has befallen him. He has done his duty as a Prince.’ He said no more on the subject. Fouché took to himself all the credit due to this generosity. He opened a negotiation under the pretext of recovering some diamonds, which, being the property of the state, were to be surrendered up by the Royal Family. There was no necessity for Fouché’s interference in this business; but it enabled him the more easily to correspond with Ghent. Fouché was Napoleon’s evil genius.

“ I was entrusted, by order of the Emperor, with two very difficult negotiations. Neither Baron Vincent, the Austrian Minister, nor M. Boudiakine, the Russian Chargé d’Affaires, had yet left Paris. The truth is, there was no great hurry manifested in delivering their passports. I arranged to have an interview, in the house of a third party, with Baron Vincent, with whom I was acquainted. The Baron was a mild and moderate man, and had there been any possibility of coming to an understanding, he would have promoted it. But he assured me from the first that the Allies were averse to Napoleon’s continuing on the throne, and he never encouraged me to hope that this feeling would undergo any modification in the cabinet of Vienna. Nevertheless, he pledged his word to me that he would make the Emperor Francis acquainted with Napoleon’s wish to maintain peace. In compliance with my urgent entreaties he undertook to convey to Maria Louisa a letter from Napoleon. Baron Vincent is a man of honour, and I felt confident that the letter was delivered. The answer was not received.

“ This was all I was able to effect. My interview with M. Boudiakine gave rise to a very interesting conversation. M. de Jancourt (who

did us so much mischief at the time of the negotiations of Fontainebleau) forgot, at his departure, to withdraw from the portfolio of foreign affairs a treaty secretly entered into between England, Austria, and France, and by which those powers pledged themselves to oppose the dismemberment of Saxony, meditated by Russia and Prussia. This was a very curious document. I laid it before the Russian Minister, adducing it as a manifest proof of the ingratitude of the Court of the Tuileries towards the Emperor Alexander. Boudiakine could scarcely believe his eyes, and after an effort to repress his indignation, he said to me, 'It must be confessed that the Bourbons owe but little gratitude to the Emperor of Russia. They well know that he warmly pleaded the cause of the regency; and had he been seconded by Austria, it is probable Louis XVIII. would never have quitted Hartwell.'

"The *liberal Autocrat*,' replied I, (for this was the title by which Alexander was designated in the little coterie of the faithful,) though he was so caressed and fêted, was nevertheless a visitor whom they were very glad to get rid of.

"'No doubt of that,' said M. Boudiakine.

‘ But my Sovereign was never deceived by the demonstrations of friendship with which he was overwhelmed, and nothing was ever more amusing than the conversations between the Emperor Alexander and Louis XVIII. The latter was ever intent on producing effect by dint of wit and talent, whilst the Emperor, whose conversation was always characterized by exquisite good taste, constantly maintained a firm footing, which admitted of no misconstruction. I promise, Duke, to report faithfully to my Sovereign the conversation I have had with your Excellency, and to acquaint him with the wish expressed by the Emperor Napoleon to preserve peace, and to become the Ally and friend of Alexander.’

“ When, at a subsequent time,” added the Duke, “ I mentioned this treaty to Alexander, he said :—‘ Boudiakine did inform me of it, and the affair rather surprised me ; but the fact is, there was no great deal of sympathy between my *Brother of France* and myself. But what could I have done, my dear Caulincourt. I should have stood alone ; and I must confess that your Emperor’s last achievement sufficiently proved to me how much he was to be feared.’

“You may now understand,” pursued the Duke, “the cause of the coolness between the two Sovereigns.

“On another occasion we were discussing the conduct of the English cabinet towards the captive of St. Helena; and Alexander said to me, in a tone of voice indicating deep emotion:—‘It would have been very embarrassing to me had Napoleon consigned his fate to my hands, for I would rather have declared war against every power on earth than have betrayed the confidence of a vanquished enemy.’

“What fatality could have led Napoleon to distrust the only one of the Sovereigns in whom feeling was not utterly blunted by the interests of policy?

“The declaration of the Congress of Vienna cut off all hope of treating with the Sovereigns. The couriers whom I had sent off with the despatches could not reach their destination. In every direction communications were intercepted. The Emperor, on his arrival, had found himself compelled to suppress the censorship, and to concede full liberty to the press. The consequence was, that Paris was inundated with pamphlets, which, on the one hand, spread alarm and disaffection, and, on the other, made the public perfectly well acquainted with all that

was going on abroad. All eyes were turned towards Ghent, and few persons ventured to compromise themselves in the Imperial cause. The government was thus left to its own resources, and wanted support.

“But, in spite of this unfortunate state of things in the capital, the provinces enthusiastically rallied round the Emperor. The south was now tranquillized and manifested the best feeling. Paris was one of the greatest embarrassments of the moment; it was the seat of intrigue, and the nucleus of contending factions.

“The Royalists, secretly supported by Fouché, having money and promises of favour to distribute in the name of the Bourbons, directed their attacks on the wavering, the timid, and the ambitious, whom they succeeded in detaching from the Imperial cause. The liberty of the press was a powerful engine, which the Royalist party set in motion. They were informed of all the proceedings in the Congress of Vienna, and they actively circulated the intelligence they obtained. It frequently happened that we were made acquainted with the most important events only through the medium of pamphlets. It was by one of those channels that we heard of a furious declaration of the Congress. That declaration will remain an

historical monument of the ingratitude and insult cast on a Sovereign whose victories had always been marked by mercy and generosity. Napoleon never insulted a conquered king.

“Independently of the Royalists, there was another party, who, being fired with mistaken and extravagant notions of patriotism, gave considerable cause for alarm. I allude to that set of men who formed themselves into clubs, associations, and confederations of various denominations. This party contained within itself elements which might have been turned to the best account, had they been directed to a truly useful and practicable object, that of heartily uniting to repel the invaders. This national duty might have been accomplished with the concurrence of the people, who certainly evinced an earnest disposition to unite in it. But as it too frequently happens, ambitious brawlers took the lead in the associations and perverted their real objects. Instead of organizing a force to defend the country, attention was solely directed to plans of government. Whilst these plans were the subject of discussion, Europe in arms was debating at Vienna the question of dismembering France!

“That was a melancholy period of our history! Foreign enemies were not the authors

of all our disasters. We ourselves blindly dug the grave in which we buried our national sympathies and our prosperity.

“The Emperor determined to review the National Guard of Paris; and many of his friends endeavoured to dissuade him from this measure. It was represented to him that the Royal Volunteers, incorporated with the National Guard, openly menaced his person and his life. But the Emperor, who was inaccessible to fear, replied to these warnings—‘I have been too long acquainted with foreign balls to stand in fear of a French ball.’ The review was ordered.

“The Emperor refused to have any escort; he would consent only to be accompanied by his staff, and that at a distance. Meanwhile sinister reports had spread among the Guards. Without the Emperor’s knowledge, and indeed without orders from any one, some grenadiers of the Island of Elba had joined us. When we approached the front line of the legions, the Emperor made a sign directing us to keep back, and he commenced the review. The Emperor advanced a short distance, at a slow pace, along the front of the ranks, without knowing that he was followed by the grenadiers, who however were pretty close behind him. But in a few minutes he spurred his horse to a gallop, and

then, turning suddenly round, he beheld to his astonishment his unexpected escort. He was not only surprised, but a little irritated at this infraction of his orders, and he said, in an angry tone, ‘What do you do here? Where is your commanding officer?’

“There was no commanding officer, neither had any order been given; it was merely the spontaneous act of ten or a dozen brave fellows, anxious to watch over the safety of their Sovereign. They made no reply to the Emperor’s questions, but hung down their heads and looked confused. Napoleon understood all, and he said, in a milder tone of voice, ‘Begone, begone.’ The grenadiers shewed no disposition to move. The Emperor then rode up to one of them, and shaking him by the arm, said, ‘It is my desire that you should all begone. Do you hear, old *moustache*? Why do you not obey? I am surrounded here by good Frenchmen. I am as safe with them as with you.’

“The effect of these words were quite electrical. ‘Yes, yes, Sire, you are safe,’ exclaimed the National Guards. ‘We will lay down our lives to defend yours!’ They rushed from their ranks, surrounded the Emperor, and kissed his hands. The enthusiasm vented itself in exclamations, in which various shades of opinions

were expressed, such as ‘*Vive l’Empereur !—Vive l’Empire !—Vive Napoleon !—Vive la Nation !*’ Cries of ‘*Vive la Garde Imperiale !*’ were responded to by shouts of ‘*Vive l’Armie Nationale !*’

“ Among the malignant reports industriously circulated at this time, there was one which attributed a feeling of animosity on the part of the Imperial Guards towards the National militia. The alleged ground of this ill feeling was said to be, that when the National Guards defended Paris in 1814, they did not hold out long enough to enable the army to arrive and engage the enemy before the walls of the capital.

“ This report having come to the ears of the Emperor, he issued orders for a dinner to be given by the Imperial Guards to the National Guards after the review of the Champ-de-Mars. The dinner was gay and social, and friendly feeling was restored between the two corps. In the evening, the troops, headed by their officers, defiled in front of the windows of the Tuileries, bearing the Emperor’s bust, which they afterwards deposited at the foot of the column.

“ A year previously, the vile parasites of foreign invaders had torn the statue of the great man from its patriotic pedestal.

“ Napoleon was eminently gifted with a con-

sciousness of his own dignity. He gave orders for the removal of the bust during the night. 'It is not,' said he, proudly, 'at the close of an orgie that my bust must be restored to its place on the column. The day will come when France will remember me, and will avenge, by a national act, the contemptible insult of a hireling mob.' "

CHAPTER IX.

The hundred days—The convocation of the Champ-de-Mai—Dilapidated condition of the military depôts—Organizing and recruiting the army—Carnot appointed minister of the interior—His conversation with the Emperor—Deference to the national will—Election of the president of the chamber of deputies—Motion proposed by M. Dupin—The Emperor's remarks upon it—Deliberative assemblies—Address to the Emperor—M. de Bourmont—Performing quarantine—Appointment of a council—Napoleon leaves Paris to join the army.

“ EVERY hour of that short interval called the *hundred days* brought about a disenchantment, and defeated some of the hopes which the Emperor's return had kindled in the hearts of his friends. The chambers were about to open, and it was indispensable that the head of the state should govern without opposition, and devote all his energies, all his intelligence, to the object of paramount importance,—namely, the defence of the country. Nothing but united efforts to repel the enemy could save France from a second defeat.

“ The Emperor was exceedingly anxious. His eagle glance enabled him at once to perceive the inextricable difficulty into which France might be plunged by imprudent resistance. I, too, was not without my share of anxiety. I was very uneasy respecting the probable results of the Champ-de-Mai.

“ ‘ Caulincourt,’ said the Emperor to me, ‘ I have yielded to public opinion, but I am convinced that this measure is ill-timed. The French people have so much ardour of imagination, so much changeableness of feeling, they are so prone to mistake effects for causes, and to deceive themselves respecting their rights, that they cannot with safety be trusted all at once with absolute liberty. The Utopians will ruin all. The opposition which is inherent to representative governments will be ill understood. It will degenerate into absurd obstacles, and will paralyze the action of government. To deprive royalty of its supremacy is to take from it its moral force.’

“ Under the influence of these gloomy forebodings, the Emperor, with indefatigable activity, employed himself, night and day, in preparing for the approaching war. Every thing was to be re-organized and re-established. The *materiel* of the army no longer existed. The store-houses and arsenals were empty, and it

seemed as though a vast conflagration had destroyed all the military resources of France. It is impossible to convey any idea of the utter neglect of all business in connexion with the war department. It must, however, be confessed that in the military preparations the Emperor was ably seconded. The re-organization of the national guards and of the army was accomplished with admirable enthusiasm. Manufactories of arms and ammunition, and establishments for military clothing, were all put into active movement from one end of France to the other. The spirit of the people was excellent, and but for impediments, which emanated from the very centre of the government, the immortal work would have been brought to a glorious completion. France presented to Europe the imposing spectacle of thirty-two millions of people rising in defence of their native soil.

“I need not,” pursued the Duke de Vicenza, “speak of the Champ-de-Mai, nor of the official acts. With those matters you are, of course, acquainted. Less generally known, but not less interesting, are the private details which throw light on the gloomy picture. On the rare occasions on which I advert to this subject, I am scrupulously careful to assign to each one his proper part in the grand historical drama. I was a

member of the government. I saw with 'my own eyes,' and no consideration shall withhold me from speaking the truth. It is not my fault if truth conveys a terrible accusation against men, who, in their insane presumption, fancied themselves capable of saving France in their curule chairs. It is false and wicked to attribute our disasters to him whose genius might have repaired them, could he have acted in conformity with his own inspirations. But those persons who would have appropriated to themselves the honour of the triumph, evaded the responsibility of the defeat. I accuse no one. I wish only to claim for all, equally, the application of the axiom, let each man have the merit or the blame of his own works. Napoleon is no more, and the hero who shed so much lustre over France must not be disavowed by his country. He is still too near to us to be judged fairly. To judge Napoleon must be the task of posterity.

“The appointment of Carnot to the office of minister of the interior, was much censured. The past conduct of that celebrated man, and his well-known republican opinions, filled the Imperialists with alarm. My political creed was totally opposed to that of Carnot; but his conduct at Antwerp, in 1814, assured me that he would do nothing that did not tend to the in-

terest of his country. In ordinary times Carnot would not have accepted office under a system of government adverse to that which he conceived indispensable to his country's welfare; but in the fearful circumstances in which we were placed, he lost sight of his own personal opinions, and cordially supported the Emperor, whose cause he identified with the cause of France. Carnot's conduct in 1815 was highly honourable.

“ The honest frankness of his nature rendered him incapable of dissembling, and from him the Emperor sometimes heard language to which he had not been accustomed. One day, when I was present, Carnot said to him—‘ Sire, your *acte additionnel* has displeased the nation. It does not answer the wishes of the people. Permit me to modify it. I have courage to tell you the truth, because your welfare and ours depend on your deference. . . . (Here the Emperor made a gesture indicative of displeasure.) . . . The word offends you, Sire; but I know of no other which so well expresses my meaning. I say, therefore, your deference to the wishes of the people.’ ‘ But,’ replied the Emperor, endeavouring to check his impatience, ‘ the enemy is at our gates. Let us first repel him, and when we obtain peace we shall have time to think of liberal institutions.’

After Carnot's departure the Emperor said to me—'That man is certainly animated by the best intentions; but the house is on fire, and instead of endeavouring to extinguish the flames, he is thinking about new arrangements and alterations to render it more convenient. Carnot is one of those men whose minds seem to be in a state of vertigo.' He walked about the room for some time, agitated and thoughtful, and then he seated himself at his writing-table, which was covered with pamphlets and journals of every kind. 'Look here, Caulincourt,' said he; 'just see how the organs of different factions understand what Carnot terms *deference to the will of the people*. The old revolutionists wish me to abolish the empire, and to establish a republic; without that, say they, there is no safety. The partizans of the regency reproach me for not having proclaimed Napoleon II. The pure liberals are of opinion that I ought to resign the crown, and leave to the *sovereign nation* the right of restoring it to me, or of offering it to one who may be deemed more worthy. Truly, if I have abused the *canon law*,' pursued he, shrugging his shoulders, 'these scribblers cruelly abuse the right of discussing their absurdities. All this would be merely laughable if we were not surrounded by a million of armed men.'

“ A few days afterwards,” continued the Duke de Vicenza, “ the chambers met, and we had a fair opportunity of seeing the feeling which animated the representatives. Nothing could have been more proper and desirable than that Prince Lucien, a man of talent and firmness, should have been chosen president of the chamber. The *acte additionnel* conferred on the chamber the right of electing its own president, and Languinois was chosen. This man was a reformer by principle, a *frondeur* by temperament, and he had been the uniform opponent of every form of government which had been established since the year 1793.

“ On hearing of this nomination the Emperor said, bitterly—‘ Well done! This is the first use that has been made of the franchise I granted.’

“ It was, I think, in the second sitting that the advocate, Dupin, proposed that the chamber should not proceed to business until the demand of the representatives should be conceded: the demand in question was, that they should be furnished with a list of the new peers. This was merely the prelude to other proceedings of the same sort; and in the following sitting the same deputy, Dupin, endeavoured to carry a measure destructive of the established government.

“ He alleged that the oath to be taken to the Sovereign by the nation, (represented by its deputies,) in order to be valid and lawful, must not be taken in virtue of a decree emanating from the will of the prince, but in virtue of a law which should be the will of the nation constitutionally expressed.

“ This captious proposition was supported by another advocate named Roi, but was rejected by the unanimous accord of the rest of the chamber. Its real tendency was to declare null and void the oath which had just been taken at the Champ-de-Mai, by the nation and the army to the Emperor, and the constitution of the empire. That oath being the bond which united the army to the Emperor and the Emperor to the nation, the consequence of its annulment must have been to deprive Napoleon of the attributes of Sovereignty and legitimacy with which he had been invested.

“ Could the man who proposed this measure be conscious of the full extent of its mischief? Or was his object merely to call public attention to his first steps in the career of politics?

“ The Emperor, on being made acquainted with this proceeding, said, indignantly—‘ I perceive that the deputies, instead of uniting with me to save the country, wish to withdraw from

my cause, and to gain popularity at my expense. . . . Do they mistake me for a Louis XVI.? Do they imagine that I will submit to be ruled or to have my throat cut by a set of factious brawlers? My blood shall be shed on the field of battle, but never on the scaffold?"

"The shrewd and correct judgment of Napoleon scanned, with its usual clearness, the consequences of the proposed measure. He saw that it was more than an insult to his person; it was a direct attack upon his throne.

"'What motive,' pursued he, in a more subdued tone, 'can instigate such conduct on the part of an unknown individual, who received, only yesterday, the honour of being chosen to represent a portion of his fellow-citizens? He has commenced his career by an attempt to stir up anarchy. Does he imagine that he is fulfilling the duties consigned to him, by thus appealing to the passions of the evil-disposed? Surely he ought to know that a war cannot be national unless the people are united heart and soul with their Sovereign. What has the advocate Dupin to complain of? Have I done him any injury? Why does he thus furiously assail the man who, during the space of twenty years, has led the French to victory, sharing alike their hardships and their glory? The conduct of Dupin is

not that of a man who wishes to serve his country.'

“ I followed the Emperor to his cabinet, where we sat writing during the remainder of the evening. But occupation had not the effect of diverting away the sad impression caused by the proceedings of the day. He was anxious and agitated. After some time he laid down his pen, and throwing himself back in his arm chair, he said to me, in a desponding tone,—‘ Caulincourt, we are wasting time. Fate is hurrying France to destruction. In present circumstances, the best devised plans must fail. These men are themselves working the ruin of their country. By alienating from me the affections of the people, they are demoralizing public feeling, and damping public energy. At this moment, when I am about to join the army, I am alarmed at the thought of leaving the government *de facto* (for so it really is) in the hands of a turbulent chamber, eager for the exercise of authority, and heedless of the critical position of the country.

“ ‘When the conflict has fairly commenced, the presence of a deliberative body cannot fail to be mischievous, perhaps even fatal. Turbulent and ambitious men, thirsting for popularity and power, set themselves up as advocates of the people, advisers of the Sovereign, and defenders of

things which are not attacked. If their advice be not followed, they lay aside the character of counsellors and become censors. They next turn from censors to rebels. Such is the course of all deliberative assemblies, composed, as they are now, of a majority of intriguing, dishonest, and ignorant men. The last class are always the dupes of the two former, and they become unconsciously their instruments and accomplices. The bold rule the timid; and weak persons, whose terrors have been worked upon, soon find that they have only been helping others to mount the ladder of ambition.'

“Your Majesty has, observed I, recapitulated in a few words a whole catalogue of those illusive theories in which ideologists love to indulge. All that I see passing around fills me with sad forebodings. We must fall.

“‘There is still hope,’ eagerly interrupted the Emperor. ‘The first cannon balls that are fired for the independence of France will restore the true spirit of patriotism in her representatives. The game is begun, and it must be played to an end.’

“Next day the Emperor received the deputation with the address. I never shall forget the look which accompanied that part of his answer, in which he uttered the words,—‘*Let us not imi-*

tate the Lower Empire.' Some of the promoters of discord seemed abashed by the reproach which this expression conveyed.

“ I could mention a thousand traits indicative of the bad feeling which pervaded the chamber ; and not one of those traits escaped the penetration of Napoleon. He could see through every dark manœuvre, and he clearly perceived the hostile attitude of that great power which was rising up in opposition to the throne. ‘ The honest members of the chamber,’ said he, ‘ do not see that they are being mystified and duped by the royalists, who have many artful and able leaders among their party. Under the mask of the love of liberty, they insinuate themselves into the favour of the patriots, and with the *acte additionnel* in their hands, they delude them into disastrous measures under the pretext of reining in my tyranny. Ask these new converts, on the day when the royal cause is triumphant, what they mean to do with the men they have misled? They will answer, to send them into exile to reflect on the dangers of democracy.’

“ In this state of anarchy the Emperor left the capital to make head against the overwhelming force arrayed against our unfortunate country.”

“ I asked the Duke de Vicenza, whether it

was true that General Bourmont had solicited leave to enter the Emperor's service, and that it was on the application and guarantee of General Gerard that the Emperor consented to employ him.

“Your question,” replied the Duke de Vicenza, “brings to my recollection one of those acts over which, for the honour of human nature, one would fain draw the veil of oblivion.

“General Bourmont was well treated by the Bourbons in 1814, and he might, like many other general officers, who conceived it to be their duty to espouse the royal cause, have remained faithful to the white cockade. Immediately on the Emperor's return, the general became assiduous in his attendance at the Tuileries. At one of the receptions, the Emperor was making his usual tour through the saloons, and addressing a few gracious words to those present. Suddenly he perceived Bourmont, and he passed on without speaking. The general followed him, and said,—‘Sire, the Allies have declared war against France. I entreat your Majesty to accept my services.’

“The Emperor turned round, and looking steadfastly at the general, said, in a very decided tone of voice, ‘No, General Bourmont, no.’

“ ‘ Sire, I have been guilty of nothing which should make me forfeit the honour of serving in the army. The favour which I solicit——’

“ ‘ Bye and bye.—Bye and bye, I will think of it.’

“ ‘ Sire,’ replied Bourmont, with deep emotion, and placing his hand on his heart, ‘ I should have thought that a man like me had no need to perform quarantine.’

“ ‘ We shall see—we shall see,’ said the Emperor, and he passed on.

“ There was a report in circulation that Gerard had influenced the Emperor in thus slighting Bourmont; but I have heard a very different account,—viz. that Gerard expressed his admiration of Bourmont’s conduct. At all events, the General got a command—you know the rest.”

“ I heard,” replied I, “ though without believing it, the story of General Bourmont’s application to the Emperor. It was one of those things to which one finds it difficult to give credit.”

“ The Emperor,” pursued the Duke, “ con- signed the management of the government to a council, composed of his two brothers, Lucien and Joseph, the four ministers of state, Defer-

mont, St. Jean, d'Angely, Boulay de la Meurthe, Merlin, and several other ministers. He wound up his instructions with these words:—
' I depart to-night. Do your duty—the army and I will perform ours. I recommend you to act with union, zeal, and energy. Be careful, gentlemen, not to suffer liberty to degenerate into licence, or anarchy to take place of order. Bear in mind that on unity the success of our exertions must depend.'

“ After the Emperor retired to his cabinet, where he had numerous orders to dispatch, I once more earnestly renewed my request to be permitted to accompany the army. ‘ No, Caulincourt, no,’ replied he; ‘ it is impossible. Do not think of it.’

“ I represented to him that the post of minister for foreign affairs was at that moment merely nominal, and that I could be of no use in Paris.

“ ‘ Say no more of this—it cannot be; and on my still urging him to consent to my going, he added,—‘ I am going to take Maret with me, and if I were not to leave you in Paris, who would there be here on whom I could rely.’

“ The Emperor then proceeded to arrange some business connected with the different ministerial departments. He gave me his private

instructions with the most unlimited confidence. He foresaw many misfortunes; but he trusted with perfect reliance to his devoted army.

“The clock struck three, and daylight was beginning to appear. ‘Farewell, Caulincourt,’ said the Emperor, holding out his hand to me. ‘Farewell—we must conquer or die.’ . . . With hurried steps, he passed through the apartments, his mind being evidently absorbed by melancholy ideas. On reaching the foot of the staircase, he cast a lingering look around him, and then threw himself into his carriage.

“When the carriage was out of sight, and the rattling of the wheels was no longer audible, the most gloomy feelings overwhelmed me. The silence which pervaded the capital seemed to bode evil. I went down into the garden, and walked about, but without being able to calm the inward agitation that preyed upon me. A mass of flame seemed to be gathering on the horizon; I heard the howling of the storm, and my eyes involuntarily turned towards the opposite bank of the Seine. From that direction came the thunderbolts which dealt destruction on France.”

CHAPTER X.

Ministerial communications to the Chambers—Dissatisfaction of the members—The Emperor's views for the aggrandizement of France—Napoleon's reserve in reference to Maria Louisa—Mysterious billet—The Duke de Vicenza's suspicion—Interview with Carnot—Nocturnal visit to the Duke of Otranto—Fatal telegraphic dispatch—The disasters of Waterloo—Exultation of the Royalists—Disturbances in the theatres—The Marseillaise Hymn—Napoleon arrives at the Elysée Palace—His grief and agitation—His description of the battle—Bourmont's defection—Napoleon's mortal blow—Project of assembling the two Chambers—Lucien and Joseph—The Duke de Bassano—Convocation of the Council—The bulletin of Mont St.-Jean—The Emperor's address—Animated discussion in the Council—Message from the Chamber of Deputies—The Emperor's communications to the two Chambers—Restoration of the Bourbon family—Deputation to the Emperor—Napoleon's remark to Count Regnault.

“ON the day after the Emperor's departure, I proceeded, in company with the minister of the interior, to the chamber of peers. Carnot presented an accurate report of the true situation of the country. He announced that the Emperor

wished, in concurrence with the Chambers, to give suitable organic laws to France. With praiseworthy courage and candour he acknowledged the fears excited in the friends of the government by the manifest progress of demagogic spirit. He concluded by observing that on the union of all depended the safety of the state.

“ The boldness of this avowal gave umbrage to some ; but Carnot carried along with him the authority of his own example. He was a sincere republican ; and yet he refrained from the declaration of his opinions, in consideration of the dangers which menaced his country. There was only one man who could save France, and Carnot devoted all his energies to aid that man, zealously and loyally.

“ Carnot’s address was followed by the report of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I represented, without reserve, our position with Europe in arms against us ; and I stated that it was the fixed determination of the Allied Powers not to grant any truce, nor to accede to any treaty with France. I described the fruitless efforts made by the Emperor to bring the Allied Sovereigns to pacific sentiments, by making every concession compatible with national honour. I observed that France, being menaced on all sides by war-

like preparations, was under the necessity of striking the first blow in the conflict, under pain of compromising her dignity and her interests by protracted hesitation. I concluded by appealing to the enlightened patriotism of the representative powers, and imploring them to aid and support the Emperor, who was himself on the frontiers, fighting in defence of the independence of the country.

“My address,” pursued the Duke, “excites some sympathy. I am inclined to believe that the majority of the assembly were actuated by good intentions, but energy was wanting. Foreseeing a defeat, all suffered themselves to be influenced by personal considerations—all were anxious to be saved from foreign domination, provided they could be saved without detriment to their possessions and interests. Selfishness, that scourge of society, was destined to prevail over generous resolves. How very little great political characters appear when we have a close view of them.

“Communications, similar to those made to the Chamber of Peers, were presented to the Chamber of Deputies by two ministers of state: they elicited unequivocal demonstrations of dissatisfaction from the representatives. In the interval between the departure and the return of

the Emperor, the Chambers, instead of devoting attention to measures of defence, resumed their discussions on the acte additionnel, and launched into theoretic dissertations, of which untimeliness was their least objection.

“ On perceiving the spirit evinced by the Chambers, I could not help calling to mind the words of the Emperor, which were impressed with that correctness of observation which characterized him. How perfect was his acquaintance with the machinery of government ! To what a degree of prosperity would he not have brought France, if, instead of directing all his efforts to her aggrandizement, he had confined his attention to her internal government. But his volcanic temperament, which for the space of twenty years made him regard nothing as impossible, could not be satisfied with anything short of conquests and wonders. He could not brook the thought of seeing ardent and intellectual France, without preponderance, without domination, over the European equilibrium. He resolved to see her unrivalled in glory, respected and envied by all the nations of the earth. The year 1815 closed this brilliant dream. Terrible reality superseded the noble illusions of a noble heart. France destroyed the existence of her

hero, before his last sigh was breathed at St. Helena !”

“ Even now,” said I to the Duke de Vicenza, “ whenever I pronounce his name, a bitter regret attaches itself to a painful recollection —. Did Napoleon often speak of his son and Maria Louisa ?

“ Of his son sometimes ; but of the Empress never. It is not a little remarkable that he never alluded to the negotiations which I was to have undertaken in 1814, for re-uniting him to Maria Louisa. Having been deceived in his hopes of possessing the affections of the woman to whom he was so much attached, he was, no doubt, anxious to avoid a useless explanation. He was too proud to complain, and he disdained to reproach.

“ I will mention to you,” continued the Duke, “ a circumstance characteristic of that strange period called the Hundred Days, during which the government had no positive or palpable existence. An occult power ruled the public mind, and directed the public resources. Honest men found themselves betrayed and mystified. They beheld scenes and deeds of darkness which they could not bring to light,—they saw mischief which they could neither prevent nor denounce.

“It was midnight, I was sitting alone in my cabinet writing, when my attention was suddenly diverted from my occupation by a loud knocking at the door of the hotel. In a few moments I heard hurried footsteps approaching my apartment. The usher entered and presented to me a note which was scarcely sealed. It contained only the following words, written in Latin:—
“The army has been destroyed at Waterloo.” I was for a moment petrified.—But a rapid reflection brought me to myself. This, thought I, is the work of some demon, and the intelligence here communicated is intended to be circulated through Paris. I rang the bell violently. Stop the bearer of this note, I exclaimed. Do not let him leave the house.

“‘Sire,’ replied the usher, ‘I was in the porter’s lodge, when a gentlemanly-looking man entered. He appeared rather agitated, and he said, hurriedly, —“Here is a letter for the minister, and here is a twenty-franc piece for any one who will deliver it to him immediately, wheresoever he may be.”—Having uttered these words, the person disappeared as hurriedly as he had entered.’

“I could not, I would not,” continued the Duke, “believe what I saw written, and yet, thought I, it is very improbable that any one

would give twenty francs for the sake of a silly hoax. I instantly ordered a coach, and proceeded straight to Carnot. I showed him the billet, and expressed my fears respecting machinations hatched by the Emperor's enemies.

“ ‘The last telegraphic intelligence, which was received to-day at noon,’ said Carnot, ‘was satisfactory. The Haie Sainte and Mont-Saint-Jean had been carried by our troops.’

“ That is true, replied I, but how happens it that we have no later news ?

“ ‘That may be easily accounted for. Supposing the telegraph nearest to the theatre of war to have gone wrong; it would be sufficient to interrupt the communications along the whole line.’

“ I am exceedingly uneasy If the fatal news be true, it must have been transmitted this evening by the telegraph. The signals are visible until three-quarters past eight.

“ ‘No dispatch has arrived this evening,’ said Carnot, emphatically; ‘of that I am certain.’

“ You mean to say, my dear Carnot, that you have received none ?

“ He immediately seized the idea which my words were intended to convey.

“ ‘If,’ said he, ‘your suspicions were just, he

would certainly deserve to be hanged. . . . But let us go, without delay, and clear up this affair.’

“ We shall not get at the truth, said I.

“ Carnot speedily dressed himself, and we both proceeded to the hotel of the Duke of Otranto. It was now two o’clock in the morning.

“ ‘ We will not give him time to invent any falsehoods,’ said Carnot. ‘ We will follow the servant into his bed-room, and take him by surprise.’

“ However, our nocturnal visit put Fouché sufficiently on his guard. He raised himself up in his bed, and gazed at us with an air of astonishment.

“ ‘ Colleague,’ said Carnot, in a sharp tone, ‘ you have received intelligence from the army which has not been communicated to us.’

“ ‘ What do you mean?’ said he, evidently disconcerted. ‘ I have received none.’

“ ‘ We have sustained terrible disasters. The army is stated to have been destroyed at Waterloo.’

“ ‘ How did you hear this? No doubt it is all an absurd invention.’ As he uttered these words his voice faltered.

“ Duke, said I, the report is either true or

false. If this speaks truth, said I, presenting to him the note, the news must have been communicated by telegraph, for there has not been time for the arrival of a courier.

“ ‘What do you infer from that?’ said he, drily.

“ ‘Parbleu!’ exclaimed Carnot; ‘what we infer from it is, that we are delivered up, bound hand and foot, to the enemy; and that there is among us a traitor—a Judas!’

“ ‘Have you come here to insult me?’ said he, hastily jumping out of bed, and throwing on his *robe de chambre*.

“ ‘There can be no insult,’ rejoined Carnot, sternly, ‘except for one who feels that the epithets of traitor and Judas are applicable to himself.’

“ Monsieur, said I, addressing myself to Fouché, let us not quarrel about words; we have come here to discuss a fact . . . You affirm that you have received no news?

“ ‘I do, positively.’

“ Then it follows that the intelligence announced in this anonymous billet is false?

“ ‘I cannot say whether it be false or true?’

“ Well, the telegraph of this morning will, I hope, prove that I have been misinformed.

“ ‘ And, even supposing the telegraph were to confirm this sinister news ! do I command the telegraph ? Besides, what motive could I have for suppressing dispatches and delaying their communication ? ’ ”

“ We felt that it was useless to make any reply to these remarks, and we accordingly took our leave.

“ ‘ What do you think of this ? ’ said Carnot to me, after we came out.

“ ‘ I think,’ replied he, ‘ that he knows all, and that the disaster is but too certain. We are lost.’ ”

“ I fear so. He has spies and agents everywhere. He has received the news, no matter by what means ; and his object is to devise some diabolical plan for repressing the national feeling which would be excited by the loss of the battle.

“ The most curious part of the whole affair was, that at six o’clock in the morning the telegraph announced the fatal catastrophe, and that the tenour of the dispatches evidently denoted that there was a deficiency in the last correspondence communicated to the council.

“ The person who communicated this information never made himself known. How he obtained his information I am unable to guess.

“In the course of the day several couriers arrived. It was determined in the council that the fatal telegraphic dispatch should not be made known, and that the most perfect secrecy should be observed until the receipt of further intelligence. Nevertheless, in the evening the news was whispered in some of the fashionable *salons*, . . . and it was easy to read in the triumphant looks of the royalists the disasters of Waterloo.

“Next day, alarm began to take possession of the public mind. The interruption of the bulletins created fear; and the populace evinced symptoms of that sort of suppressed agitation which always precedes a crisis. Some disturbances also took place in the theatres. The pit called for the performance of the Marseillaise Hymn, and turbulent groups assembled in the *coulisses* and green-rooms.

“The Emperor’s expected arrival was announced to me during the night by a courier from Laon. I immediately proceeded to the Elysée to receive him. Scarcely six days had elapsed since I bade him farewell, and those six days had obliterated the past, and sealed the doom of the present and the future.

“The Emperor arrived early in the morning, overcome by grief, and exhausted by fatigue.

He endeavoured to give vent to the emotions of his heart, but his oppressed respiration permitted him only to articulate broken sentences—
 ‘The army,’ he said, ‘has performed prodigies of valour! inconceivable efforts! What troops! . . . Ney behaved like a madman. . . . He caused my cavalry to be cut to pieces! . . . All has been sacrificed! . . . I am ill and exhausted. . . . I must lie down for an hour or two. . . . My head burns . . . I must take a bath!’

“He took the bath, and retired to bed; but he continued restless and feverish. He asked me many questions, but I was so fearful of increasing his excitement that I absolutely refused to speak of the affairs of Paris. I had none but disheartening communications to make to him. The altered expression of his countenance sufficiently indicated the sufferings of his mind; but nevertheless he could neither divide his thoughts from the fatal field which he had just quitted, nor subdue his anxiety for the course of affairs in Paris.

“‘It is grievous!’ he exclaimed, ‘to think that we should have been overcome after so many heroic efforts. My most brilliant victories do not shed more glory on the French army than the defeat of Mont St.-Jean. . . . Our troops

have not been beaten ; they have been sacrificed, massacred by overwhelming numbers. . . . My guards suffered themselves to be cut to pieces without asking for quarter. . . . I wished to have died with them ; but they exclaimed—“ Withdraw ! withdraw ! You see that death is resolved to spare your Majesty.” And opening their ranks, my old grenadiers screened me from the carnage, forming around me a rampart of their bodies. . . . My brave, my admirable guard has been destroyed, . . . and I have not perished with them !

“ The Emperor paused, and heaved deep sighs. I listened to the sad recital with agonized feelings.

“ ‘ I had,’ resumed the Emperor, ‘ combined a bold manœuvre with the view of preventing the junction of the two hostile armies. I had combined my cavalry into a single corps of twenty thousand men, and ordered it to rush into the midst of the Prussian cantonments. This bold attack, which was executed on the 14th, with the rapidity of lightning, seemed likely to decide the fate of the campaign. French troops never calculate the number of an enemy’s force. . . . They care not how they shed their blood in success. . . . They are invincible in prosperity ; . . . but I was compelled to change my plan ! Instead

of making an unexpected attack, I found myself obliged to engage in a regular battle, having opposed to me two combined armies, supported by immense reserves ! The enemy's forces quadrupled the number of ours. I had calculated all the disadvantages of a regular battle. The infamous desertion of Bourmont forced me to change all my arrangements. To pass over to the enemy on the eve of a battle ! Atrocious ! The blood of his fellow countrymen be on his head ! The maledictions of France will pursue him.'

“ Sire, observed I, on a former occasion you rejected that man ; how unfortunate that you did not follow your own impulse !

“ ‘ Oh ! this baseness is incredible. The annals of the French army offer no precedent for such a crime. Jomini was not a Frenchman. The consequences of this defection have been most disastrous. It has created despondency in the minds of those who witnessed the paralyzing effects of previous treasons. My orders were not properly understood, and consequently there was some degree of hesitation in executing them. At one time, Grouchy was too late ; at another time, Ney was carried away by his enthusiasm and intrepidity. He exposed himself to danger

like any common soldier, without looking either before or behind him; and the troops under his command were sacrificed without any necessity. It is deplorable to think of it! Our army performed prodigies of valour, and yet, we have lost the battle. Generals, Marshals, — all fought gloriously, — but nevertheless an indescribable uncertainty and anxiety pervaded the commanders of the army. There was no unity, no precision, in the movements—— and,' added he, with painful emotion, 'I have been assured that cries of *sauve qui peut* were uttered. I cannot believe this. What I suffered, Caulincourt, was worse than the tortures of Fontainebleau. I feel that I have had my death wound. The blow I received at Waterloo is mortal !'

“What could I say in reply to this?” said the Duke. “What consolation could I offer to his wounded spirit?”

“I retired to the Emperor's cabinet, where he rejoined me in about half an hour after. His pale countenance and sunken eyes bore evidence of his mental suffering; but he had recovered some degree of calmness.

“‘My intention is,’ said he, ‘to unite the two Chambers in an imperial sitting. I will faithfully describe to them the misfortunes of the

army, and appeal to them for the means of saving the country. After that, I will again return to the seat of war.'

"Sire, said I, the intelligence of our disasters has already transpired; and there is considerable agitation in the public mind.

"My first intention was,' said he, 'on my arrival in the capital, to alight at the Chamber of Deputies; and whilst yet covered with the dust and smoke of the field of battle, to unfold the danger of the country. I was dissuaded from this design.'

"I feel much grieved, Sire, in being compelled to add to your unhappiness; but it is incumbent on me to make your Majesty acquainted with the truth. The feeling of the Deputies is more hostile than ever.

"Nevertheless,' he exclaimed, 'they must yield to conviction.'

"They knew before the meeting of the council, resumed I, the extent of our disasters, and yet no sympathy for your misfortunes was manifested previously to your return. The machinations which ruined us in 1814, are renewed in 1815 under new forms.

"Treachery, treachery everywhere! Where is the heroism of '93, when all France arose as one man to repel foreign invasion? Can these men

have French blood in their veins?' His eyes beamed with extraordinary lustre.

"Sire, said I, deign to listen to me! The Chambers neither deserve your confidence, nor will they answer to your appeal. Permit me likewise to say that I regret to see your Majesty in Paris. It would have been better, Sire, if you had not separated from your army, which was your strength, your safety. In the midst of your troops, you are inviolable. They are *courtiers* who will never betray or forsake you. With them you are still a redoubtable chief; without them you are a powerless Sovereign.

" 'I have no longer an army,' said he, mournfully. 'I may find men, but how are they to fight? They are without arms or ammunition. However, by dint of patriotism and unity all may yet be repaired. You are low-spirited, my dear Caulincourt. You view things through the veil of disappointment. After all, the deputies are the representatives of the nation; we must not despair of their patriotism at the present moment; the question at issue is, not opposition to me personally, but the salvation of the country; and they must second me. They feel the weight of the awful duty that hangs upon them, and they know that they are responsible to their fellow citizens. Three months ago France

greeted my return with enthusiasm. Is that forgotten?"

"Lucien and Joseph entered, and the Emperor anxiously questioned them respecting the course which the Chambers were likely to adopt. Their answers confirmed the opinion which I had expressed, and they advised him to defer the convocation for the imperial sitting. They added, that it appeared to them most advisable to allow the Ministers to take some previous measure.

"The Emperor gave me some orders, which I retired to execute. I was glad that he had consulted his brothers before he came to any determination. Lucien is a man of judgment and resolution. He knew, as well as I, the real state of things, and he was certain to give none but good advice.

"In passing through the apartments, I found them filled with all the great functionaries and dignitaries, who had hurried to the Elysée on hearing of the Emperor's arrival. The aides-de-camp and officers who had returned from Waterloo, were eagerly interrogated. The terrific spectacle of the route and destruction of the army was still present to their eyes; and the details they gave filled with dismay all who heard them. The *scenes of Fontainebleau* were re-enacted at

the Elysée. The actors were the same, and their conduct no less shameful.

“As I was coming out, I met the Duke de Bassano, who had not left the Emperor. ‘All is lost!’ said he, pressing my hand. He was overwhelmed with grief, as he narrated to me some particulars which had come to his knowledge. I could not help repeating with him. ‘All is lost!’

“Ever since the Emperor’s arrival, I had been in a state of mind which I cannot attempt to describe. At Fontainebleau I thought I had suffered every extreme of mental agony. But I was deceived. My torments were now renewed under a still more painful aspect. In 1814, foreign conquerors within our walls dictated laws to us. We had to submit to the fate of the vanquished. But now, the government was our own; the Emperor was in Paris; public feeling in the provinces and in the capital was hostile to the enemy and to the second restoration. With the active and intelligent concurrence of the constituted authorities, the country might be saved. Who was the person who intervened between the nation and her Sovereign? Who consummated our ruin?

“I withdrew to my own apartments to con-

sole myself. These successive trials had almost exhausted my firmness. I am not of a temperament to fall lukewarmly; and I felt my strength sinking beneath this tenacity of misfortune.

“ After the lapse of about two hours, I returned to the Elysée, where the council was convoked. All the ministers were present. The Duke de Bassano read the bulletin of Mont St.-Jean. To that sentence of death the Emperor, with dignity, made the following reply :— ‘ The army is covered with glory. Desertions, misunderstandings, and an inexplicable fatality have rendered unavailing the heroic exertions of our troops. Our disasters are great; but they are still reparable if my efforts are seconded. I returned to Paris to stimulate a noble impulse. If the French people rise, the enemy will be subdued. If, instead of resorting to prompt measures, and making extraordinary sacrifices, time is wasted in disputes and discussions, all is lost. The enemy is in France—in eight days he will be at the gates of the capital. To save the country, it is requisite that I should be invested with vast power, with a temporary dictatorship. For the interest of all, I ought to possess this power. But it will be more proper, more national, that it should be conferred on me by the Chambers.’

“ No reply was made to this address, to which all listened with downcast eyes; or, to speak more correctly, I should say all, with the exception of Fouché, who darted oblique glances on the countenances of his colleagues, as if to watch their feelings.

“ The Emperor called upon Carnot to deliver his opinion, which he did frankly and energetically. He spoke as follows:—‘ It is necessary to declare that the country is in danger; to summon every French patriot to take up arms. Paris must be placed in a state of siege, and defended to the last extremity, or we must retire behind the Loire, recal the army of La Vendée, with the corps of observation of the south, and hold the enemy in check, until it be possible to collect or organize sufficient forces to resume the offensive, and to expel the enemy from France.’

“ I did not share Carnot's opinion, as to the expediency of the retreat on the Loire. I called to mind the events of 1814, and I maintained, with all the earnestness of positive conviction, that the occupation of the capital by the enemy would, a second time, decide the fate of the Imperial throne. The safety of the country, said I, must not depend upon isolated measures, or on the good or bad intentions of the Allied

Powers. (Here I fixed my eyes on a certain personage.) It is indispensable, Sire, that your Majesty should be invested with an absolute dictatorship. The nation must make a great effort. The Chambers must do their duty by not separating the cause of the country from that of its Sovereign. These are the conditions on which the safety of France depends.

“Whilst I was speaking, Fouché was evidently revolving in his mind the course which it would be most expedient for him to adopt. My proposition was calculated to subvert his intrigues, and to thwart his plan of deposing Napoleon. He had too much tact to oppose me openly, and he accordingly expressed his concurrence with those of our colleagues who were unanimously of my opinion. He eulogized the wisdom of the measure which Carnot and I had proposed. He dwelt on the justice of my observation respecting the occupation of Paris by the enemy; and he artfully added,—‘Nevertheless, I think these measures ought to be referred to the Chambers. By shewing them good faith and implicit confidence we shall convince them that their duty is to unite with his Majesty the Emperor in energetic measures to save the independence of the nation.’

“ As he concluded his address, he cast a sinister glance at me, which seemed, as it were, a defiance to outwit him. I saw through his artful design in proposing the sanction of the Chambers. His looks seemed to say, ‘ You may spare yourself all further trouble ; affairs are entirely at my control.’ Between Fouché and me there existed one of those antipathies which resolve into hatred on the one part, and hatred mingled with contempt on the other.

“ Decrès protested against Fouché’s suggestion, and declared that it was useless to hope to gain over the deputies, who, he said, were disposed to go to the most violent extremes.

“ Regnault added, that he did not believe the representatives would consent to second the Emperor’s views ; and that they openly declared he could do nothing more for France.

“ ‘ Speak candidly,’ said the Emperor ; ‘ it is my abdication they wish for, is it not?’

“ ‘ I fear it is, Sire, and though it is deeply repugnant to my feelings to tell your Majesty a painful truth, yet it is my belief that if you were not to abdicate voluntarily, the Chamber would require your abdication.’

“ ‘ Well, Duke of Otranto,’ said the Emperor, directing at Fouché a glance of severity,

to which the latter replied by an obsequious gesture of incredulity. 'Well, Duke, this does not correspond with what you just now said.'

" 'I have lived during other crises,' exclaimed Lucien, with warmth; 'and under circumstances no less difficult than the present. It is in temporizing that the danger consists. If the Chamber be not willing to second the Emperor, his Majesty can dispense with its feeble assistance. The defence of the country is the first law of the state. If the Chamber do not unite with the Emperor to save France, he must save her by his single efforts. He must declare himself a dictator; he must declare the whole of France in a state of siege; and he must summon all true Frenchmen to arms.'

" Carnot earnestly supported Lucien. 'I surrender my individual opinion,' said he, 'to the necessity of circumstances; and I declare that I consider it indispensable that, during the present crisis, the Sovereign should be invested with absolute power.'

" 'The nation,' said the Emperor, in a voice of thunder, 'did not elect the deputies to overthrow me, but to support me. Woe to them if the presence of the enemy on the French soil do not arouse their energy and patriotism! . . . Whatever course they may adopt, I shall always

be supported by the people and the army. Their fate, their very existence, depends on my will. Were I to pronounce their doom, they would all be sacrificed. They are playing an artful game. No matter! I have no need to resort to stratagem. I have right on my side. The patriotism of the people, their antipathy to the Bourbons, who are kept in reserve for them, their attachment to my person—all these circumstances still afford immense resources if we know how to profit by them.'

“ He successively brought under consideration the means of repairing the disasters of Waterloo. He drew a bold picture of the misfortunes which threatened France, and concluded by developing an admirable plan of defence and attack for opposing the invasion of the enemy. All eyes were fixed upon him: all attention was concentrated on the workings of that stupendous mind, the energy of which was unimpaired by the reverses and difficulties rising up on every side.

“ The various shades of opinion which had prevailed among the members of the council at length blended into one, and all united in approving the plans of the Emperor. Measures were adopted for facilitating their immediate execution. It was resolved that the ministers

should proceed in a body to the Chambers, and make an official communication, or that they should adopt a resolution consistent with the urgency of circumstances.

“ I am betraying state secrets,” said the Duke, smiling ; “ I have unfolded to you this scene in the council in order to give you a true idea of the terrible position of Napoleon, and the motives which forced on the second abdication. Many persons pronounce this abdication to have been an act of weakness. Thus it is that history is written from conjecture.

“ The council was interrupted by a message from the Chamber of Representatives. I will spare you the literal tenour of the ultimatum addressed to the Emperor. The Chamber declared itself permanent, designated as high treason any attempt to dissolve it, and declared to be treasonable any encroachment on the rights of the representatives, &c.

“ The ministers of the war department, of foreign affairs, and the interior, were requested to proceed immediately to the assembly.

“ The Emperor turned pale with anger. He rose, and striking his hand forcibly on the table, exclaimed, in a tone of indignation — ‘ I ought to have dismissed these men before my departure. I foresaw this. These factious fire-

brands will ruin France. I can measure the full extent of the evil. They are in open rebellion against legitimate authority. I must reflect on what is to be done.' He dissolved the sitting.

"I never beheld anything more hideous than the sardonic expression which was at that moment depicted in the countenance of Fouché.

"I was roused to the utmost degree of indignation. I declared, that for my own part, convinced as I was of the uselessness of seeking to convince people who were resolved not to be convinced, I would not obey the summons of the Representatives, and that I did not acknowledge their right to call me to their bar.

"The Emperor, who was exceedingly indignant, sent Regnault with a message to the Chamber of Deputies. Carnot was dispatched with a similar communication to the Chamber of Peers. The latter was listened to with courtesy and attention; but in the Chamber of Deputies Regnault could not obtain even silence. He was refused a hearing; and a second message imperatively commanded those ministers who had been specified in the first to appear immediately in the Chamber.

"I need not," pursued the Duke de Vicenza, "carry you through the long train of torments and disgusts which embittered the close of my

political career. The numerous memoirs of the period exhibit faithful pictures of the inconsistency, the turbulence, and the deplorable inability, of the representative powers.

“Events hurried on: we counted not days, but hours and minutes. The abdication was wrested from Napoleon. For the second time he resigned the throne in favour of his son. This concession has shared the fate of all concessions made by sovereign authority to factious exigency: it has remedied no evil; it has not saved France from becoming the prey of conflicting parties, nor from being ruined by a feeble government. In short, the Emperor’s abdication left the field open to all sorts of political speculations.

“The republicans insisted on the establishment of a feudal government; the imperialists, who had with them the voice of the nation, urged the claims of Napoleon II. and the Regency; whilst another party, composed of the most furious speakers in the assembly, was secretly labouring to place the Duke of Orleans on the throne. Others were for the Prince of Orange. Doubtless I must seem to be relating the occurrences of a romance; but, to our everlasting shame, these occurrences must find a place in the pages of French history. But

amongst all the projects that were set afloat, it is easy to distinguish those which were projected by honest men and dupes from the machinations of unprincipled intriguers, who are ever ready to barter the interests of their country.

“ Whilst parties were thus contending one with another, in order to obtain the Sovereign of their choice, one man succeeded in baffling them all, and placing the exiled family on the throne. He had maintained constant correspondence with Ghent; his conditions were agreed to, and his regicide vote of '93 received the baptism of the amnesty. In return for the sovereignty of France, which he surrendered to the Bourbons, the latter presented to astonished Europe the inconceivable spectacle of Fouché, the regicide, becoming a minister in the council of the brother of Louis XVI.

“ I was with the Emperor when the deputation from the Chamber of Deputies came to express the respect and gratitude with which the Chamber received the sacrifice he had made to the independence and happiness of the French people.

“ The Emperor at first received the deputation with dignified coolness; but inspired by his natural feelings, he delivered an answer replete

with sound arguments and lofty ideas. His earnest prayers and recommendations for the national prosperity and glory moved all present. Lanjuinais himself with difficulty repressed his emotion, and no doubt he and some others felt compunctious visitings.

“ After the departure of the deputation, Regnault observed that he esteemed himself happy in having prevailed on the Chamber to adopt this respectful measure.

“ ‘ Ah ! ’ exclaimed the Emperor, in a tone of mingled anger and disdain, ‘ then this is your work ? ’

“ ‘ Yes, Sire. ’

“ ‘ Well then, you ought to have remembered that the title of Emperor cannot be forfeited ; ’ and he turned his back on Lanjuinais.

“ The Emperor had good reason for treating him in this way. In the address, the Chamber had substituted for the title of Emperor the denomination *General Bonaparte*. This was an act of insolence which ought not to have been permitted by one of the Emperor’s ministers of state, the more especially as the acknowledgment of Napoleon’s right to abdicate was a formal acknowledgment of his sovereign dignity. Such conduct is truly contemptible !

“ The painful restraint which the Emperor

imposed on himself, for the sake of appearing calm in public, was thrown aside in his intercourse with persons with whom he was intimate. He then seemed to be profoundly wretched. He felt unspeakable mortification in attributing to the French people the outrages which had been inflicted on him. ‘Caulincourt,’ said he to me, ‘this last experience of mankind has irrevocably banished from me those illusions which help to counteract the cares of sovereignty. I have no longer any faith in patriotism : it is a mere empty word, expressing a noble idea. The love of country is the love of one’s self, of one’s position, of one’s personal interest Interest ! that miserable motive is now paramount over every other in France.

“ ‘ There is no longer faith or integrity in the bond which unites the nation to its Sovereign. France is verging towards her decline . . . The future is pregnant with disasters . . . Kings are treading on volcanized ground . . . The Bourbons have stripped from the crown the halo with which I sought to encircle it . . . How short-sighted . . . They cannot perceive that by disavowing our glory, and our conquests—by depreciating the great and brilliant works which have elevated the throne, they are destroying its illusions. I have elevated, not degraded royalty.

I have made it great and powerful—I have presented it under a new and favourable aspect, to a people to whom it had become obnoxious—I had collected round the national throne everything that could fix popular admiration. My successors will not feel the value of these attractions. They will imprudently strip off the velvet and gold, and shew that the throne is only a few deal planks.'

“ Ah ! thought I, struck with these prophetic words, the glorious days of France are past. The Sovereign who may venture to seat himself on Napoleon's throne, may possibly reign, but he will never govern.”

CHAPTER XI.

Disorderly spirit in the Chamber of Deputies—Fouché's Machiavelism — Public feeling in Paris — Conflicting parties — The Elysée Palace — The Imperial Guards— A solitary sentinel—Napoleon's forbearance — Alarming state of Paris — The Duke's visit to the Elysée — Inevitable result of the decision of the Chamber — A curious episode — Unexpected entrance into the gardens of the Tuileries — Important papers — Captain Délort — His travelling companion—A spy — Military capture — Treason discovered — Madame Délort — Her courage — Her mission to the Emperor—Napoleon leaves the Elysée for Malmaison.

“THE representatives who were in open rebellion launched into the most furious declamations. In vain did Lucien, Labédoyère, Boulay de la Meurthe, Segur, and all the friends of the Emperor, advocate the inheritance of Napoleon II. in virtue of the abdication. Several advocates, among whom was M. Dupin, made themselves conspicuous by their bitter hostility to the Imperial cause, and their exertions in favour of a heterogenous system of government, which was

neither republic nor empire. The time of the Chambers was wasted in idle harangues, which were frequently interrupted by violent murmurs. But the brand of discord was lighted, and the enemies of the Emperor attained their object.

“Fouché, who was president of the provisional government, of which I was likewise a member, was regent *de facto*. He was the central point of every intrigue; and by a thousand hidden springs he controlled the deliberations of the assembly. When urged to explain his views and intentions, Fouché replied that he had never disavowed the claims of Napoleon II.; but that Prince, not having yet been acknowledged by any of the Powers, we could not treat with them in his name. It was therefore requisite, he said, to adopt Deputy Dupin’s suggestion, and to stipulate provisionally in the name of the nation, so as to afford the enemy no pretence for rejecting the negotiators selected by the Chamber.

“Fouché’s reply was dictated by the most artful Machiavelism and perfidy. The throne was thus declared vacant, and was at the full and entire disposal of the Allied Powers, who were advancing by forced marches on Paris. We exerted our utmost efforts to shew the fatal consequences of this measure; but the violent decla-

mations of our antagonists prevailed, and it was found more convenient to adopt the opinion expressed by Fouché than to oppose it.

“ During this usurped reign of the Chambers, the feeling that pervaded the Parisian population was remarkable. Among masses of people there usually prevails a degree of good sense which enables them, with inconceivable sagacity, to estimate the ability of those who are appointed to rule them. The legislative authority, proceeding, as it did, without object or unity, was watched with painful impatience, and it was clearly understood that no benefit could accrue from the fiery harangues in the Chambers. The enemy was now within ten leagues of Paris.

“ The Emperor, who was a prisoner in the Elysée, excited the sympathy of the populace, whose menacing aspect diffused terror through the capital. Bands of federalists paraded the streets, uttering threats against the representatives. An armed force, under the command of Fouché, surrounded the Chamber, and protected its deliberations, whilst the approaches to the Elysée were filled by crowds, who mingled menaces with shouts of ‘ *Vive l’Empereur!*’ The state of Paris was most alarming.

“ The palace, which was invested on the out-

side by turbulent mobs, was in the interior a vast solitude. It was deserted by men devoid of honour and faith, those who crouch to good fortune and fly from adversity. The guard—the faithful Imperial guard—no longer surrounded Napoleon. Happy were they who were sleeping their last sleep on the field of Waterloo. The ill-starred men who survived that great disaster, soon knew not where to hide their proscribed heads, or how to conceal the insignia of their immortal glory. Alas! is it to be wondered at that feelings of hatred still lurk in those broken hearts!

“ Some wrecks of those heroes who had been forgotten in the hecatombs of Mont St.-Jean, wandered to Paris, and from thence to the Elysée. There they were without commanders, without orders . . . but no matter, they were there. A single sentinel, in a tattered uniform, guarded the door of the hero who so lately had legions enrolled under his banners. How many unheard-of pangs accompanied the last convulsions of Napoleon's political existence!

“ His position at the Elysée is unexampled in history. He might, had he been so inclined, have annihilated the traitors by a single word. The crowds who surrounded him would, on the

slightest signal, have overthrown any obstacle that stood between Napoleon and the nation. But the Emperor would never have consented to excite scenes of carnage. He well knew the terrific nature of popular justice.

“ I proceeded to the Elysée to render him an account of what was passing in the Chamber of Deputies. I experienced no little difficulty in gaining access to the palace. I was obliged once or twice to harangue the crowd, in order to obtain room for my carriage to pass along, and though I knew the people to be all friendly to the Emperor, yet the fury depicted in their countenances not a little alarmed me.

“ I found the Emperor very impatient to know what had been done in Paris. The shouts of the populace were distinctly heard within the walls of the palace.

“ ‘ This is dreadful,’ said he to me, as I entered. ‘ The mob may be led to the commission of some excess; and I shall be accused of being the cause. These mistaken people wish to serve me, and yet they are doing all they can to injure me. What effect do these demonstrations produce in Paris?’

“ Paris, replied I, is in a state of stupor. Many families have fled. Almost all the best

houses are empty. As I drove through the streets I met scarcely one respectably-dressed man. Some riots are apprehended to-night.

“ ‘ This is deplorable!—most deplorable.—Let us go into the garden,’ pursued he. ‘ The heat is suffocating here.’

“ The sun was setting. We walked into that part of the grounds, called the *jardin-Anglais*, to escape the observation of the crowd, who formed a cardon round the palace.

“ ‘ Well,’ said the Emperor, ‘ let me know what has been done in the Chambers?’

“ I told him the particulars, which I have just detailed to you.

“ ‘ All is lost !’ he exclaimed. ‘ They seem not to be aware that by declaring the throne to be vacant they surrender it to the first claimant. The Allies will not now treat; they will dictate their conditions, and they must be accepted. . . . All this has been arranged beforehand. Fouché is a base intriguer, and he has artfully laid his plans. The majority of the Chamber is hostile to the Bourbons; and yet there is no doubt the Bourbons will be brought back through their refusal to proclaim Napoleon II. To overthrow an established government, supported by the constituted authorities, by the army, by the citizen guards, and by the populace, is a very different

affair from finding a government in a state of dissolution, distracted by factions, and a prey to anarchy. To abandon the rights of my son, is to smooth the path for the Allies. France is at the mercy of her foreign enemies. She will pay dearly for the inability of her representatives.'

"At this moment we were interrupted by a great noise, which seemed to proceed from the direction of the Champs-Élysée. We first heard acclamations and shouts of '*Vive l'Empereur!*' and then loud and tumultuous bravos.

"The following episode, which intervened amidst the great political scenes of the time, revealed a very important fact, and furnished us with a key to many others. We at length discovered secret causes which had heretofore been hidden from us. We found an explanation of the circumstances which had brought about our disasters at Waterloo, and the fabulous rapidity of events which baffled all foresight.

"The sound of voices in the garden arrested our attention. We stopped, and through the trees we perceived, between two grenadiers, an elegantly-dressed lady. She looked pale and terrified, and she directed her steps towards the palace. 'Who is that?' inquired the Emperor, with astonishment.

"Where are you going? said I, advancing

towards the guards. Whom do you want, madam ?

“ Alarm seemed almost to have bereft the lady of her senses. I repeated my question, and at length, in a very sweetly-toned voice, she uttered the following words, which were interrupted by torrents of tears :—‘ Protect me, sir, I conjure you. I wish to see the Emperor. I must speak with him personally !’

“ ‘ That may be all very true,’ interrupted one of the old grenadiers ; ‘ but that is no reason why you should have darted, like a bullet, over the walls ;’ then, scanning the lady from head to foot, he added—‘ This manœuvre seems to me rather suspicious. She may be an assassin in disguise for anything we know. We have seen such things in Egypt.’

“ On hearing this I could scarcely refrain from smiling. The poor lady certainly looked like anything but an assassin.

“ ‘ Sir,’ said she, turning to me, ‘ I entreat that you will obtain for me an interview with the Emperor.’

“ That is impossible, madam ; but permit me to inquire how you gained access to this garden ?

“ ‘ How ! how !’ she repeated ; and her looks expressed great alarm. ‘ A terrific turbulent crowd raised me to the top of the terrace,

and from thence I threw myself down into the garden. Had it been an abyss I would not have hesitated to plunge into it to escape from my fearful protectors.

“ ‘ After braving a thousand dangers, I reached the gate of the Elysée. The porter refused me admittance, and then, almost distracted by disappointment, I exclaimed that I must see the Emperor;—that I wished to impart to him a communication from my husband, who is a captain in the Imperial guards. I mentioned that I had about me papers of the utmost importance to the Emperor’s safety. In short, I scarcely knew what I said, I was so terrified when I beheld the furious crowd that surrounded me. Some persons among the mob cried out—“ She is a good patriot. We will protect her. We will try to get her into the palace. She says she has papers which are important to the Emperor.” These men, whose looks filled me with alarm, then led me from the Champs-Elysée, and we passed through the crowd, who opened a passage for us as if by enchantment. On arriving in front of the palace they raised me up on their shoulders, and on recovering from the bewilderment into which this scene had thrown me, I found myself on the terrace wall. These two brave men,’ said she, turning her eyes to-

wards the grenadiers, ‘hastened to me and conducted me hither.’

“The Emperor who, concealed behind the trees, had heard the lady’s story, now suddenly presented himself, and said, in a very kind tone—
‘What have you to say to me, madam?’

“‘Sire! Ah, Sire!’ she exclaimed, with increased trepidation, and with trembling hands she drew some papers from her bosom.

“‘Compose yourself, madam,’ said the Emperor; ‘let me know what you wish to communicate to me.’

“She presented the papers to the Emperor, who took them from her, and perused them attentively. I observed that his countenance betrayed an expression of strong indignation; and when he had finished reading he convulsively squeezed the papers in his hands. His agitation was very great, but after the lapse of a few moments, he said, addressing himself to the lady—‘Your husband, madam, has done his duty. It is no longer in my power to recompense fidelity, but ——’

“‘Sire,’ interrupted the lady, earnestly, ‘the only recompense my husband wishes is an opportunity of shedding his blood for your Majesty.’

“ ‘ Tell him, madam, that I would most willingly give mine to redeem the misfortunes of my brave companions in arms. Adieu, madam, you have performed your mission courageously, and I thank you.’

“ ‘ Sire, what is to be done with the man? Will not your majesty order him to undergo a legal examination.’

“ ‘ Restore him to liberty, madam. Rid yourselves of him. It is too late to obtain justice!’

“ I was struck with the graceful and elegant figure of the lady, whose personal appearance was far from denoting the courage and heroism of which her conduct afforded proofs. This delicate woman had braved a thousand dangers in the fulfilment of a duty, and I reflected with feelings of indignation on the many men who at that moment forgot their duty and their country.

“ The lady appeared confused, and looking fearfully around her, she seemed to ask pardon for the breach of etiquette which she had unwillingly committed. I could perceive that over-excited feeling had borne her up, and that she had hitherto disregarded the dangers she had encountered in the attainment of her object; but now her heart failed her, and she had not courage to venture again to pass through the crowd.

My carriage was standing in the court yard. I offered her the use of it, which she accepted, and she was driven home unmolested.

“Meanwhile the Emperor had left the garden and retired to his cabinet. When I rejoined him he was walking about, with his arms crossed on his bosom. He was absorbed in reflection, and he did not perceive my entrance. I was of course very curious to know the contents of the papers which had been delivered in so mysterious a way; but I made it a rule never to interrogate the Emperor. He seated himself at his desk, and began to peruse the papers a second time. ‘*Melediction!*’ he exclaimed. ‘Look, Caulincourt; read this. Such turpitude would suffice to make one hate the very name of man, if some rare exceptions did not plead the cause of human nature!’

“I will now,” pursued the Duke, “briefly relate to you the whole of this mysterious adventure!

“A captain in the guards named Délort, who had been wounded in the battle of Mont Saint-Jean, succeeded in gaining Charleroy. His wound was not so dangerous as to prevent him from continuing his route. A friend who resided at Charleroy, lent him his carriage, and at considerable expense, two strong horses were procured to convey him to Paris. A serjeant of his

regiment, who had likewise been wounded, accompanied him. On arriving at Amiens, the captain alighted at a hotel, for the purpose of taking a little rest. When he was about to resume his journey, a man of respectable appearance stepped up to him. This person represented himself as being charged with an important mission to the government; and he stated that, having reached Amiens with considerable difficulty, he found himself absolutely without the means of continuing his journey. He begged the captain would allow him a seat in his carriage, and offered to refund any expenses on reaching home. M. Délort granted the place, and refused the payment, and the carriage immediately started for Paris. In the course of conversation, Captain Délort discovered that his new companion was singularly well acquainted with passing events. He spoke of the battle of Waterloo, estimated the amount of the Allied forces, and repeatedly corrected errors committed by the captain, in his statement of the amount of French troops engaged in the battle. He decidedly declared that the cause of Napoleon was lost, and that before the lapse of a week, the Allies would be under the walls of Paris. Captain Délort puzzled himself in trying to guess who this person could possibly be. He

was not a military man, and yet he was accurately acquainted with everything connected with the army. Some remarks which fell from him awakened the captain's suspicion; and at length he came to the conclusion that his new acquaintance was neither more nor less than a spy.

“ At the different places at which they stopped on the road, the captain communicated to his serjeant his suspicions, and they arranged together a plan for cutting short the mischievous proceedings of their travelling companion.

“ Captain Délort possessed a country house at Saint-Ouen, where his wife was at that time residing. The house was situated on the road to Paris, and Délort naturally gave directions for being set down at his own house. On reaching home, he begged that the stranger would step in and accept of some refreshment. As soon as the door was closed, he made a military capture of the man and his portmanteau. On examining the latter, he found unquestionable proofs that the man was a spy in the pay of the police. The miserable traitor had set out from Paris with the ostensible mission of proceeding to Belgium to obtain information relating to the forces and movements of the enemy; but his real mission was to convey to the enemy the most accurate information respecting our forces and

movements. This discovery roused the indignation of Captain Délort and the serjeant; and their first resolution was to inflict summary justice on the villain who had fallen into their hands. However, on reflection, Captain Délort thought it would be more advisable to confine him securely in a cellar. The next thing to be done was to find some prompt mode of transmitting to the Emperor the written proofs of the treason of the Ministers who had been intrusted with the government during his absence. The captain's wound prevented him from moving; and he could not sufficiently rely on the intelligence of his serjeant, who moreover could not hope to gain access to the Emperor personally. The papers could not be intrusted to any intermediary hands, for the Emperor was known to be surrounded by traitors.

“Madame Délort was the daughter of a colonel who was killed on the field of battle. She had been educated at the Maison d'Evouen, and her attachment to the Emperor amounted to idolatry. She offered to undertake the difficult mission. Proud of the confidence of her husband, and fully aware of the importance of the communication with which she was entrusted, this courageous woman set out from Paris, resolved to surmount every difficulty which might

impede her attempts to gain access to the Emperor. It was not till she approached the Elysée that her courage began to fail her. She felt alarmed at the sight of the vast multitude of people. She now perceived that she had not ordinary difficulties to surmount; but that she must brave real dangers. For a moment she hesitated; but the safety of Napoleon, perhaps of France, depended on her resolution. She raised a supplicating look to heaven, praying for support, and courageously made her way into the thick of the crowd.

“Madame Délort,” continued the Duke, “was not precisely handsome, but when she suddenly presented herself in the garden of the Elysée, I thought her extremely interesting. But the truth is, I have but a faint recollection of her, for the whole scene did not last half an hour.

“Every ten minutes the Emperor received news of what was passing in the Chamber. The storm was rapidly gathering, and at length the thunderbolt broke.

“It was not the insolent insinuations of the representatives which induced the Emperor to quit the capital, where he was an object of alarm to intriguers. He was weary of mankind; but he despised them too much to fear them. He

yielded, not to fear, but to disgust, excited by perfidy and baseness. He would not permit blood to be shed in Paris for the triumph of his cause.

“ At noon, on the 25th, the Emperor left the Elysée for Malmaison. ‘ Remain where you are, Caulincourt,’ said he, on taking leave of me. ‘ Do whatever you can to prevent mischief. Carnot will second you. He is an honest man. For me, all is at an end. Strive to serve France, and you will still be serving me. Courage, Caulincourt. If you and other honourable men decline to take an active part in affairs, that traitor, Fouché, will sell France to foreigners.’

“ All is over. All is consummated, said I, totally dispirited. I will remain, Sire; but only because I hope for the possibility of being yet useful to your Majesty.”

CHAPTER XII.

Fouché's alarm—General Becker sent to Malmaison—The Emperor's future residence—A hint—Bitter regrets—Letter from Napoleon to the council—The answer—Count Flahant—Davoust—His infamous conduct—The Emperor's departure for Rochefort—Lafitte, the banker—Vast sums lodged in his hands—Napoleon's high opinion of him—Queen Hortense—The 29th of June at Malmaison—Napoleon abjures all desire to resume sovereignty—His remarks on the battle of Waterloo—Heroism of the Imperial Guard—The Duke's last farewell of the Emperor—Historical character of Napoleon—Death of the Duke de Vicenza.

“THE government committee, of which the Duke of Otranto was president, held its sittings at the Tuileries. It would be impossible to describe the misery I suffered during the last days of the crisis. I was not now, as in 1814, supported in the painful conflict by the consciousness of being useful to the Emperor. Now, all I could do was to obtain some little mitigation of the vexations to which he was exposed. I was like a sentinel stationed to watch the ap-

proach of danger, and to use my efforts to avert it.

“The Emperor’s removal to Malmaison gave Fouché some uneasiness. He communicated his fears to the representatives, and it was consequently determined that General Becker should accompany the Emperor to the Isle d’Aix, and to remain with him till his embarkation. The general was immediately dispatched to Malmaison, to watch the movements of the prisoner. Napoleon perceived the object of the general’s visit; but he felt that it would be beneath his dignity to express, by words, his contempt of the mean conduct practised towards him. He took no notice of it. It must be observed, too, that General Becker behaved with perfect propriety and respect. The Emperor had no reason to complain of him.

“In my visits to Malmaison the Emperor did not manifest, in his conversation, any of these violent ebullitions of feeling which were of such frequent occurrence at Fontainebleau. All that could rouse the indignation of a lofty spirit; all that could lacerate a mortal wound, was studiously put into practice, and this treatment had wrought the wished-for effect—that of impairing his energy. His mental suffering was extreme. ‘My removal to this place,’ said he, ‘is an addi-

tional annoyance to me. Every object that presents itself to my eyes revives some distressing recollection. This Malmaison was the first considerable property that I became possessed of. The money with which I purchased it was my own earning. It was long the abode of happiness; but she who was its chief ornament is now no more;—my misfortunes killed her. Ten years ago I little foresaw that I should one day take refuge here to avoid my persecutors. And who are these persecutors? Men whom I have loaded with favours; men whom I have raised from humble to exalted stations. I made myself what I was; but they are only what I made them. What recollections I shall carry with me from France.'

“ I impressed upon him the necessity of coming to a prompt determination as to the residence which he wished to make choice of. I was in a state of great anxiety. Malmaison was surrounded by the enemy. Blucher was advancing; and some detachments of his force had arrived at Saint-Germain. What was to be the fate of the Emperor?

“ He spoke of England, and the United States; but he had made no decided choice. I ventured to throw out a hint, which he immediately understood.

“ ‘No,’ said he, emphatically, ‘that cannot be. Circumstances have occurred between Alexander and me which render it impossible for me to make any such proposition to him.’

“ Alas !” continued the Duke; “the Niemen, Tilsit, and other recollections of friendly intercourse with Alexander, were still fresh in the memory of Napoleon. How bitter must have been the regrets which they excited.

“ However, it was necessary for his own safety that he should quit France. Friends and enemies, from different motives, regarded his speedy departure as indispensable. Decres and Boulay de la Meurthe arrived at Malmaison. We prevailed on the Emperor to fix his departure for the following day.

“ I returned to Paris, to settle the preliminary arrangements. I was just about to return to Malmaison when General Becker arrived with a letter from the Emperor to the government committee. Becker stated, that in the morning the Emperor heard the distant roaring of the cannon, and, starting up as if electrified by the sound, he exclaimed :—‘ Let the committee restore to me the command of the army, and I swear, on the faith of a soldier and a citizen, to depart as soon as I shall have delivered the capital. All I wish is to defeat the enemy, and

force him to consent to negotiations which will secure the interests of France. I do not wish to repossess sovereign power—heaven forbid that I should. I wish only to fight in the cause of France.’

“ Napoleon’s letter, of which Becker was the bearer, contained a repetition of this noble declaration. The Duke of Otranto for a moment felt alarmed; but his characteristic cunning came to his aid, and he said, in his sharp discordant voice, ‘ Surely, *he* is jesting.’

“ Carnot and I made some remark favourable to Napoleon’s proposition; and yet it must be confessed that many obstacles stood in the way of its execution. Fouché grew warm; and a vehement discussion ensued. The majority was hostile to the measure, which, I repeat, appeared likely to be attended with great inconveniences in the then critical position of affairs; for we did not possess a sufficient number of troops to make head against the overwhelming forces which were pouring in upon us. No time was to be lost!

“ Becker conveyed to Malmaison the determination of the council. The Emperor then determined to depart, and he sent Flahant to arrange with the committee the period of his departure, and the place of his embarkation.

The Prince of Eckmuhl, who was present, suspected that this new message was merely a subterfuge to gain time. He made some remarks to the Emperor, couched in terms the most disrespectful. Davoust, who was overwhelmed with the Emperor's bounty (he possessed an income of 1,800,000 livres per annum) — Davoust carried his insolence so far as to threaten to *have Napoleon arrested*, or to *arrest him himself!* This infamous conduct is sufficiently well authenticated. But Davoust has already paid the penalty due to his turpitude.

“The Emperor's departure was at length irrevocably fixed for the 29th of June. He proceeded to Rochefort, where two frigates were to be in readiness to convey him to the United States of America. There he had determined to fix his future residence. He seemed now to recover some degree of mental tranquillity; as he always did whenever he succeeded in prevailing on himself to yield to necessity. Only those who have closely watched the working of Napoleon's vigorous mind can conceive the violence he must have imposed upon himself when he surrendered his own will to that of others. Napoleon possessed a consciousness of his personal superiority, and conquered as he was by the force of events, he felt that nature

had created him to fill the foremost rank among men.

“At the period to which I am here referring, Napoleon proved himself to be what he had been at all times, and under all circumstances—namely, superior to his condition. Though internally racked by mental torture, yet he had sufficient self-command to conceal his sufferings, and to maintain a dignity which awed even his persecutors. With coolness and presence of mind he made the necessary preparations for his journey. On the day preceding his departure from Malmaison, he sent for Lafitte the banker, and he conversed with him with the most perfect composure on the state of public affairs. He lodged in Lafitte’s hands a deposit of eight hundred thousand francs in specie, and about three millions in bonds and *rentes*. He would not accept any acknowledgment of the receipt of these vast sums, though M. Lafitte earnestly entreated him to do so. When speaking to me on the subject of these arrangements, the Emperor said:—‘I would with equal readiness have entrusted the finances of the empire to M. Lafitte. I know he is not favourable to my government; but I also know him to be an honest man.’ This was a high eulogy on the banker, in the mouth of Napoleon, who enter-

tained a most decided prejudice against what he termed *maltotiers*.

“ On the morning of the 29th, the day fixed for the Emperor’s departure, I proceeded to Malmaison. That charming retreat, which in the month of June was in its full beauty, presented a painful contrast to the grief depicted in the countenances of its inmates. Queen Hortense and a few faithful friends, who had not forsaken the illustrious exile, were there. As we gazed around on the smiling gardens and splendid apartments, we all felt how unavailing are the enjoyments of luxury as a solace to the wounded spirit. We felt how true it is that there is nothing positive but misfortune.

“ When I arrived at Malmaison the Emperor was alone in his cabinet. I found him seated at his writing table, his head resting on one hand, whilst with the other he was writing. His pen glided rapidly over the paper, which was thrust to a distance from him. His attitude was indicative of dejection; and his whole appearance betrayed the efforts he had made to conceal the grief which inwardly preyed upon him. It was evident that he suffered the utmost extreme of mental misery. I shuddered as I read the anguish depicted in his looks. His glory and his dignity were insulted—his feelings

and affections were violated! He was now sinking under the lassitude consequent on the efforts he had made to conceal his real emotions. He summoned all his energy to struggle against his pitiless destiny, and to subdue the irritation continually created by the circumstances of his position.

“As I entered the cabinet, he raised his head, laid down his pen, and holding out his hand, though without changing his attitude, he said— ‘Well, Caulincourt! this is truly draining the cup of misfortune to the dregs. I wished to defer my departure only for the sake of fighting at the head of the army. I wished only to contribute my aid in repelling the enemy. I have had enough of sovereignty. I want no more of it.—I want no more of it.—(He repeated these words with marked vehemence.)—I am no longer a Sovereign, but I am still a soldier! When I heard the cannon roar—when I reflected that my troops were without a leader—that they were to endure the humiliation of a defeat without having fought—my blood boiled with indignation. All I wished for was a glorious death amidst my brave troops. But my co-operation would have defeated the schemes of traitors. France has been sold. She has been surrendered up without a blow being struck in her

defence. Thirty-two millions of men have been made to bow their heads to an arrogant conqueror, without disputing the victory. Such a spectacle as France now presents is not to be found in the history of any other nation. What has France become in the hands of the imbecile government which has ruled her for the last fifteen months? Is she any longer the nation unequalled in the world?

“ The Emperor rose and paced up and down the apartment. His rapid utterance and animated gestures betrayed the emotion which agitated him. I listened to him, as I always did, with deep interest. On this occasion he seemed only to give expression to my own feelings.

“ ‘ In 1814,’ resumed he, ‘ honest men might justly say, all is lost except honour—except national dignity. Let them now bow down their heads with mortification; for now all—all is lost! And that villain Fouché imagines that I would resume the sovereignty in the degradation to which it is now reduced! Never, never! The place that is assigned to the Sovereign is no longer tenable. I am disgusted alike with men and things, and I am anxious only to enjoy repose. I am utterly indifferent about my future fate—and I endure life, without attaching myself to it by any alluring chimeras. I carry with me

from France recollections which will constitute at once the charm and the torment of the remainder of my days. A bitter and incurable regret must ever be connected with this last phasis of my singular career. Alas! what will become of the army—my brave, my unparalleled army! The re-action will be terrible, Caulincourt. The army will be doomed to expiate its fidelity to my cause—its heroic resistance at Waterloo. Waterloo!—What horrible recollections are connected with that name! Oh! if you had seen that handful of heroes, closely pressed one upon another, resisting immense masses of the enemy, not to defend their lives, but to meet death on the field of battle, where they could not conquer! The English stood amazed at sight of this desperate heroism; and weary of the carnage, they implored the martyrs to surrender. This merciful summons was answered by the sublime cry:—“*Le garde meurt et ne se rend pas.*” The Imperial guard has immortalized the French people and the empire!

“He paused, apparently overcome by the recollections of these gigantic scenes. How well I understood the incessant pre-occupation of Napoleon respecting the future fate of his army. Deceived, forsaken, betrayed by all who had shared his prosperity, he naturally transferred

all his affection, and attached all his regret, to those devoted friends of his misfortune. Two months after, these heroic troops received the appellation of Brigands of the Loire!

“ ‘ And you,’ pursued he, gazing at me with a melancholy expression ; ‘ all you who are here will be pursued and persecuted. Compromised as you are for my cause, what will become of you ! Your antagonists in the late deplorable conflict you sustained will become your persecutors.’

“ Sire, I replied, your friends will suffer only through your misfortunes. Persecution will be felt lightly by them, if it spare you. A man who feels the consciousness of having faithfully served his country, and having supported a noble cause, can view persecution with indifference and contempt. That conviction brings with it a feeling of self-approbation, of which persecution cannot deprive its victims.

“ ‘ All is over, Caulincourt. We are now about to part. In a few days hence, I must quit France for ever. I will fix my abode in the United States. In the course of some little time, the spot which I shall inhabit will be in a condition to receive the glorious wrecks of the army. All my old companions in arms will find an asylum with me. Who knows but that I may one day or other have an *hospital des in-*

valids in the United States, for my veteran guards.'

“ Suddenly, the galloping of horses was heard in the court yard. The Emperor advanced to the window, and heaved a deep sigh. He seemed greatly agitated. I was almost distracted at the thought of parting with him for ever. I moved towards the door, and, as it were unconsciously, turned back again. The Emperor advanced a few paces to meet me. He fixed upon me a look which no words can express. I saw the tears start into his eyes. How cruelly painful was that moment !

“ I will not attempt to describe my feelings on taking my last farewell of the Emperor. I felt that he was about to enter upon an endless exile. I rushed from the cabinet, almost in a delirium of despair. There is something which utterly prostrates the mental energies, in the consciousness that misfortunes are irreparable—when we find ourselves compelled to bid farewell to hope.

“ I have told you all I have to relate of the terrific interval of the *hundred days*. I need not detail anything which has subsequently occurred to me, for since then my prosaic life has been utterly devoid of interest. Since that period of trial, I have been insensible to persecution, and I have resented injuries only by cold

contempt. The quiet retirement of my present existence is congenial with the state of my mind. Feeling no interest in the events that are passing in the world, I turn for recreation to the poetry of my recollections, those treasures which have escaped from the wreck of my sympathies. There is one regret which presses more heavily than all the rest on my heart,—which is, that I cannot live long enough to complete the work of conscience and justice, which I am anxious to bequeath to France. By employing the few hours which I can snatch from death in portraying the hero whom faction hurled from the throne, I feel that I am discharging a sacred duty to my country. France will one day or other know her friends from her enemies, and usurped reputations will fall before inexorable truth.

“ The events of the empire furnish the most brilliant pages of French history ; but they are not the history of Napoleon. His wonderful character can only be accurately portrayed by those who had the opportunity of observing him in the relations of private life ; they only can paint the thousand traits which characterized his extraordinary mind. Napoleon was more than a hero, more than an Emperor. A comparison between him and any other man, or any other

Sovereign, is impossible. His death has left a void in human nature which will probably never be filled up. Future generations will bow with respect to the age on which the glory of Napoleon Bonaparte shed its lustre. For centuries to come French hearts will glow with pride at the mention of his exploits: to his name alone is attached inexhaustible admiration, imperishable remembrance.”

* * * * *

The Duke paused. With what eager interest I listened to these last outpourings of his ardent and impassioned soul.

“Duke,” said I, “I shall carry with me from Plombières a rich treasure of recollections, for my days of suffering and retirement. I have read with earnest interest all the histories of the Emperor’s reign; but now, methinks, for the first time I know Napoleon. I can never sufficiently express my thanks for the gratification your kindness has conferred on me. The details which I have heard you narrate will henceforth be the subject of my eternal meditations.”

Even whilst I trace these lines I am transported in imagination to the little drawing-room at Plombières. There I fancy I can still behold the Duke de Vicenza. I see his pale countenance, his attenuated form. The melancholy

tones of his voice still vibrate in my ear : that voice which, alas ! death has now rendered mute.

We took leave of the Duke at Plombières, in October, 1826; and in February, 1827, he was consigned to the tomb !

I leave to abler pens than mine the honour of inscribing a fitting eulogy on a man, whose many noble qualities must claim the admiration, not only of France, but of Europe. The foregoing pages contain merely a faithful record of his conversations : this record is a humble tribute deposited on a national tomb.

APPENDIX.

DETAILS RELATING TO THE DEATH OF THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN.

THE reader may find it interesting to peruse the following statement of the Duke de Rovigo, in conjunction with that given by the Duke de Vicenza :—(*See vol. i. chap. v.*)

“ The catastrophe of the Duke d’Enghien was yet unexplained: nothing was certain but the Duke’s melancholy death, when, in 1823, I published an abstract of my memoirs, in which I explained the causes of that event. In this publication, I had two objects in view. The first certainly was to repel the base insinuations which were cast upon me, when, during my imprisonment at Malta, I was supposed to be lost beyond redemption: the second was to defend the me-

mory of the Emperor, to whom I had wholly devoted my existence ; for I accept this reproach as an honour conferred on me. My only wish was to unfold the truth ; but that which was merely the elucidation of an historical fact has suddenly become a personal question. Adversaries, whom I had never even thought of, rose up against me. Of these, General Hullin, who had hitherto been on as friendly a footing with me as I had with him, and whom I had informed of my publication before it appeared, was the first to present himself.

“ He was soon followed by two others. One naturally anxious to repel in anticipation a portion of the blame which a profound investigation of the affair could not fail to cast upon him, published a letter, which, among many offensive things to which I did not condescend to reply, contained false assertions, which cannot with propriety remain unanswered.

“ The other only *wrote that he would not write* : he declared that he had transmitted a letter to the King. I certainly was not aware that I was so far honoured as to be the object of his attention, until I received a letter prohibiting my appearance in a place to which I had always had free access in the days of our glory.

“ I was doubtless bound to respect the will of

the Sovereign, and to submit to it; but I regarded it only in the light of a decision wrested by surprise from his mistaken equity. Besides, it was not before him that this cause was to be tried; and the judgments of a king are not without appeal, when the reputation and honour of a citizen are concerned.

“ It is public opinion, tested by public discussion, that judges in the last instance. To this I might immediately have had recourse; and some of my friends have blamed me for not doing so. I considered, however, that delay was more advisable; and it was not without well-founded motives that I came to this determination.

“ Like all political publications, mine had its inconveniences and advantages. It drew public attention to transactions which some persons had good reason to wish for ever buried in oblivion: it compromised some personal interests; it disturbed securities which were believed to be well secured; and committed the unpardonable offence of alarming certain Parisian saloons. But, on the other hand, it brought to light important facts; it resuscitated incontrovertible documents which had escaped the search of those who would willingly have destroyed them; and it excited a polemical discussion from which history cannot fail to profit, and by which truth must

unavoidably be elicited. It became me then to wait, that I, as well as others, might be benefited by these new lights.

“ Besides, at the point to which the question had been brought, was it proper to reply by a pamphlet to pamphlets, or to oppose a justificatory memorial to vague or false assertions? I know not whether such a contest would have convinced my adversaries, but it certainly was not in my opinion worthy of me. I owed it to my honour to make a more noble and more complete defence. I owed it also to my children, to whom I have to transmit a name, the lustre of which is proved by titles which cannot be disputed. I therefore resolved to publish my Memoirs—that is, to submit my whole life to public examination.

“ Let my adversaries thus descend into the arena with me, and take up this new kind of gauntlet. A fine opportunity is afforded them for doing homage to the memory of him who loaded them with benefits, and for explaining events much more serious, and of much higher historical importance, than the question which has awakened their inquietudes or disconcerted their views.

“ A day will come when public opinion will judge, without reserve and without partiality, all who have acted a part in the great drama of the

empire. The course of nature puts a period to personal influences; the petty animosities and gossiping traditions of drawing-rooms sink into oblivion. Men then decide on documents—and to that decision I submit mine.

“ I wish, but I doubt, that my adversaries would follow this example.

“ Among the works which have appeared since 1823, I must particularly mention :—

“ 1. Examination of the Proceedings of the Court-martial instituted to try the Duke d’Enghien.

“ 2. A justificatory Memorial published by the Duke de Vicenza.

“ 3. Some Letters published by the Duke de Dalberg, minister from the Court of Baden to the French Government, in the year XII. (1804.)

“ 4. An important note from the Baron de Massias, then French Minister at the Court of Baden.

“ 5. Minutes made on the Exhumation of the Duke d’Enghien, in 1816.

“ 6. A Deposition of the Sieur Anfort, brigadier of Gendarmerie at Vincennes, preserved and separately published, in 1822, by a writer who styles himself a Bourgeois de Paris.

“ Such are the documents which ought to be referred to for the solution of a question which it is in vain attempted to render personal, and which belongs wholly to history.

“ I shall not repeat here what I have already stated in reference to the circumstances which transpired on the trial of Georges, and which would lead to the conclusion that the mysterious personage whom certain subaltern agents alluded to, was the Duke d'Enghien. What I have written gives on this subject every desirable explanation. I have nothing to add.

“ But what I did not state, and what, for the elucidation of other important circumstances which require investigation, must not now be omitted, is, that at the time of that trial the Duke de Dalberg was the envoy from the Elector of Baden to the French republic: though descended from a princely German family, he was then only a baron. He was nephew of the last Elector of Mentz, who had not yet become Primate of Germany. Thus, in 1804, Baron Dalberg was from relationship, and as feudatory of the German empire, connected with the ambassador of

the chief of that empire. His transactions must naturally have been intimately combined with those of that ambassador; unless it be supposed, contrary to all probability, that the court of Baden had instructed the baron to sacrifice the general interests of Germany for the sake of favouring the extension of the French republic.

“Be this as it may, Baron Dalberg, in his apologetic letter, declares that “M. de Talleyrand, during his ministry, had constantly endeavoured to moderate the violent passions of Bonaparte.”

“Had, then, Baron Dalberg private communications with M. de Talleyrand? It certainly could not be in any intercourse between them, as minister with minister, that he was informed by Talleyrand of the efforts which he might or might not have made to calm the violence of the First Consul’s passions.

“Baron Dalberg, indeed, dates this confidence only from the war of 1806; but I will soon fix its real date.

“In the first place, I would ask how it happened that, according to these premises, Baron Dalberg left a country, where his birth ensured him the highest consideration, to come to France and connect himself with a republican system against which all Europe had risen? How came he to renounce the high honour of being proclaimed

at every coronation of the German Emperors, when the Emperor himself used to ask aloud, in the presence of the nobility of Germany assembled in the church at Frankfort, "Is there a Dalberg here?"

"It may be readily conceived that the First Consul, on becoming Emperor, had to reward great services in war; and there is nothing extraordinary in the political fortunes of men who astonished the world by their talents and their achievements.

"It was the same in the civil administration, where great talents and efforts, supported by patriotic zeal, substituted a code of laws for the anarchy which desolated society, a system of finance for the waste of the republic, and restored order and economy in every branch of the government.

"All these superior men naturally became the objects of particular attention, and the causes of their elevation were perfectly honourable.

"But when Baron Dalberg joined our fortunes, he had neither incurred the danger of our battles nor shared the labours of our administration. What, then, were the *potent* services which he could have rendered us, and which warranted his sudden entrance into the service of France as Duke de Dalberg, instead of Baron—the title

he had borne in Germany—and being, in the course of *a few months*, endowed with the sum of four millions, and with the appointments of counsellor of state and senator?—*None*. It must, then, be presumed, that *officious* services already performed, but not publicly known, drew upon Baron Dalberg all these accumulated favours.

“The Emperor Napoleon was not ungrateful; but he was not in the habit of rewarding services before they were performed. Why, then, has not Baron Dalberg himself explained his private services? I can supply what his modesty has omitted. He knows this well; for he admitted me sufficiently into his confidence. His zeal to bring about the marriage of the grandson of his elector with Mademoiselle Stéphanie de Beauharnois—the choice which was made of Cardinal Fesch to succeed to the primateship of Germany in preference to a German ecclesiastical prince—the good offices and the particular relations of Baron Dalberg when a member of the diplomatic body at Warsaw, in 1806—the eagerness of M. de Talleyrand to summon him to Tilsit, in order that he might mingle with the foreign diplomatists, though the Emperor ordered me to prevent his arrival at Tilsit, when I was governor of old Prussia, at Königsberg—the *officious* part which he acted at Erfurt, and

even the anecdote which forced him to enter the service of France—are all known to me. But this is not the place to break the prudent silence which the Duke de Dalberg thinks proper to maintain with reference to these circumstances. An explanation of all these facts, and others not less characteristic, will perhaps find a place in contemporary Memoirs. What I have now said is sufficient to shew that Baron Dalberg never thought that, while engaged in an *official* correspondence arising out of his ostensible functions, he was not also at liberty to maintain *officious* communications.

“ Let us now examine the conduct of Baron Dalberg, the minister representing that venerable and respected prince, the Elector of Baden, at the period of the catastrophe of the Duke d’Enghien, and we shall see whether he was not at once the *official* agent of his Sovereign, and the *officious* agent of a French minister.

“ The affair of Georges then occupied the attention of the French government. Our diplomatic agents were making investigations in all directions. Baron Dalberg had, doubtless, given official information of this affair to his Sovereign ; for in his letter to M. de Talleyrand, dated 13th November, 1823, he acknowledges, ‘ that he had received orders to inquire whether

there was any complaint against the emigrants who resided in the electorate, and whether their abode there excited any dissatisfaction.'

“ Could the *pretended* distance at which Baron Dalberg kept himself from the French ministry have made him the dupe of M. de Talleyrand's assertion? and could he really believe that he might transmit to his court, as sincere, this reply of the minister of foreign affairs for the Republic—“ That he did not think the government of Baden should be more severe than the French government; that he was not aware of any complaint on the subject, and that the emigrants must be left unmolested?” Or did Baron Dalberg transmit this reply merely in discharge of his *official* duties, and in opposition to other positive opinions? It is not to be expected that Baron Dalberg will make an honest confession on this point: we must therefore seek the truth in comparisons, which are likely to lead to it.

“ Baron Dalberg had scarcely transmitted M. de Talleyrand's letter to the court of his Sovereign, when the territory of Baden was violated. Previous to this violation, a privy-council had been assembled on the 10th of March, composed of the three consuls, the grand-judge, the minister for foreign affairs, and M. Fouché.

In this council, a report was read on the foreign ramifications of Georges' conspiracy. The evidence of these ramifications rested on the reports of the Sieur Melée. From these reports it was inferred, that it could be no other than the Duke d'Enghien who was to head the insurrection after the blow should be struck. This opinion was held to coincide with the declarations of the subordinate confederates of Georges; and the report terminated with the proposition for carrying off the Duke d'Enghien, and *getting rid of him*.

“ A diplomatist like Baron Dalberg could not be ignorant of the assembling of this council. According to his own confession he knew, on the 12th of March, of the departure of General Caulincourt, who, he says, it was suspected had orders for the arrest of Dumouriez on the territory of Baden.

“ I was at Rouen on the 12th of March; and I learned through the ordinary channels the departure of General Caulincourt and of General Ordener.

“ Baron Dalberg was the advanced sentinel of the court of Baden. He had hitherto had no guarantee for the safety of the emigrants to whom his Sovereign granted an asylum but the law of nations, and the assurances of the minister

for foreign affairs. If the French government, in the very face of Baron Dalberg, violated that law, and acted in opposition to those assurances, it was the incumbent duty of the minister of Baden, who knew that the Duke d'Enghien and other emigrants resided at Ettenheim, to make immediate communications to his court. The emigrants were especially compromised by the depositions of the agents of Georges. Not a single individual in Paris was ignorant of this fact: for the first proceedings on the trial took place publicly in the Temple.

“ Thus, on learning the fact of the holding of the council on the 10th, and the departure of M. Caulincourt, which took place on the 11th, *vid. Vol. P. 105* Baron Dalberg, if he had not voluntarily allowed himself to be misled by the minister for foreign affairs ought immediately to have dispatched couriers to his Sovereign, to rouse him from the false security into which he had been plunged some days before, by the transmission of the reply of the minister for foreign affairs. From that moment there could exist no doubt that the territory of the electorate would be violated; and from that moment Baron Dalberg might have appreciated the just value of the assurances he had received from the minister for foreign affairs.

“ An estafette may go from Paris to Carlsruhe in forty hours : to this I have myself been many times a witness. A courier dispatched by Baron Dalberg even on the 12th, would have reached Carlsruhe, or rather Ettenheim (where he might have been directed to the grand-bailli of the place), in the course of the 14th, and in sufficient time for warning to have been given to the Prince, who was not arrested until the 15th : yet Baron Dalberg remained inactive. Surely there is no injustice in affirming that this inactivity was not in unison with his official duties.

“ But what are we to think, when we find that it was only on the 20th of March, the day on which the Duke d’Enghien arrived in Paris, that Baron Dalberg wrote to the court of Baden to announce the departure of M. Caulincourt, and the object of his journey ; that it was not until the 21st, when all Paris knew that the Prince had perished at six o’clock on that very morning, that he again wrote to Baden, stating, that the Duke d’Enghien *had arrived, escorted by fifty gendarmes*, and “ that everybody was inquiring what was intended to be done with him ?”

“ The courier then left Paris at four in the afternoon : and at that hour, on the 21st of

March, Baron Dalberg writes, that the above question was asked with reference to the Duke d'Enghien !

“ Finally, it was not until the 22nd of March, *when the Moniteur published the sentence of death, that, in a postscript to a letter of the same day,* the minister of Baden informed his court that the unfortunate prince was no more.

“ All these circumstances are now revealed by the correspondence of Baron Dalberg. Nothing but the publication of the *Moniteur* would have forced him to mention the catastrophe. Thus far his official duties had not been forgotten ; they might, according to his combinations, yield to his officious duties But let us proceed.

“ The Duke d'Enghien was arrested at Ettenheim at five in the morning of the 15th of March. This news must immediately have been conveyed to Carlsruhe. The letter of the 11th, of which M. de Caulincourt was the bearer, written by M. de Talleyrand to the Baden minister for foreign affairs, was transmitted on the 15th. This is proved by the decree published by the Elector of Baden on the 16th, in which the arrests of the preceding day are alluded to.

“ It is impossible that an event of this importance could take place without the court of

Carlsruhe writing on the same day, or at latest on the 16th, to its minister at Paris, to remonstrate against this violation of territory, or at least to attest the peaceable and inoffensive conduct of the Duke d'Enghien, and to intercede in his behalf. The spirited M. de Massias, the French minister at the court of Baden, himself wrote to the minister for foreign affairs; and he could only have done so on the communications made to him the same day by the Baden minister. M. de Massias did not fear to affirm, that, during his residence in the electorate, the conduct of the Duke d'Enghien had been *moderate and innocent*.

“ The dispatches of M. de Massias to the minister for foreign affairs, and those of the minister of Baden to Baron Dalberg, ought therefore to have been received in Paris at the latest on the 18th or 19th of March; but certainly before the arrival of the Duke d'Enghien, who did not reach Vincennes till the 20th, at six in the evening.

“ Baron Dalberg himself admits, in his letter of the 20th of March, “ that on Thursday the 15th he knew positively the order of which M. Caulincourt was the bearer;” that is to say, he was informed that M. de Talleyrand had written to his court, stating that General Ordener was

directed to arrest the Duke d'Enghien and General Dumouriez.

“ But on learning the object of this expedition, why did not Baron Dalberg immediately repair to the minister for foreign affairs? Why did he not instantly assemble the diplomatic body to intercede for the Duke d'Enghien? Had Baron Dalberg taken these measures, they certainly could not have failed in their object; if, as he affirms in his letter of the 13th of November, 1823, the minister for foreign affairs was of opinion that the emigrants ought to remain unmolested in the electorate; or if, according to the letter he addressed to the court of Baden, on the 22nd March, 1804, ‘ M. de Talleyrand himself seemed, until the last moment, to be ignorant of the resolution that was adopted.’

“ Nevertheless, the First Consul, who, as every circumstance proves, entertained no private resentment against the Duke d'Enghien, except indeed that which might have been excited by the report on which he ordered the arrest of the Prince, might have suspended the sentence. Communications between Baron Dalberg and other members of the diplomatic body, and the minister for foreign affairs—had the latter been as favourably disposed as Baron Dalberg pretends he was—might have produced this re-

sult; especially as such communications would have induced the ministers to lay before the First Consul the letter of Baron Massias, which was concealed from him, as I shall soon have occasion to shew, and all would have terminated by explanations in favour of the Duke d'Enghien.

“ Instead of pursuing this course, Baron Dalberg remained passive until after the catastrophe. It was not until the 22nd of March that he wrote to the court of Baden: ‘ I cannot, in the very difficult and delicate situation in which I stand, do anything else than explain to the ministers of the courts with which we are most intimately related, the circumstances, such as they are.’

“ This was the language which Baron Dalberg held on the 22nd, when the Prince was no more; but were these also his sentiments on the 15th?

“ But what need was there of express orders, when, on the 20th of March, and consequently before the trial of the Duke d'Enghien, Baron Dalberg wrote that he was informed of arrests having taken place at Ettenheim? And when he knew that the honour of the respectable Elector of Baden was offended, the territory of his electorate violated, the law of nations disregarded,

and a prince of the house of Bourbon, at a critical moment, arrested—were there not in these circumstances sufficient motives to give a generous impulse to Baron Dalberg, had he been entirely devoted to his duty as minister of the court of Baden? Besides, how could Baron Dalberg, a man of high monarchical principles, as he would have himself believed to be, allow those principles to yield, on so very important an occasion, to the childish considerations stated in his dispatch of the 20th of March?

“The conjectures which must unavoidably be deduced from the conduct of Baron Dalberg, acquire additional force from the consideration that he knew, on the 20th of March, what degree of reliance he ought to place on a minister who was contemplating the arrests at Ettenheim, at the very moment when he was giving assurances that the emigrants residing in the electorate should not be molested.

“It even appears that Baron Dalberg, on writing at this period to his court, pronounced an official judgment on the conduct of this minister which was far from being favourable.

“In fact, there appears in a letter written on the 12th Nov. 1823, by Baron Berstett, minister for foreign affairs at Carlsruhe, to Baron Dalberg, permitting him to publish some parts of

his diplomatic correspondence, the statement that Baron Dalberg would find, in No. 27, dated March 27, 1804, 'that, at the fatal epoch, he (Baron Dalberg) had not yet reason to be proud of the confidence of the minister for foreign affairs at Paris.'

"I need not stop to consider what are the causes which afterwards obtained for Baron Dalberg the confidence of the minister for foreign affairs; but I must remark, that Baron Dalberg has taken care not to publish this letter, No. 27. The reason of this reserve may be easily divined. The *official* judgment, then pronounced by Dalberg on the minister for foreign affairs, would form too revolting a contrast with the *officious* judgment contained in his letter of the 13th of November, 1823, in which he states, 'that it is well known that, during his ministry, M. de Talleyrand never ceased to moderate the violent passions of Bonaparte.'

"But what Baron Dalberg did not wish to say, doubtless because since that time he had obtained the confidence of M. de Talleyrand, may be easily conjectured from Baron Berstett's letter.

"Be this as it may, it is easy to estimate at its true value Baron Dalberg's recent apology for the conduct of the minister for foreign affairs,

respecting the catastrophe of the Duke d'Enghien. It will also readily be conceived, that the most favourable judgment which can be formed of Baron Dalberg's conduct is, that though he knew everything which was going on, his scruples had been satisfied by being told that the Duke d'Enghien would only be detained as a hostage; and that this was told him because it was foreseen that Baron Dalberg must transmit some statement on the subject to his court; and that, on finding himself placed between the fear of compromising his government, and of compromising himself in his relations with France, on which he probably had already founded projects for the future, he would quietly allow the affair to take its course; being persuaded that his court would easily exculpate itself as to an event which, in the absence of previous information, it could not prevent.

“ But if Baron Dalberg was only the dupe of those who contrived this plot—if his diplomatic self-love induced him at that epoch to disguise from his court a part of the mystification which was practised upon him, instead of acknowledging his fatal mistake, the odium of the atrocity does not fall with the less weight on those who planned and effected its accomplishment.

“ Who were those machinators? I conceive

that I have sufficiently indicated them, and that I have supported my assertions by circumstances and comparisons of dates which carry with them at once the stamp of truth and of authenticity. M. de Talleyrand has referred for his justification to his letter to the King, the contents of which are not known; to the attestations which Baron Dalberg and himself have reciprocally given for each other in their own cause, and which they affect to regard as the public opinion; and finally, to General Hullin's memorial, which does not say one word about the circumstances personally implicating M. de Talleyrand. I might acknowledge all the part of the catastrophe of the Duke d'Enghien attributed to me in that memorial, or rather that with which General Hullin must himself remain charged; and still the part assigned to M. de Talleyrand would not be changed.

“My accusation then remains complete against him. Neither the cautious silence which he observes, nor his secret intrigues affect it.

“When I preferred this accusation against him, what were, it may be asked, my antecedent relations with M. de Talleyrand? On this it is proper to say a few words.

“At the period when I was promoted to the ministry, Talleyrand was in a deplorable situa-

tion, both as to his pecuniary and political circumstances. Many avoided him, believing thereby to pay their court to superior power. I was not one of the number.

“It is to me he was indebted for payment of the rent of his chateau of Valençay, which was occupied by the Spanish princes. This, doubtless, was only an act of justice; but in fact, from motives which I do not pretend to judge, the payment had been withheld from M. de Talleyrand, and he solicited it in vain. Had it not been for my interference, the state of things would have long continued; but my applications procured him payment of the rent of his chateau, at the rate of 75,000 francs per annum.

“It was I also who ventured to speak to the Emperor respecting threats of prosecution by some of M. de Talleyrand’s creditors. In consequence of what I said, the Emperor was induced to purchase the Hotel de Valentinois, completely furnished, which belonged to M. de Talleyrand, and for which he gave him the sum of 2,100,000 francs. For this he was indebted to me: and besides that, he was not obliged to bring back the articles which he had already moved to furnish his present hotel.

“Again, it was I who, during four years, suspended the effect of certain disagreeable ma-

nœuvres, which could not have failed to reach him; and I went so far in my services as to throw an obstacle in the way of the unexpected return of a member of his family from Berne to Paris; an event which, at that moment, would have placed him in a most embarrassing situation.

“ Such was my perseverance in reconciling the Emperor, whom this affair had greatly displeased, that, in 1812, when he departed for the Russian campaign, he was inclined to take M. de Talleyrand with him.

“ If, from the conduct of M. de Talleyrand towards his benefactor, I turn to that which he has held with regard to me, it is there proved that, in return for my good offices, I owe to him my being placed on the most fatal of the two lists of proscription.

“ It is impossible to mistake the secret object of this testimony of his gratitude. My crime was the being able to shew what his part had been in the affair of the Duke d’Enghien. This explains M. de Talleyrand’s efforts to obtain my removal from Malta in 1815; and why, during the whole period of my imprisonment, I could look to no security until after he left the department of foreign affairs. In 1815, it was intended to bring me before a court-martial at Toulon or

Marseilles ; I have evidence of this fact before me. I should, as a matter of course, have been condemned and executed : after which, M. de Talleyrand would have boasted to my family of his efforts to save me. It is a maxim with M. de Talleyrand, that a man who can speak only ceases to be an object of fear when he is no more.

“ After what has now been said, few will be surprised at the pains I in my turn take to leave to M. de Talleyrand the share which duly belongs to him in a catastrophe in which I took no part for which I can with justice be reproached.

“ What further encourages my efforts in this respect is, my perfect conviction that the Emperor Napoleon did not act on the impulse of his own mind when he ordered the arrest of the Duke d'Enghien. My opinion is fully confirmed by the works written at St. Helena. The authenticity of these works is unquestionably augmented by the circumstance of the authors, who composed them without communication with each other, being unanimous on this point.

“ The Emperor Napoleon, whose words and even autograph notes these works record, had no motive for blaming or accusing any one person more than another. He knew that what he was

writing was to come under the severe scrutiny of history, and to its judgment he looked forward with respect. He besides expressed himself in a way which proves that he had no wish to rid himself of any part of the transaction which could reasonably be attributed to him.

“The Emperor ought then to be believed, when he himself wrote that ‘the death of the Duke d’Enghien must be ascribed to those who laboured by reports and conjectures to represent him as the chief of a conspiracy;’ and when, in familiar intimacy with his faithful followers at St. Helena, he added—‘that he had been suddenly urged; that his opinion had been taken as it were by surprise, his measures precipitated, and their result secured beforehand. I was alone one day,’ he says; ‘I was still at the table where I had just dined, and was finishing my coffee: I was hastily told of a new conspiracy. I was vehemently reminded that a period ought to be put to such horrible attempts; that it was full time to give a lesson to those who were in the daily habit of plotting against my life; *that there was no way of putting an end to the business but by shedding the blood of one of them*; that the Duke d’Enghien ought to be the victim, since he might be taken in the fact, as forming part of the existing conspiracy. I did not rightly know

who the Duke d'Enghien was. The revolution came upon me when I was very young, and I had never been at court. I did not even know where the Duke was. *All these points were explained to me.* If it be so, I said, he must be seized; and the necessary orders were given in consequence. Everything had been provided beforehand; *the papers were prepared, and there was nothing to do but to sign them;* and the fate of the Prince was already decided.'

“ Mr. O'Meara's veracity cannot be suspected when, agreeing in his work with the other publications from St. Helena, he affirms, that having asked Napoleon whether it was true a letter written to him by the Duke d'Enghien had been received by M. de Talleyrand, and not delivered until two days after, the Emperor replied— ‘ After the Prince's arrival at Strasburg, he wrote me a letter; that letter was delivered to T—— who kept it until after the execution.’

“ But who, then, were those who, by *reports* and *conjectures*, represented the Duke d'Enghien as chief of a conspiracy? Who was at that time in a situation to induce the First Consul to compromise himself by shedding the blood of a Bourbon? Who could it be that had foreseen everything; who had in anticipation *prepared the papers*, which were *instantaneously presented*

for the First Consul's signature, and which decided the fate of the Prince?

“The minister for foreign affairs under the Directory shall now himself declare what interest he had in making the First Consul compromise himself. The functions and the personal transactions of that minister under the First Consul will also shew whether it was he who prepared the reports and the papers which determined the fatal measure.

“In a pamphlet which was published in the year V., and which was addressed by Citizen Talleyrand to his fellow-citizens, he thus expresses himself:—

“‘I should be unworthy to have served the noble cause of liberty, if I dared regard as a sacrifice what I then did (1789) for its triumph. But I may at least express my surprise, that after having so many just claims on the implacable hatred of the heretofore clergy and nobility, I should draw upon myself the same hatred from those who style themselves the vehement enemies of the nobility and clergy.’* ”

“The man whose former conduct authorized such language, could not, without fear, see the

* *Eclaircissemens donnés par le citoyen Talleyrand à ses concitoyens.* (Page 3.)

French republic ready to expire in the year XII. in the person of the First Consul, without wishing to place that personage in a situation which would render it impossible for him ever to become a Monck. . . Citizen Talleyrand in his foresight might not repel the idea of one day becoming Prince of Benevento under a new dynasty : but, priding himself in the advantage of having merited the implacable hatred of the clergy, from whom he was a renegade, and of the nobility, to whom he was a traitor, he must doubtless have shuddered at the very thought of their return under the banner of the Bourbons.

“ M. de Talleyrand has unfortunately learned in the course of his political life that rule by which certain men make interest the sole motive of their actions. This may explain the motive he had to be one of those who endeavoured, ‘ by *reports* and *conjectures*, to represent the Duke d’Enghien as the chief of a conspiracy ; to take the judgment of the First Consul by surprise ; and to advise him to finish the business by steeping his hands in the blood of a Bourbon.’

“ His terror at the bare idea of the possible return of the Bourbons was perhaps peculiarly strong at this time, as when the conspiracy of George was detected, the First Consul had not

disclosed his project of ascending the throne. On the contrary, it is alleged that he formally refused the title of King of France, which was offered to him during the negotiations at Amiens, in compensation for sacrifices of conquered territory, which it was wished to prevail on him to make.

“ The official transactions of the minister for foreign affairs, and his general conduct, add greatly to the evidence by which the truth of the facts stated has been demonstrated. The minister for foreign affairs was the only person who could answer the questions which the First Consul declared he had asked respecting the Duke d’Enghien, of whose name even he was ignorant, when that Prince was pointed out to him as the chief of a conspiracy. He alone corresponded with foreign cabinets, and with our ministers at foreign courts. To him only belonged the duty of watching the proceedings of the emigrants. Of this, proof may be found in the diplomatic note which he addressed, on the 11th of March, to Baron Edelsheim, minister of state at Carlsruhe, of which M. de Caulincourt was the bearer. In this note, which officially announces the order given for the arrest of the Duke d’Enghien, M. de Talleyrand admits that

he had previously transmitted another note, which contained a demand for the arrest of the committee of French emigrants at Offenburg.

“ The nature of M. de Talleyrand’s functions sufficiently explain why the arrest of the Duke d’Enghien was decreed and ordered on his report in the privy-council, which preceded the departure of General Ordener.

“ It could not have taken place on the report of any of the three Consuls; for it was clearly foreign to their functions. M. Fouché, who was admitted to the council, was not then in office, and was only called as an assistant in the deliberations, and because he was considered to be greatly interested in the adoption of the proposed measure. It is, however, but just to state, that it was warmly opposed by the Consul Cambaceres. He recommended that instead of forcibly seizing the Duke d’Enghien, as the report proposed, the measure should at least be postponed until the Prince entered the French territory. It was on this occasion that Cambaceres was asked, how long it was since he had been so sparing of Bourbon blood.

“ This information was communicated to me by the Duke de Cambaceres; who, besides, assured me that he had recorded the facts in his memoirs.

“ It, however, may be asked, whether it be true, that when M. de Talleyrand instigated the arrest of the Duke d’Enghien, before that of Pichegru had explained the fatal mistake respecting the real head of the conspiracy, he participated in the common error, or rather whether such error ever existed on his part. His anterior correspondence with the French minister at Baden had given him such positive information on the Duke d’Enghien’s mode of living, that it was not possible for him to believe that the Duke d’Enghien could be the mysterious personage spoken of in the examinations preliminary to the trial of George.

“ If such was M. de Talleyrand’s belief, still it must be asked, why did he not put in the balance against it, in the privy-council of the 10th March, the previous reports of M. de Massias? Why so much zeal in accusing the Duke d’Enghien? In a case of doubt, to abstain from proposing a forcible removal was an indispensable duty.

“ I have been informed that M. de Talleyrand presented to the King an attested declaration of the Princess de Rohan, from which it appears that the Duke d’Enghien was warned to go out of the way some days before he was arrested. He also pretends that he sent this information by a courier; who, according to his

statement, broke a leg at Saverne. This, however, is nothing but a fable; for such a fact could at any time be proved, and yet no proof whatever is offered of it. It is not at all probable that he sent a courier; but had he wished to do so, there were many persons in his family who would have gladly undertaken the mission, and the messenger would now be ready to declare himself.

“ But the degree of credit due to this attested declaration of the Princess de Rohan’s may be easily appreciated. M. de Talleyrand only obtained it at Paris after the restoration; and for the possession of it he has to thank the urgent applications made to the Princess de Rohan-Rochefort by Madame Aimée de Coigny, formerly Duchess de Fleury.

“ The truth is, that M. de Talleyrand never sent. The information which was conveyed to the Duke d’Enghien, and to which Madame Rohan-Rochefort bore witness, without specifying whence it came, proceeded from another source. The King of Sweden, who was then at Carlsruhe, and the Elector himself, warned the Prince of the danger he might incur, and advised him to depart. Baron Dalberg, a witness whom M. de Talleyrand will not certainly refuse, admits this in his letter of the 13th of November,

1823. The warning thus conveyed to the Prince was the consequence of the diplomatic note sent by M. de Talleyrand to Carlsruhe, previously to the 10th of March, in which he demanded the arrest of the committee of French emigrants at Offenburg. The Duke d'Enghien did not immediately depart, and his delay proved fatal. The whole of M. de Talleyrand's conduct controverts the idea that he ever wished to save the Duke d'Enghien ; and, certainly, if the Prince had received from Paris any intimation confirming that which was given him by the King of Sweden, it cannot be doubted that he would have quitted Ettenheim without delay.

“ Let us now hear what M. de Massias says, in a note which he thought it necessary to publish on this subject.

“ ‘ Some days after the catastrophe, I received a letter from the minister for foreign affairs, directing me to go to Aix-la-Chapelle, where I should find the Emperor Napoleon, to whom I had to render an account of my conduct. On my arrival, I called on General Lannes, with whom I had served in the wars of Spain and Italy, and to whose friendship I was indebted for the post I held, and for all my future prospects. He informed me that I was accused of

having married the near relation of a dangerous intriguer, and of having contrived the conspiracy of the Duke d'Enghien.

“ ‘ On leaving General Lannes, I went to the minister for foreign affairs, to whom I repeated that which I had mentioned to him in my correspondence,—viz., *that the conduct of the Prince was peaceable and innocent, and that my wife was no relation of the Baroness de Reich; a fact, of which he was assured by an authentic certificate which I had sent him.* He told me that all would be arranged.

“ ‘ The Emperor began by asking news of the Grand-Duke and his family; and, having heard my reply, without any further observations, he said, “ How could you, M. de Massias, whom I have treated with kindness, join in the miserable intrigues of the enemies of France ?”

“ ‘ I knew his address; and I was aware that if I entered immediately on my justification, he would seize and draw inferences from certain circumstances, on which I should not be able to give categorical explanations: I therefore determined to manifest astonishment, and to appear not to understand what he meant.’

“ ‘ Ah!’ he exclaimed, with a gesticulation and a start back; ‘ one might almost believe that he does not know what I am talking about.’

(The same astonishment and the same appearance of ignorance on my part.)

“ ‘ How ! ’ continued he, emphatically, but not angrily ; ‘ have you not married a near relative of that wretched intriguer, the Baroness de Reich ? ’—Sire, said I, this gentleman (pointing to the minister) has unworthily deceived your Majesty. He was informed by me that my wife was no relation of Baroness de Reich. Of this fact I sent him an authentic certificate. On hearing this, the Emperor smiled and stepped back, and then paced up and down his closet, still looking at us. He afterwards stepped up to me, and said, in a softened tone, ‘ You, nevertheless, permitted meetings of emigrants at Offen- burg ? ’—I rendered a faithful account of all that had taken place during my mission. ‘ How could I,’ said I, ‘ think of persecuting a few un- fortunate men, while, with your permission, they were crossing the Rhine by hundreds and thou- sands ? I was merely acting in the spirit of your government.’ — ‘ You might, however,’ resumed the Emperor, ‘ have prevented the plots which the Duke d’Enghien was organizing at Ettenheim ? ’—‘ Sire, I am too old to learn to utter falsehoods. Your Majesty has also been deceived on this point.’—‘ Do you think, then,’ said he, with vehemence, ‘ that if the conspiracy

of George and Pichegru had succeeded, the Prince would not have crossed the Rhine, and posted to Paris?" I hung down my head, and said nothing. Then, assuming a careless air, he spoke to me of Carlsruhe, and some other subjects of little interest, after which he dismissed me.*

"M. de Talleyrand then deceived the Emperor, in not rendering him a faithful account

*"On the following day," adds M. de Massias, "there was public and solemn distribution of crosses of the Legion of Honour, which the Emperor had then newly instituted. According to the regulations, I was entitled to one, both on account of my post of chargé d'affaires, and my rank as a colonel in the army.

"The honour was, however, conferred on all my colleagues who were present, and I was the only person who did not receive one. General Lannes, whom I saw in the morning, told me, that the Emperor was perfectly satisfied with my courage and honourable conduct, but that he wished to punish my want of respect to my superior.

"I returned to Carlsruhe; and in about a month or two afterwards, one of his Majesty's chamberlains called on me. This was the Count de Beaumont, who delivered to me a letter from Duroc, the grand-marshal of the place. This letter informed me that the Emperor would shortly send to Carlsruhe his adopted daughter, Princess Stephanie, wife of the Grand-Duke of Baden, whom he intended to confide to my care; and that in everything concerning her, I was not to correspond with the minister for foreign affairs, but directly with the Emperor himself.

"About a year after the arrival of the Princess, the Emperor appointed me resident-consul-general at Dantzick. I

of the tenour of the correspondence of M. de Massias ;—he deceived M. de Massias himself, whom he misrepresented to the Emperor ;—he deceived the Elector of Baden, by assuring him, through Baron Dalberg (whom he was, doubtless, at the same time deceiving), that the emigrants residing in the electorate would not be molested, while he was preparing his diplomatic note of the 11th of March, which was not to be transmitted to the Baden minister of state until after the arrest of the Duke d'Enghien !

“ M. de Massias thus continues :—‘ As soon as I learned that the Prince had been arrested, and removed to the citadel of Strasburg, I wrote, without loss of time, to the minister for foreign affairs, to inform him that, during his residence in the electorate (*of which my former dispatches had apprized him*), the conduct of the Prince had been moderate and blameless. *My letter must be in the archives* ; it is the only one in which I ever introduced a Latin quotation. To give additional force to my ideas, and greater

had scarcely held this new situation a week, when I was appointed intendant of the city ; a post to which great emoluments are attached.

“ On my return to France, which my health obliged me to revisit, on leave of absence, the Emperor created me a baron, with authority to institute a majorate for my family.”

weight to my assertion, I borrowed these words from Tacitus—*Nec beneficio nec injuriâ cognitus*; which perfectly explained the situation in which I stood with reference to the august personage, whom the cause of truth alone led me to defend.’

“ But this letter, which could only have been written on the 15th of March, must have reached Paris on the 18th at latest; and it was not until that very day that the Prince quitted the citadel of Strasburg.

“ Let M. de Talleyrand inform us what efforts he employed in the interval between the 18th and 20th, to substantiate the clear evidence of an honest man, which must have dispelled, or at least have diminished, the alarms which had been excited in the mind of the First Consul.

“ The evidence of M. de Massias is positive. Had it been viewed solely with the object of elucidating the truth, it could not in any way have squared with the portrait of the individual who was supposed to be at the head of the conspiracy. Three previous days ought to have sufficed for M. de Talleyrand to endeavour to undeceive the First Consul, and to prevent the great catastrophe. How did he employ this valuable time? What said he? What did he to corroborate the letter of M. de Massias, and to get it introduced as a defensive document

on the trial? The sentence shews that the documents for and against the prisoner amounted to *one* only; and it may be easily guessed that this one was not the letter of M. de Massias.

“ Let M. de Talleyrand answer this.

“ This letter,* and other documents relative to the fatal event, have disappeared from the archives of the department of foreign affairs, at the head of which M. de Talleyrand has successively been during the Republic, the Directory, the Consulate, the Empire, and the Kingdom.

“ Let us proceed.

“ On the morning of the 29th Ventose (20th of March), the day on which the sentence was pronounced, I saw M. de Talleyrand at Malmaison. By a singular coincidence, it was shortly after this that orders were given for the removal of the Prince to Vincennes. In the afternoon he called on the governor of Paris. His duty might have required his attendance on the First Consul: but he, a minister, and the reporter of the privy-council which had deter-

* It is possible that this letter is the same to which the Emperor Napoleon alluded, in replying to Mr. O'Meara, when he complained that it had not been delivered to him until after the death of the Prince. From the declarations of persons attached to the Emperor's cabinet, it appears that they had no knowledge of any letter of the Duke d'Enghien's.

mined the arrest of the Duke d'Enghien, what business could he have with the general who was appointed to nominate the Prince's judges, and to direct them to bring him before their tribunal? If the letter of the First Consul, of which I was the bearer to the governor of Paris, said all, as it may be supposed it did, what was the object of M. Talleyrand's extraordinary visit? Did he go to add his own comments to the letter, or to transmit the last instructions, the last commands, of the First Consul? . . . It must be observed, that the decree of the government of the same day, which directed that the Duke d'Enghien should be brought before a court-martial, certainly authorized the governor of Paris to nominate the court; but that it should be *immediately* summoned by order of the governor, who selected its members, is not in the decree.

“ M. de Talleyrand, like Count Hullin, may justly exclaim, ‘ How unfortunate I am ! ’ He did everything to bring about the catastrophe, and nothing to prevent it. After the event he was so unlucky as to be the individual on whom devolved the task of announcing and justifying the death of the Duke d'Enghien to the foreign powers. If he acted against his inclination, it may truly be said that he has drained the cup of

bitterness to the very dregs. But what is to be thought of the fate of the victim ?

“ Will it now be said that I have done wrong in endeavouring to exculpate the Emperor at the expense of M. de Talleyrand,—that is to say, candidly unfolding facts of which I entertain a thorough conviction ? I am aware that the Emperor Napoleon, in his testament, seems to take upon himself the whole responsibility of the catastrophe ; but I know him well enough to estimate differently from many other persons the value of his own declarations. Even in his last moments, the Emperor Napoleon was less concerned by the approach of death, than he was anxious to preserve unbroken, in public opinion, the illusion attached to his power ; and I am certain that, even on the brink of the grave, he would have felt highly displeased at an attempt to prove that any event of his reign took place without his authority. ‘ The Duke d’Enghien died because I willed it.’ Such is the language of the Emperor to posterity ; which is as much as to say—‘ I being sovereign, nobody dared to conceive the thought of disposing of the life or liberty of any one whatever. I might have been misled, but no one dared for a moment to interfere with my power.’

“ Penetrated with these ideas, to which all the facts I have recorded, as well as the words of the Emperor himself, add considerable weight, I propose this objection to those who persist in maintaining that the Emperor ordered the execution of the Duke d’Enghien, as the sultan sends the bowstring to a vizier.

“ The Emperor regretted the death of the Duke d’Enghien ; but the deed was done, and he could not throw the blame of it on any one. His inflexible character, the strong feeling of his dignity and his duty as a Sovereign, would not permit him to evade the responsibility of anything that had been done, still less to screen himself by throwing blame on another.

“ If matters had been managed at Vincennes, by the president of the court-martial, in such a way that M. Real had found the Prince still living ; if the examination had proved that he was not the mysterious person who had been seen with George, and who was sought for, I ask all who knew the First Consul, whether it is their belief that he would have suffered the Duke d’Enghien to be sacrificed. I also ask what would have become of M. de Talleyrand, if, after his terrible proposition of removing the Prince and putting him out of the way, he had seen the chief of the state relinquish the prey,

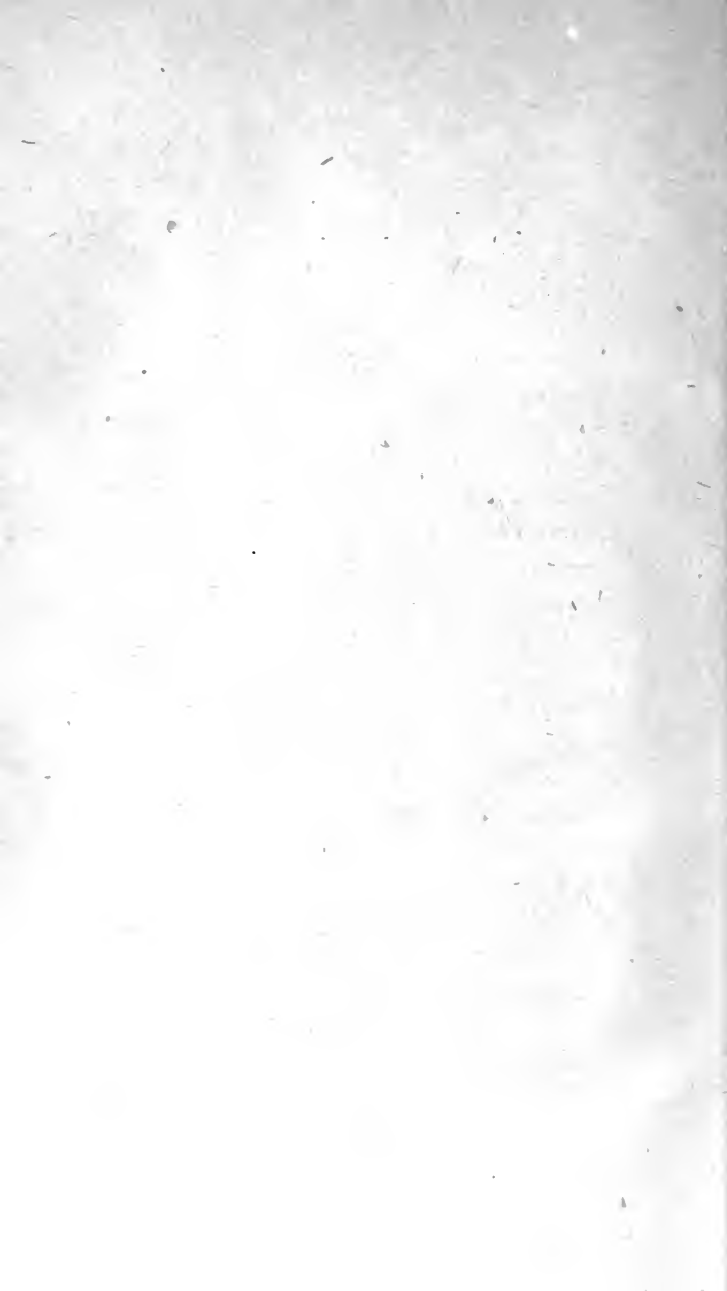
which he had been induced to seize as the means of protecting his life against the plots of his irreconcilable enemies.

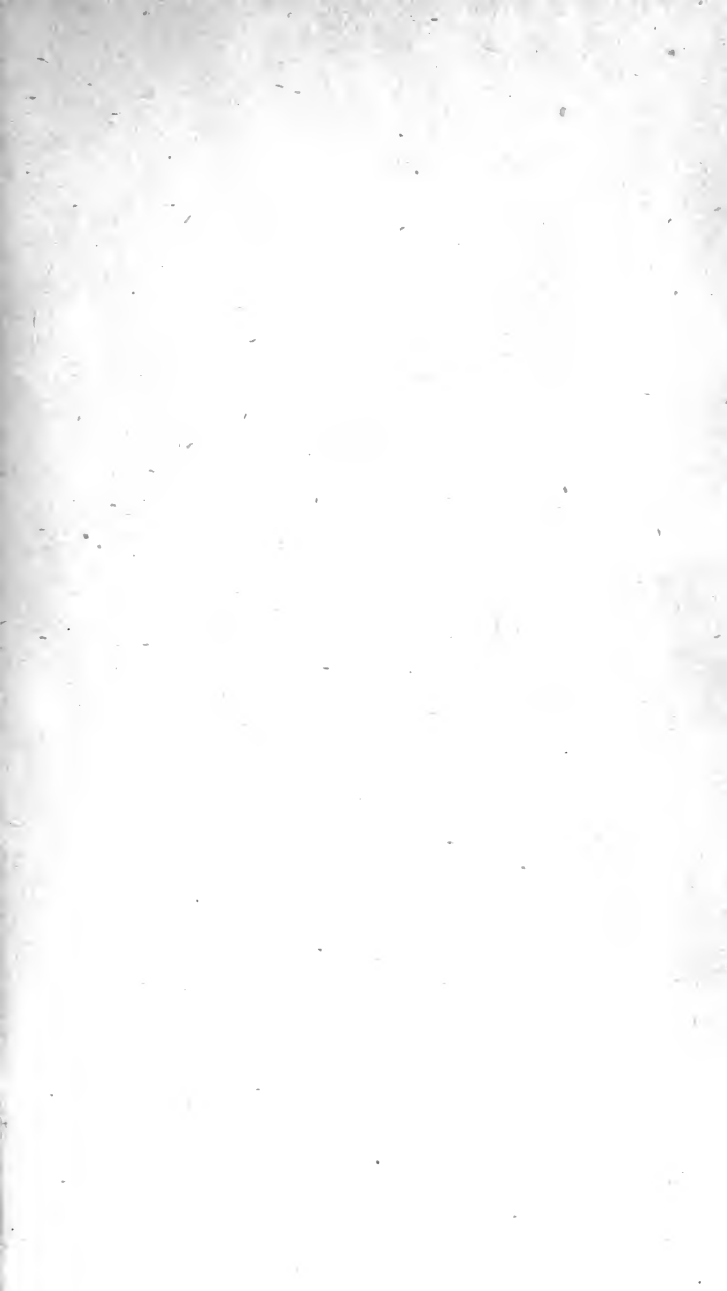
“ Another trait yet remains to be recorded, and with it I shall wind up the observations which this statement of facts has suggested. In the evening of the Duke d’Enghien’s execution, M. de Talleyrand gave a masked ball, to which all the diplomatic body were invited. Nothing could exceed the dulness of this ball, which was an outrage upon public feeling. Some individuals had spirit enough to refuse the invitations ; among these were, Princess Dolgoroucky and M. de Moustier, now one of his Majesty’s ambassadors, who informed me of this fact.

“ Such was the part which M. de Talleyrand performed in the catastrophe of the Duke d’Enghien. Let him now say whether the exchange of a few polite phrases with Baron Dalberg, and the silence he has maintained, suffice to remove the serious accusations which public opinion has affixed upon him for the share he took in that fatal event.”

THE END.









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