

The Private Life of Napoleon, V5

Constant

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RECOLLECTIONS OF THE PRIVATE LIFE OF NAPOLEON, V5

BY CONSTANT
PREMIER VALET DE CHAMBRE

TRANSLATED BY WALTER CLARK

CHAPTER I.

I left the Emperor at Berlin, where each day, and each hour of the day, he received news of some victory gained, or some success obtained by his generals. General Beaumont presented to him eighty flags captured from the enemy by his division, and Colonel Gerard also presented sixty taken from Blucher at the battle of Wismar. Madgeburg had capitulated, and a garrison of sixty thousand men had marched out under the eyes of General Savary. Marshal Mortier occupied Hanover in the name of France, and Prince Murat was on the point of entering Warsaw after driving out the Russians.

War was about to recommence, or rather to be continued, against the latter; and since the Prussian army could now be regarded as entirely vanquished, the Emperor left Berlin in order to personally conduct operations against the Russians.

We traveled in the little coaches of the country; and as was the rule always on our journeys, the carriage of the grand marshal preceded that of the Emperor. The season, and the passage of such large numbers of artillery, had rendered the roads frightful; but notwithstanding this we traveled very rapidly, until at last between Kutow and Warsaw, the grand marshal's carriage was upset, and his collarbone broken. The Emperor arrived a short time after this unfortunate accident, and had him borne under his own eyes into the nearest post-house. We always carried with us a portable medicine-chest in order that needed help might be promptly given to the wounded. His Majesty placed him in the hands of the surgeon, and did not leave him till he had seen the first bandage applied.

At Warsaw, where his Majesty passed the entire month of January, 1807, he occupied the grand palace. The Polish nobility, eager to pay their court to him, gave in his honor magnificent fetes and brilliant balls, at which were present all the wealthiest and most distinguished inhabitants of Warsaw.

At one of these reunions the Emperor's attention was drawn to a young Polish lady named Madame Valevska, twenty-two years of age, who had just married an old noble of exacting temper and extremely harsh manners, more in love with his titles than with his wife, whom, however, he loved devotedly, and by whom he was more respected than loved. The Emperor experienced much pleasure at the sight of this lady, who attracted his attention at the first glance. She was a blonde, with blue eyes, and skin of dazzling whiteness; of medium height, with a charming and beautifully proportioned figure. The Emperor having approached her, immediately began a conversation, which she sustained with much grace and intelligence, showing that she had received a fine education, and the slight shade of melancholy diffused over her whole person rendered her still more seductive.

His Majesty thought he beheld in her a woman who had been sacrificed, and was unhappy in her domestic relations; and the interest with which this idea inspired him caused him to be more interested in her than he had ever been in any woman, a fact of which she could not fail to be conscious. The day after the ball, the Emperor seemed to me unusually agitated; he rose from his chair, paced to and fro, took his seat and rose again, until I thought I should never finish dressing him. Immediately after breakfast he ordered a person, whose name I shall not give, to pay a visit to Madame Valevska, and inform her of his subjugation and his wishes. She proudly refused propositions which were perhaps too brusque, or which perhaps the coquetry natural to all women led her to repulse; and though the hero pleased her, and the idea of a lover resplendent with power and glory revolved doubtless over and over in her brain, she had no idea of surrendering thus without a struggle. The great personage returned in confusion, much astonished that he had not succeeded in his mission; and the next day when the Emperor rose I found him still preoccupied, and he did not utter a word, although he was in the habit of talking to me at this time. He had written to Madame Valevska several times, but she had not replied; and his vanity was much piqued by such unaccustomed indifference. At last his affecting appeals having touched Madame Valevska's heart, she consented to an interview between ten and eleven o'clock that evening, which took place at the appointed time. She returned a few days after at the same hour, and her visits continued until the Emperor's departure.

Two months after the Emperor sent for her; and she joined him at his headquarters in Finkenstein, where she remained from this time, leaving at Warsaw her old husband, who, deeply wounded both in his honor and his affections, wished never to see again the wife who had abandoned him. Madame Valevska remained with the

Emperor until his departure, and then returned to her family, constantly evincing the most devoted and, at the same time, disinterested affection. The Emperor seemed to appreciate perfectly the charms of this angelic woman, whose gentle and self-abnegating character made a profound impression on me. As they took their meals together, and I served them alone, I was thus in a position to enjoy their conversation, which was always amiable, gay, and animated on the Emperor's part; tender, impassioned, and melancholy on that of Madame Valevska. When his Majesty was absent, Madame Valevska passed all her time, either in reading, or viewing through the lattice blinds of the Emperor's rooms the parades and evolutions which took place in the court of honor of the chateau, and which he often commanded in person. Such was her life, like her disposition, ever calm and equable; and this loveliness of character charmed the Emperor, and made him each day more and more her slave.

After the battle of Wagram, in 1809, the Emperor took up his residence at the palace of Schoenbrunn, and sent immediately for Madame Valevska, for whom a charming house had been rented and furnished in one of the faubourgs of Vienna, a short distance from Schoenbrunn. I went mysteriously to bring her every evening in a close carriage, with a single servant, without livery; she entered by a secret door, and was introduced into the Emperor's apartments. The road, although very short, was not without danger, especially in rainy weather, on account of ruts and holes which were encountered at every step; and the Emperor said to me almost every day, "Be very careful, Constant, it has rained to-day; the road will be bad. Are you sure you have a good driver? Is the carriage in good condition?" and other questions of the same kind, which evidenced the deep and sincere affection he felt for Madame Valevska. The Emperor was not wrong, besides, in urging me to be careful; for one evening, when we had left Madame Valevska's residence a little later than usual, the coachman upset us, and in trying to avoid a rut, drove the carriage over the edge of the road. I was on the right of Madame Valevska and the carriage fell on that side, in such a position that I alone felt the shock of the fall, since Madame Valevska falling on me, received no injury. I was glad to be the means of saving her, and when I said this she expressed her gratitude with a grace peculiarly her own. My injuries were slight; and I began to laugh the first, in which Madame Valevska soon joined, and she related our accident to his Majesty immediately on our arrival.

I could not undertake to describe all the care and attentions which the Emperor lavished upon her. He had her brought to Paris, accompanied by her brother, a very distinguished officer, and her maid, and gave the grand marshal orders to purchase for her a pretty residence in the Chaussee-d'Antin. Madame Valevska was very happy, and often said to me, "All my thoughts, all my inspirations, come from him, and return to him; he is all my happiness, my future, my life!" She never left her house except to come to the private apartments at the Tuileries, and when this happiness could not be granted, went neither to the theater, the promenade, nor in society, but remained at home, seeing only very few persons, and writing to the Emperor every day. At length she gave birth to a son, —[Count Walewski, born 1810; minister to England, 1852; minister of foreign affairs, 1855–1860; died 1868.]—who bore a striking resemblance to the Emperor, to whom this event was a source of great joy; and he hastened to her as soon as it was possible to escape from the chateau, and taking the child in his arms, and caressing him, as he had just caressed the mother, said to him, "I make you a count." Later we shall see this son receiving at Fontainebleau a final proof of affection.

Madame Valevska reared her son at her residence, never leaving him, and carried him often to the chateau, where I admitted them by the dark staircase, and when either was sick the Emperor sent to them Monsieur Corvisart. This skillful physician had on one occasion the happiness of saving the life of the young count in a dangerous illness.

Madame Valevska had a gold ring made for the Emperor, around which she twined her beautiful blonde hair, and on the inside of the ring were engraved these words:

"When you cease to love me, do not forget that I love you."

The Emperor gave her no other name but Marie.

I have perhaps devoted too much space to this liaison of the Emperor: but Madame Valevska was entirely different from the other women whose favor his Majesty obtained; and she was worthy to be named the La Valliere of the Emperor, who, however, did not show himself ungrateful towards her, as did Louis XIV. towards the only woman by whom he was beloved. Those who had, like myself, the happiness of knowing and seeing her intimately must have preserved memories of her which will enable them to comprehend why in my opinion there exists so great a distance between Madame Valevska, the tender and modest woman, rearing in retirement the son she bore to the Emperor, and the favorites of the conqueror of Austerlitz.

CHAPTER II.

The Russians, being incited to this campaign by the remembrance of the defeat of Austerlitz, and by the fear of seeing Poland snatched from their grasp, were not deterred by the winter season, and resolved to open the attack on the Emperor at once; and as the latter was not the man to allow himself to be forestalled, he consequently abandoned his winter quarters, and quitted Warsaw at the end of January. On the 8th of February the two armies met at Eylau; and there took place, as is well known, a bloody battle, in which both sides showed equal courage, and nearly fifteen thousand were left dead on the field of battle, equally divided in number between the French and Russians. The gain, or rather the loss, was the same to both armies; and a 'Te Deum' was chanted at St. Petersburg as well as at Paris, instead of the 'De Profundis', which would have been much more appropriate. His Majesty complained bitterly on returning to his headquarters that the order he had sent to General Bernadotte had not been executed, and in consequence of this his corps had taken no part in the battle, and expressed his firm conviction that the victory, which remained in doubt between the Emperor and General Benningsen, would have been decided in favor of the former had a fresh army—corps arrived during the battle, according to the Emperor's calculations. Most unfortunately the aide—de—camp bearing the Emperor's orders to the Prince of Ponte—Corvo had fallen into the hands of a party of Cossacks; and when the Emperor was informed of this circumstance the day after the battle, his resentment was appeased, though not his disappointment. Our troops bivouacked on the field of battle, which his Majesty visited three times, for the purpose of directing the assistance of the wounded, and removal of the dead.

Generals d'Hautpoult, Corbineau, and Boursier were mortally wounded at Eylau; and it seems to me I can still hear the brave d'Hautpoult saying to his Majesty, just as he dashed off at a gallop to charge the enemy: "Sire, you will now see my great claws; they will pierce through the enemy's squares as if they were butter" An hour after he was no more. One of his regiments, being engaged in the interval with the Russian army, was mowed down with grape—shot, and hacked to pieces by the Cossacks, only eighteen men being left. General d'Hautpoult, forced to fall back three times with his division, led it back twice to the charge; and as he threw himself against the enemy the third time shouted loudly, "Forward, cuirassiers, in God's name! forward, my brave cuirassiers?" But the grapeshot had mowed down too many of these brave fellows; very few were left to follow their chief, and he soon fell pierced with wounds in the midst of a square of Russians into which he had rushed almost alone.

I think it was in this battle also that General Ordenerl killed with his own hands a general officer of the enemy. The Emperor asked if he could not have taken him alive. "Sire," replied the general with his strong German accent, "I gave him only one blow, but I tried to make it a good one." On the very morning of the battle, General Corbineau, the Emperor's aide—de—camp, while at breakfast with the officers on duty, declared to them that he was oppressed by the saddest presentiments; but these gentlemen, attempting to divert his mind, turned the affair into a joke. General Corbineau a few moments after received an order from his Majesty, and not finding some money he wished at Monsieur de Meneval's quarters, came to me, and I gave it to him from the Emperor's private purse; at the end of a few hours I met Monsieur de Meneval, to whom I rendered an account of General Corbineau's request, and the sum I had lent him. I was still speaking to Monsieur de Meneval, when an officer passing at a gallop gave us the sad news of the general's death. I have never forgotten the impression made on me by this sad news, and I still find no explanation of the strange mental distress which gave warning to this brave soldier of his approaching end.

Poland was relying upon the Emperor to re—establish her independence, and consequently the Poles were filled with hope and enthusiasm on witnessing the arrival of the French army. As for our soldiers, this winter campaign was most distasteful to them; for cold and wretchedness, bad weather and bad roads, had inspired them with an extreme aversion to this country.

In a review at Warsaw, at which the inhabitants crowded around our troops, a soldier began to swear roundly against the snow and mud, and, as a consequence, against Poland and the Poles. "You are wrong, Monsieur soldier," replied a young lady of a good bourgeois family of the town, "not to love our country, for we love the French very much."—"You are doubtless very lovable, mademoiselle," replied the soldier; "but if you wish to persuade me of the truth of what you say, you will prepare us a good dinner, my comrade and I."—"Come, then,

messieurs," said the parents of the young Pole now advancing, "and we will drink together to the health of your Emperor." And they really carried off with them the two soldiers, who partook of the best dinner the country afforded.

The soldiers were accustomed to say that four words formed the basis of the Polish language,— kleba? niema; "bread? there is none;" voia? sara; "water? they have gone to draw it."

As the Emperor was one day passing through a column of infantry in the suburbs of Mysigniez, where the troops endured great privations since the bad roads prevented the arrival of supplies, "Papa, kleba," cried a soldier. "Niema," immediately replied the Emperor. The whole column burst into shouts of laughter, and no further request was made.

During the Emperor's somewhat extended stay at Finkenstein, he received a visit from the Persian ambassador, and a few grand reviews were held in his honor. His Majesty sent in return an embassy to the Shah, at the head of which he placed General Gardanne, who it was then said had an especial reason for wishing to visit Persia. It was rumored that one of his relations, after a long residence at Teheran, had been compelled, having taken part in an insurrection against the Franks, to quit this capital, and before his flight had buried a considerable treasure in a certain spot, the description of which he had carried to France. I will add, as a finale to this story, some facts which I have since learned. General Gardanne found the capital in a state of confusion; and being able neither to locate the spot nor discover the treasure, returned from his embassy with empty hands.

Our stay at Finkenstein became very tiresome; and in order to while away the time, his Majesty sometimes played with his generals and aides-de-camp. The game was usually vingt-et-un; and the Great Captain took much pleasure in cheating, holding through several deals the cards necessary to complete the required number, and was much amused when he won the game by this finesse. I furnished the sum necessary for his game, and as soon as he returned to his quarters received orders to make out his account. He always gave me half of his gains, and I divided the remainder between the ordinary valets de chambre.

I have no intention, in this journal, of conforming to a very exact order of dates; and whenever there recurs to my memory a fact or an anecdote which seems to me deserving of mention, I shall jot it down, at whatever point of my narrative I may have then reached, fearing lest, should I defer it to its proper epoch, it might be forgotten. In pursuance of this plan I shall here relate, in passing, some souvenirs of Saint-Cloud or the Tuileries, although we are now in camp at Finkenstein. The pastimes in which his Majesty and his general officers indulged recalled these anecdotes to my recollection. These gentlemen often made wagers or bets among themselves; and I heard the Duke of Vicenza one day bet that Monsieur Jardin, junior, equerry of his Majesty, mounted backwards on his horse, could reach the end of the avenue in front of the chateau in the space of a few moments; which bet the equerry won.

Messieurs Fain, Meneval, and Ivan once played a singular joke on Monsieur B. d'A——, who, they knew, was subject to frequent attacks of gallantry. They dressed a young man in woman's clothes, and sent him to promenade, thus disguised, in an avenue near the chateau. Monsieur B. d'A—— was very near-sighted, and generally used an eyeglass. These gentlemen invited him to take a walk; and as soon as he was outside the door, he perceived the beautiful promenader, and could not restrain an exclamation of surprise and joy at the sight.

His friends feigned to share his delight, and urged him, as the most enterprising, to make the first advances, whereupon, in great excitement, he hastened after the pretended young lady, whom they had taught his role perfectly. Monsieur d'A—— outdid himself in politeness, in attentions, in offers of service, insisting eagerly on doing the honors of the chateau to his new conquest. The other acted his part perfectly; and after many coquettish airs on his side, and many protestations on the part of Monsieur d'A, a rendezvous was made for that very evening; and the lover, radiant with hope, returned to his friends, maintaining much discretion and reserve as to his good fortune, while he really would have liked to devour the time which must pass before the day was over. At last the evening arrived which was to put an end to his impatience, and bring the time of his interview; and his disappointment and rage may be imagined when he discovered the deception which had been practiced on him. Monsieur d'A—— wished at first to challenge the authors and actors in this hoax, and could with great difficulty be appeased.

It was, I think, on the return from this campaign, that Prince Jerome saw at Breslau, at the theater of that town, a young and very pretty actress, who played her part badly, but sang very well. He made advances, which she received coolly: but kings do not sigh long in vain; they place too heavy a weight in the balance against

discretion. His Majesty, the King of Westphalia, carried off his conquest to Cassel, and at the end of a short time she was married to his first valet de chambre, Albertoni, whose Italian morals were not shocked by this marriage. Some disagreement, the cause, of which I do not know, having caused Albertoni to quit the king, he returned to Paris with his wife, and engaged in speculations, in which he lost all that he had gained, and I have been told that he returned to Italy. One thing that always appeared to me extraordinary was the jealousy of Albertoni towards his wife—an exacting jealousy which kept his eyes open towards all men except the king; for I am well convinced that the liaison continued after their marriage.

The brothers of the Emperor, although kings, were sometimes kept waiting in the Emperor's antechamber. King Jerome came one morning by order of the Emperor, who, having not yet risen, told me to beg the King of Westphalia to wait. As the Emperor wished to sleep a little longer, I remained with the other servants in the saloon which was used as an antechamber, and the king waited with us; I do not say in patience, for he constantly moved from chair to chair, promenaded back and forth between the window and the fireplace, manifesting much annoyance, and speaking now and then to me, whom he always treated with great kindness. Thus more than half an hour passed; and at last I entered the Emperor's room, and when he had put on his dressing-gown, informed him that his Majesty was waiting, and after introducing him, I withdrew. The Emperor gave him a cool reception, and lectured him severely, and as he spoke very loud, I heard him against my will; but the king made his excuses in so low a tone that I could not hear a word of his justification. Such scenes were often repeated, for the prince was dissipated and prodigal, which displeased the Emperor above all things else, and for which he reprovved him severely, although he loved him, or rather because he loved him so much; for it is remarkable, that notwithstanding the frequent causes of displeasure which his family gave him, the Emperor still felt for all his relations the warmest affection.

A short time after the taking of Dantzic (May 24, 1807), the Emperor, wishing to reward Marshal Lefebvre for the recent services which he had rendered, had him summoned at six o'clock in the morning. His Majesty was in consultation with the chief-of-staff of the army when the arrival of the marshal was announced. "Ah!" said he to Berthier, "the duke does not delay." Then, turning to the officer on duty, "Say to the Duke of Dantzic that I have summoned him so early in order that he may breakfast with me." The officer, thinking that the Emperor had misunderstood the name, remarked to him, that the person who awaited his orders was not the Duke of Dantzic, but Marshal Lefebvre. "It seems, monsieur, that you think me more capable of making a count [faire un conte] than a duke."

The officer was somewhat disconcerted by this reply; but the Emperor reassured him with a smile, and said, "Go, give the duke my invitation, and say to him that in a quarter of an hour breakfast will be served." The officer returned to the marshal, who was, of course, very anxious to know why the Emperor had summoned him. "Monsieur le Due, the Emperor invites you to breakfast with him, and begs you to wait a quarter of an hour." The marshal, not having noticed the new title which the officer gave him, replied by a nod, and seated himself on a folding chair on the back of which hung the Emperor's sword, which the marshal inspected and touched with admiration and respect. The quarter of an hour passed, when another ordnance officer came to summon the marshal to the Emperor, who was already at table with the chief-of-staff; and as he entered, the Emperor saluted him with, "Good-day, Monsieur le Due; be seated next to me."

The marshal, astonished at being addressed by this title, thought at first that his Majesty was jesting; but seeing that he made a point of calling him Monsieur le, Due he was overcome with astonishment. The Emperor, to increase his embarrassment, said to him, "Do you like chocolate, Monsieur le Duc?"—"But—yes, Sire."—"Well, we have none for breakfast, but I will give you a pound from the very town of Dantzic; for since you have conquered it, it is but just that it should make you some return." Thereupon the Emperor left the table, opened a little casket, took therefrom a package in the shape of a long square, and handed it to Marshal Lefebvre, saying to him, "Duke of Dantzic, accept this chocolate; little gifts preserve friendship." The marshal thanked his Majesty, put the chocolate in his pocket, and took his seat again at table with the Emperor and Marshal Berthier. A 'pate' in the shape of the town of Dantzic was in the midst of the table; and when this was to be served the Emperor said to the new duke, "They could not have given this dish a form which would have pleased me more. Make the attack, Monsieur le Duc; behold your conquest; it is yours to do the honors." The duke obeyed; and the three guests ate of the pie, which they found much to their taste. On his return, the marshal, Duke of Dantzic, suspecting a surprise in the little package which the Emperor had given him, hastened to open it, and found a

hundred thousand crowns in bank–notes. In imitation of this magnificent present, the custom was established in the army of calling money, whether in pieces or in bank–notes, Dantzic chocolate; and when the soldiers wished to be treated by any comrade who happened to have a little money in his pocket, would say to him, "Come, now, have you no Dantzic chocolate in your pocket?"

The almost superstitious fancy of his Majesty the Emperor in regard to coincidences in dates and anniversaries was strengthened still more by the victory of Friedland, which was gained on June 14, 1807, seven years to the very day after the battle of Marengo. The severity of the winter, the difficulty in furnishing supplies (for which the Emperor had however made every possible provision and arrangement), added to the obstinate courage of the Russians, had made this a severe campaign, especially to conquerors whom the incredible rapidity of their successes in Prussia had accustomed to sudden conquests. The division of glory which he had been compelled to make with the Russians was a new experience in the Emperor's military career, but at Friedland he regained his advantage and his former superiority. His Majesty, by a feigned retreat, in which he let the enemy see only a part of his forces, drew the Russians into a decoy on the Elbe, so complete that they found themselves shut in between that river and our army. This victory was gained by troops of the line and cavalry; and the Emperor did not even find it necessary to use his Guards, while those of the Emperor Alexander was almost entirely destroyed in protecting the retreat, or rather the flight, of the Russians, who could escape from the pursuit of our soldiers only by the bridge of Friedland, a few narrow pontoons, and an almost impassable ford.

The regiments of the line in the French army covered the plain; and the Emperor, occupying a post of observation on a height whence he could overlook the whole field of battle, was seated in an armchair near a mill, surrounded by his staff. I never saw him in a gayer mood, as he conversed with the generals who awaited his orders, and seemed to enjoy eating the black Russian bread which was baked in the shape of bricks. This bread, made from inferior rye flour and full of long straws, was the food of all the soldiers; and they knew that his Majesty ate it as well as themselves. The beautiful weather favored the skillful maneuvers of the army, and they performed prodigies of valor. The cavalry charges especially were executed with so much precision that the Emperor sent his congratulations to the regiments.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, when the two armies were pressing each other on every side, and thousands of cannon caused the earth to tremble, the Emperor exclaimed, "If this continues two hours longer, the French army will be left standing on the plain alone." A few moments after he gave orders to the Count Dorsenne, general of the foot grenadiers of the Old Guard, to fire on a brick–yard, behind which masses of Russians and Prussians were intrenched; and in the twinkling of an eye they were compelled to abandon this position, and a horde of sharpshooters set out in pursuit of the fugitives.

The Guard made this movement at five o'clock, and at six the battle was entirely won. The Emperor said to those who were near him, while admiring the splendid behavior of the Guard, "Look at those brave fellows, with a good–will they would run over the stone–slingers and pop–guns of the line, in order to teach them to charge without waiting for them; but it would have been useless, as the work has been well done without them."

His Majesty went in person to compliment several regiments which had fought the whole day. A few words, a smile, a salute of the hand, even a nod, was sufficient recompense to these brave fellows who had just been crowned with victory.

The number of the dead and prisoners was enormous; and seventy banners, with all the equipments of the Russian army, were left in the hands of the French.

After this decisive day, the Emperor of Russia, who had rejected the proposals made by his Majesty after the battle of Eylau, found himself much disposed to make the game on his own account; and General Bennigsen consequently demanded an armistice in the name of his Emperor, which his Majesty granted; and a short time after a treaty of peace was signed, and the famous interview between the two sovereigns held on the banks of the Niemen. I shall pass over rapidly the details of this meeting, which have been published and repeated innumerable times. His Majesty and the young Czar conceived a mutual affection from the first moment of their meeting, and each gave fetes and amusements in honor of the other. They were inseparable in public and private, and passed hours together in meetings for pleasure only, from which all intruders were carefully excluded. The town of Tilsit was declared neutral; and French, Russians, and Prussians followed the example set them by their sovereigns, and lived together in the most intimate brotherhood.

The King and Queen of Prussia soon after joined their Imperial Majesties at Tilsit; though this unfortunate

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monarch, to whom there remained hardly one town of the whole kingdom he had possessed, was naturally little disposed to take part in so much festivity. The queen was beautiful and graceful, though perhaps somewhat haughty and severe, which did not prevent her being adored by all who surrounded her. The Emperor sought to please her, and she neglected none of the innocent coquetries of her sex in order to soften the heart of the conqueror of her husband. The queen several times dined with the sovereigns, seated between the two Emperors, who vied with each other in overwhelming her with attentions and gallantries. It is well known that the Emperor Napoleon offered her one day a splendid rose, which after some hesitation she accepted, saying to his Majesty with a most charming smile, "With Magdeburg, at least." And it is well known also that the Emperor did not accept the condition.

The princess had among her ladies of honor a very old woman, who was most highly esteemed. One evening as the queen was being escorted into the dining-hall by the two Emperors, followed by the King of Prussia, Prince Murat, and the Grand Duke Constantine, this old lady of honor gave way to the two latter princes. Grand Duke Constantine would not take precedence of her, but entirely spoiled this act of politeness by exclaiming in a rude tone, "Pass, madame, pass on!" And turning towards the King of Naples, added, loud enough to be heard, this disgraceful exclamation, "The old woodcock!"

One may judge from this that Prince Constantine was far from exhibiting towards ladies that exquisite politeness and refined gallantry which distinguished his august brother.

The French Imperial Guard on one occasion gave a dinner to the guard of the Emperor Alexander. At the end of this exceedingly gay and fraternal banquet, each French soldier exchanged uniforms with a Russian, and promenaded thus before the eyes of the Emperors, who were much amused by this impromptu disguise.

Among the numerous attentions paid by the Russian Emperor to our own, I would mention a concert by a troop of Baskir musicians, whom their sovereign brought over the Niemen for this purpose, and never certainly did more barbarous music resound in the ears of his Majesty; and this strange harmony, accompanied by gestures equally as savage, furnished one of the most amusing spectacles that can be imagined. A few days after this concert, I obtained permission to make the musicians a visit, and went to their camp, accompanied by Roustan, who was to serve as interpreter. We enjoyed the pleasure of being present at a repast of the Baskirs, where around immense wooden tubs were seated groups consisting of ten men, each holding in his hand a piece of black bread which he moistened with a ladleful of water, in which had been diluted something resembling red clay. After the repast, they gave us an exhibition of shooting with the bow; and Roustan, to whom this exercise recalled the scenes of his youth, attempted to shoot an arrow, but it fell at a few paces, and I saw a smile of scorn curl the thick lips of our Baskirs. I then tried the bow in my turn, and acquitted myself in such a manner as to do me honor in the eyes of our hosts, who instantly surrounded me, congratulating me by their gestures on my strength and skill; and one of them, even more enthusiastic and more amicable than the others, gave me a pat on the shoulder which I long remembered.

The day succeeding this famous concert, the treaty of peace between the three sovereigns was signed, and his Majesty made a visit to the Emperor Alexander, who received him at the head of his guard. The Emperor Napoleon asked his illustrious ally to show him the bravest grenadier of this handsome and valiant troop; and when he was presented to his Majesty, he took from his breast his own cross of the Legion of Honor, and fastened it on the breast of the Muscovite soldier, amid the acclamations and hurrahs of all his comrades. The two Emperors embraced each other a last time on the banks of the Niemen, and his Majesty set out on the road to Koenigsberg.

At Bautzen the King of Saxony came out to meet him, and their Majesties entered Dresden together. King Frederick Augustus gave a most magnificent reception to the sovereign who, not content with giving him a scepter, had also considerably increased the hereditary estates of the elector of Saxony. The good people of Dresden, during the week we passed there, treated the French more as brothers and compatriots than as allies.

But it was nearly ten months since we had left Paris; and in spite of all the charms of the simple and cordial hospitality of the Germans, I was very eager to see again France and my own family.

CHAPTER III.

It was during the glorious campaign of Prussia and Poland that the imperial family was plunged in the deepest sorrow by the death of the young Napoleon, eldest son of King Louis of Holland. This child bore a striking resemblance to his father, and consequently to his uncle. His hair was blond, but would probably have darkened as he grew older. His eyes, which were large and blue, shone with extraordinary brilliancy when a deep impression was made on his young mind. Gentle, lovable, and full of candor and gayety, he was the delight of the Emperor, especially on account of the firmness of his character, which was so remarkable that, notwithstanding his extreme youth, nothing could make him break his word. The following anecdote which I recall furnishes an instance of this.

He was very fond of strawberries; but they caused him such long and frequent attacks of vomiting that his mother became alarmed, and positively forbade his eating them, expressing a wish that every precaution should be taken to keep out of the young prince's sight a fruit which was so injurious to him. The little Napoleon, whom the injurious effects of the strawberries had not disgusted with them, was surprised to no more see his favorite dish; but bore the deprivation patiently, until one day he questioned his nurse, and very seriously demanded an explanation on this subject, which the good woman was unable to give, for she indulged him even to the point of spoiling him. He knew her weakness, and often took advantage of it, as in this instance for example. He became angry, and said to his nurse in a tone which had as much and even more effect on her than the Emperor or the King of Holland could have had, "I will have the strawberries. Give them to me at once." The poor nurse begged him to be quiet, and said that she would give them to him, but she was afraid that if anything happened he would tell the queen who had done this. "Is that all?" replied Napoleon eagerly. Have no fear; I promise not to tell."

The nurse yielded, and the strawberries had their usual effect. The queen entered while he was undergoing the punishment for his self-indulgence; and he could not deny that he had eaten the forbidden fruit, as the proofs were too evident. The queen was much incensed, and wished to know who had disobeyed her; she alternately entreated and threatened the child, who still continued to reply with the greatest composure, "I promised not to tell." And in spite of the great influence she had over him, she could not force him to tell her the name of the guilty person.

Young Napoleon was devoted to his uncle, and manifested in his presence a patience and self-control very foreign to his usual character. The Emperor often took him on his knee during breakfast, and amused himself making him eat lentils one by one. The pretty face of the child became crimson, his whole countenance manifested disgust and impatience; but his Majesty could prolong this sport without fearing that his nephew would become angry, which he would have infallibly done with any one else.

At such a tender age could he have been conscious of his uncle's superiority to all those who surrounded him? King Louis, his father, gave him each day a new plaything, chosen exactly to suit his fancy: but the child preferred those he received from his uncle; and when his father said to him, But, see here, Napoleon, those are ugly things; mine are prettier."—"No," said the young prince, "they are very nice; my uncle gave them to me."

One morning when he visited his Majesty, he crossed a saloon where amid many great personages was Prince Murat, at that time, I think, Grand Duke of Berg. The child passed through without saluting any one, when the prince stopped him and said, "Will you not tell me goodmorning?"—"No," replied Napoleon, disengaging himself from the arms of the Grand Duke; "not before my uncle the Emperor."

At the end of a review which had taken place in the court of the Tuileries, and on the Place du Carrousel, the Emperor went up to his apartments, and threw his hat on one sofa, his sword on another. Little Napoleon entered, took his uncle's sword, passed the belt round his neck, put the hat on his head, and then kept step gravely, humming a march behind the Emperor and Empress. Her Majesty, turning round, saw him, and caught him in her arms, exclaiming, "What a pretty picture!" Ingenious in seizing every occasion to please her husband, the Empress summoned M. Gerard, and ordered a portrait of the young prince in this costume; and the picture was brought to the palace of Saint-Cloud the very day on which the Empress heard of the death of this beloved child.

He was hardly three years old when, seeing his shoemaker's bill paid with five-franc pieces, he screamed loudly, not wishing that they should give away the picture of his Uncle Bibiche. The name of Bibiche thus given

by the young prince to his Majesty originated in this manner. The Empress had several gazelles placed in the park of Saint-Cloud, which were very much afraid of all the inhabitants of the palace except the Emperor, who allowed them to eat tobacco out of his snuff-box, and thus induced them to follow him, and took much pleasure in giving them the tobacco by the hands of the little Napoleon, whom he also put on the back of one of them. The latter designated these pretty animals by no other name than that of Bibiche, and amused himself by giving the same name to his uncle.

This charming child, who was adored by both father and mother, used his almost magical influence over each in order to reconcile them to each other. He took his father by the hand, who allowed himself to be thus conducted by this angel of peace to Queen Hortense, and then said to him, "Kiss her, papa, I beg you;" and was perfectly overjoyed when he had thus succeeded in reconciling these two beings whom he loved with an equal affection.

How could such a beautiful character fail to make this angel beloved by all who knew him? How could the Emperor, who loved all children, fail to be devoted to him, even had he not been his nephew, and the godson of that good Josephine whom he never ceased to love for a single instant? At the age of seven years, when that malady, the croup, so dangerous to children, snatched him from his heart-broken family, he already gave evidence of remarkable traits of character, which were the foundation of most brilliant hopes. His proud and haughty character, while rendering him susceptible of the noblest impressions, was not incompatible with obedience and docility. The idea of injustice was revolting to him; but he readily submitted to reasonable advice and rightful authority.

First-born of the new dynasty, it was fitting he should attract as he did the deepest tenderness and solicitude of the chief. Malignity and envy, which ever seek to defame and villify the great, gave slanderous explanations of this almost paternal attachment; but wise and thoughtful men saw in this adoptive tenderness only what it plainly evinced,—the desire and hope of transmitting his immense power, and the grandest name in the universe, to an heir, indirect it is true, but of imperial blood, and who, reared under the eyes, and by the direction of the Emperor, would have been to him all that a son could be. The death of the young Napoleon appeared as a forerunner of misfortunes in the midst of his glorious career, disarranging all the plans which the monarch had conceived, and decided him to concentrate all his hopes on an heir in a direct line.

It was then that the first thoughts of divorce arose in his mind, though it did not take place until two years later, and only began to be the subject of private conversation during the stay at Fontainebleau. The Empress readily saw the fatal results to her of the death of this godson, and from that time she dwelt upon the idea of this terrible event which ruined her life. This premature death was to her an inconsolable grief; and she shut herself up for three days, weeping bitterly, seeing no one except her women, and taking almost no nourishment. It even seemed that she feared to be distracted from her grief, as she surrounded herself with a sort of avidity with all that could recall her irreparable loss. She obtained with some difficulty from Queen Hortense some of the young prince's hair, which his heart-broken mother religiously preserved; and the Empress had this hair framed on a cushion of black velvet, and kept it always near her. I often saw it at Malmaison, and never without deep emotion.

But how can I attempt to describe the despair of Queen Hortense, of that woman who became as perfect a mother as she had been a daughter. She never left her son a moment during his illness; and when he expired in her arms, still wishing to remain near his lifeless body, she fastened her arms through those of her chair, in order that she might not be torn from this heartrending scene. At last nature succumbed to such poignant grief: the unhappy mother fainted; and the opportunity was taken to remove her to her own apartment, still in the chair which she had not left, and which her arms clasped convulsively. On awaking, the queen uttered piercing screams, and her dry and staring eyes and white lips gave reason to fear that she was near her end. Nothing could bring tears to her eyes, until at last a chamberlain conceived the idea of bringing the young prince's body, and placing it on his mother's knees; and this had such an effect on her that her tears burst forth and saved her life, while she covered with kisses the cold and adored remains. All France shared the grief of the Queen of Holland.

CHAPTER IV.

We arrived at Saint-Cloud on the 27th of July; and the Emperor passed the summer partly in this residence, and partly at Fontainebleau, returning to Paris only on special occasions, and never remaining longer than twenty-four hours. During his Majesty's absence, the chateau of Rambouillet was restored and furnished anew, and the Emperor spent a few days there. The first time he entered the bathroom, he stopped short at the door and glanced around with every appearance of surprise and dissatisfaction; and when I sought the cause of this, following the direction of his Majesty's eyes, I saw that they rested on various family portraits which the architect had painted on the walls of the room. They were those of madame his mother, his sisters, Queen Hortense, etc.; and the sight of such a gallery, in such a place, excited the extreme displeasure of the Emperor. "What nonsense!" he cried. "Constant, summon Marshal Duroc!" And when the grand marshal appeared, his Majesty inquired, "Who is the idiot that could have conceived such an idea? Order the painter to come and efface all that. He must have little respect for women to be guilty of such an indecency."

When the court sojourned at Fontainebleau, the inhabitants indemnified themselves amply for his Majesty's long absences by the high price at which they sold all articles of food. Their extortions became scandalous impositions, and more than one foreigner making an excursion to Fontainebleau thought himself held for ransom by a troop of Bedouins. During the stay of the court; a wretched sacking-bed in a miserable inn cost twelve francs for a single night; the smallest meal cost an incredible price, and was, notwithstanding, detestable; in fact, it amounted to a genuine pillage of travelers. Cardinal Caprara,

--[Giovanni Battista Caprara, born of a noble family at Bologna, 1733; count and archbishop of Milan; cardinal, 1792; Negotiated the Concordat, 1801; died 1810]--

whose rigid economy was known to all Paris, went one day to Fontainebleau to pay his court to the Emperor, and at the hotel where he alighted took only a single cup of bouillon, and the six persons of his suite partook only of a very light repast, as the cardinal had arranged to return in three hours; but notwithstanding this, as he was entering his carriage, the landlord had the audacity to present him with a bill for six hundred francs! The prince of the church indignantly protested, flew into a rage, threatened, etc., but all in vain; and the bill was paid.

Such an outrageous imposition could not fail to reach the Emperor's ears, and excited his anger to such a degree that he at once ordered a fixed schedule of prices, which it was forbidden the innkeepers to exceed. This put an end to the exactions of the bloodsuckers of Fontainebleau.

On the 21st of August, there arrived at Paris the Princess Catharine of Wurtemberg, future wife of Prince Jerome Napoleon, King of Westphalia. This princess was about twenty-four years of age, and very beautiful, with a most noble and gracious bearing; and though policy alone had made this marriage, never could love or voluntary choice have made one that was happier.

The courageous conduct of her Majesty the Queen of Westphalia in 1814, her devotion to her dethroned husband, and her admirable letters to her father, who wished to tear her from the arms of King Jerome, are matters of history. I have seen it stated that this prince never ceased, even after this marriage, which was so flattering to his ambition, to correspond with his first wife, Mademoiselle Patterson, and that he often sent to America his valet de chambre, Rico, to inquire after this lady and their child. If this is true, it is no less so that these attentions to his first wife, which were not only very excusable, but even, according to my opinion, praiseworthy in Prince Jerome, and of which her Majesty the Queen of Westphalia was probably well aware, did not necessarily prevent her being happy with her husband.

No testimony more reliable than that of the queen her self can be given; and she expresses herself as follows in her second letter to his Majesty, the King of Wurtemberg:--

"Forced by policy to marry the king, my husband, fate has willed that I should find myself the happiest woman in the universe. I feel towards my husband the united sentiments of love, tenderness,

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and esteem. In this painful moment can the best of fathers wish to destroy my domestic happiness, the only kind which now remains to me? I dare to say that you, my dear father, you and all my family, do great injustice to the king, my husband; and I trust the time will come when you will be convinced that you have done him injustice, and then you will ever find in him, as well as in myself, the most respectful and affectionate of children."

Her Majesty then spoke of a terrible misfortune to which she had been exposed. This event, which was indeed terrible, was nothing less than violence and robbery committed on a fugitive woman defenseless and alone, by a band at the head of which was the famous Marquis de Maubreuil, —[A French political adventurer, born in Brittany, 1782; died 1855.]— who had been equerry of the King of Westphalia. I will recur in treating of the events of 1814 to this disgraceful affair, and will give some particulars, which I think are not generally known, in regard to the principal authors and participants in this daring act of brigandage.

In the following month of September, a courier from the Russian cabinet arrived from St. Petersburg, bearing a letter to his Majesty from the Emperor Alexander; and among other magnificent gifts were two very handsome fur pelisses of black fox and sable martin.

During their Majesties residence at Fontainebleau, the Emperor often went out in his carriage with the Empress in the streets of the city with neither escort nor guards. One day, while passing before the hospital of Mont Pierreux, her Majesty the Empress saw at a window a very aged clergyman, who saluted their Majesties. The Empress, having returned the old man's salutation with her habitual grace, pointed him out to the Emperor, who himself saluted him, and ordering his coachman to stop, sent one of the footmen with a request to the old priest to come and speak to them a moment, if it were not too great an exertion. The old man, who still walked with ease, hastened to descend; and in order to save him a few steps the Emperor had his carriage driven very close to the door of the hospital.

His Majesty conversed for some time with the good ecclesiastic, manifesting the greatest kindness and respect. He informed their Majesties that he had been, previous to the Revolution, the regular priest of one of the parishes of Fontainebleau, and had done everything possible to avoid emigrating; but that terror had at length forced him to leave his native land, although he was then more than seventy-five years old; that he had returned to France at the time of the proclamation of the Concordat, and now lived on a modest pension hardly sufficient to pay his board in the hospital. "Monsieur l'Abbe," said his Majesty after listening to the old priest attentively, "I will order your pension to be doubled; and if that is not sufficient I hope you will apply to the Empress or to me." The good ecclesiastic thanked the Emperor with tears in his eyes. "Unfortunately, Sire," said he among other things, "I am too old to long enjoy your Majesty's reign or profit by your kindness."— "YOU?" replied the Emperor, smiling, "why, you are a young man. Look at M. de Belloy; he is much your senior, and we hope to keep him with us for a long time yet." Their Majesties then took leave of the old man, who was much affected, leaving him in the midst of a crowd of the inhabitants who had collected before the hospital during this conversation, and who were much impressed by this interesting scene and the generous kindness of the Emperor.

M. de Belloy, cardinal and archbishop of Paris, whose name the Emperor mentioned in the conversation I have just related, was then ninety-eight years of age, though his health was excellent; and I have never seen an old man who had as venerable an air as this worthy prelate. The Emperor had the profoundest respect for him, and never failed to give evidence of it on every occasion. During this same month of September, a large number of the faithful having assembled according to custom on Mount Valerien, the archbishop likewise repaired to the spot to hear mass. As he was about to withdraw, seeing that many pious persons were awaiting his benediction, he addressed them before bestowing it in a few words which showed his kindness of heart and his evangelical simplicity: "My children, I know that I must be very old from the loss of my strength, but not of my zeal and my tenderness for you. Pray God, my children, for your old archbishop, who never fails to intercede on your behalf each day."

During his stay at Fontainebleau, the Emperor enjoyed more frequently than ever before the pleasures of the chase. The costume necessary was a French coat of green dragon color, decorated with buttons and gold lace, white cashmere breeches, and Hessian boots without facings; this was the costume for the grand hunt which was

always a stag hunt; that for a hunt with guns being a plain, green French coat with no other ornament than white buttons, on which were cut suitable inscriptions. This costume was the same for all persons taking part in this hunt, with no distinguishing marks, even for his Majesty himself.

The princesses set out for the rendezvous in a Spanish carriage with either two or four six horses, and thus followed the chase, their costume being an elegant riding-habit, and a hat with white or black plumes.

One of the Emperor's sisters (I do not now recall which) never failed to follow the hunt, accompanied by many charming ladies who were always invited to breakfast at the rendezvous, as was always the custom on similar occasions with the persons of the court. One of these ladies, who was both beautiful and intelligent, attracted the attention of the Emperor, a short correspondence ensued, and at last the Emperor again ordered me to carry a letter.

In the palace of Fontainebleau is a private garden called the garden of Diana, to which their Majesties alone had access. This garden is surrounded on four sides by buildings; on the left was the chapel with its gloomy gallery and Gothic architecture; on the right the grand gallery (as well as I can remember); in the middle the building which contained their Majesties' apartments; finally, in front of and facing the square were broad arcades, and behind them the buildings intended for the various persons attached to household of the princes or the Emperor. Madame de B——, the lady whom the Emperor had remarked, lodged in an apartment situated behind these arcades on the ground floor; and his Majesty informed me that I would find a window open, through which I must enter cautiously, in the darkness, and give his note to a person who would ask for it. This darkness was necessary, because this window opened on the garden, and though behind the arcades, would have been noticed had there been a light. Not knowing the interior of these apartments, I entered through the window, thinking I could then walk on a level, but had a terrible fall over a high step which was in the embrasure of the window. I heard some one scream as I fell, and a door was suddenly closed. I had received severe bruises on my knee, elbow, and head, and rising with difficulty, at once began a search around the apartment, groping in the dark; but hearing nothing more, and fearing to make some fresh noise which might be heard by persons who should not know of my presence there, I decided to return to the Emperor, and report to him my adventures.

Finding that none of my injuries were serious, the Emperor laughed most heartily, and then added, "Oh, oh, so there is a step; it is well to know that. Wait till Madame B—— is over her fright; I will go to her, and you will accompany me." At the end of an hour, the Emperor emerged with me from the door of his cabinet which opened on the garden. I conducted him in silence towards the window which was still open and assisted him to enter, and having obtained to my cost a correct idea of the spot, directed him how to avoid a fall.

His Majesty, having entered the chamber without accident, told me to retire. I was not without some anxiety as I informed the Emperor; but he replied that I was a child, and there could be no danger. It appeared that his Majesty succeeded better than I had done,—as he did not return until daybreak, and then jested about my awkwardness, admitting, however, that if he had not been warned, a similar accident would have befallen him.

Although Madame de B—— was worthy of a genuine attachment, her liaison with the Emperor lasted only a short while, and was only a passing fancy. I think that the difficulties surrounding his nocturnal visits cooled his Majesty's ardor greatly; for the Emperor was not enough in love to be willing to brave everything in order to see his beautiful mistress. His Majesty informed me of the fright which my fall had caused her, and how anxious this amiable lady had been on my account, and how he had reassured her; this did not, however, prevent her sending next day to know how I was, by a confidential person, who told me again how interested Madame de B—— had been in my accident.

Often at Fontainebleau there was a court representation, in which the actors of the first theaters received orders to play before their Majesties scenes selected from their various repertoires. Mademoiselle Mars was to play the evening of her arrival; but at Essonne, where she was obliged to stop a moment on account of the road being filled with cattle going or returning from Fontainebleau, her trunk had been stolen, a fact of which she was not aware until she had gone some distance from the spot. Not only were her costumes missing, but she had no other clothing except what she wore; and it would be at least twelve hours before she could get from Paris what she needed. It was then two o'clock in the afternoon, and that very evening she must appear in the brilliant role of Celimene. Although much disturbed by this accident, Mademoiselle Mars did not lose her presence of mind, but visited all the shops of the town, and in a few hours had cut and made a complete costume in most excellent taste, and her loss was entirely repaired.

CHAPTER V.

In the month of November of this year I followed their Majesties to Italy. We knew a few days in advance that the Emperor would make this journey; but as happened on all other occasions, neither the day nor the hour was fixed, until we were told on the evening of the 15th that we would set out early on the morning of the 16th. I passed the night like all the household of his Majesty; for in order to carry out the incredible perfection of comfort with which the Emperor surrounded himself on his journeys, it was necessary that everybody should be on foot as soon as the hour of departure was known; consequently I passed the night arranging the service of his Majesty, while my wife packed my own baggage, and had but just finished when the Emperor asked for me, which meant that ten minutes after we would be on the road. At four o'clock in the morning his Majesty entered his carriage.

As we never knew at what hour or in what direction the Emperor would begin his journey, the grand marshal, the grand equerry, and the grand chamberlain sent forward a complete service on all the different roads which they thought his Majesty might take. The bedroom service comprised a valet de chambre and a wardrobe boy. As for me, I never left his Majesty's person, and my carriage always followed immediately behind his. The conveyance belonging to this service contained an iron bed with its accessories, a dressing-case with linen, coats, etc. I know little of the service of the stables, but that of the kitchen was organized as follows: There was a conveyance almost in the shape of the coucou on the Place Louis XV. at Paris, with a deep bottom and an enormous body. The bottom contained wines for the Emperor's table and that of the high officers, the ordinary wine being bought at the places where we stopped. In the body of the wagon were the kitchen utensils and a portable furnace, followed by a carriage containing a steward, two cooks, and a furnace-boy. There was besides this, a baggage-wagon full of provisions and wine to fill up the other as it was emptied; and all these conveyances set out a few hours in advance of the Emperor. It was the duty of the grand marshal to designate the place at which breakfast should be taken. We alighted sometimes at the archbishop's, sometimes at the hotel de ville, sometimes at the residence of the sub-prefect, or even at that of the mayor, in the absence of any other dignitaries. Having arrived at the designated house, the steward gave orders for the provisions, the furnaces were lighted, and spits turned; and if the Emperor alighted and partook of the repast prepared, the provisions which had been consumed were immediately replaced as far as possible, and the carriages filled again with poultry, pastry, etc.; before leaving all expenses were paid by the controller, presents were made to the master of the house, and everything which was not necessary for the service left for the use of their servants. It sometimes happened that the Emperor, finding that it was too soon for breakfast, or wishing to make a longer journey, gave orders to pass on, and everything was packed up again and the service continued its route. Sometimes also the Emperor, halting in the open field, alighted, took his seat under a tree, and ordered his breakfast, upon which Roustan and the footmen obtained provisions from his Majesty's carriage, which was furnished with small cooking utensils with silver covers, holding chickens, partridges, etc., while the other carriages furnished their proportion. M. Pfister served the Emperor, and every one ate a hasty morsel. Fires were lighted to heat the coffee; and in less than half an hour everything had disappeared, and the carriages rolled on in the same order as before.

The Emperor's steward and cooks had nearly all been trained in the household of the king and the princes. These were Messieurs Dunau, Leonard, Rouff, and Gerard. M. Colin was chief in command, and became steward-controller after the sad affliction of M. Pfister, who became insane during the campaign of 1809. All were capable and zealous servants; and, as is the case in the household of all sovereigns, each department of the domestic affairs had its chief. Messieurs Soupe and Pierrugues were in charge of the wines, and the sons of these gentlemen continued to hold the same office with the Emperor.

We traveled with great speed as far as Mont-Cenis, but were compelled to go more slowly after reaching this pass, as the weather had been very bad for several days, and the road was washed out by the rain, which still fell in torrents. The Emperor arrived at Milan at noon on the 22d; and, notwithstanding our delay at Mont-Cenis, the rest of the journey had been so rapid that no one was expecting the Emperor. The vice-king only learned of the arrival of his step-father when he was half a league from the town, but came in haste to meet us escorted only by a few persons. The Emperor gave orders to halt, and, as soon as the door was opened, held out his hand to Prince Eugene, saying in the most affectionate manner: "Come, get up with us, my fine prince; we will enter together."

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Notwithstanding the surprise which this unexpected arrival caused, we had hardly entered the town before all the houses were illuminated, and the beautiful palaces, Litta, Casani, Melzi, and many others, shone with a thousand lights. The magnificent cupola of the cathedral dome was covered with garlands of colored lights; and in the center of the Forum—Bonaparte, the walks of which were also illuminated, could be seen the colossal equestrian statue of the Emperor, on both sides of which transparencies had been arranged, in the shape of stars, bearing the initials S M I and R. By eight o'clock all the populace had collected around the chateau, where superb fireworks were discharged, while spirited and warlike music was performed. All the town authorities were admitted to the Emperor's presence.

On the morning of the next day there was held at the chateau a council of ministers, over which the Emperor presided; and at noon he mounted his horse to take part in the mass celebrated by the grand chaplain of the kingdom. The square of the cathedral was covered by an immense crowd, through which the Emperor advanced on horseback, accompanied by his imperial Highness, the vice-king, and his staff. The noble countenance of Prince Eugene expressed the great joy he felt in the presence of his step-father, for whom he had always so much respect and filial affection, and in hearing the incessant acclamations of the people, which grew more vociferous every moment.

After the 'Te Deum', the Emperor held a review of the troops on the square, and immediately after set out with the viceroy for Monza, the palace at which the queen resided. For no woman did the Emperor manifest more sincere regard and respect than for Princess Amelia; but, indeed there has never been a more beautiful or purer woman. It was impossible to speak of beauty or virtue in the Emperor's presence without his giving the vice-queen as an example. Prince Eugene was very worthy of so accomplished a wife, and justly appreciated her exalted character; and I was glad to see in the countenance of the excellent prince the reflection of the happiness he enjoyed. Amidst all the care he took to anticipate every wish of his step-father, I was much gratified that he found time to address a few words to me, expressing the great pleasure he felt at my promotion in the service and esteem of the Emperor. Nothing could have been more grateful to me than these marks of remembrance from a prince for whom I had always retained a most sincere, and, I made bold to say, most tender, attachment.

The Emperor remained a long while with the vicequeen, whose intelligence equaled her amiability and her beauty, but returned to Milan to dine; and immediately afterwards the ladies who were received at court were presented to him. In the evening, I followed his Majesty to the theater of la Scala. The Emperor did not remain throughout the play, but retired early to his apartment, and worked the greater part of the night; which did not, however, prevent our being on the road to Verona before eight o'clock in the morning.

His Majesty made no stop at Brescia and Verona. I would have been very glad to have had time on the route to examine the curiosities of Italy; but that was not an easy thing to do in the Emperor's suite, as he halted only for the purpose of reviewing troops, and preferred visiting fortifications to ruins.

At Verona his Majesty dined, or rather supped (for it was very late), with their Majesties, the King and Queen of Bavaria, who arrived at almost exactly the same time as ourselves; and very early the next day we set out for Vicenza.

Although the season was already advanced, I found great pleasure in the scene which awaits the traveler on' the road from Verona to Vicenza. Imagine to yourself an immense plain, divided into innumerable fields, each bordered with different kinds of trees with slender trunks, —mostly elms and poplars,—which form avenues as far as the eye can reach. Vines twine around their trunks, climb each tree, and droop from each limb; while other branches of these vines, loosening their hold on the tree which serves as their support, droop clear to the ground, and hang in graceful festoons from tree to tree. Beyond these, lovely natural bowers could be seen far and wide, splendid fields of wheat; or, at least, this had been the case on my former journey, but at this time the harvest had been gathered for several months.

At the end of a day which I passed most delightfully amid these fertile plains, I entered Vicenza, where the authorities of the town, together with almost the entire population, awaited the Emperor under a superb arch of triumph at the entrance of the town. We were exceedingly hungry; and his Majesty himself said, that evening as he retired, that he felt very much like sitting down to the table when he entered Vicenza. I trembled, then, at the idea of those long Italian addresses, which I had found even longer than those of France, doubtless because I did not understand a single word; but, fortunately, the magistrates of Vicenza were sufficiently well-informed not to take advantage of our position, and their speeches occupied only a few moments.

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That evening his Majesty went to the theater; and I was so much fatigued that I would have gladly profited by the Emperor's absence to take some repose, had not an acquaintance invited me to accompany him to the convent of the Servites, in order to witness the effect of the illumination of the town, which I did, and was repaid by the magnificent spectacle which met my eyes. The whole town seemed one blaze of light. On returning to the palace occupied by his Majesty, I learned that he had given orders that everything should be in readiness for departure two hours after midnight; consequently I had one hour to sleep, and I enjoyed it to the utmost.

At the appointed moment, the Emperor entered his carriage; and we were soon rolling along with the rapidity of lightning over the road to Stra, where we passed the night. Very early next morning we set out, following a long causeway raised through marshes. The landscape is almost the same, and yet not so beautiful, as that we passed before reaching Vicenza. We still saw groves of mulberry and olive trees, from which the finest oil is obtained, and fields of maize and hemp, interspersed with meadows. Beyond Stra the cultivation of rice commences; and, although the rice-fields must render the country unhealthy, still it has not the reputation of being more so than any other. On the right and left of the road are seen elegant houses, and cabins which, though covered with thatch, are very comfortable, and present a charming appearance. The vine is little cultivated in this part of the country, where it would hardly succeed, as the land is too low and damp; but there are, nevertheless, a few small vineyards on the slopes, and the vegetation in the whole country is incredibly rich and luxuriant. The late wars have left traces which only a long peace can efface.

CHAPTER VI.

On his arrival at Fusina the Emperor found the Venetian authorities awaiting him, embarked on the 'peote' or gondola of the village, and advanced towards Venice, accompanied by a numerous floating cortege. We followed, the Emperor in little black gondolas, which looked like floating coffins, with which the Brenta was covered; and nothing could be stranger than to hear, proceeding from these coffins of such gloomy aspect, delicious vocal concerts. The boat which carried his Majesty, and the gondolas of the principal persons of his suite, were handsomely ornamented.

When we arrived at the mouth of the river we were obliged to wait nearly half an hour until the locks were opened, which was done by degrees, and with every precaution; without which the waters of the Brenta, held in their canal and raised considerably above the level of the sea, would have rushed out suddenly, and in their violent descent have driven our gondolas along before them, or sunk them. Released at last from the Brenta, we found ourselves in the gulf, and saw at a distance, rising from the midst of the sea, the wonderful city of Venice. Barks, gondolas, and vessels of considerable size, filled with all the wealthy population, and all the boatmen of Venice in gala dress, appeared on every side, passing, repassing, and crossing each other, in every direction, with the most remarkable skill and speed.

The Emperor was standing at the back of the peote, and, as each gondola passed near his own, replied to the acclamations and cries of "Viva Napoleone imperatore e re!" by one of those profound bows which he made with so much grace and dignity, taking off his hat without bending his head, and carrying it along his body almost to his knees.

Escorted by this innumerable flotilla, of which the peote of the city seemed to be the admirals vessel, his Majesty entered at last the Grand Canal, which flowed between magnificent palaces, hung with banners and filled with spectators. The Emperor alighted before the palace of the procurators, where he was received by a deputation of members of the Senate and the Venetian nobility. He stopped a moment in the square of St. Mark, passed through some interior streets, chose the site for a garden, the plans for which the architect of the city then presented to him, and which were carried out as if it had been in the midst of the country. It was a novel sight to the Venetians to see trees planted in the open air, while hedges and lawns appeared as if by magic. The entire absence of verdure and vegetation, and the silence which reigns in the streets of Venice, where is never heard the hoof of a horse nor the wheels of a carriage, horses and carriages being things entirely unknown in this truly marine city, must give it usually a sad and abandoned air; but this gloom entirely disappeared during his Majesty's visit.

The prince viceroy and the grand marshal were present in the evening when the Emperor retired; and, while undressing him, I heard a part of their conversation, which turned on the government of Venice before the union of this republic with the French Empire. His Majesty was almost the only spokesman, Prince Eugene and Marshal Duroc contenting themselves with throwing a few words into the conversation, as if to furnish a new text for the Emperor, and prevent his pausing, and thus ending too soon his discourse; a genuine discourse, in fact, since his Majesty took the lead, and left the others but little to say. Such was often his habit; but no one thought of complaining of this, so interesting were nearly always the Emperor's ideas, and so original and brilliantly expressed. His Majesty did not converse, as had been truthfully said in the journal which I have added to my memoirs, but he spoke with an inexpressible charm; and on this point it seems to me that the author of the "Journal of Aix-la-Chapelle" has done the Emperor injustice.

As I said just now, his Majesty spoke of the ancient State of Venice, and from what he said on this occasion I learned more than I could have done from the most interesting book. The viceroy having remarked that a few patricians regretted their former liberty, the Emperor exclaimed, "Liberty, what nonsense! liberty no longer existed in Venice, and had, indeed, never existed except for a few families of the nobility, who oppressed the rest of the population. Liberty, with a Council of Ten! Liberty, with the inquisitors of state! Liberty, with the very lions as informers, and Venetian dungeons and bullets!" Marshal Duroc remarked that towards the end these severe regulations were much modified. "Yes, no doubt,"—replied the Emperor. "The lion of St. Mark had gotten old; he had no longer either teeth or nails! Venice was only the shadow of her former self, and her last doge found

that he rose to a higher rank in becoming a senator of the French Empire." His Majesty, seeing that this idea made the vice-king smile, added very gravely, "I am not jesting, gentlemen. A Roman senator prided himself on being more than a king; a French senator is at least the equal of a doge. I desire that foreigners shall accustom themselves to show the greatest respect towards the constituted authorities of the Empire, and to treat with great consideration even the simple title of French citizen. I will take care to insure this. Good-night, Eugene. Duroc, take care to have the reception to-morrow all that it should be. After the ceremony we will visit the arsenal. Adieu, Messieurs. Constant, come back in ten minutes to put out my light; I feel sleepy. One is cradled like an infant on these gondolas."

The next day his Majesty, after receiving the homage of the Venetian authorities, repaired to the arsenal. This is an immense building, fortified so carefully that it was practically impregnable. The appearance of the interior is singular on account of several small islands which it incloses, joined together by bridges. The magazines and numerous buildings of the fortress thus appear to be floating on the surface of the water. The entrance on the land side, by which we were introduced, is over a very handsome bridge of marble, ornamented with columns and statues. On the side next the sea, there are numerous rocks and sandbanks, the presence of which is indicated by long piles. It is said that in time of war these piles were taken up, which exposed the foreign vessels, imprudent enough to entangle themselves among these shoals, to certain destruction. The arsenal could formerly equip eighty thousand men, both infantry and cavalry, independent of complete armaments for war vessels.

The arsenal is bordered with raised towers, from which the view extends in all directions. On the tallest of these towers, which is placed in the center of the building, as well as all the others, sentinels were stationed, both day and night, to signal the arrival of vessels, which they could see at a very great distance. Nothing can be finer than the dockyards for building vessels, in which ten thousand men can work with ease. The sails are made by women, over whom other elderly women exercise an active surveillance.

The Emperor delayed only a short time to look at the 'Bucentaure'; which is the title of the magnificent vessel in which the Doge of Venice was accustomed to celebrate his marriage with the sea; and a Venetian never sees without deep chagrin this old monument of the former glory of his country. I, in company with some persons of the Emperor's suite, had as our guide an old mariner, whose eyes filled with tears as he related to us in bad French that the last time he witnessed the marriage of the Doge with the Adriatic Sea was in 1796, a year before the capture of Venice. He also told us that he was at that time in the service of the last Doge of the republic, Lord Louis Manini, and that the following year (1797), the French entered Venice at the exact time when the marriage of the Doge to the sea, which took place on Ascension Day, was usually celebrated, and ever since the sea had remained a widow. Our good sailor paid a most touching tribute of praise to his old master, who he said had never succeeded in forcing himself, to take the oath of allegiance to the Austrians, and had swooned away while resigning to them the keys of the city.

The gondoliers are at the same time servants, errand boys, confidants, and companions in adventures to the person who takes them into his service; and nothing can equal the courage, fidelity, and gayety of these brave seamen. They expose themselves fearlessly in their slender gondolas to tempests; and their skill is so great that they turn with incredible rapidity in the narrowest canals, cross each other, follow, and pass each other incessantly, without ever having an accident.

I found myself in a position to judge of the skill of these hardy mariners the day after our visit to the arsenal. His Majesty was conducted through the lagoons as far as the fortified gate of Mala-Mocca, and the gondoliers gave as he returned a boat-race and tournament on the water. On that day there was also a special representation at the grand theater, and the whole city was illuminated. In fact, one might think that there is a continual fete and general illumination in Venice; the custom being to spend the greater part of the night in business or pleasure, and the streets are as brilliant and as full of people as in Paris at four o'clock in the afternoon. The shops, especially those of the square of Saint Mark, are brilliantly lighted, and crowds fill the small decorated pavilions where coffee, ices, and refreshments of all kinds are sold.

The Emperor did not adopt the Venetian mode of life, however, and retired at the same hour as in Paris; and when he did not pass the day working with his ministers, rode in a gondola through the lagoons, or visited the principal establishments and public buildings of Venice; and I thus saw, in company with his Majesty, the church of Saint Mark, and the ancient palace of the Doge.

The church of Saint Mark has five entrances, superbly decorated with marble columns; the gates are of bronze

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and beautifully carved. Above the middle door were formerly the four famous bronze horses, which the Emperor carried to Paris to ornament the Arch of Triumph on the Place du Carrousel. The tower is separated from the church by a small square, from the midst of which it rises to a height of more than three hundred feet. It is ascended by an inclined platform without steps, which is very convenient; and on arriving at the summit the most magnificent panorama is spread out before you, Venice with its innumerable islands covered with palaces, churches, and buildings, and extending at a distance into the sea; also the immense dike, sixty feet broad, several fathoms deep, and built of great blocks of stone, which enormous work surrounds Venice and all its islands, and defends it against the rising of the sea.

The Venetians have the greatest admiration for the clock placed in the tower bearing its name, and the mechanism of which shows the progress of the sun and moon through the twelve signs of the zodiac. In a niche above the dialplate is an image of the Virgin, which is gilded and lifesize; and it is said that on certain fete days, each blow of the pendulum makes two angels appear, trumpet in hand, followed by the Three Wise Men, who prostrate themselves at the feet of the Virgin Mary. I saw nothing of all that, but only two large black figures striking the hour on the clock with iron clubs.

The Doge's palace is a gloomy building; and the prisons, which are separated from it only by a narrow canal, render the aspect still more depressing.

At Venice one finds merchants from every nation, Jews and Greeks being very numerous. Roustan, who understood the language of the latter, was sought after by the most distinguished among them; and the heads of a Greek family came one day to invite him to visit them at their residence on one of the islands which lie around Venice. Roustan confided to me his desire to accept this invitation, and I was delighted with his proposition that I should accompany him. On our arrival at their island, we were received by our hosts, who were very wealthy merchants, as if we had been old friends. The apartment, a kind of parlor into which we were ushered, not only evinced cultivation and refinement, but great elegance; a large divan extended around the hall, the inlaid floor of which was covered with artistically woven mats. Our hosts were six men who were associated in the same trade. I would have been somewhat embarrassed had not one of them who spoke French conversed with me, while the others talked to Roustan in their native tongue. We were offered coffee, fruits, ices, and pipes; and as I was never fond of smoking, and knew besides the disgust inspired in the Emperor by odors in general, and especially that of tobacco, I refused the pipe, and expressed a fear that my clothes might be scented by being so near the smokers. I thought I perceived that this delicacy lowered me considerably in the esteem of my hosts, notwithstanding which, as we left, they gave us most urgent invitations to repeat our visit, which it was impossible to do, as the Emperor soon after left Venice.

On my return, the Emperor asked me if I had been through the city, what I thought of it, and if I had entered any residences; in fact, what seemed to me worthy of notice. I replied as well as I could; and as his Majesty was just then in a mood for light conversation, spoke to him of our excursion, and visit to the Greek family. The Emperor asked me what these Greeks thought of him. "Sire," replied I, "the one who spoke French seemed entirely devoted to your Majesty, and expressed to me the hope which he and also his brothers entertained, that the Emperor of the French, who had successfully combated the mamelukes in Egypt, might also some day make himself the liberator of Greece."

"Ah, Monsieur Constant," said the Emperor to me, pinching me sharply, "you are meddling with politics."—"Pardon me, Sire, I only repeated what I heard, and it is not astonishing that all the oppressed count on your Majesty's aid. These poor Greeks seem to love their country passionately, and, above all, detest the Turks most cordially."—"That is good," said his Majesty; "but I must first of all attend to my own business. Constant!" continued his Majesty suddenly changing the subject of this conversation with which he had deigned to honor me, and smiling with an ironical air, "what do you think of the appearance of the beautiful Greek women? How many models have you seen worthy of Canova or of David?" I was obliged to admit to his Majesty that what had influenced me most in accepting Roustan's proposition was the hope of seeing a few of these much vaunted beauties, and that I had been cruelly disappointed in not having seen the shadow of a woman. At this frank avowal the Emperor, who had expected it in advance, laughed heartily, and took his revenge on my ears, calling me a libertine: "You do not know then, Monsieur le Drole, that your good friends the Greeks have adopted the customs of those Turks whom they detest so cordially, and like them seclude their wives and daughters in order that they may never appear before bad men like yourself."

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Although the Greek ladies of Venice may be carefully watched by their husbands, they are neither secluded nor guarded in a seraglio like the Turkish women; for during our stay at Venice, a great person spoke to his Majesty of a young and beautiful Greek, who was an enthusiastic admirer of the Emperor of the French. This lady was very ambitious of being received by his Majesty in his private rooms, and although carefully watched by a jealous husband, had found means to send to the Emperor a letter in which she depicted the intensity of her love and admiration. This letter, written with real passion and in an exalted strain, inspired in his Majesty a desire to see and know the author, but it was necessary he should use precautions, for the Emperor was not the man to abuse his power to snatch a woman from her husband; and yet all the care that he took in keeping the affair secret did not prevent her husband from suspecting the plans of his wife, and before it was possible for her to see the Emperor, she was carried away far from Venice, and her prudent husband carefully covered her steps and concealed her flight. When her disappearance was announced to the Emperor: "He is an old fool," said his Majesty, laughing, "who thinks he is strong enough to struggle against his destiny." His Majesty formed no other liaison during our stay at Venice.

Before leaving this city, the Emperor rendered a decree which was received with inexpressible enthusiasm, and added much to the regret which his Majesty's departure caused the inhabitants of Venice. The department of the Adriatic, of which Venice was the chief city, was enlarged in all its maritime coasts, from the town of Aquila as far as Adria. The decree ordered, moreover, that the port should be repaired, the canals deepened and cleaned, the great wall of Palestrina of which I have spoken above, and the jetties in front of it, extended and maintained; that a canal of communication between the arsenal of Venice and the Pass of Mala-Mocco should be dug; and finally that this passage itself should be cleared and deepened sufficiently for vessels of the line of seventy-four tons burthen to pass in and out.

Other articles related to benevolent establishments, the administration of which was given to a kind of council called the Congregation of Charities, and the cession to the city from the royal domain of the island of Saint Christopher, to be used as a general cemetery; for until then here, as in the rest of Italy, they had the pernicious custom of interring the dead in churches. Finally the decree ordered the adoption of a new mode of lighting the beautiful square of Saint Mark, the construction of new quays, gateways, etc.

When we left Venice the Emperor was conducted to the shore by a crowd of the population fully as numerous as that which welcomed his arrival. Treviso, Udine, and Mantua rivaled each other in their eagerness to receive his Majesty in a becoming manner. King Joseph had left the Emperor to return to Naples; but Prince Murat and the vice-king accompanied his Majesty.

The Emperor stopped only two or three days at Milan, and continued his journey. On reaching the plains of Marengo, he found there the entire population of Alexandria awaiting him, and was received by the light of thousands of torches. We passed through Turin without stopping, and on the 30th of December again descended Mont Cenis, and on the evening of the 1st of January arrived at the Tuileries.