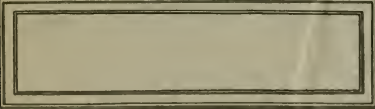


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THE LIFE OF AN EMPRESS
(EUGÉNIE DE MONTIJO)



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The Empress Eugénie.
From a portrait by P. de Sommevran

THE LIFE OF AN EMPRESS

(EUGÉNIE DE MONTIJO)

BY
FRÉDÉRIC LOLIÉE
AUTHOR OF 'WOMEN OF THE SECOND EMPIRE'

ENGLISH VERSION BY BRYAN O'DONNELL

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PREFACE

THESE final pages are written as a necessary conclusion to our trilogy of the women of the Second Empire. Having sketched the pictures of Court and Society with a pen as discreet as possible, although by some it has been termed a frivolous pen, we had to determine in a wider manner the historical bearing of an important personality. Through circumstances, more than by her own will, she was the leading figure among the women of that Court and of that Society, and her position as such was naturally due to her sovereign rank, her influence for good or evil, and the extraordinary series of fateful events in which she took part. This is an opportune time for recalling the career of such a personality, because we have not yet reached the period when gossip and reiterations of a commonplace nature shall run their free course unfettered by the hand of fate.

We dispose of such information and authentic data as enable us to undertake our task without fear. Yet the subject of this study is so near to us, and reasons of reserve and propriety, of historical hesitation, so to speak, have so carefully

shaded it from the lurid light of publicity, that it has all the seduction of novelty. That novelty cannot long endure because narratives, memoirs and similar publications are about to see the light of day.

Our views upon this matter have been shared by others. During the latter part of 1906, two volumes of monographs upon the Empress Eugénie were published in England—compact works, confined to well-known generalities, and so evidently inspired by a desire of complete complacency towards one whose merits are being sung, that the two books seem to be the replicas of the one model.

Does this long and well-filled life offer no more matter of interest than three or four salient points which have been worked out and dwelt upon with the greatest minutia, viz. the family history of the Empress, her coming to Paris, her conquest of a spouse and of a throne, her marriage, her existence at Court, during her regency throughout the war and through her long years of exile? We think that the picture needs retouching so that it may afford a complete and faithful likeness.

Thus we have obtained from Emile Ollivier himself, from his own lips, the solution to the secret of the last act, the key to the painful enigma that was to drag the Empire and France into the mire.

The happy days of the Empire were minutely chronicled in so far as intimate and external

matters were concerned. We have had the opportunity of reading some of its uncut pages. We have studied closely the manuscript notes forgotten at the Tuileries, which recorded the observations of their writer, Bernard Bauer, a Court preacher most eloquent in the pulpit, most persuasive in the drawing-room.

There was no lack of strange physiognomies in this new-born society which had crowded the road to power upon the accession of the Bonapartist *régime*.

Among them were many as complicated and as troubling as that of the Abbé Bauer, formerly dubbed "Monsignor." His existence was made up of a series of evolutions and transformations. Born a German and a Jew, he became a Catholic monk, and carried the word of Christ throughout the Breton villages. He had wished to bury himself in the cloister. He left the cloister. The whilom Carmelite monk, with deep-set eyes and sunken cheeks, became later the cynosure of every woman's eye at brilliant, worldly gatherings, where he displayed all the charms of a fashionable ecclesiastic, playing to the life the part of a red-heeled prelate in the by-gone days of the monarchy. Pure mysticism had so far possessed all the faculties of his soul as to immobilize them in dream and ecstasy. Then the ardent flames of the neophyte flickered under the breath of human passions, growing dull, languid, almost extinct.

Towards the end of his life, when religion or the commerce of human beings had nothing more to teach him, the late Imperial chaplain, henceforth as sceptical as he had been enthusiastic, will throw off his sacerdotal garb ; the late man of the world, pleasant and benevolent in private intercourse, will take the place of the quondam priest by the side of a young, beautiful and intelligent wife, whom he has married in the sere and yellow of his days. To her he will look for warmth and affection, that heretofore had found no place in the rarefied atmosphere in which he moved. When he crossed the threshold of the Tuileries for the first time, he had just returned from Rome, bearing the highest recommendations of the Pontifical Court. The letters in his possession and his fame for eloquence were not the only titles that Bernard Bauer could invoke with Eugénie de Montijo. He was personally known to her, and she remembered his brother, a prince of finance, the Rothschild of Madrid. Bauer was chosen to preach the Lent in 1866 before their Majesties. Public curiosity ran high, for Madrid and Vienna, where he had made his début in the pulpit, treasured recollections of him, which, added to the mysterious legend of his conversion to Catholicism, lent much importance to his name. For a time he was held in the highest favour. The Empress afforded him numerous proofs of her sympathy. The Emperor, whose religious convictions were, to say the least, lukewarm,

could not escape the charm and the power of his word. Above all things, Napoleon admired his zeal in charitable intercession, which urged the priest to multiply his efforts in behalf of the afflicted poor. The Sovereign conceived a scheme of public relief, the administration of which he meant to entrust to Monsignor Bauer. Rome had conferred upon him the insignia of the prelacy, and Paris proclaimed him the ablest and most popular of preachers. It is little wonder that such a vivid imagination as his, so excitable a nature, should have been sorely tried by such a quick succession of incredible successes. A Queen in all the radiancy of youth and glory bowed her head under this sacerdotal hand, whispered her secret fears into the ear of this upstart priest, telling him her most intimate woes, relating her moments of weakness, and seeking from him both light and peace. He directed the minds and consciences of the most beautiful women in the capital. He was the chosen confidant of weakest hearts residing in loveliest frames. At first they repaired as pilgrims to his humble apartment in the Carmelites' convent, and then foregathered in the handsome house he took in the Rue Saint Florentin, close to the Rothschild mansion. His house, whither women went in long processions, was termed by the people "the little church." It was well-nigh impossible to live in such an intoxicating atmosphere without suffering from vertigo. That atmosphere cost him his fortune

and wrecked his future. Imprudences and indiscretions were soon laid at his door. He was too much in evidence, and had lost his former simplicity. His affected manners, acquired in his constant communion with women, were severely criticized; so were the dandyish cut of his cassocks and the erotic perfumes he was wont to use.

The Empress Eugénie had cleverly widened the distance that separated her from the chaplain. She did not discard him completely: this would have been difficult to effect, for had he not been her chosen confessor in her hours of melancholy? She had not forgotten the day when he met her in Scotland, travelling under an official pretext, but in reality seeking to heal her soul of the wounds inflicted upon it by the betrayal of her hearth. Better than any man, Bauer could analyze the slightest impressions of the proud soul of Eugénie. So after years of silence and oblivion, he wished to commit in these scattered notes the minute historical facts of which he had personal knowledge.

In them we have found the echoes of conversations overheard, of unpublished anecdotes, of original reminiscences, and we have culled them from the narrative so that they may serve in their proper place as an ornament to this work and a recreation to its readers. It seems needless to add that, when dealing with the essential and living parts of our subject, we have gone to deeper and more authorized sources of information.

For the last few years by-gone political passions

are analyzed in detail, as have also been the personages of the Second Empire, and it is patent that sincere efforts have been made to correct mistakes, and also to judge the rash acts of the Empress with more harshness than the heavy mistakes of Napoleon. Devoted beings and faithful pens have struggled energetically to refute such imputations. With loyalty most admirable, they have pleaded all the circumstances that could deaden the blow of such accusations. They have failed, however, to secure the acquittal of Eugénie. It is only in the light of accurate facts, considered without the slightest prejudice, that one can fairly apportion the justice or otherwise of her intervention, direct or indirect, in the counsels of a State in which she was but the consort of its Chief. In such light must we tax her with, or relieve her of, all responsibility in causing the armed conflicts of her period.

In this Life of an Empress, in which the narrative of events must bear a strange personal interest from end to end, we have endeavoured to prepare matter born of a healthy appreciation of simple facts, and to relate events as they came to pass, brilliant or disappointing, fortunate or tragic in their bearing.

FRÉDÉRIC LOLIÉE.

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THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE.
12, Calle de la Gracia, Granada.



THE LIFE OF AN EMPRESS

CHAPTER I

The prophecy of a famous French writer, spoken by him in 1834 in the salon of the Countess de Montijo—The daughters of Don Cipriano de Montijo, Eugénie and Francesca—Description of their mother—Details concerning their childhood and education—From Paris to Madrid—Frequent voyages—Death of Count de Montijo—Return to France—Unpublished anecdotes.

It was in 1834, in a Madrid drawing-room to which Stendhal had gained access through his friendship with Mérimée, that the famous man was wont to gambol with a pretty child born under the sky of Granada. Her graceful charms bewitched him. With a bitter smile, the sceptical thinker would often say to the child, as though speaking to himself—

“When you grow up, you will marry the Marquis de Santa Cruz, and I shall think of you no more.”

True, Eugénie de Guzman, Countess of Teba, could aspire to this marquisate. The house from which she sprang basked in the glory of famous recollections, and as she was taught the alphabet, she learnt that among her ancestors was one

Alphonse Perez de Guzman, a hero whose deeds and prowess are sung to this day by the peasants of Andalusia; that Gonzales of Cordova, known as "the great Captain," and Antoine de Leve, the ablest of Charles V's generals, were also among her forefathers. The young lady was not, however, to assume the name of Santa Cruz—a still more surprising fate was in store for her. On the day when her feeble cry was first heard,¹ amid the roars of thunder caused by the cataclysm that rent the soil of Granada and shook the earth, a mysterious sign is said to have appeared above the cradle—a sign betokening the fact that, in order to die a Queen, you need not be born a Princess.

The famous writer who had foretold the future of the youngest daughter of Countess de Montijo was a constant visitor at her house. He came regularly on stated days, took up his quarters in the drawing-room with the two children, Eugénie and Francesca, whose pet name was Pacca, and

¹ In 1867 the following inscription was placed upon the house where she was born: 12 Calle de Gracia, Granada—

"In this house was born the illustrious
Senora dona Eugénia de Guzman
Y Porto-carrero,
now Empress of the French.

The municipality of Granada is conferring an honour upon itself by placing this commemoration stone in recollection of our famous townswoman.

1867."

found in the child-like gaze and the interested, inquisitive expression of their little faces that inspiration which enabled him to unfold to them with eloquence the story of the great deeds of the Empire. He would hold them in awe with improvised warmth as he sketched to them great pictures of conquest, relating episodes both true and legendary, and turning over with them the leaves of the epic of Napoleon. Designedly would he pass over in silence all matters of sad reality, the wholesale slaughter of peoples, the horror of the battle-field, the wailings and gnashings of humanity, caused by dread war. But he painted to them in vivid colours the glorious and flamboyant aspect of these campaigns, to which he was well entitled to bear witness. The children drank in his words, wishing that they might never end, and when the clock recalled the lateness of the hour, Stendhal would tear himself away reluctantly, promising to resume his story soon again. He was in the habit of bringing to them coloured pictures of the different incidents related in the heroic poem, with which he kindled their enthusiasm. Seventy years later Eugénie de Montijo can still show the picture of the battle of Austerlitz, the gift to her of "Monsieur Beyle." Her youth, her years of splendour in married life and the sad period that followed it have not yet dimmed the recollection, deep and tender, of

Stendhal, to whom she still refers as "Monsieur Beyle," just as she did in the days of her girlhood.¹

"We looked forward with great joy to the evenings when he was expected at our mother's house, for we knew that on those days he would charm us with his vivid anecdotes, and that we should be allowed to stay up a little later."

Thus she wrote to Count de Morile. In such ways did the girls imbibe the religion of the Empire, for which their souls had been prepared by the recollections of their father. That religion became the staple food of their minds.

Stendhal was fond of travel. Through Italy and France he wandered, gathering on the way impressions of art and literature. His little friends did not forget him during his absences, and in their graceful, childish epistles they warned him that they would not allow him to forget them. This school-girls' correspondence reveals the great dissimilarity that existed between the two sisters. In the case of the one, political considerations obtain sway—considerations which in after life as a Sovereign were to occupy and preoccupy her mind to excess.² Her sister poured forth im-

¹ Stendhal was a *nom de plume*; Beyle was his real name, under which he was introduced to the Countess de Montijo, and which he had reassumed on the fall of the Empire.

² Her political tendencies are well set forth in the following letter of Eugénie de Guzman, written to Henry Beyle in December 1839—

pressions of youth condign with her age and position. Speaking of others and herself with much frankness, she gave full vent to her sentiments, and unwittingly provided indications precious to history upon the mode of living under the maternal roof of a future Empress and her sister, upon their education and the way in which they spent their holidays. Often she would refer to the void created by the absence of their big friend from the country house, in which they had no other companion, for they desired none.

“SIR,

“I have read your letter with great pleasure, and await the coming of the year 1840 with keen impatience, since that year is to bring you back to us. You ask me what my present occupations are. I am learning to paint, and the rest of the time we work and laugh as usual. Mother still finds time to give us a few lessons, and we endeavour not to forget what we learnt in Paris.

“Spain at present is much agitated; a nation clamours for peace; Marato, the Carlist General, has come over to Christina in consideration of a large handover—surely a mean and petty action. The subordinate officers have followed in his wake. Navarre, Alava, Guipuzcoa and Biscaya have recognized the legitimate queen. It is said that Don Carlos and the Duchess of Bura have fled to France. Cabrera has gone to Jaramon, and 200 horsemen are watching the enemy. In Madrid great festivals have been held in honour of the proclamation of peace, but so often has peace been proclaimed, that I am slow to believe it is yet an accomplished fact. However, every one yearns for peace. Mother, my sister and Miss Flower send their respectful regards, and I remain, Sir, your devoted and affectionate friend,

“E. GUZMAN Y PALAFOX.”

“The young girls that we meet can only speak of dress, or if they change their conversation it is to slander and backbite one another, as is the wont of the sex. I do not like such friends, and when I am in their drawing-rooms, I only open my mouth to wish them good-day and good-bye.”

Pacca and Eugénie urged Stendhal to return to Madrid. At that time the attention of Europe was riveted upon a great event—the translation to Paris of Napoleon’s ashes. How they yearned to witness this great function in the city that they knew, and of which Eugénie wrote at length to Prosper Mérimée, another intimate friend of her mother! In a letter to the sapient curator of the British Museum, Mérimée described his saunters along the Boulevard with the little Spanish girl of five or six years of age. At length he wrote about this child, ingenuous and bewitching, wondering what would become of the sprightly mite, who bullied him and led him to the pastry-cook’s as she would a victim to the altar.

Eugénie and Francesca were the daughters of Don Cipriano de Portocarrero, who served in the armies of Napoleon, became Count of Teba in 1814, was grievously wounded in the battle of Salamanca, and was made Senator of Spain at the end of the reign of Ferdinand VII. He was also Marquis of Ardales and Grandee of Spain.

Their mother, Marie Manuela de Kirkpatrick y

Grivegnée, Countess of Teba and later of Montijo, occupied a brilliant social position. She was the most striking of three daughters, owing to the brilliancy of her eyes, the vivacity of her manner, and the gracefulness of her deportment. Her father was a Scotch merchant, one William Kirkpatrick, of Malaga, where his wine and fruit business did not cast a veil of oblivion upon his lineal parentage with the ancient Barons of Closeburn. Nay, more, a family tradition went so far as to claim the giant Finn Mac-Cual, king of the Fenians, as an ancestor of William Kirkpatrick. So when the Malaga merchant gives his daughter to a Spanish nobleman, who, like his fellow-peers, has more full titles than ducats, he can say to him, "You trace your ancestry to Alphonse XI, but I go back to Robert Bruce and Finn Mac-Cual, so I am sure His Majesty will be satisfied." This pious expression of opinion was repeated to Ferdinand VII. Genealogical documents extolling the virtues of the Kirkpatricks, and hailing from the archives of Edinburgh, were submitted to the consideration of His Majesty.

"It is our royal pleasure," said he, "to allow this worthy nobleman to marry the daughter of Fingal."

Count de Montijo, brother of Cyprien, the prospective bridegroom, did not share his political opinions or his feelings of devotion towards

France. A man of ungovernable temper, who had been christened the Spanish Mirabeau, he severely criticized the contemplated marriage, which, he said, would be a *mésalliance* for the Guzman family. His remonstrances were of no avail. Marie Manuela de Kirkpatrick became the Countess of Teba, and shortly afterwards her sister married the Count of Cabarrus.

The marriage took place on December 15, 1817. The following year George Ticknor, an American writer of much talent, said of the Countess of Teba, "She is without a doubt the most cultivated and intelligent woman in Spain."

Private reasons, another name for family troubles in married life, caused their departure from Malaga for Granada, where the young couple took up their abode in the most fashionable quarter of the town. There the spritely Malageña soon became the cynosure of every eye, the centre of attraction.

Her beauty was both regular and striking. She was attractive mainly through that amenity so often found among Spanish women. She did not go through the period of human passions without causing a certain turmoil. In Madrid, indiscreet inquiries were made concerning the choice and nature of her sentiments, with the result that risky inductions and daring epilogues were indulged in, as to the extent of the intimacy

exhibited by her with some of her followers, notably the Duke of Ossuna, who, later on, sought her second daughter in marriage. The Count de Lagrené, late French Ambassador to China, and Louis de Viel-Castel were also said to be among her elect. And while we are upon this chapter, we note that a certain famous name in England was freely linked to hers by the gossipers of the day. Truth to tell, she courted slander and laid herself open to its darts by the external expansion of her feelings and the intimacy she displayed in her relations towards certain friends. Her honour as a spouse and a mother was somewhat besmirched. Perusers of private documents and diligent archive compilers went so far as to cast a doubt upon the legitimacy of her daughter Eugénie, whose certificate of birth will be found in the Appendix.

The question raised about Eugénie's birth drives one's memory back to the countless number of equivocal births that occurred in the family of Bonaparte, to which she was to become allied.

It was sought to prove¹ that the document concerning the births of the future Empress of the French and the future Duchess of Alba were

¹ I do not think the publication of this certificate necessary. It really conveys nothing different from any other certificate of birth. The value of the document means much to the living, but could only be vouchsafed for by the dead.—*Translator's note.*

spurious, and related in reality to two daughters of the Countess of Montijo who had died in their cradles. It was urged that the certificates had been wilfully post-dated, and that Eugénie was twenty-nine, and not twenty-seven, when she married. There were daring allegations brought against the Duke of Ossuna, whom the Countess had favoured not wisely but too well, as had done other ladies of the Court. It was even freely stated that the Countess of Montijo was not the mother of Eugénie and Pacca; that they were the daughters of Queen Christina of Spain, sister of the Duchess de Berry, and grand-niece of Marie Antoinette, and that they were born before her marriage with Ferdinand VII. Proofs of such assertions were lacking, but still the conviction obtained and grew that Madame de Montijo was not possessed of unassailable virtue.

After the Paris events of 1830, the Count and Countess of Montijo decided to reside in the French capital, where their friendship with Mérimée afforded them valuable social relations among the *élite* of society, with such families as the Labordes and Delesserts.

They did not display much style until the death, in 1834, of Don Eugénio, the head of the family, from whom Cipriano inherited the wealth and property of the Montijos.

This accession to wealth had no effect upon the

course chosen by him in the bringing up of his daughters.

A wise and far-seeing man, he wished them brought up with dignity and simplicity, and with the knowledge that fate holds cruel awakenings in store for us all. His wife was endowed with less philosophy and more ambition. Full of energy, and intent upon carrying out her plans, she made up her mind that her daughters should never become familiar with isolation born of poverty. She was not the woman to neglect the necessary means for raising her own daughters to the topmost rung of the ladder—she who on all occasions displayed her strong will in obtaining for her friends, despite all obstacles, the promotion and preferment they yearned for. She was devoured by that fever of restlessness which whips the imagination and shatters the nerves. She had both brains and courage, attributes without which ambitious desires can never be satisfied. “You have accustomed me to believe,” wrote Mérimée, “that all must be accomplished which you wish to be accomplished.”

She possessed that optimistic faith which enables all enterprising characters to reach their goal. This was proved when the death of her husband afforded a free course to her activity. Then she took her place in the forefront of Madrid society, commingling pleasure and politics, endeavouring

to play a part through the divisions and subdivisions of political parties, and holding countless receptions, balls and festivities in her mansion of Carabanchel. When the Countess of Montijo had provided her own daughters with the most exalted stations in life, she continued until her death this life of ceaseless energy, applying her zeal to marrying and remarrying couples.¹

For the nonce she did not exercise the princely authority which one day she was to wield in her palace of Liria or at Carabanchel. She resided in her Paris apartment on a modest footing, devoting her whole time to her daughters. Mérimée was a constant visitor. He was attracted by his devotion to the mother and his affection for the child Eugénie, whose mind he loved to shape and fashion. He gave her lessons in French, and educated her by conversation. With paternal solicitude, added to the curiosity of the thinker, he watched the first efforts of a child's soul, analyzing them, turning them to the best advantage.

The two sisters had become indispensable to him, and separation from them, though only temporary, caused him much pain. They were then thirteen and fourteen respectively, having reached that interesting age when the woman begins to peep through the eyes of the child. He

¹ Augustin Filon, *Mérimée*, Book III.

witnessed their departure with sadness when their father fell ill in Madrid—it was in 1839, and this date remained engraved upon his memory. He had accompanied them to the coach which bore them away across the Pyrénées, and it was with difficulty that he refrained from following them to Madrid. He made them promise to write to him regularly, and laid a similar embargo upon Miss Flower. He wrote to the mother, saying, “Having taken such precautions, I truly hope I may receive a letter.” It was not long forthcoming, upon lined paper, in the handwriting of Eugénie. She wrote it at Oléron, just before crossing the frontier.

Years rolled by. Paris society had resumed possession of Madame de Montijo and her daughters, now grown up.

The Countess was fond of travelling, and visited most of the Continent, spending her time between Paris and London, where Eugénie had studied. In summer she frequented seaside or health resorts. In July 1832 the town of Eaux-Bonnes was set agog by the arrival of the Montijos. The charming personality of Eugénie scored an immediate triumph; all the men in the place fell at her feet and worshipped her. The women were unanimous in stating that they had never seen so sweet or charming a smile as hers. Such a verdict from women concerning the advantages

of another woman is surely the rarest thing in the world.

The name of Mademoiselle de Montijo was on every lip. The quaintness of her ways, her somewhat bold originality of behaviour, due, no doubt, to her cosmopolitan education, as well as her charitable nature, which urged her to relieve suffering and pain around her—these and other causes excited curiosity and awakened in her behalf the sympathy of all. This was during the summer that preceded the proclamation of the Empire. Bernard Bauer, the future preacher of the Tuileries, was also at Eaux-Bonnes. His recollection of the graceful young Spaniard was committed by him to his notes, which came into my hands at his death. So keen and full was that recollection, that the years which intervened between his first meeting with Eugénie and his demise did not slow the pulse of his enthusiasm. In his conception she remained radiantly beautiful.

The future Empress pursued her moral and physical exercises with the utmost energy. Excursions on foot and on horseback through the picturesque valleys and o'er the majestic crests of the Pyrénées, balls and parties, were all indulged in with that gusto born of youth; and in the short intervals between her pursuits of pleasure she threw herself whole-hearted into the work of charity amid her surroundings.

Each morning a touching sight could be witnessed at the hall door of the hotel where the Countess and her daughters resided. There foregathered the halt and helpless of the countryside, awaiting the advent of the beautiful fairy ; daily did their numbers increase, for all who were in want had heard of her beneficence and sought to partake of it. From the furthestmost villages came the disinherited in quest of their daily share of this booty of benevolence. An old blind man, crippled and helpless, was the only pariah who could not reach this fountain of relief. His distress became known to the providential dispenser, and on the day of her departure from Eaux-Bonnes she stopped her carriage at the door of the wretched hut, entered, and handed to the poor old human wreck the wherewithal he sadly needed. Moved by gratitude, this simple-minded man exclaimed, " May God reward you according to your deserts ; may God make you Queen." Such legends are always coined around a royal cradle, or around a cradle that contains the making of history. This prophecy, however, was surely fulfilled, and in the very country, in the very district, in which it was made, if ever it was made.

But for the nonce she could hardly expect to see it realized in France by the means of a French alliance. Her ambition was none the less kindled by the words of the blind man.

A true Spaniard as she is to this day, the sympathies of Eugénie towards France were vague, ill-defined, and, if anything, they leaned towards the legitimist party. She did not hide her feelings in the matter, as is proved by an anecdote related by Bernard Bauer. One morning she witnessed a running race between French and Spanish Basques. The French runner had reached the goal and won the prize, and the Spanish lady, furious at the defeat of her fellow-countryman, called him over and spoke harsh words to him. Then with the end of her umbrella she scattered a little mound of stones that had been gathered by the road-makers. "What are you doing?" inquired Bauer. To which she gave reply, "I am demolishing France to avenge the defeat of Spain."

The family of Montijo, whose coat-of-arms was emblazoned with French, English and Spanish quarters, had preserved family ties in France.¹

¹ Her Spanish genealogy was always a source of pride to the Empress, and in this feeling she was ever encouraged by Napoleon, who, having married the granddaughter of Kirkpatrick, and daughter of Cipriano de Portocarrero, was anxious to create the impression that she came of as good a stock as a princess of the blood.

Her sister, the Duchess of Alba, was every whit as Spanish in this. On the occasion of the Queen of England's visit, her mother and herself were bidden take inferior precedence in the procession. She exclaimed, "I would sooner go to make lint and dress the wounds of Crimean soldiers. I am the Duchess of Alba, and that title yields precedence to none."

There was a certain cousinship between the Montijos and the de Lesseps.¹ This was well known in Royalist circles to which they were admitted, and the friends of the Duc de La Rochefoucauld long remembered the handsome Countess of Teba, whose presence they often witnessed at the country parties given by this great nobleman on his estate of la Vallée-aux-Loups.

Madame de Montijo and her daughters soon made their mark in the social set, whose interest and curiosity were somewhat whipped by their foreign extraction and their somewhat showy appearance. The personal charm and aristocratic demeanour of Eugénie singled her out from the first, and she compelled attention and commanded sympathy by the intonation of her voice, her manners and her dignified deportment.

She was still absorbed by dreams of greatness, and by the conviction that she was destined to play a leading part upon the world's stage. Notwithstanding her sojourns in France, she conceived

¹ One Henry de Grivegnée settled in Spain at an early age and took up his residence at Malaga, where he married one Doña Antonia de Gallegos, by whom he had two daughters. The one, François, married William Kirkpatrick, grandfather of the future Empress, and the other, Kathleen, became the wife of Matthieu de Lesseps, father of Ferdinand. Madame de Lesseps died on January 27, 1853, three days before the marriage of Napoleon and Eugénie. Her leanings towards the Marquis d'Alcanizes gave food to gossipers. Later he became Duke of Sesto and the husband of the Duchess de Morny.

the idea that she was doomed to reign as a woman in Madrid. Her first ambition was to bear the title of Duchess of Alba, but her sister forestalled her. Too proud to betray her disappointment, Eugénie forthwith left Madrid. She spent some time at Bordeaux, and in the ancient city of Aquitaine she prayed in beautiful churches and danced at brilliant gatherings. The sorrow of the young girl was soon dissipated. A young girl's first love is often but her last doll! Noblemen of high birth, such as the Marquis de Dampierre and Count Bryas, organized hunting-parties in her honour, and at such meetings she invariably led the field across country, accomplishing many daring feats of horsemanship. Songs of praise were sung about this Amazon, who after a day's hunting had ridden her horse up the grand staircase to the first floor of a château. One night, at an official dinner given at Cognac, she sat beside a very worldly abbé, whose name, Boudinet, was somewhat plebeian, a fact that did not prevent him from frequenting drawing-rooms with much more zest than churches. He had not spared words of adulation, because, a practised worshipper of woman, he knew that they are easy preys to flattery. Wishing to prolong his insidious suit, he had resort to the somewhat common practice of reading the lady's hand.

“Great goodness,” he exclaimed, “I see a crown in your hand!”

“A Duchess’s crown, Abbé?”

“No, one more brilliant and resplendent.”

“Oh, speak, sir—speak.”

“I see an Imperial crown in your hand.”

The listeners lavished compliments upon the future Empress. Did the romantic nature and superstitious tendencies of Eugénie lead her to take this prophecy in earnest? We know not. The fact remains that she remembered it well when later on in Paris she neglected no opportunity of meeting the Emperor by the merest chance. The merest chances were always well ordained.

CHAPTER II

Early ambitions of Eugénie de Montijo—Plans conceived after the meeting of Louis Napoleon and the Countess of Teba—The Compiègne hunt meetings—Society life—Characteristic anecdotes—The Emperor's hesitancy in proposing marriage—Vicissitudes and apprehensions of Eugénie preceding the issue of this contest between ambition and love—Official declaration of the betrothal—Preliminary arrangements—The marriage ceremony.

EUGÉNIE DE MONTIJO had proved the worth of her weapons in more than one encounter. Was Paris to witness her decisive victory in the field of love? It was time to give stability by means of marriage to the vague aspirations of the young girl. Nay, it was urgent to do so as weeks and months rolled by. She had reached her twenty-fifth year, a critical age in woman, at which matrimonial conclusions cannot be delayed without increasing peril.

While she scanned the horizon, several offers had come her way. At one time her friends were almost certain that she would marry the son of a wealthy banker of Spanish origin. Her mother and she were received by his parents in the greatest intimacy, and the love of Count Aguado

for his fair compatriot was known to all. The date of the nuptial ceremony was almost mentioned, but suddenly this, like other projects of marriage, vanished into thin air. A powerful rival was to dispel the fond dreams of Aguado. The day was not far off when the discarded lover had to bemoan his fate in tearful tones to sympathetic hearers, who made merry of him in his absence.

The Duke of Ossuna, Spanish Ambassador to Paris, was also a serious candidate, for he endeavoured to kindle the hymeneal torch, thus perpetuating in the daughter the great love he had conceived for her mother. Woman-like, Eugénie de Montijo played fast and loose with this family friend, one day encouraging him, the next day rebutting his advances, and leaving in doubt all those who took an interest in his fate. She hesitated to accept his hand, as if a mysterious warning bade her await some strange surprise of destiny.

Proud and self-possessed, she walked through the drawing-rooms of Paris like a queen, while carefully watching the course of events and the promotion of ambitious friends. In the aristocratic society in which she had taken root, the sayings and doings of the Prince-President Louis Napoléon were the subject of frequent conversation. It is needless to say that he was not spoken of as a saint, to whom one prays with devotion.

It was considered good form in this monarchical circle to riddle his effigy with contemptuous darts, and to apply to him such terms as "half-caste" créole, "Dutchman"—so many allusions to the somewhat complicated question of his birth. Mademoiselle de Montijo had often smiled at these quips. Without taking part in such slanderous conversations, she evinced no displeasure at hearing them. Her friend Mérimée did not tend to create in her mind a better impression of Napoleon, the new chief of the State in France, of whom he was wont to speak as "our poor President." Far-seeing though he was, he had not diagnosed the true possibilities of this adventurer, whom the Orleanists in their myopia looked upon as a mere political figure-head, behind whom would rise in due time the real master, the true maker of history. But Eugénie had not grown up in vain in the admiring atmosphere of the Imperial legion. Though in her speech she adhered to legitimist views, her masters, Stendhal and Mérimée, had so often tickled her childish ear with the narrative of the great deeds accomplished by the first Bonaparte, that she could not remain indifferent to the success and undertakings of the one who bore his name. In December, when the struggle was at its height, she had written an enthusiastic letter to the Pretender, to whom she offered her all in case he should fail.

His heart, which had often spoken to him of her, now throbbed with gratitude.

Napoleon's discerning gaze had been attracted by her on the occasion of their first meeting in the drawing-room of his handsome cousin the Princess Mathilde.

"Who is she?" he asked of her, pointing to the beautiful girl, engaged in animated conversation, and surrounded by a host of admirers.

"A Mademoiselle de Montijo, a foreigner, a newcomer from Andalusia."

"I would like to be introduced to her."

At dinner the next day he seemed absorbed by her, and gossip says that it was not long before he sought her in the modest apartment of her mother, at No. 12 Place Vendôme; but on that occasion he exhibited youthful buoyancy and indiscretion, which brought forth from Eugénie the caustic warning—

"After marriage, please, Prince."

But what is the real value of all these hearsays? The brutal fact is that Napoleon did not look upon Mademoiselle de Montijo as his predestined bride, but as a possible favourite. This at least was his impression when he began his suit, but he soon discovered his mistake. The nature of his early feelings towards her was frankly set forth in a letter to Prince Jérôme Bonaparte, who had also indulged in amorous propensities towards the

beautiful Spaniard, whom eventually he came to loathe. He had confessed his love for her to his cousin, who wrote the following cutting reply: "It is quite natural and proper to love Mademoiselle de Montijo, but of course one cannot marry her."

It is possible that later Louis Napoleon endeavoured to justify this hasty opinion by a personal experiment, to the inception of which he made events subservient. The newly-chosen object of his affections was invited to the house-parties at Fontainebleau, where he pressed his suit in the presence of all. His vivid imagination was easily kindled by the attraction of feminine charms. He always followed his inclinations with a romantic fervour that made him look upon women as angels sent from heaven. He became absorbed by his love for the foreigner, whose graceful bearing on horseback and whose subtle desire to please him wrought havoc in his soul. Indiscretions of history teach us that many a favourite and many a left-hand queen have had to thank the propitious opportunities of the hunting-field for their exalted if somewhat irregular positions. As graceful and enticing Amazons, they came under the notice of their masters in break-neck runs across country, appearing and disappearing in the thickets in the woods, displaying skill and valour, and adding a note of charm to the harmony of the



EUGÉNIE DE MONTIJO
In Spanish Costume.



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surroundings. Subdued by so much grace, their masters became their slaves. Thus did Madame de Pompadour secure her victory over the King in the forest of Sénart, the meeting-place of the royal hunt. There she kindled his curiosity, tempting him with the most elegant and daring costumes, and playing before him with the famous fan upon which Henry IV was depicted at the feet of Gabrielle. An enchanting Diana, she rode in and out amid the horses and the hounds. At other times she drove in a pink phaeton, clad in azure ; or in an azure phaeton, wearing a graceful gown of pink. Her previsions were fully realized and her object achieved. The King saw her, noticed her, and soon she became the chosen one.

The great hunting scenes of Compiègne and Fontainebleau afforded Eugénie de Montijo ample scope for securing a more complete and legitimate victory than that won by Pompadour.

Gossip was soon rife, and indiscreet prophecies were vouchsafed as to the duration of Eugénie's resistance, and the price that she would obtain for a double victory. The terrible old analyst, Viel Castel, committed the following malevolent reflection to his memoirs—

“Since her visit to Fontainebleau, Mademoiselle de Montijo, a fair young Spaniard of high birth, has become the object of the Prince's closest attention. What will my brother Louis say—

he who was her mother's lover, and is still her friend?"

Eugénie was well to the fore at all social functions, where she was observed and keenly criticized. The essential features of her nature consisted of an intellectual culture which, if somewhat limited, could pass muster so long as it was not too deeply sifted, and of feelings more positive than sentimental, though she displayed a certain tendency towards chivalrous and religious shibboleths. Those who met her in society refused to recognize in her mental capabilities above the average, nor did they admit that she was possessed of much knowledge or endowed with much intelligence. Notwithstanding, it could not be denied that she exhibited qualities of tact and prudence quite remarkable, and applied them to maturing her hopes and projects, leaving nothing to chance, and curbing herself in the use of caustic and ill-measured terms which so often jeopardize the worthiest causes. She would stay the word upon her lips in due time to avoid a mistake.

During her early acquaintance with the Prince-President, when his demonstrations of affection were in the preliminary stage, she was present one day at a party given in the reception-rooms of an embassy. Tongues wagged concerning Napoleon's courtship towards her and the imminent

advent of the Empire. One of the guests seated beside her tried to whisper a few words to her upon the subject which was to provide conversation to all upon the morrow. She shrugged her pretty shoulders, and said, "All this is nonsense, idle talk, a stupid fancy." But things pursued their even course. The last trees of liberty had been cut down. The people, thirsting for authority, had taken unto themselves a master. Louis Napoleon was Emperor of the French and still the slave of Eugénie de Montijo. Around him, among his Court and following, in the gossip of drawing-rooms and boudoirs, a burning question still held sway: "Would Montijo yield to his amorous caprice, or, better advised concerning her future, would she offer a virtuous and politic defence of herself?" Seldom was such an opportunity afforded to the espionage and jealousies of a whole Court.

When stung by the dart of a sentimental adventure, Napoleon soon lost his head, and fell a victim to his intense passion. He had not, however, yet contemplated marriage as a means to achieve the end he hoped for. Between this end and the reward it was to receive, between an ephemeral crown of orange blossom and the crown of an empress, given in exchange for the achievement of his purpose, the proportions appeared to him quite unequal. At first he had only aspired

to the fulfilment of his own desire, without fixing the limits of his gratitude. But with that intuitive knowledge of the heart of man with which the youngest, purest and simplest maiden is endowed, with a skill and courage the value of which was known to her, thanks to her intelligence, Eugénie smiled and broke away, to come again with encouraging graces and lay down her hard-and-fast conditions. Every detail of this pitched battle between love and ambition was closely analyzed by the onlookers. The more far-seeing among them began to court Montijo. They sought her influence, entreating of her to plead with the Emperor in their behalf, as though they had no doubt concerning her power over him. She was the rising sun of the day, and events worked in her favour.

At Court it was the unanimous wish that the Emperor should marry, a wish expressed to him in diverse ways as being the wish of the whole country. Troplong, President of the Senate, was the first to give public expression to the wish of the nation (in such cases the wish of the nation is synonymous with that of the interested servants of the existing *régime*). France yearned for the day when Napoleon would take unto himself a companion who would help to make his reign more magnificent, and ensure the dynastic stability that all hoped for.

Such advice was given to him the more confidently as it was an open secret that His Majesty was thinking very seriously about marriage. He was less reserved upon the chapter of sentiment than upon that of politics, and more than once he had unfolded his intentions to those around him who could serve them.

He had carefully avoided all mention of them to his ambitious cousin Jérôme, who lived in constant dread of seeing his chances of inheritance dashed to the ground by the marriage of the Emperor. But he confided his matrimonial aspirations to Morny, Persigny, and to his relative and high dignitary, Count Tascher de la Pagerie, who had been accredited to various foreign Courts, and who was best acquainted with the difficulties that beset Napoleon's views abroad. These difficulties were almost insuperable in the case of the German Princesses, such as Queen Elizabeth of Prussia, the Archduchess Sophia of Austria, or Queen Mary of Saxony.

Though Napoleon had waited long with an amount of patience which certain *liaisons* made quite endurable, he still caressed fond hymeneal hopes. Mathilde, his cousin and the friend of his childhood, had not had the firstfruits of his love. As early as June 1834 his affection had been directed towards the Duchess of Padua. "You will cause me great pleasure," he wrote on the 5th

of that month, to his father, Count de Saint-Leu, ex-King of Holland, "if you will give me your advice upon this projected marriage, although I am in no hurry to contract matrimony." The following year efforts were again made to provide the Prince with a consort. He was then twenty-seven, and resided at Arenenberg. It was rumoured, with little foundation, however, that he was to marry Queen Maria of Portugal, and then came the project of his alliance with Mathilde—a project that was not realized owing to fortuitous circumstances. After his escape to the British shore he fell in love with a charming young English girl, Miss Emmy Rowles, who lived with her brother-in-law at Camden House, Chislehurst, the very house in which Napoleon was doomed to die twenty-six years afterwards. His marriage with her was broken off at the last moment because Miss Rowles became aware of his *liaison* with Miss Howard.

From the day on which he was elected to the Presidency by the enthusiastic votes of a frenzied people, the scope of his ambitions became much wider. Pending the possibility of their realization, he put into practice the advice given after the taking of Amiens by the first Napoleon to the Archbishop of Malines, when he sent him as Ambassador to London—

“Above all, do not fail to give good dinners, and take great care of the women.”

Imbued with the principles of this easy and pleasant policy, he put them into practice. At the cost of the national Treasury, he gave countless dinners and receptions, over which his cousin Mathilde presided with perfect grace and ease. To such gatherings were bidden the *élite* of the great State bodies—the Institute, the Army, the world of Finance and Fine Arts. The beauty of the scene was enhanced by the presence of the most graceful women in Europe. Without the walls of the Tuileries ironical prophets were wont to say concerning these festivals and the one who ordained them, “He is making the Republic dance, awaiting the day when he will compel it to hop.”

At this period the phlegmatic Napoleon enjoyed life. The Palace of the Elysée, which he occupied as the ante-room to the Tuileries, afforded him complete freedom, for there he lived untrammelled by etiquette or convention. But the pursuit of pleasure and levity did not dim his views upon an alliance worthy of his future. He had reached the summit of power, and this urged him to contract a great alliance that would flatter his *amour propre* and spur his ends.¹ As he

¹ The Duke of Rianzas, who was on intimate terms with the future host of the Tuileries, undertook to bring about his

was only yet a Prince-President, he trained his diplomatic guns upon Spain.

After the Coup d'État, energetic efforts had been made in the chancelleries of Madrid, London and other capitals, with a view to obtaining the hand of a princess of the blood. Napoleon's overtures were received with coldness, even when as a last resource his attentions were turned to the daughter of a prince without crown or subjects, Prince Wasa, the disinherited heir to the throne of Sweden, a monarch in exile wandering on the highways and through the hostleries of Europe. Nobody believed that power could endure which had been obtained by surprise, violence and revolution. His mysterious matrimonial campaigns were met with polite refusals. The reigning families seemed to have unanimously decided to place a sort of matrimonial interdict upon the new Emperor.

Keenly nettled by this contempt, which was wrapt up in Court formulæ, and by the thinly-veiled hostility displayed towards him, deceived in his reckonings, and, moreover, much in love, Napoleon

marriage with the Infanta Maria Christina, sixth child and fourth daughter of Don François de Paul, and sister-in-law of Queen Isabel II. She was just seventeen, plain, and moderately well off. There was no official effort made to seek her hand, and Spain was not called upon to accept an offer or to reject it.

decided to follow the dictates of his heart. The mere mention of a certain name caused many comments. Could a love-match be effected in the case of one who had reached sovereign power? Could such a thing occur, save in fairy tales?

The course of events continued untrammelled. Hearsays, anecdotes and small tattle were repeated from mouth to mouth. Every one related the well-known saying of Eugénie, "that the only way to her bedroom was through a well-lit church," and also the words spoken at a card-table at Compiègne and the answer of Mademoiselle de Montijo, her victorious smile when she picked up the trump card in the presence of the Prince, an act interpreted as the triumph of will over the capriciousness of fate; and the haughty answer given on the morrow to the insulting and impudent observations of Madame Fortoul, by which she expressed her indignation at "a questionable stranger" being granted precedence over her, the wife of the Home Secretary.

Then, again, the graceful incident that occurred at the hunt meeting in the forest, when the Emperor plaited a crown of leaves and placed it on her brow, saying, "Wear this until the other one is ready." They also related that one evening, while admiring the Crown jewels, whose rays reflected many centuries of the

monarchy's greatness, he had taken up the diadem and placed it upon the head of the girl he loved. This romantic scene, which occurred in the Tuileries on the 31st December, 1832, was not to be forgotten in history.

Then the sacramental word fell from the lips of Napoleon III. He had indeed spoken it to her, Eugénie de Montijo, Countess of Teba. On hearing it, she seemed dazed and overjoyed. The thought of the splendours laid at her feet, but not originally meant for her, suddenly overcame her. The interests of France and of the Emperor himself were far more important than her own. She asked him to reflect upon this, to consult and study higher political reasons of State, to weigh all pros and cons, to elicit the judgment of his people and that of the world. She added that if he thought fit to maintain his generous offer, she conjured of him to calm the scruples of her mother, so full of zeal and devotion to the glory of the Emperor. Sweetly, softly, ingeniously, she begged of him to write himself to the Countess of Montijo, asking her not to consider as an insuperable hindrance the distance existing between the throne and the object of his love. In a word, he was to obtain her consent to their marriage.

His eyes were blindfolded by his great passion ; he allowed her to hold his hand while he wrote

the coveted letter,¹ and before long the mother of Eugénie was the proud possessor of a document from the contents of which there could be no appeal. On the 1st January, 1853, an equerry brought Napoleon's official request to Madame de Montijo. All was joy in the Spanish household, but joy commingled with that acute impression produced by excessive happiness, that instinctive fear of the sudden awakening from too joyful a dream. Moved by fear and joy, the mother wrote the feelings of her heart to the Marquis de Rochelambert, late French Minister in Berlin—

“ I don't know if I should laugh or cry. Many mothers who to-day envy me could not explain the cause of my tears. Eugénie is about to become Queen of France, but I cannot help thinking that queens know but little joy. Do what I may, I am obsessed by the recollection of Marie Antoinette, and I ask myself in dread if my poor child will not some day meet with a similar fate.”

The Royal martyr alluded to by Madame de Montijo, the happy and beloved Princess whose misfortunes began on the day that the Royal circle touched her forehead, was the historical ideal religiously worshipped by Eugénie. But

¹ The Montijo Palace possesses a collection of archives in which this letter of Napoleon is catalogued among the “curiosities” and “rare documents.”

her mind was too full of joy just then to harbour any thoughts of sadness ; her eyes, illumined by the light of gaiety and fond hope, could not foresee the weird fatality that hung about the Palace of the Tuileries, and was so nefarious to most of the princesses and queens who entered its portal. She only thought of the morrow, and was busily engaged in apprising all her friends of her good fortune. Shortly before the public announcement of her betrothal, she had registered a solemn vow with several young girls in her *entourage* to the effect that whichever of them would first secure a high social position must look after all the others during the rest of their lives. It was now her duty to tell them that she was about to become an Empress.

The de Laborde family heard the happy news before it became public property. It was borne to the little house at Passy by Eugénie herself. That home contained the object of her affection, Madame de Nadaillac, daughter of Countess de Laborde.¹ The happy tidings were forthwith carried to the Opéra, to Madame Aguado's box,

¹ The intimate circle of the de Labordes consisted of Princess Mathilde, Viscount de Noailles, the Duchess of Galliera, the Count and Countess Phillippe de Segur, the wife of Marshal de Castellane, the Duke and Duchess de Broglie, Mérimée, Thiers, Xavier, Doudan, the Duke de Richelieu, General de Girardin, Emile de Girardin, Marshal Suchet's wife, and hosts of diplomatists.

by Charles Bocher, one of the intimate friends of the household. His information was received with indignant protest. Could it be possible that the Emperor would commit such a folly? Whoever spread such a rumour must indeed be an enemy of the Government, an Orleanist, not to say a vile calumniator.

Everything was settled, and of this there were abundant signs, yet there were some who still believed that the whole thing was a mere flirtation with no definite consequences. Such folk could not possibly make up their minds to the inevitable. Here is a strange anecdote related to me by an eye-witness of the occurrence. It throws a curious light upon the opinion that prevailed at the time.

The intentions of the Emperor were about to be publicly proclaimed. By his order, apartments were being prepared at the Elysée for the reception of the Montijo family, and tongues wagged accordingly. Still conjectures ran riot. Morny, who knew the formal intentions of his brother and master, and who knew from past experience that it was as difficult to change his mind as to make him adopt a course of action, gave a great dinner in honour of the future Sovereign, thus endeavouring to forestall events.

The wives of all those who were in high station and in favour were bidden to the feast. Among them was Madame Walewska, whose husband,

Ambassador in London, had been instructed to feel the pulse of foreign Courts upon the subject of a princely alliance. She was a woman of high education and intellect, and was one of the first to be apprised of the coming surprise. This knowledge had not been imparted to the other guests, who, on hearing that the arrival of Madame de Montijo and her daughters was awaited before dinner could be served, assumed airs of injured dignity. At last they came, and Morny rushed to meet them with eagerness so palpable that the dowagers blushed for him behind their fans. Madame de Fortoul and Madame Ducos, the wife of the Minister of Marine, suffered a painful shock indeed. The latter, who afterwards humbly and repeatedly sought the honour of becoming the nurse of the Prince Imperial, was the more shocked of the two. Eugénie made her *entrée* with graceful, natural ease. She wore a charming and simple toilette. As Madame Walewska, whose training in diplomacy had borne full fruit, came to greet the young Countess, saying, "I congratulate you, madame, upon the brilliant future in store for you," the other ladies present stared at the young stranger as if suffering from a personal injury. A pretty comedy for those who knew the secret, that on the following day was to be the common talk of all.

Opinions were divided at Court upon the intentions of the Chief of the State, pending the knowledge that his decision was irrevocable. The more ardent and adventurous partisans were urged by their own youth and loving dispositions to bow to the triumph of Mademoiselle de Montijo's charms. They did not admit that much advantage would have accrued to the Emperor of France from an alliance with a high-born Princess, perhaps cantankerous and very ugly, who might have brought to him as a dowry fragile alliances, coupled with invincible prejudices. They considered he was well advised to take unto himself the one whom his heart had spontaneously chosen. Politicians and logicians took a very different view of the possible results of such a dangerous step. Drouyn de Lhuys, who presided at the Foreign Office, and other members of the Council offered some objections when informed by Napoleon of his intentions. They were about to give him their reasons for so doing, and to discourse at length with ample proofs upon the drawbacks and perils attending such a *mésalliance*, but the Emperor soon guillotined their admonitions. "Gentlemen," he declared in calm tones of triumph, which admitted of no reply, "you need make no observations, nor need you discuss the matter. This marriage I have decided upon, and it shall take place." After that they came to the

conclusion that comment was useless, and would possibly deprive them of an invitation to the ceremony. The political opponents of Napoleon, legitimists and Orleanists, were not silenced by the same motives of submission. On the contrary, they seized the opportunity red-hot of indulging themselves in quips and railleries that relieved their sufferings. From drawing-room to drawing-room they hawked the ironical saying of Thiers, which gave one to understand that the sojourn of the Imperial couple at the Tuileries would be short-lived. "The Emperor has always struck me as a man of wit and ability," he said. "To-day I recognize his foresight, because he has won over the good-will of the Grandees of Spain."

The family of Louis Napoleon also affected to be scandalized. Among its members acute irritation really prevailed. At the Palais Royal, where the angry and disillusioned ambitions of Prince Jérôme and his son were harboured, the minds of their followers were in a state of ebullition. They could not find terms strong enough in which to qualify this eccentric marriage, the contract of which they would have to sign, nor expressions vivid enough to express the consternation of the highnesses upon whom untold wealth and preferments had been showered by the object of their blame and sarcasm. Napoleon III proceeded undismayed towards the goal he had in

view. On the 22nd January, 1853, he called together the great bodies of the State, and to them he declared that, yielding to the desire so often expressed by the country, a desire he shared himself, he had decided to choose a virtuous and graceful companion, and that his choice had fallen upon Mademoiselle Eugénie de Montijo, a Spaniard by birth, a Frenchwoman by sympathy, by education, and by the memory of the blood which her father had lost in the cause of France and of the Empire.

Three or four weeks previously, two days before Christmas, the happy *fiancée*, joyous and exuberant, was trotting along the boulevards, visiting the little shops and stalls of the New Year fair. Those who saw her that day little thought that she would soon ascend the throne of the Tuileries and wear a purple mantle.

Time flew in the preparations for the nuptial ceremony. Mérimée, with his usual zest, was busy drawing up the contract, devoting all his care to the correct enumeration of the bride's titles of nobility, heraldic and genealogical, that filled a whole page of foolscap. The sempstresses were hard at work in their shops. Palmyre, the great dressmaker of the day, was in a state of high fever. But what toilettes she turned out, what creative genius she bestowed upon the conception and realization of her masterpieces! Among feminine

circles curiosity reached a point of frenzy. With unheard-of perseverance, women sought to force the doors of Palmyre's salons, just for a glimpse at the treasures they contained. The merest detail of the confection of dresses, mantles, flashed from end to end of Paris society, whose attention hung upon the elaborate details, the treasures of art and science, the gowns, the coming of which were to stagger the world and make the laws of fashion. The slightest indiscretions upon these subjects were caught on the wing and generously retailed. Happy were the women who knew an hour before the others that a dress of moire antique, with pink fringe, lace and feather trimmings, had seen the light of day ; that another of green taffetas, with flounces of curled feathers, and a third of mauve moire covered with finest lace, were being evolved from the brain of the mighty one ! Their joy and admiration were rekindled by their possession of the anticipated description of the ball gowns. Among these were a dress of white brocade covered with flowers wrought in gold and silver, then, in more serious vein, a gown of black velvet flounced with gold guipure, a red velvet one embroidered with beads, and a diaphanous blue tulle built upon satin, and covered with roses and feathers. But soon the public was to be afforded an opportunity of gloating over these marvels. Palmyre condescended to make it



THE EMPRESS IN HER BRIDAL ROBES.
After Mme. Lefèvre-Deumier.



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known that the toilettes of the future Empress would be exposed under glass to the admiring gaze of the elect.

The intimate friends had gained the knowledge that the dress to be worn at the religious ceremony was to be the work of Madame Vignon, and that its composition would be as follows—White velvet, with a Court train covered with English lace, and a bodice studded with diamonds. They also knew that Félix had been chosen from among the past-masters of Parisian coiffeurs to erect the crown of diamonds and sapphires upon the undulating tresses, and to adjust in the centre of a bouquet of orange blossom the veil, a marvel of lightness, a mere zephyr.

There was still great uncertainty concerning the robes that were to be worn at the lay ceremony. This point was only settled at the last moment, notwithstanding the curiosity of the idlers to glean this important item of information. The bride had hesitated between two costumes which the diligent Palmyre submitted to her approval, the one of pink satin, trimmed with English lace, the other of white satin, with a shawl of point d'Alençon, studded with jewels and brilliants. The latter dress was chosen as being more maidenly and juvenile in appearance. The civil marriage was to take place on the 29th January, before 9 p.m., and from all parts huge crowds gathered

early round the Elysée. There they remained, bearding the bitter cold, in hopes of catching one glimpse of the cortège. At last, with much ado, the escort of the mounted Carabineers headed the procession. In the state coach rode the bride and her mother, accompanied by the Marquis de Valdegamas, Spanish Ambassador, and the Duke of Cambaceres. The onlookers beheld in a rapid transit the transfiguration of youth and human joy, and they applauded, shouting with the ingenuous enthusiasm peculiar to crowds, as if the rays of this joy and the benefits of this good fortune were shared by one and all of the applauders.

The cortège stopped at the Flora Pavilion. There, at the top of the marble steps, were grouped the Lord Chamberlain and the officers on duty, who had to accompany Mademoiselle de Montijo and lead her to the family drawing-room, where the Emperor awaited her. On the threshold of the first reception-room stood Prince Napoleon, furious at having to be present, and his consort, Princess Mathilde.

Here the full cortège was formed. The orderly officers, the Chamberlain, two equerries, the Master of the Horse, and two Masters of Ceremonies preceded their Imperial Highnesses. Then came the Countess of Teba and her mother. The Lord Chamberlain was on their right, the Grand Master

of Ceremonies on their left, and they were followed by the ladies in waiting. This nuptial procession proceeded with great solemnity, but with rapid gait one of the Masters of Ceremonies hurried forth to announce to the Emperor the coming of his bride.

Etiquette nailed him to his throne, where he remained seated with Prince Jérôme by his side, and surrounded by the field-m Marshals, his admirals, the Diplomatic Corps, and the Ministers. All present noticed the pallor of his cheeks. Descending slowly the steps of his throne, he came towards her whose steps guided her to him. Her arms were bared, her bodice was cut low, and partially covered by a bertha of lace. Her face betrayed neither surprise nor emotion. Napoleon held out his hand to her as she ascended the steps of the throne, and took her seat on his left between him and Princess Mathilde. Behind her stood the Countess de Montijo.

The Master of Ceremonies exclaimed in a loud voice, "The Emperor." All present rose to their feet, while the august couple remained seated. When the Minister had pronounced the formula, "In the name of the Emperor," they both rose.

"Sire," said the Secretary of State, who spoke with the registry of the Imperial Family ¹ before

¹ Its pages were blank since the inscription of the birth of the King of Rome on the 20th March, 1811.

him, "does your Majesty declare his august wish to take unto himself in matrimony Her Excellency Mademoiselle Eugénie de Montijo, Countess of Teba, here present?" Napoleon's voice, as he repeated and confirmed these words, was less firm than when, in the presence of the great State bodies, he delivered a political speech or a message to the nation.

Turning towards the descendant of the Guzmans,¹ Mademoiselle Eugénie de Montijo, Countess of Teba, the Minister said—

"Does your Excellency declare her wish to take unto herself in matrimony His Majesty Napoleon the Third, here present?" The answer was soon forthcoming: "Yes." It was pronounced clearly, with a sort of happy eagerness. Then fell in solemn and weighty tones the consecrating words of the civil court. "In the name of the Emperor, of the Constitution and of the Law, I hereby declare that His Majesty Napoleon the Third, Emperor of the French by the grace of God and the will of the people, and Her Excellency Eugénie de Montijo are joined in matrimony."

¹ Here is the enumeration of the titles given to her in the Royal Almanack of Spain: "Doña Maria Eugénia de Guzman Portocarrero y Palafox, Countess of Teba, Marchioness of Ardales, of Osera, of Moya, Countess of Ablitas, of Banos (with grandeeship of the first class), Countess of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Viscountess of Calzada."

The table and the register were placed before them. They signed the register, remaining seated. Upon it the Countess Montijo placed her maternal signature, then the relations of Napoleon, who had quite recently qualified as Princes and Princesses of the blood, affixed their many signatures to the document. The Ambassador of Spain, the high dignitaries, and lastly, Achille Fould, Secretary of State and Imperial notary, did likewise. The official ceremony was over. The company repaired to the reception-rooms, and to the theatre to listen to sweet music. After the concert, Eugénie de Montijo and her mother drove back to the Palace of the Elysée in the majestic coach that had borne them to the Pavilion of Flora. On the following day at noon a coach resplendent with gold, a coach that had been used for the coronation of Napoleon I and Josephine at Notre Dame, conveyed Napoleon III and Eugénie to the cathedral, where the religious service was to take place with unprecedented pomp. Drawn by eight horses, led by eight grooms, and preceded by three other coaches, each drawn by six horses, and containing their Imperial Highnesses the Countess of Montijo and the great Court officers, it was escorted on the right and the left by the Master of the Horse, the General commanding the National Guard, the Master of the Household, and the Grand Master

of the Hounds. The cannon roared ; the bells pealed. Numberless regiments lined the route of the cortège, which was preceded and followed by eight squadrons at a gallop. At last the goal, the huge basilica, was reached. The Sovereigns alighted, the Empress in her white silk dress, covered with lace, and tightened at the waist by a belt studded with rare and precious stones. Her train was of velvet and point d'Alençon. The Emperor wore the uniform of a lieutenant-general, white breeches, patent top-boots, the collar of the Golden Fleece that had belonged to Charles V and the collar of the Legion of Honour, a relic of Napoleon I.

Crossing the threshold of the church, they directed their steps towards the throne which Lassus and Viollet-Leduc had erected in the centre of the transept, under a daïs of ermine velvet supporting a gigantic eagle with wings displayed. At the altar stood Monseigneur Sibour, Archbishop of Paris, surrounded by cardinals and prelates clad in the dazzling brilliancy of their sacerdotal garb. Divine music quickened the senses. But what need is there to describe once more these religious magnificences and this display of banners, of every splendour, that are the customary staging of monarchical pageantry?

But a few minutes before, Eugénie de Montijo had entered the cathedral with somewhat halting



THE IMPERIAL WEDDING.
Celebrated at Notre Dame, January 30th, 1853.



gait, her head bowed low, her body slightly inclined forward as if she were borne down by the weight of her extraordinary good fortune. But what a metamorphosis was witnessed on her return! What a sudden change in her attitude and in her whole person! Her hand resting on the arm of the man who for twenty years was to be the sole arbiter of Europe, she seemed to proceed in the glory of apotheosis, smiling and bowing as befits a queen.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Napoleon and his bride returned officially to the Tuileries, borne upon the plaudits of the crowd, ever quick to acclaim that which strikes its imagination and dazzles its eyes. Soon they appeared again, driving in two superb Daumonts drawn by four horses and ridden by postilions in the Imperial livery. They proceeded at a fast trot from Paris to Saint-Cloud. The end of the journey was near at hand, for they were about to reach the little Château of Villeneuve-l'Étang,¹ that had been prepared for them.

Their suite consisted of three or four persons only, among whom was Adrienne de Montebello,

¹ It was a charming property, separated from Saint-Cloud by a wall. The Prince-President, having bought it in the summer of 1852, decided to throw down the wall. But as Bacciochi explained to him that later on some difficulties might arise if he did so, he replied, "There is no later on so far as I am concerned. I shall live and die here."

just appointed lady in waiting. In their frenzied happiness, they had even forgotten the Countess of Montijo.¹ Then on the morrow they basked alone in the winter sun, in a phaeton driven by Napoleon himself. Crossing the frost-crested woods of Saint-Cloud and Ville-d'Avray, they proceeded to the Trianon on a pious pilgrimage, there to dwell upon and thread together the sweet legend of Marie Antoinette, who had spent her heyday there. For a whole week they hid from the gaze of indiscretion those impressions common to all human hearts, their first joy, and those mutual confidences that should always be spoken in the narrowest of circles.

¹ We read the following in the memoir of the Marquise de la Ferronays: "On the night of the wedding, the poor Countess de Montijo was confronted with a disappointment such as often befalls the mothers of *débutantes*. On her daughter's departure for Saint-Cloud the Elysée was left without domestics, and she was extremely grateful to accept dinner from a friend of hers, Madame Gould, a worthy soul, somewhat Jewish and somewhat Portuguese."

CHAPTER III

First impressions created in the public mind by the marriage of Napoleon—Open criticisms and secret opposition—First enactments under the new reign—Questions of etiquette—Detailed organization of the ceremonials at Court—Distribution of titles and dignities—Household of the Emperor and Empress—Gentlemen and ladies in waiting—Apparent omission of the Countess of Montijo in the conferring of high favours—The rank afforded to their Imperial Highnesses—As a contrast, the truth about the real feelings among the parties—Jealousies, rivalries in the family—Relations with the Empress of Prince Jérôme, Princess Mathilde and Princess Clotilde—General description of the Court—Official splendour of the Tuileries.

THIS extraordinary marriage, born of chance, intrigue and love, was at last an accomplished fact. By a solemn declaration Napoleon had justified his choice in the eyes of the nation, ever quick to link circumstances with the reasons he adduced in vindication of his acts.

Before taking Eugénie as his bride, and with a tenacity as persistent as it was ill-requited, he had brought into play the strongest springs and levers of secret diplomacy in order to secure his alliance with one or other of the old dynasties of Europe.

He had been confronted with insurmountable difficulties. The foundations of the throne which he offered to share seemed to lack solidity. It was not deemed possible that his power, wrenched

by strength and violence through premeditated revolution, could endure for any length of time. With much zest did the Courts of Europe repeat the answer made by Lady Blessington to Napoleon when he asked her if she meant to make a long stay in Paris: "Yes, Majesty; what about you?" Failing an Infanta or an Archduchess, he had led to the Tuileries the daughter of a Grandee of Spain.

Though of necessity he had made a virtue, he proclaimed loudly that he had refused offers which in reality were never forthcoming. His marriage, due to the force of circumstances, produced the following principle of government: "When, in the presence of old Europe, one is borne by the strength of a new principle to the giddy heights of ancient dynasties, it is not by adding age to one's coat-of-arms, or endeavouring to force a way or to elbow oneself into the families of Kings that a monarch of yesterday's creation can make himself acceptable."

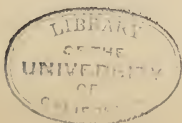
Where love had triumphed, diplomacy had failed, and with much ingenuity he circumvented the difficulty by opportune expressions of opinion, and statements that lent a colour of truth to his asseverations. The Empress also testified in feeling terms to those noble sentiments which spring to the lips of Princes and Princesses when they ascend a throne—

“I ardently wish that my marriage may not prove an extra burden to the country which is henceforth mine, and my one ambition is to share with the Emperor the love and esteem of the French nation.”

Sincere words, no doubt as sincere as the feelings that urged them when they were spoken. Very empty in practice, because overwhelming proofs are at hand that the food her youth sought most was that of luxury and display, not love or esteem.

The national approval did not manifest itself spontaneously or very warmly. Among the public there was more surprise than sympathy. The love that filled the heart of Napoleon the Third had not made contact, like a magnetic fluid, with the hearts of the French citizens, who had been invited to come and drink to the full of this cup of joy. Before the official ceremonies took place, unpleasant allusions were whispered and circulated, secretly at first, then quite openly. The name of Mademoiselle de Montijo and her personality were the subject of ill-natured talk. The echoes multiplied the whisperings to such an extent that the police deemed fit to act. In the cafés of the boulevards, in the Latin quarter, a number of arrests were effected, and all who spoke disrespectfully of the Empress *fiancée* were summarily dealt with. In a wine-shop on the Boulevard

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Baumarchais, two individuals were roughly handled for indulging in unseemly remarks. A well-known dramatic author, having asserted that at a dance the Countess of Teba had lent a willing ear to his amorous supplications, was sent to reflect between four walls upon the very bad taste of his reminiscences. Journalists, financiers and artisans shared the same fate for not approving or at least remaining silent. All this caused a certain amount of dissatisfaction. Even the Stock Exchange had two or three fits of sulkiness, the effects of which were felt as soon as Napoleon's matrimonial intentions were made public. National funds fell several points ; but these summer clouds were soon dispelled, and useless opposition vanished before long. The accomplished fact was accepted as if it had been desired, and the popular interest was awakened as it might have been by the unfolding of a romantic story or the fifth act of a popular play. Poets in their lyrics proclaimed the great goodness of Providence showering gifts and the most enviable of crowns upon such a charming head. Flatterers, seeking to earn their monthly wage, candidates for the fattest sinecures, aspirants to the gold lace of Court appointments, rushed forth, eager to know the price they would receive for their services, and what services might be expected of them. They were soon enlightened on both points.

From the day Eugénie and her mother took up their abode in the Elysée Palace, the care of forming a Court became far more important than all questions of State and Government. The constitution of this Court was to be based upon that of Napoleon the First, wherein display, magnificence and lavish splendour had prevailed. Such a Court commended itself to Napoleon the Third, with whom display was a real passion. Equipoised brains would have preferred that he did not soar so high or so far, deeming that an important military household for himself and an adequate number of attendants for the Empress would meet the requirements of their positions. But such prudent advice was not sought. In spite of those who tendered it, it was decided to do things on a higher scale. This was the more easily effected as the private expenditure of the Emperor, and all expenses he considered necessary, were in no way subjected to the control of the financial department.

Napoleon was sufficiently versed in the history of successful men of great ambition to know the strength of the illusion created upon the minds of the crowd by the display of Royal pomp. So, on principle, and also through pride, he decided that the second Napoleonic period should appropriate the complicated hierarchy of its predecessor, its

improvised nobility, its sonorous titles and solemn ceremonials. He had come to this decision the day he set foot in the palace of kings. Had he not been brought up to it from his infancy? During the first seven years of his life he had enjoyed the privileges of a princely education. In the Castle of Arenenberg, the residence of Queen Hortense, his mother, a woman urged by the necessity to imitate the doings and gestures of royalty, there still remained the faded traces of a vanished glory in a very minute frame. A dethroned Queen living on the borders of a Swiss lake, with curtailed means and a few followers, Hortense rehearsed the splendour of the past, if only in memory.

Voltaire has said, "The more uncivilized the country and the more pusillanimous its rulers, the greater will be the ceremonial they indulge in."

Napoleon the Third did not share the philosopher's views. He hastened to adopt monarchical formalities which one might have thought dead for ever in France, since the Revolution had swept them away like so much dust. They were resuscitated in the spirit and the letter; people grew accustomed to them, and regulations, however drastic, were gladly obeyed. Witness the rule which stated that on being ushered into the presence of the Sovereign, the subject should make three low

bows, remove both gloves, and reply to His Majesty in the third person. During weeks and months these weighty questions were carefully studied by busy Ministers, who thus devoted their time to those pursuits usually followed by idle folk. Details of proceedings, details of dress, of gold and silver lace, details concerning the numbers of stripes and buttons, their shapes and sizes, details of distinctions of privileges, absorbed their minds. Experts were consulted and asked to classify, codify and dogmatize all the childish futilities of the Protocole.

With feverish ardour they compiled the texts and regulations of Court functions held under the old *régime*, as well as those copied from it by Napoleon the First. Thus was created a code with chapter and verse, the contents of which seemed strangely out of date and much belated in these days of republicanism. All such regulations were strictly adhered to.

At the outset, the decree of equality was rescinded, a decree by which titles of nobility had been declared null and void.¹ On the 23rd February, 1852, a ball was attended at the Tuileries by a host of people who had recently been rechristened and recreated barons, counts, marquises and dukes. It was soon learnt with general satisfaction that henceforth there would

¹ Decree of the 24th January, 1852.

be a Lord High Chamberlain,¹ a Grand Master of the Palace,² a Grand Master of Ceremonies,³ a Grand Master of the Hounds,⁴ and a Grand Master of the Horse.⁵ All and sundry were informed that such ritual as had been born again would be strictly enforced. A proof of this was soon forthcoming in the ceremonial of the Emperor's wedding, and in the visits of their Majesties to England, and of Queen Victoria to France.

Upon the questions of the homage and the tokens of respect and ceremonial due to the Empress and of the number and quality of those who were privileged to accompany her footsteps in her private apartments, in the chapel of the Tuileries, outside the palace, the Book of Imperial Ordinance was as complete as it was explicit. The same order was followed in her case as in that of her Imperial spouse. Presentations were to be made to her at her receptions. With such exceptions as those of Imperial Highnesses who had access to her by right of birth, all other mortals must seek and obtain audience, the petition for which was transmitted to her by numberless dignitaries of her household. At the hour of religious

¹ Duke of Bassano.

² Field-Marshal Villiant.

³ The Duke de Cambacres.

⁴ Field-Marshal Magnan.

⁵ General Fleury.

ceremonies the cortège of the Empress led the way to the chapel. Her Majesty was preceded by her pages, equerries and chamberlains, preceded by princesses, followed by princesses, ladies in waiting, more princesses, and more ladies in waiting on princesses. The Grand Master had to follow her on her right at a distance of three feet, and the Mistress of the Robes on her left at a similar distance. All through the day, at stated times, and on the slightest provocation, certain honours had to be rendered to her in accordance with the circumstances of the hour. The doings of her *entourage* were carefully measured and set forth for every conceivable occasion and incident. The daughter of a Grandee of Spain, with as great a liking for titles as Napoleon himself, she was enamoured of all outward signs and tokens of nobility, armorial bearings, escutcheons, crests, and all the ancient lustre appertaining to old pedigrees. So it was that she wished to see in her suite not only barons, counts and dukes of the Empire, whose nobility could only boast of a few hours' existence, but also the authentic representatives of the old French houses. When the indefatigable Fialin, created Count and afterwards Duke de Persigny, said to her with ingenuous pride, "We, members of the nobility," she weighed it for what it was worth, and let him know that she would gladly look upon some armorial bearings

whose coat of paint was somewhat drier than his.

The first offers of appointments in her household were made to the Duchesses de Lesparre and de Vicence. They declined haughtily, and some other great dames had to be chosen. The Duchess de Bassano did not offer any resistance, although the Duke, her husband, did not seem at all anxious to become Lord Chamberlain, or to see his wife as Mistress of the Robes. After some well-ordained hesitations, which called forth the renewed request that they sought, they accepted the appointments, and discharged their duties with eagerness, zeal and fidelity. In this spirit did they act until the end.

It was no easy matter to bewitch the aristocratic Faubourg Saint-Germain. It displayed an irreconcilable mood, and one would have thought that not a single member of one of those haughty families, with pride of ancestry and pride of purse, would have consented to become a member of an exotic Court of parvenus. Their proud attitude, however, was doomed to soften soon. The attraction of honours easily obtained as well as large salaries soon brought about defections in the legitimist ranks. To such ambition was added the desire to shine, to live and love in pleasant company, instead of sulking in barren and monotonous isolation. Gradually

Prince Charles of Beauveau, seduced by the promise of a senatorship, the Duke of Clillon, Prince de Beauveau-Craon and Count de la Montalembert, seceded from the Royalist camp. One and all were offered their price. It was accepted. The following year the "Purists" described as scandalous what they were pleased to call the desertion of the Duke de Mouchy, the Marquises de Pastoret and de la Rochejacquelin and Prince de Beaufremont; but their indignation knew no bounds when they learned that the Duke de Guiche had also yielded to the offers of the Emperor and the Empress, though he was the favoured heir of the Duchess d'Angoulême, Princess Royal, and should have been above temptation, thanks to the large income of £36,000 a year which she allowed him. Count de Chambord and his intimate friends took the matter to heart, while the conversion of the Duke caused much joy at the Court of Napoleon. There was good reason for this, because such aristocratic elements lent much distinction and French elegance to the *entourage* as cosmopolitan as it was socially confused, which followed in the wake of the Countess of Teba on the morrow of her coronation. Meanwhile, the constitution of her service of honour was carefully proceeded with. Without dealing with the matter in the tyrannical spirit of the first Bonaparte, who had

assumed the right to name, dismiss or take to task the ladies in waiting of Marie Louise, Napoleon III had categorically expressed the wish that the members of the Empress's household should be forthwith appointed. The Duchess of Bassano had been appointed Lady of Honour. The Princess of Essling, daughter-in-law of Masséna, Duke of Bassano, and daughter of General Debelle, was appointed Mistress of the Household. She was a lady of freezing manner, with that haughty air common to people of small stature. She was most particular on matters of etiquette. So punctilious was she in the observance of its ruling that she always drove in a ponderous and solemn-looking barouche, thus giving the example of impeccable propriety. Though intelligent and good-natured, she invariably failed to produce a favourable first impression. Very often, the second and third impressions made by her were just as unsatisfactory as the first. . . . The Princess of Essling and the Duchess of Bassano were entrusted with all matters relating to presentations and audiences. Neither of them appeared at Court functions. The former, as Mistress of the Household, determined the duties of the ladies in waiting, who at first numbered six and later twelve.

The three first appointments included Viscountess Aguado, Marquise de Las Marismas.

She had married the eldest of three Spanish brothers, known in Paris by their luxury and elegance. The charm and magnificence of her receptions was appreciated by all, and her house in the Rue de l'Elysée was, during many years, the chosen rendezvous of the foreign aristocracy and the members of the Court at the Tuileries. The list of ladies in waiting contained the names of Countess Adrienne de Montebello, *née* de Ville-neuve-Bargmont and maternal granddaughter of the Duchess de Vicence, Countess de Lezay-Marnésia, Baroness de Malaret, Marchioness de la Tour-Maubourg and Baroness de Pierre, the finest horsewoman in France. Though her courage in the hunting-field was undaunted, she was known to be a most timid lady, who would get confused on the slightest provocation.

A little later a second list appeared, with the names of Madame de Sancy-Parabére, *née* Lefèvre Desnouettes (whose delightful literary portrait drawn by the Marquis de Charnace, under the name of Herminie), and of the Countess de la Bedoyere, who later became Princess de la Moskowa, a moderately witty person, but decidedly handsome and showy. Her sister, the Countess de la Poëze, who was much devoted to her duties at Court, was endowed with a keen sense of humour much appreciated in her circle. Madame de Saulcy, a severe, stern and

enigmatic lady with large black eyes and a somewhat hard expression, was also handsome and possessed of sound judgment. She was a fit and worthy companion for Louis de Saulcy, a member of the Institute and a charming conversationalist, who devoted to the society of princes such time as he did not spend in the study of Byzantine numismatics. The Countess de Lourmel had neither much intelligence nor common-sense, and of the Baroness de Viry-Cohendier little is remembered, save her handsome brown eyes. She cultivated a jealous love for her husband, and was fanatically enamoured of Savoy, her native country; Madame Ferey d'Isly, the daughter of Field-Marshal Bugeaud, soon resigned a post which she did not deem worthy of one whose father had been Governor-General of Algeria, and whose advent was heralded by the beating of drums and the marshalling of troops; Madame Carette, granddaughter of Admiral Bouvet, was first appointed second reader to the Empress, but afterwards promoted lady in waiting in the room of Madame Lezay-Marnésia.

Two ladies in waiting took duty at a time. They did not live in the Tuileries. Each day a large barouche, bearing the Imperial coat-of-arms, called for them at their residences and brought them at a slow pace to their pleasant occupation. They generally arrived at two o'clock, and took

their seats in the drawing-room reserved for their use. It was an apartment furnished with the greatest elegance. Its bronzes and tapestries were in the purest Louis XVI style. On the ceiling and the panels of the doors were painted the most exquisite bunches of flowers. The ladies sat reading, embroidering or doing tapestry, ready to communicate to Her Majesty, either directly or through the medium of the head usher, such facts or incidents which they deemed she should be apprised of. Off this drawing-room was another one decorated in pink, and leading to the blue drawing-room of the Empress, a marvel of delicate ornamentation, in which she gave audiences. Here Eugénie had collected in medallions the portraits of all the dazzling beauties of her Court, each of them representing by her dress a European nation.

The household of the Empress was completed by the creation of two Chamberlains, the Marquis de Fiennes and Count de Cossé-Brissac, and of two equerries, Baron de Pierre and the Marquis Lagrange, both splendid sportsmen. This household was much less numerous than that of the Emperor, but just as brilliant.

When conferring the honours and sinecures at his disposal, Napoleon had satisfied the claims of all his followers, and afforded ample reward to the hosts of greedy Bonapartes, Eugénie followed

his example and looked around her for friends of her youth upon whom she might bestow her favours, place and emoluments.

The first name with which she charged her memory was that of Mérimée, who hourly had watched her progress until she had realized the fairylike dream of her childhood. When he said "Her Majesty" to the whilom child whom he had led through Paris crowds, he wondered if he was not the victim of an hallucination, or if he was playing charades as in the days gone by at the Countess of Montijo's. But what could she offer to this neurotic man of letters, a pessimist, too subtle or too indolent to bow his head to any yoke or to apply himself continuously to a set task? Punctuality and regularity make for order, but are indissolubly linked with mediocrity of the average output. Besides, Mérimée asked for nothing. All he wanted was a front stall, to take stock of what was going on. To see the comedy and analyze it. Analysis was life to him. At one time it was suggested that he should be appointed Secretary of Royal Ordinances. He was approached upon the matter, but it seems evident that he spurned an offer which entailed upon him daily subjection at regular hours. His protectress had to seek and find him a better position. On the 23rd June, 1853, he learnt that he had been created a Senator. It was an easy position, the duties of



THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS.

which he could discharge at his own sweet will in the spirit or in the flesh. It afforded a yearly income of £1200, and every opportunity for studying in their detail the political comedies and dramas that were enacted in the Senate. The Empress displayed more pleasure at the appointment than Mérimée himself. When Napoleon informed her of the news, she testified to her satisfaction in so spontaneous a manner that she warmly embraced her husband.

Other names and other personalities less important were remembered by her, such as the Abbé Boudinet, the insinuating priest who years before at a dinner-party had the lucky inspiration to prophesy her advent to a throne. A telegram bade him to the Tuileries, where he was informed of his appointment to the See of Amiens. She also remembered an old friend in Madrid, a fervent admirer of Spanish literature, Damas-Hinard, who was appointed Secretary of Ordinances. He was most circumspect, an ideal official, very reverential, who, though compelled to see the Empress daily and in intimacy, always stood in her presence bowed in two.

The Spanish element, as is easily understood, was fully represented in the circle of the new Sovereign. She at least had the good taste not to underline her foreign origin by imposing Spanish ways and habits, as well as Spanish

individuals, upon the French nation. For instance, she carefully eschewed the advice of those who urged her to popularize in France such gaudy, noisome and blood-stained pursuits as bull-fights. On the other hand, Napoleon somewhat favoured the idea because, imbued with his knowledge of Roman history, this future historian of the Cæsars saw in bull-fighting the means of resuscitating the old gladiatorial games. "The French people," he said, "are fond of emotional games." Thus, he was wont to compare exhibitions of pluck and endurance with displays of useless and barbarous cruelty that could never find favour in Central or Northern France. He added that the excitement provided by such prowess was sure to engender deeds of courage. Though often led astray by the impulse of her ardent nature, Eugénie was not deceived in this matter. She realized, and made him understand, that bull-fights would be a signal failure in Paris, so in the blue drawing-room of the Empress the subject was severely dropped.

When the conferring of titles and distinctions had been accomplished, not a few observed that no preferment had been found for the mother of the Empress. She was not even termed "Her Highness." "Could it be," they inquired, "that Madame de Montijo preferred her own independence and the habits of Spanish society to such

foreign honours as might be conferred upon her at the Court of her daughter? Or was her aloofness to be explained by more serious and secret reasons?" It has been said with a certain semblance of truth that she always preferred her elder daughter, the Duchess of Alba, and that serious differences occurred between herself and the Empress long after the latter had effected the brilliant marriage, which was mainly brought about by her mother's diplomacy.

Shortly after the wedding-day, the Countess left for Spain. Prosper Mérimée, her faithful friend and correspondent, accompanied her as far as Poitiers, and, a few weeks later, he wrote to her, recalling the events to hand.

"What a dreadful thing it must be to have daughters and to see them married! But Scripture says that woman must leave her parents to follow her husband. Now that you have done your duty as a mother (and forsooth none can deny that you have effected brilliant matches for your daughters), you must begin to live for yourself, and try to cultivate a little selfishness."

The advice was welcome. It fell in with the free-and-easy tastes of the Countess, and she acted upon it without hesitation. In Madrid, she resumed her former existence, watching the course of her daughter's career from afar, without interfering with it in any way, and preserving in her

native country the status and aspirations of a great Spanish lady.

Her manner was in no way changed by the sovereign rank conferred upon her daughter in the most marvellous way. It did not make her more enamoured of her daughter or of herself. Whether her absence from the Imperial Court was dictated solely by her own will, or by the desire of the Emperor to prevent her from seeking self-aggrandizement, the fact remained that she never did assume the rank to which blood ties entitled her.

Nearer to her eyes, if not nearer to her heart, stood Eugénie's Napoleonic connections, who had shared the fruits of her promotion, but who chafed under it. In accordance with the Protocole that obtains in monarchies, the supreme rank of Majesty needs have in its wake a number of Imperial or Royal Highnesses, branches more or less ramified of the same tree. Napoleon the Third must needs enforce the tradition, were it only to give greater brilliancy to the importance of his prattling dynasty. He improved upon the ancient Protocole of the Kings of France by instituting two classes of Highnesses, the first and the second, the Imperial Family and the civil one. The former title was conferred only upon Jérôme and his European descendants, to the exclusion of the American or Patterson branch of his lineage.

The other members of the Emperor's family, though just as closely related to him, only shared in a very small degree the honours and emoluments of the civil list, a rich cake indeed, but the greater part of which was requisitioned by the *Imperial Highnesses*. Though honours, dowries and favours were showered upon them with a generosity unhopèd for, King Jérôme and his family knew little of gratitude, and never rallied faithfully or frankly to the interests of Napoleon the Third. They considered him a usurper, occupying a throne that should be theirs, and their feelings towards the Empress were still more bitter, for they had opposed her marriage with all their might.

It was, as we have said, in the house of Princess Mathilde that her cousin Louis Napoleon met Mademoiselle de Montijo for the first time. To the Princess he first confided those matrimonial intentions which had met at her hands with uncompromising disapproval. But finding that she was unable to alter his decision by words, she tried to do so by deeds, throwing herself at his feet, and conjuring of him to give up a project which, if effected, could only jeopardize his career by stopping his ambitious progress. How could words or arguments prevail against the powerful effects of love? The Princess Mathilde was not only unheeded, but compelled as an Imperial

Highness to play a leading part at the great function, and to master with a ready-made smile the feelings of jealous hate and bitterness that filled her soul. Forthwith she was invited to the Tuileries after the marriage ceremony, and compelled to dine face to face with her successful rival, who now occupied the throne that might have been hers, had she been allowed by her father to encourage the advances of the quondam obscure Pretender.

So great was the antithesis between the two women, both in ideas and in character, that no perfect harmony could ever exist between their minds. At the beginning of their era of prosperity, they cultivated but a lukewarm affection for one another, and at times their relations were more than strained. Their mutual ties were only strengthened by adversity. Etiquette and ceremonious regulations caused visible restraint that was witnessed by all. Between the Empress and Prince Jérôme a similar state of mind existed. Their relations were even more strained, amounting almost to avowed enmity. She reproached him with being an unscrupulous libertine, a turbulent democrat, an audacious free-thinker, while apprehending the dangers accruing from his political ambition. He condemned her unbending ultramontaniam, and her unswerving devotion to the Papacy. He accused her of being frivolous,

extravagant, irresponsible, exaggerating her defects, minimizing her qualities. He had admired her beauty when she was only the elegant foreigner, the admired pet of Paris society. When she took the final step which bore her so high, he only beheld in her the Spaniard, the enemy whose marriage with its presumable consequences had widened the breach that separated him from power, the one object of his ardent aspirations. Yielding to his daring frankness, that brutal cynical frankness which betrayed itself in his speech and caused such prejudice to his intelligence, he would shout his anger, his hatred and his disappointment to the winds, caring little if the echo bore them back to the ears of Eugénie. Under such circumstances, it is little wonder that she did not betray much sympathy towards him, or that she did not endeavour to stay the intrigues of such coteries as endeavoured to undermine the position of the Emperor's cousin. Some years later the advent of Princess Clotilde, daughter of Victor Emmanuel, married for state reasons to the ex-King of Westphalia, tempered the relations between the Tuileries and the Palais Royal with a modicum of wisdom and propriety. But even so clear-sighted and able a Princess as Clotilde was unable to kindle any warmth or true affection between the parties. The proof of this was soon afforded to the Empress on the occasion

of the festivals held in honour of Jérôme and Clotilde, his newly-wedded wife. No effort had been spared to impart due magnificence to the presentation ceremony on the 3rd February, 1859. Princess Mathilde had gone to meet their Highnesses at the station of Fontainebleau, and on the platform they were awaited by Magnan, a Field-Marshal of France, and Commander-in-Chief of the army in Paris, by General Lowœstein, the Prefect of Police, the Sardinian Legation and a host of minor dignitaries. An infantry regiment lined the street at the Lyons station, and at the Tuileries the newly-married couple were greeted by Napoleon, who stood at the foot of the grand staircase, surrounded by all his household. The Empress, escorted by her ladies in waiting, had gone to meet Princess Clotilde at the entrance of the gallery, where she greeted her with the most affectionate embrace. But Clotilde's gratitude was of short duration. That evening, Eugénie, interpreting as timidity the excessive reserve which was of the nature of Clotilde, proceeded to give her advice to supply her want of experience, holding her hand in hers, as a good and affectionate relative. She was thanked for her pains in words which she could never forget. "Madame, you are very good, but you seem to forget that I was born and brought up at Court."

None was so ceremonious as this austere Princess of the House of Austria. One can only form an idea of her character by reading the description of the presentations and audiences that took place at the Palais Royal. Hers was a cold nature, devoid of all effusion. She chilled all those who came near her. An audience with the Princess Clotilde was freezing, and of short duration. At the appointed hour, the person to whom it had been granted had to wait in one of the drawing-rooms of the Palace, there to be received by Madame Barbier and an equerry. After exchanging a few words in a whisper, as if in a sacred temple, they led the victim to the door of Her Highness's salon, a sumptuous, refrigerating apartment, lofty, long and wide out of all proportion. At the extreme end Clotilde was seated in front of the fireplace beside a low table on which stood a shaded lamp. She would rise upon the introduction of her visitor, who from the threshold was to proceed slowly, bowing low while the Princess acknowledged her presence by the slightest inclination of the head, standing erect with her arms folded across her chest. Then a halt in the centre of the drawing-room, another low bow, followed by another halt, and then again a bow, and a second inclination of the Princess's head. On reaching her, a final bow, the respectful kiss

of hands, followed by the imperious gesture of Clotilde pointing to the arm-chair, which was to be occupied on the other side of the room. Under such conditions the conversation proceeded with difficulty. It practically ended as soon as it began. Without looking at her caller, man or woman, the Princess would roll off a number of hurried words or phrases befitting the situation or the object of the visit, then after getting the answers she would rise from her chair, thereby intimating that the audience must cease, and in the same low tone would bid good-bye. The visitor traversed the same road, performed the same halts, and bowing backwards, left the room. As the door was opened, the Royal Clotilde was beheld for the last time standing rigidly as if transfixed, with her arms still folded across her chest. Such was the final impression created by a private audience with the Princess of Savoy.

There could be no ties of friendship between her cousin and herself as long as the Empire lasted. She knew her duties towards the Empress, and performed them without warmth, without enthusiasm, as she performed every act, emanating from a sullen, mysterious nature as colourless and emotionless as were her pale eyes. Her appearances at Court were very few and far between.

We have shown that the relations between the

members of the Imperial Family were in reality bereft of all cordiality, however well ordained by irreproachable etiquette. In due time two rival parties were forthcoming, and in turn Napoleon had to submit to their contending influence, oscillating between them as long as his reign lasted. For the nonce the existence of those parties was not openly recognized. Politics did not absorb the mind of the graceful Sovereign who basked in the joy of a realized dream, and in her daily successes and nightly triumphs.

As a result of the adoption of monarchical convention, the magnificence and dignity of Court functions were greatly enhanced. The ladies who surrounded the Empress beautified the picture by their luxury and elegance, while the great Court dignitaries, Chamberlains, Prefects and Equeries, strove hard to enhance its glory. The Tuileries had never witnessed the kindling of so many brilliant lights. The Court of Napoleon the Third was a brilliant one indeed, whenever circumstances enabled it to meet. But in spite of this pompous ceremonial, extraordinary events succeeded one another with such rapidity that there was little time or opportunity for establishing anything like permanent institutions at such a Court. Under the restoration, an essential influence was lacking. The woman, the Queen,

was, as it were, absent from the King's Court. The simple and parsimonious tastes of Louis Philippe were still fresh in the public memory. Under Napoleon and Eugénie, the staging was unequalled for wealth and spectacular grandeur during their years of prosperity.

CHAPTER IV

Early period of the reign—The beginning of greatness—State receptions—The presentation of ladies at Court—Official balls—Sketches of some of the guests on gala nights—The Empress's Monday "At Homes"—Curious nature of these receptions—The daily occupations and amusements of the Empress—Her temporary infatuation for spiritualism and table-turning—The Court enjoys itself throughout 1853 and 1854 while the Crimean War was fought—Opposing influences at work upon the mind of Eugénie—Her excess of haughtiness vies with her natural nonchalance—Her early political tendencies still remain subordinate to her duties as first lady at her own Court—The aristocratic element of that Court—Strange composition of its female constituents—The most brilliant period of the reign.

GALA concerts, festivities and rejoicings, journeys far and wide surrounded by pomp and state, the foundation of charitable institutions carefully brought to the public notice—thus were the happy beginnings of this period.

On the evening when for the first time Eugénie opened a State ball as Empress all eyes were fixed upon her, examining her every feature, seeking a vulnerable spot, but all were surprised to find none.

General satisfaction was expressed, only interrupted by some slight exhibitions of bad temper, caused in some feminine groups by the wealth of the Empress's beauty and attractions.

The recalcitrants from the noble Faubourg Saint-Germain were discernible by their disdainful mien and ironical laughter.

They whispered audibly unkind comments upon the *décolletage* which they termed extremely Spanish. It is true that the bearing of the neck, shoulders and bust of the young Empress was of so generous a nature that its effect was somewhat disconcerting to the men in general, who had to bow low as they passed before the very low chair upon which she was seated. It was particularly noticed that the papal nuncio had prolonged his bow, and accentuated it with evident pleasure. This caused the Ambassador of a Protestant Power to remark that His Eminence looked like a diving cardinal finch.¹

Though she was not in the first bloom of youth—for twenty-seven or twenty-eight years begin to count in the life of every woman—Eugénie was in the spring-time of her existence. Her profile had all the refinement of a beautiful cameo, although the lower part of the face was somewhat too rounded.² The features were

¹ This was an allusion to the American bird called "cardinal," whose plumage is of a rich red like that of the cardinal's purple.

² The oval line of the face was not perfect, for it was not sufficiently attenuated towards the lower part; otherwise the profile was most classical.

admirable in their detail—two blue eyes full of life and light that did not reveal the fact that they could ever cast an angry glance; a very small and charming mouth with graceful contours; a skin so delicate as to be almost transparent; a brilliant complexion, and hair neither red nor fair nor auburn,¹ but the colour of which was unique, thanks to a secret treatment of it. The most that could be said against her by her critics was that she was too short-waisted, like many Spanish ladies, but this question was barely touched upon, and was deemed insignificant compared with the perfection of the neck and shoulders.

However strong her natural pride and her inclination to consider fortune's favours as a just tribute paid to her charms, she was at first overcome by a certain timidity owing to the suddenness of her metamorphosis.

Borne to such heights, she felt the need for guidance, lest she missed her step through vertigo. Her eyes, generally bathed in languor, assumed a look of simple joy or soft surprise which produced an excellent effect. With sufficient diffidence, she triumphed modestly. It was a short period of charming hesitancy. Courtiers were soon convinced, however, that ere long she

¹ In 1856 Baron von Moltke wrote thus to his wife: "It would be truer to describe the Empress of the French as a brunette."

would learn the part and fittingly perform the duties of a Queen. At the outset she found it difficult to practise the rules of etiquette. But soon she felt that they were a necessity, the neglect of which impeded her breathing and her movements. It seemed, after five or six weeks' experience of life as an Empress, that she had never been Mademoiselle de Montijo. Nay, either through jealousy or through other motives, she was actually reproached with not sufficiently preserving that personality. Her detractors were wont to say that the bride of yesterday had been quite absorbed by a reign of a few days. They added that the improvised Sovereign had become the mistress of her house, who knew her power and made it felt by her manner, her gestures, her stern orders and the assumed look of indifference to all that she really had at heart.

It would have been difficult for her to escape the intoxication of pride, when witnessing such demonstrations of ceremonious pomp as that displayed regularly on the occasion of Court drawing-rooms, at which took place the presentation to her of the ladies of France. At nine o'clock in the morning, the Corps Diplomatique met in the Louis XIV chamber, which was next to the throne room where the Court foregathered. The Emperor and the Empress stood on a platform surmounted by a daïs, with the Ministers,



*The Empress Eugenie and her Maids of Honour
From a picture by Winterhalter.*

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Field-Marschals, Admirals and high dignitaries on their right, while on the left stood the ladies in waiting. Facing them was the Corps Diplomatique. When all had taken up their positions, presenting a grandiose picture in accordance with the ceremonial imported from the Court of Bavaria by Count Tacher de la Pagerie,¹ the march past of the ladies began. From four to five hundred of them, headed by Madame Fould, made their obeisance to the Empress. The Princess of Essling, the Mistress of the Robes, named them in turn as they bowed low, followed by a long queue of guests. They were not all irreproachable or very distinguished in their bearing, but the magnificence of the apartment, the brilliant *éclat* of the throne's occupants, the dazzling uniforms, the gorgeous toilettes and priceless jewels, presented a striking and magnificent *ensemble*. These were, indeed, triumphant days for the Empire, witnessed with pain by those who kept aloof in the exercise of their duty towards the exiled Princes.²

¹ Countess Charles Tascher de la Pageni was distinguished by the majesty of her deportment, the slowness of her movements, in this gymnastic exercise.

² The receptions at Frohsdorf of Count de Chambord were anything but gay. They were presided over by Madame, calm serene and frigid. Here is a sketch describing the King's daily occupations. It affords an interesting comparison between the Court of the Tuileries and that of the Pretender.

"The meal having been promptly dispatched, Madame

Each night there was a fresh gathering of beauty, at which the gold lace and the aiguillettes of the brilliant uniforms provided a handsome background for the exquisite freshness of the ladies' toilettes. On all sides one saw the handsomest uniforms copied on that of the master. Generals and officers of the Emperor's household wore white breeches and silk stockings, with buckled shoes. The breeches had been discarded since the Restoration. The civil servants, studded with orders and decorations, had no reason to be jealous of the military, because they too wore Court uniforms with heavy embroidered cuffs and collars, swords and cocked hats.¹ Besides these

would return to the drawing-room, where she worked at her tapestry or embroidery, surrounded by her ladies in waiting, who were likewise engaged. When the post arrived, all were allowed to read their letters. Monseigneur and the gentlemen in waiting would glance at the papers. As soon as eleven struck, the Princes retired to their apartments.

"The evening dragged on painfully until nine, through the absence of strangers. When Monseigneur felt sure that his words would not provide food for a leading article, he was wont to indulge in witticisms that often provoked a haughty laugh. When the *séance* came to an end in the drawing-room the men would doff their dress-coats and don their smokers, while the ladies who did not wish to retire so early were compelled to seek refuge in the drawing-room of the worthy Countess de Chabannes, there to sip an insipid cup of tea and take part in the most insipid conversation."

¹ The equerry on duty wore a special uniform, consisting of tunic, buckskin breeches, patent top-boots and patent Hessian boots.

ornamental accoutrements, they wore a most satisfied air.

Eugénie delighted in presiding at these balls, that lasted from the beginning of January till Lent, which was devoted to religious ceremonies and spiritual concerts.¹

Napoleon, while encouraging them, was only interested in the organization of these musical parties. Has it not been said of him that he got up bored, that he went through the day bored, and that he retired to bed bored? The preludes of the festival were watched by him with some interest, but soon the Imperial dreamer began to dream, and if he played his part to the end it was merely through a sense of duty. With every good intention, he endeavoured to shake off his natural apathy and to be amiable to his guests. He would go from group to group twisting the waxed ends of his moustache, stopping to greet newcomers, and finding a tactful phrase that soon made them feel at ease. Unfortunately his attention could not be riveted for long, and his eternal absent-mindedness laid hold of him and soon spoilt things. He

¹ During this penitential period the Emperor and Empress deemed it their duty to attend every spiritual concert. They suffered them all to the bitter end, with stoic dignity. Her Majesty yawned behind her fan, while the Emperor beat time with his head so as to stave off sleep. When the ordeal was over, they showered praises on the artist, the best obtainable, who performed under the leadership of Auber.



would then mix up names, mistake one person for another, asking questions without waiting for the answers. If his sleepy eyes caught sight of a pretty woman, he would hurry away to her side, leaving his unfortunate interlocutor dumfounded.¹

The Empress on retiring from these balls was always very tired, and often did not even take time to call her ladies in waiting; so anxious was she to rid her head and shoulders of the weight of the diadem and necklaces, that she would take them off with her own hands and throw them pell-mell into the satin or velvet lap of one of her ladies' skirts. She would then retire to her dressing-room and prepare for the night's rest. Doña Eugénia, like all Southern women, was late to bed.

The Court galas took place in the gallery of Peace and in that of the Marshals of France. Two orchestras held sway, and the apartments of the first floor were brilliantly lighted. The guests entered through the gate of the Horioge

¹ "The women who knew his peculiarities—and there were a few who did—tried by every means to come near him. It was most amusing to watch the evolutions of the great coquettes of the day. On that evening Madame de Neuwied and Madame de Saint-Briene changed their seats at least ten times without any possible reason, and walked across the rooms in every sense, in order to attract the notice of the Emperor and to elicit some complimentary remarks from him" (Marquise de Taisy-Chatenoy, *A la Cour de Napoleon III*).

Pavilion. They slowly ascended the staircase of honour, on each step of which was a cent-garde, superb in his blue tunic, his patent top-boots and his shining helmet and cuirass. In the Louis XIV salon the presentations took place, and the Emperor and Empress received the homage of the Corps Diplomatique. He wore the uniform of a full general, with the Grand Cordon and the Star of the Legion of Honour, while the Empress wore a diadem and the richest jewels of the Crown. Preceded by the great officers of their household, the ladies in waiting, the prefects of the palace, clad in gold and amaranth, the orderly officers in pale blue and silver, and the masters of ceremonies in violet and gold, Napoleon and his Consort would vacate the Louis XIV room, and walk through the throne room, the Apollo and the First Consul's room. When the chief of the State had reached the Marshals' room, a herald announced in stentorian tones, "The Emperor." The orchestra struck up the air of "Queen Hortense." The Sovereigns then occupied the arm-chairs that awaited them, and the ball began. During the course of the evening they would rise. Making their exit through the Marshals' gallery, and addressing some amiable words to those around them, they usually repaired to the gallery of Diana, where supper was served. Supper was taken standing, and four or five

thousand guests would lay siege to the hospitable buffets. During the intervals between the dances and quadrilles, those present busied themselves naming the principal guests of note, whose presence might be due to the privilege of a name, to their official position, to the honour conferred upon holders of brand-new titles, or perhaps to private invitations due for the most part to the beauty of their women folk. Busybodies eagerly pointed out the notorieties of the day, especially the pure Elysians whose ambition had brought about and made possible the restoration of the Empire.

At the head of them was Morny—the sensible, intelligent, supple and clear-headed Morny. It is useless to recall how he sacrificed Republican liberties upon the altar of a Cæsarian *régime*, thanks to which he could exercise his rights and privileges and freely distribute sinecures and honours to his friends. He had quickly chosen men capable of becoming the instruments of a daring policy, bereft of scruples, heedless of the illegitimacy of the means employed in the obtainment of the end, a flexible policy which, having secured success, lent itself readily to tolerance. It was he who, speaking of the timid Orleanists, was wont to say before the Coup d'État, "They are incapable of taking a sword in hand or putting their hand to their pockets.

We can do without such people!" Men can be judged by such expressions. This one was repeated to me by General Estancelin fifty years after he heard it spoken. No one wanted to remember Morny as the councillor of a perjurer, or the instigator of the massacres on the boulevards, who beheld him smiling placidly through the drawing-rooms of the Tuileries, a little haughty perhaps, but very courteous to men whom he despised, and very winning with women whom he knew he could conquer. When goaded on by ambition, he always knew how to curb his feelings if it was necessary that he should please. A statesman and a man of the world, a frantic gambler and an incorrigible votary of this world's voluptuous pursuits, he lived up to his motto, which taught that life should yield to man all sensations procurable through power of wealth or pleasure. Though Morny wielded the sceptre of elegance, Flain de Perseying had a personality none the less striking. The carriage of his head, his short whiskers and waxed moustache, his open and resolute countenance, his excessive ardour, which at times caused him to be voted a nuisance, all tended to make of him the Loyola of the Empire, the fanatic of the Napoleonic faith. His words were unmeasured, and his merciless darts made many enemies, who only awaited an opportunity to hurl him from his exalted position.

Those very idiosyncrasies arrested attention. He would captivate the intelligence and in turn baffle the common-sense of those with whom he came into contact. At times absent-minded to a degree; and at other times treating with consummate eloquence some weighty subject, he could always command the confidence of his hearers.

Prince Napoleon was satisfied to sulk in a corner, and there receive the adulation of his admirers. To all it was evident that his one ambition was to be master of the Tuileries, and not a Highness on a visit there. He seemed detached from the present and absorbed by some far-away dream, dreaming perhaps that some day France might be happy to throw herself into his arms!

Within the circle of thoughtful men, among diplomatists, a Drouyn de Lhuys or a Walewski called for notice. The former, a sagacious and far-seeing man, enjoyed the respect and esteem due to a great and noble character. His features were more than handsome, and they would have betrayed the secret of his Napoleonic birth had the story of his birth been a secret to any one. The effect of his physical charms would have been still greater had his manners been less cold and conventional. He was endowed with great tenacity of purpose, and with a thorough knowledge of the mainsprings of foreign politics. As a

Minister of Napoleon the Third he was doomed to realize that with a master whose one idea of diplomacy was to contradict others and himself, it was useless to endeavour to put principles into practice, and follow a definite line of conduct. Statesmen like Baroche, Billault and Fould called for special mention, but the attention of women was mainly arrested by the representatives of the foreign colony, the d'Ottensfels, the Blomers, Reuss, the gilded youth of diplomacy. They also took notice of some Spanish Grandees, with tall titles and very small statures, the Medina Cœlis Ossuna y Infantados, and the Albas. The fantastic Field-Marshal Vaillant, the elegant Fleury, and in ironical contrast to him the valiant Canrobert, far from elegant but doing his utmost to appear so, such were some of the telling lights in the military set. Canrobert afforded much amusement by endeavouring to atone for his short and squatty appearance by the dignity of his deportment, the cut of his clothes and the curling of his hair. Heroes are apt to yield to human weaknesses.

Countless interesting types might be sketched among the numbers of individuals decked in gold lace and brilliant trappings. Again, in the charming bouquet of lovely young women we could describe many exquisite creatures, and tarry long in our description. Of course in the number there were some stripped of all charms, prudes,

Jansenists of a new school that feigned to shun pleasure, the ambiguous by-products of aristocracy, the middle classes and the world of finance, one and all constructed upon a false basis. Women with commonplace and heavy features, from whom men were wont to fly. Severe-looking women who seemed to have lost their way, and who had come there only to put a stop to merriment. If, on the one hand, such ladies of honour as the *Princesse de la Moskowa* and others were the incarnation of the worldly element, others like *Mdme. de Rayneval* and *Countess de Latour Maubourg*, penitents of the *Abbé Deguerry*, the rector of the *Madeleine*, bore the austere features of devotion, wherever they went. Apart from such, and they were in the vast minority, one could not fail to be seduced by the sight of a bevy of beautiful women covered with diamonds, whose high coiffures threw out in bold relief the whiteness of their satin necks and shoulders.

These brilliant butterflies were spontaneously evolved under exceptional circumstances. The Court at which they fluttered was of yesterday's creation, and they who added to its beauty were yesterday's chrysalids. They had had no time to fade. Hence a galaxy of youth and beauty that could not be matched. The sudden irruption of ambitious courtiers who had followed in the wake of the *Coup d'État* had, of course, produced a

shower of honours and a lavish distribution of favours. Numerous households were started on a footing of luxury and elegance hardly hoped for by the innumerable chamberlains and other upstarts. Many of these were bachelors who could have made very good matches. The prettiest and most charming girls were invited to share their good fortune. They did so the more readily as they had come to obtain all they could from the new *régime*, and to take as good a bite out of the cake of pleasure as could be effected by their pretty teeth. They threw themselves into a movement in which were distinguishable by their novel bearing and their intelligence a few great ladies of the diplomatic set, and of aristocratic families who had linked their fortunes to that of the Second Empire. Composed of such diverse elements, the gathering was indeed incomparable!

In her happiest hours, Eugénie surrounded herself with pretty faces that set her off as a handsome *parure* sets off a pretty gown. The indescribable nature of her personal attractions was enhanced by the contrast of a harmonious gathering, in which were reflected her elegance, her prestige and her radiant youth.

Many of the most attractive ladies at Court were invited to the Monday "At Homes," and to the small dances of the Empress. These were social gatherings of a less solemn nature, and

therefore much more enjoyable and more select than the State functions. They were given after Easter in a series to which were bidden in turn the State dignitaries, diplomatists, eminent writers, and those whom Napoleon and his Consort wished to favour. The number of invitations never exceeded five hundred. At such gatherings, the Emperor and his household wore the dark-blue uniform with velvet collar and gold buttons; the other men present wore black evening dress, with tight breeches and stockings. The ladies, in accordance with their sweet habits, vied with one another in extravagant elegance. These balls, preceded by exclusive dinner-parties, took place in the salon of the First Consul, which was reached through the salon of Apollo. The ladies awaited the arrival of Her Majesty, standing in a double row, through which the Empress passed bowing gracefully to the right and to the left. She seemed to be inspecting a flying squadron of graceful and worldly beauties. She witnessed the dancing of the squares, quadrilles, lancers and minuets from an adjoining drawing-room, in which she sat chatting with the guests that she had bidden there, or who had found their way to her side in virtue of their intimate friendship with Her Majesty.¹

¹ Among the privileged ones may be mentioned Lord Cowley, Hubner, Metternich, Nigra; her circle of intimate

She was particularly attentive to foreign noblemen who represented in France the interests of the Great Powers. Count Hubner received signal marks of her kindness, and was constantly bidden to her side until the tendency at Court became anti-Austrian, on the eve of the war with Italy. Hubner, Austria's first Ambassador to Paris, was at all Court functions and at the Monday "At Homes." He was often invited to Fontainebleau, Compiègne or to Saint-Cloud, when the Court went there into residence. On the 13th October, 1853, he was at a dinner-party at Saint-Cloud, which he thought very select, although he was wont at times to complain of the lack of aristocracy at this French Court. He had met the Princess Mathilde, the Princess of Essling, Mistress of the Household, Viscountess Aguado, Field-Marshal Vaillant, the Grand Master of the Palace, Fleury, and the indispensable Bacciochi. Eugénie was on that day full of chat and gaiety on her return from Dieppe, where the sea-bathing had somewhat thinned and beautified her. She flitted from one subject to another with Southern vivacity, and among other subjects, she recalled the murderous attempt of the Opéra Comique. "The Police," she said, "are instituted in order to unravel plots and bring them to light, but

friends included Mérimée, Edouard Delessert, Onesyme, Aguado, Hidalgo, Guel y Rente.

no remedy can prevail against such regicides as those of Madrid and Vienna. Here the task of the Police is an easier one." So she proceeded in a light vein.

On another occasion, on the 15th May, 1854, at a dinner to which seventy-four guests were bidden, the Empress expressed the wish that the representative of Austria-Hungary should be seated on her right. Seldom was she so gay or so expansive. By chance she quoted a Spanish legend that commended itself to her romantic tastes: "Though the world gazes upon me, my looks are directed towards one alone." This she interpreted with her turbulent imagination, her unaffected sprightliness—her greatest charm, if at times it proved a great drawback to the women of Madrid and Granada. Once more she had become Mademoiselle de Montijo.

At other times she would take the Ambassador to one side, and converse with him upon matters of a vastly different nature.

"My worship for you, Madame, increases every day," was the ordinary opening sentence of the diplomatist.

"But at your Court it decreases every day," replied the Empress. "You are too bitter. On the occasion of the funeral service of Princess Th  odolinde at Stuggart, Monsieur de Buol said, 'It is high time to put a stop to the invasions of

France.' You are too bitter about small things, and we do not seem to understand each other about important ones."

Even at this time she seemed to take the keenest interest in questions concerning peace and war, alliances and international rivalries; she would approach the subject with the utmost daring, though she was but a novice; and these preliminary conversations were so many skirmishes that enabled her to get her hand in. The relations between the Emperors Napoleon and Francis Joseph were becoming more and more strained. The acute crisis, stalled off for a while, threatened to break out on the smallest provocation. Time and again at her dinners, her receptions, Eugénie had assailed Count Hubner with pressing questions, sudden apostrophies almost as keen and biting as if they were attacks. In the same wise, at a later period, she took the Chevalier Nigra to task with the utmost fervour upon the question of Italy and in the interests of the Pope.

At the Monday "At Homes" of the Empress, those who were not admitted to her intimacy, and those who neither danced nor carried on intrigues, but were satisfied to observe the passing whirlwind, found plenty of occupation in studying the galaxy of feminine beauty that congregated there. They admired the variety of the dresses, which,

notwithstanding the vagaries of the prevailing fashions, were exquisite in taste. At full leisure they could appreciate numberless *décolletages* so generously displayed. The evening invariably wound up with a cotillon, after which supper was served in the Louis XIV drawing-room.

On ordinary days the Emperor and Empress often countenanced dancing after dinner. No ceremonial was observed on such occasions. As a result, a peculiar but pleasing condition of things was obtained. The wives and daughters of high officials were alone bidden to these hops, while their partners, generals, academicians, secretaries of State and judges, were, to say the least, somewhat ripe. Most of them had neither the taste for dancing nor legs upon which to dance, but of course they did their best. Eugénie took the keenest delight in these impromptu affairs, and loved to watch the grey-haired beaux, who grew heated and breathless in the accomplishment of their task. In order to simplify matters, it was agreed that the simple and classical square dances should be adhered to. It would have been downright cruelty to include in the programme polkas, mazurkas, redowas or fast waltzes. But in due time these entertainments became very monotonous, and as the Empress ceased to derive the slightest pleasure from them, she insisted upon

introducing the young element to these small gatherings.

During the hours that intervened between State receptions, balls, concerts, appearances in public and private audiences, Eugénie was wont to retire to her apartments and remain there in comparative solitude—in her study, reading, writing or drawing, and taking cognizance of the chief events or the telling works of the day; often she would go out in the early morning to pay a round of charitable visits in the poorest slums of Paris. When bent on these mysterious errands of charity she drove in a dark-coloured landau. In the afternoon she was often seen in the Bois du Boulogne in brilliant equipages. She developed the taste for collecting autographs, letters, State papers, which she knew would acquire historical value in the course of years. From the beginning of her married life she evinced a passionate interest in the family of Bonaparte, and her collection of documents relating to it occupied a long line of volumes which she treasured.

The Empress and Spiritualism; Table-turning.

On other occasions she was wont to yield to her inquisitive mind and to her imagination to an extent not always reasonable. She was mystical

by nature, not to say superstitious. Spiritualism and its attendant ceremonies and performances leaped into favour, thanks to her encouragement. She practically started and consecrated these practices by the extraordinary favours she dispensed to the famous medium, Hume, a Scotchman, naturalized American, who suddenly came and conquered Paris. He was a nine days' wonder at Court and in society, who disappeared as swiftly as he came.

The Empress, Madame Kalerdgi and the high-born dames of haughty Poland went into ecstasies about this canny trickster, and sang his praises far and wide. With utmost sincerity and trembling voice Eugénie related as she left one of his *séances*, that she had felt the touch, cold and warm alternately, of a hand which seized hers under the table, and she even asserted that she had seen this phantom hand. The Emperor was also much impressed by what she had seen and related. She became impassioned, frenzied, about this sort of evocation. As soon as she thought herself surrounded by sympathetic and communicative souls, she proceeded forthwith to try some new test upon the sensitiveness of a centre-table. It often occurred that those present became somewhat heedless, notwithstanding her strict recommendation to all present that the matter should be treated most seriously. In such cases she

would immediately adjourn the sitting till a more opportune time, displaying great annoyance at the careless behaviour of the said sympathetic souls.

Officious courtiers lent themselves sedulously and skilfully to the enactment of the comedy, so currying the favour of their Imperial mistress. One evening, at one of her intimate gatherings, the conversation fell upon magnetism. Bacciochi, the Chamberlain, was the subject-designate for the experiment. He allowed himself to be hypnotized by Dr. Hume. If he did not really fall asleep he played the part to perfection, perspiring, laughing and crying alternately.

“Are you in pain?” said the operator.

“Oh yes, in great pain,” replied the patient.

“Where do you suffer?”

“In my heart.”

“Don’t you sleep well here?”

“No.”

“Where would you like to be asleep?” And before the answer came the Empress intervened.

“Don’t ask him that question, Doctor; he sometimes says such silly things.”

Table-turning and table-talking were the order of the day in every drawing-room. The spiritualistic epidemic was short-lived, for the pastimes and distractions indulged in at the Tuileries were ever ephemeral.

The winter and the spring of 1853 flew past in the giddy atmosphere of festivities and pleasure. The reception-rooms of the old palace of the Kings had donned their freshest clothing in honour of the young spouse. The long series of entertainments organized in honour of the happy circumstances was replete with brilliancy and profuse lavishness. It seemed as though these charming functions had come to the end of their tether. Towards the autumn, however, the Imperial receptions were resumed, notwithstanding a series of calamities, epidemics and inundations which plunged the country into desolation. From the fall of the first leaf in 1853 right through the year of 1854 the doings at Court simulated, in the words of Pierre de la Gorce, one perpetual carnival.

They were no doubt justifiable, for as official and elegant displays they undoubtedly made for the good of trade in general, and benefited industry by giving work to many. So much did they effect even when they did not take place in behalf of some charitable institution.

The war and its tragic shadows soon cast a gloom upon these doings. While the Embassies of Paris, London, Vienna and St. Petersburg exchanged hurried dispatches, and as the storm that husbanded the thunderbolt was gathering upon the horizon, a great ball was given at the

Tuileries. The Empress was in the best of moods, chatting, laughing and playing with her fan as a Spanish lady only can play. She had danced the first quadrille with the Austrian Ambassador, and afterwards had kept him chatting with her. This important individual was able to learn from her own mouth the reasons which made her give up the idea or intention of wearing a certain toilette, because, forsooth, Queen Marie Antoinette had worn a similar one on a similar occasion.

The declaration of war was imminent. In a letter of the 29th January, Nicholas had not minced his words, declaring that it did not suit him to give any consideration to the terms and conditions proposed by Napoleon III. The arsenals were working at fever heat; the fleet was arming actively. But should the ball be countermanded—the fancy-dress ball that was announced to take place at Court on the 18th February? It took place, and, as usual, was a brilliant affair. The Empress once more bade the Ambassador of Austria-Hungary sit by her side upon the daïs, where he had to listen to the petty details of an insignificant and endless conversation. She was dressed as a Grecian lady, her fair hair and neck and breast laden with pearls, diamonds and other stones. Her features betrayed a certain sadness, though it was difficult to say whether this sadness

was superficial or whether it was born of the thought of human blood about to be spilt, of the flows of tears that would soon be caused by an awful cataclysm. Be it as it may, Count Hubner did not fail to notice that when the cotillon was danced and supper served Her Majesty partook of the meal with generous appetite. In truth this sudden rise to arms of France against Russia, with the aid of England and Turkey, had taken her by surprise, as it had done public opinion. In the whirlwind of pleasure traversed by her she had been unable to espy the threatening forebodings of this campaign, the inception of which had no serious ground, and the result of which was merely to be the aggrandizement of England. Though she already endeavoured between two quadrilles to penetrate the oracles of diplomacy in conversation with the representatives of foreign Powers, she still displayed much discretion in conversing upon diplomatic subjects. As yet she did not aspire to being listened to, as she soon would, in the councils of a State. As yet she was only the first lady of her Court, and did not seem to harbour any other ambition. The secret combinations of the European chess-board did not interest her, at least apparently. She became apprised of them, spoke of them, and perhaps judged them, for she would have been deeply hurt if her intelligence and her political capabilities had not been

recognized to the extent of her being made aware of what was going on. She did not, however, consider herself called upon as yet to take a direct or active part in the deliberations of higher politics. During this phase of her worldly domination, when she reigned supreme over fashion and etiquette, questions of international moment were of less importance in her mind than those concerning the organization and the invitation list of a great State ball at the Tuileries.

She glided with full sail upon the waters of pleasure. Now and again she got out of her course. At fancy-dress balls and *tableaux vivants* great liberties were sometimes indulged in, but they were held in check, as a rule, by the rules of ceremonial, from the observation of which no one was exempt. The rules of etiquette were all the stricter because they had been so recently drafted. Over such matters the Empress watched more jealously even than did her Imperial spouse. Napoleon, with his air of apparent indifference, would possibly have closed his eyes to certain infractions of the formulæ, or might not even have noticed them. Eugénie did not tolerate any omission upon a subject in a matter that she took much to heart, for the threefold reason that she was a woman, a Spanish woman, and a princess of fortune.

There is no lack of examples proving the

excessive importance lent by her to all matters of ceremonial. The following telling anecdote, related by Ludovic Halévy, gives us the keynote, and enables us to draw a fair picture of the situation. A gala performance, given in the theatre of the Château of Versailles in honour of the King of Spain, was attended by the *élite*, and presented a dazzling picture, made up of gorgeous uniforms that intermingled with exquisite toilettes, the latest creations of taste and lavishness. Food for the eyes, food also for the mind! The choruses of the Conservatoire and the *corps de ballet* of the Opéra had been requisitioned, in order to lend full brilliancy to the setting of the *Psyché* of Corneille and Molière, interpreted by the artists of the Comédie Française. Invitations on this occasion had been eagerly sought for. As the curtain rose, the spectators gazed in rapture upon the stage, where the loveliest actresses of the Comédie were foregathered, enacting the principal parts. Their eyes wandered to the Imperial box, which faced the stage, and in which were seated the Emperor and Empress with their Royal guests. The features of the Empress bore witness to her triumph, and her evident joy was ascribed to the fact that she was acting as an Imperial hostess to him who had been her Sovereign when she was still Mademoiselle de Montijo. Ludovic Halévy, who occupied a stage box with Auber and Emile Perrin, the

director of the Opéra, did not fail to record his impressions on the occasion, for he could study at leisure the features of the hosts and their guests, who occupied three arm-chairs that were almost thrones. During the performance the Empress suddenly indulged in a movement of great impatience, irritated, no doubt, by some omission of etiquette that seemed to have shocked her. She insisted upon the immediate presence of the Chamberlain. He came to her presence with low and reverential bow, clad in brilliant red uniform, with gold pommel by his side, and the azure broad ribbon of the Spanish order upon his breast. All present wondered what could be the little detail that had disturbed the centre of gravity of the sacrosanct Imperial etiquette. What had been the crime committed by the unfortunate Chamberlain? He blushed, he stammered, he trembled, but, humble as was his demeanour, it begot no mercy, nor could he stay the flow of bitter words that fell upon his head like a heavy shower—words spoken by the infuriated Eugénie. At last the Emperor intervened softly, so as to stay the Imperial anger and to calm the agitation of the Empress. The King of Spain, an unwilling witness to this family scene, indulged in awkward gestures, apparently endeavouring to assure Her Majesty that he, for one, attached no importance to a slight breach of etiquette. The incident

however, riveted the attention of the house to such an extent that Corneille and Molière were utterly forgotten, that the performance of *Psyché* became a negligible quantity in the minds of all those present until the features of the offended Sovereign showed that her ruffled feelings were soothed at last and that the incident was closed. Then, and only then, were the interpreters of the masterpiece afforded a hearing.

At the Tuileries there was ever a strange admixture of starchy stiffness and Bohemian heedlessness during the reign of the improvised Sovereigns of the Second Empire. The courtiers, as well as their Royal masters, betokened the existence of this anomaly. They seemed overtaken with surprise by the newness—sudden, almost miraculous—of this sovereignty. The fear of forgetting themselves, of neglecting the slightest detail of their duties, apparently overwhelmed them, leading them to exaggerate their attitude by imparting to it formalities, excessive as they were, often grafted upon a *laissez-faire* in strange contrast with the exaggerated and affected formalities of this new-born Court. Speaking of the Empress and her relations with her surroundings, Pierre de la Gorce says, "Owing to her lack of ascendancy over her surroundings, the Empress afforded two examples equally nefarious—that of a condescension which at times justified the ignoring of all

rules, and that of a severity which inopportunately called those rules to mind." At times she would share the levity of those around her with graceful simplicity, and apparently enter fully into the fun, while endeavouring to preserve a certain gravity in her demeanour. Then just as suddenly, as it moved by a sudden return to thoughts of greatness, and by the fear that this abandon might militate against etiquette, she would tighten the reins of discipline, obtaining a sudden purchase upon herself and those with whom but a minute previously she had been on terms of the greatest familiarity.

Despotic caprices, whims, seemed betimes to possess themselves of her, and while she was all-powerful such whims found grace before the worshipping crowd of her adorers, who might have judged them more severely had they themselves been less servile. Often her actions, caused by impulses that were anything but noble, were interpreted as due to youthful proclivities, or to the fantasies of her sex.

One day as she walked through her apartments, accompanied by Colonel Verly, she stopped to gaze out upon the Guardsman who was mounting sentry under her windows, motionless as a statue, for thus were the sentries trained to stand. After gazing at him a while she burst out laughing, and turning to the Colonel of the

regiment, she said, "You must admit, my dear Verly, that this imperturbable rigidity of your men is only a make-believe, and that it would require very little to make them move."

"Will your Majesty test the fact?" replied the commanding officer.

"Supposing I insulted him?" she said.

"Your Majesty is mistress of your own actions, but I will answer for my man."

There and then she proceeded to test the soldier, and frowning upon him with a hard expression in her eyes, she proceeded to inveigh against him upon some question of discipline.

The sentry may have been taken unawares by the suddenness of this avalanche, but at any rate he displayed no signs of emotion. Erect, motionless, like a marble statue, he stood presenting arms. The undeserved words of reproach seemed to glide off his tunic. Seeing that she had failed to move him by word of mouth, she smote him on the cheek and proceeded on her way.

On the morrow she inquired his name, and sent him a gift of £20 in atonement for the insult she had inflicted upon him; but for once she had met a model soldier. He caused the money to be returned to the Empress, with a note from him to the effect that he was only too happy to have harboured upon his face the hand of his beloved Sovereign!

The heart of a courtier evidently beat under the tunic of a Guardsman. With less adulation and more dignity he might have refused the gift, invoking better reasons for doing so. He preferred to thank his Empress, and preserve the imprint of the Imperial slap as a souvenir full of sweetness during the remainder of his life.

Though she was wont at times to raise her voice in the course of a passing quarrel, or to burst out into loud laughter, she always appeared full of dignity and self-composure in the presence of her Court. It is easy to realize the barriers set up by her against possible familiarities on the part of her surroundings, if one considers the extraordinary amount of rigid etiquette that obtained at her Monday "At Homes." As soon as the family dinner was over, at about ten o'clock, she would enter the drawing-room, and take her seat in an arm-chair¹ that was a sort of bugbear to her suite. No one dared come within a certain distance of it without being instructed to do so

¹ From this point of observation she was wont to study the physiognomy and the doings of those present. On such occasions, as Princess Mathilde felt compelled to attend the gatherings, she often caused a certain amount of displeasure by conversing familiarly with those around her, laughing and joking without apparently stopping to consider whether in so doing she was acting with all the dignity expected of a Royal Highness. So two or three times in the course of the evening the Empress would bid her to her side, and thus put a break upon the natural expansiveness of her nature.

by the Lord Chamberlain. As a result, the minds of those who stood within the sacred circle around the Imperial chair seemed paralyzed and frozen, while the rest of the company enjoyed the gaiety to its full content.

Fortunately this was not always the case. Just as the Emperor knew how to be charming when he chose to discard his natural moodiness, so she could also be charming to those she liked. With them she would multiply the subjects of conversation, and appear interested by it, nay, wrapped up in it at times. Should Mérimée contribute a gay or heated note, she did not resent it, but soon became her natural self. Joining in the chat, she would recall the recollections of her native country, her education, her journeys across the Estramadura, or take an active part in the discussion. Once more she was Eugénie de Montijo, and her natural vivacity would reassert itself with all the turbulence of her Southern imagination. These returns to her old self generally occurred in the company of friends who had known her before she ascended the throne, when she was in *Society*—to use her own expression—or in that of diplomatists whose presence at the Tuileries was keenly appreciated. Did they not represent the aristocratic element at this Court, which was more or less boycotted by members of the old nobility, who through their

love of old institutions were fain to sulk with the new régime conditions? She was well aware of this, and had good reason to appreciate it.

In truth, the *élite* of the Faubourg Saint-Germain remained outside the official world, with the exception of a few of its members whose adhesion to Imperialism was deemed precious. Though the advent of a Montmorency was near at hand, the la Rochefoucaulds would have been surprised indeed to meet the la Tremoilles at the Tuileries. The fact that the Duchess de Polignac would have willingly given up her beautiful mansion on the Place Louis XV in order to go to Court was not referred to. In vain one would have looked for the Duchess de la Ferté, or Countess Pozzo di Borgo, or Madame de Beaufort, *née* de Chateaubriand, or Countesses de Blacas and de Navailles, in the *entourage* of the Empress.

The Royalists of the old stock lived upon the inheritance of the past, and hoped that the future might bring them compensations that were not destined to see the light of day. They could not succeed in playing false to their principles by accepting any compromise with the new dynasty. Notwithstanding the almost religious veneration in which the Empress Eugénie held the memory of Queen Marie Antoinette, notwithstanding the fact that her Imperial husband reproached her publicly with being more Royalist than Bonapartist,

and despite the promise that a most seductive welcome awaited their coming, the representatives of the old legitimist party held aloof. At one of the great receptions at Fontainebleau there was only one representative of the old *régime*, Prince de Bauffremont, but the diplomatic world, composed of the spoilt and petted children of Courts and aristocracies, was present to a man, and so the international link joining folk of good social standing was duly strengthened.

It is needless to say that the democratic element found no room at these great festivals. Though it was not completely eliminated, it had been treated with much severity, and the parvenus and politicians invited had been much chastened in their manners and ideas. The feminine element at Court contained certain alloys that somewhat jarred upon the whole, for among the ladies invited at Court there were not a few of the handsomest and wittiest who belonged to the foreign colony that had its privileged *entrées* through the Princess Mathilde. In the ranks of this colony one could point to more than one princess of doubtful origin. Some of these great beauties hailed from the North, with weird tastes, ways and manners that dealt a heavy blow to decorum. The principles that ruled their conduct and their education were open to severe comment, and many of them, be they foreigners or French,

would have felt very uncomfortable if an indiscreet light had been suddenly thrown upon the origin of their titles and their fortunes. Their external appearance betrayed a lack of propriety which did not escape analytical minds. Lord Malmesbury, British Ambassador, referred to this with little favour when he wrote of them on the 1st October, 1862¹: "With the exception of Madame Walewska, all the ladies who surround the Empress are decidedly vulgar. They wear their hair dressed in Chinese fashion, and drawn so tightly that they can hardly close their eyes. Their scarlet jackets and mantles are in the worst of taste, inasmuch as most of them are fair women."

Often the cosmopolitan *laissez-aller* of the Court, which the Protocole was unable to keep in hand, put the Empress to serious inconvenience. She endeavoured more and more to expurgate the invitation list; but she had to contend with too many recommendations and hidden influences, which, added to the example of the Emperor and his facile *liaisons*, made it difficult for her to adhere to her own wishes.

¹ On the same day he entered the following note in his diary: "I have returned to Paris in the Imperial carriage with Mr. and Madame de Morny, Mr. Walewska and his wife, and two ladies in waiting, the one Madame de Pierre, *née* Thorne, an American, and the other, Madame de Morny, a Russian, smoked incessantly in the face of the Empress. She is really too indulgent towards her *entourage*."

She had best bear what she could not avoid. She made up her mind to widen more or less the meshes of the net into which many curious personalities were wont to slip under the flattering unction of a title of external beauty and elegance. It proved impossible to change the existing order of things. The elements of youth that surrounded the Empress carried her away. When all is considered, it is only fair to say that at this period of her life it was neither of her age nor her nature to view worldly pleasures with a strong hatred. Easily did she become a votary of them, for during these happy days everything seemed to fashion itself to her sweet will ; she had not yet been scratched and scarred by the sharp thorns of politics, nor had religion become the importunate counsellor which later on she tried to introduce into the field of human reality. The crowd adored her, singing her praises and enumerating her deeds of generosity. They related with enthusiasm the handsome sacrifice she had made on the morrow of her wedding when she handed over to the poor of the capital the price of the magnificent necklace bestowed upon her by the town of Paris. A meritorious but very intelligent sacrifice, for she received at the hands of the Emperor a jewel of the same value, £40,000 to wit. The official Press and the public voice praised the active solicitude displayed by her in

the creation of new philanthropic institutions. They praised the zeal of the august Sovereign in multiplying the number of aid societies, work-rooms, infant asylums, day nurseries, convalescent homes and asylums of all sorts. She personally administered and inspected these charitable organizations, urging one and all around her to take an active part in her work. This was the ransom she paid to the populace, whom she dazzled year in and year out with the lavish luxury of her parties, festivals and receptions.

CHAPTER V

Happy days—A few clouds in a bright sky—Recollections of the Crimean War—1855-1858—The Empress Eugénie and Queen Victoria—The former's visit to Windsor—The Queen at Saint-Cloud—Royal and princely receptions at the Tuileries—The close of 1856—Frederick-William and Baron von Moltke at the Marsan pavilion—An important event during the same year—Birth of Prince Louis-Napoleon—Official and popular rejoicings—The most prosperous year of Napoleon's reign—Abortive meeting between the Tsarina Marie and Eugénie—The night of January 14, 1858—The Orsini bombs and their effect upon home and foreign events—The political world extols the conduct of Eugénie during the tragic occurrence—Prospects of a regency—The real actual regency—The position of the Empress during her husband's absence—The war in Italy—How the Empress was able to lessen its ill-effects and shortened its duration—The unknown testimony—The Empress Elizabeth, the Abbé Bauer, and the Empress of the French—After the treaty of Villafranca—Some hours of peace and happiness—Napoleon, Eugénie and the Prince Imperial are together once again at the Château of Saint-Cloud.

THE Empress now enjoyed a matchless spell of life. The dazzling sphere in which her star shone so brilliantly afforded nought but opportunities and pretexts for exuberant and magnificent rejoicings. Among those who witnessed the spectacle, but took no part in it, there were not a few slanderers who rancorously criticized this thoughtless, light-hearted way of governing a Court. She was well aware of such criticisms, but criticism did not sting her then as it did in

later years. She would shrug her shoulders, and say in answer to the tattler—

“Really, do they find fault with the gay doings at the Tuileries? The least I may do is to provide some distraction for the poor Emperor, and show him some pretty women, when he has been worried all day with political cares.”

Ample relaxation for the weary monarch was provided by a galaxy of beautiful and witty women, fired by the enthusiasm born of youthful confidence. Some of the joyful hours were clouded, notwithstanding, by sadness and anxiety. The new Imperial dictatorship, whose advent was heralded by assurances of peace for France, soon created a sense of stupefaction by awaking the gods of war and heedlessly precipitating the Crimean drama. However, final success had shed a glimmer of heroism and poetry upon such gloomy pictures of the campaign as were afforded by the battle-fields, strewn with dead and dying, and ambulances thronged with sick and wounded. In a word, the war crowned by victory was described by an eminent historian as a magnificent preface to the reign of Napoleon the Third. The sufferings of the people had also faded away in the dazzling brightness of happy days. The cholera epidemic which played great havoc from 1853 to 1855 had come to an end. The terrible floods that laid waste the valleys of the Rhone and of the Loire

were to urge the popularity of the Master, by enabling him to prove his eagerness to meet and alleviate pressing wants, and to promote without delay such protective operations as would effectively prevent the recurrence of similar disasters.

The high price of food-stuffs was another trump in his hand, because it was practically counter-balanced by the progressive increase in wages. As a result of all this, every opinion expressed and every judgment passed upon the Empire and the existing order of things were couched in words of praise or of mitigation. Successful business undertakings and lucky speculations were the order of the day. The ancient city of Paris was rejuvenated and embellished by the magic wand of Baron Haussmann, its Prefect.

The satisfaction caused by all these circumstances was displayed at Court with more effusion than anywhere, and found expression in the great number and the magnificence of Imperial functions and social entertainments.

Eugénie lent a willing ear to the arguments adduced in vindication of all these frivolous excesses. While preserving an outward demeanour of pity and dignity, she meant to neglect none of the pleasant features of her task.

At balls and receptions, the charming vivacity of her beautiful eyes, her exquisite shoulders

emerging from their lace and muslin flounces as from a cloud, and the suppleness of her movements, gained a chorus of approval.

During the sunny hours of the afternoon, the Parisian crowds would sally forth to meet her postillion-chaise, preceded by outriders, flanked by equerries, and followed by an escort, as she drove through the wide avenues that lead to the Bois de Boulogne. In December and January, when the lake presented an evenly frozen surface, skating afforded a delightful pastime, to which the Empress always gave the first impetus.

Wearing a small toque and a woollen veil, and a sealskin garment fitting close to the waist, she would glide over the ice with the swiftness of an arrow, outlining the graceful curves and undulations of a bird in mid-air. She was the cynosure of every eye. In spring-time she would flit from one Royal residence to another, or travel abroad, but, wherever she went, public interest and curiosity followed her every movement.

Towards the beginning of 1855, Napoleon decided to effect a purpose which he had harboured for some time, to wit, a journey to England with the object of inviting the late Queen Victoria to graciously consent to visit the Universal Exhibition that was being organized in Paris. He wished the Empress to accompany him, as he was desirous that she should share the pleasure he

hoped to derive from this official undertaking. Napoleon and Eugénie sailed from France at the beginning of April, and landed amid scenes of brilliant splendour. Prince Albert met the Sovereigns, and accompanied them to Windsor, where the Queen, surrounded by her children, greeted them most heartily, in a manner as stately as it was friendly. Then came a succession of days never to be forgotten. The entrance into London, witnessed by a huge concourse of people, evoked a storm of enthusiasm. The weather was ideal, the thoroughfares thronged and lined by thousands who watched the progress of the procession, consisting of six open carriages, with an escort of Life Guards, and a number of scarlet-coated outriders. As the carriages proceeded at a walking pace up St. James's Street, the Emperor leaned towards the Empress and showed her the house he had lived in formerly. The crowd seized the meaning of his gesture and cheered him. The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the City, invited the Royal guests to a great banquet at the Guildhall, and Count Walewski gave orders for a brilliant reception at the French Embassy.

Soon after their return, Queen Victoria announced her intention of visiting Paris, and within a short time her presence as guest of the chief of the State in the Palace of Saint-Cloud set a seal upon the Anglo-French Alliance, created

new ties of friendship between her and the Empress, and compelled the Council of Sovereigns to admit Napoleon the Third within their ranks.

On the 15th May the Exhibition was officially opened with great pomp. These peaceful festivities, inaugurated and continued in time of war, were the inception of an era of splendour that was to make Paris the trysting-place of the civilized world. A source of supreme satisfaction indeed to her who, three years previously, was but the Countess of Teba! Prince Jérôme Napoleon, the appointed President of these Assize Courts of Commerce and Industry, met the Emperor and his Consort at the entrance of the main hall, and conducted them to a throne upon a raised platform, the back of which was draped with a huge red velvet cloth embroidered in gold. All eyes were riveted upon Eugénie, radiant with joy.

In those days the journeys of Crowned Heads and Princes of the Royal Blood were effected with much more ostentation and pageantry than is customary now. Etiquette made greater efforts to safeguard the prestige of monarchy in its smallest details. Nations still attached sensational importance to the peregrinations of those who wore a crown. At the Tuileries, extraordinary eagerness was displayed in multiplying the number of official ceremonies and functions

for the worthy celebration of the Queen of England's visit in 1855, and of those of King Victor Emmanuel and the Duke of Brabant. The Empress devoted herself unsparingly to the duties inherent to lavish hospitality.

The following year witnessed a great many comings and goings at the Tuileries, where Royal guests arrived in quick succession. They were compelled to return to the French capital by a sense of feverish curiosity, due, no doubt, to the rapid improvements which changed its aspect with incredible rapidity.

Towards the end of 1856, Baron von Moltke, the future Chief of the Staff of the German Army, was the guest at the Marsan Pavilion, and the result of his visit was none the less important for having passed almost unnoticed at the time. On his return from London, whither he had accompanied Prince Frederick William on his presentation visit to Princess Augusta, his affianced bride, the Baron spent a fortnight in Paris, taking stock of all he saw. The Emperor greeted Prince Frederick William and the Prussian officer at the foot of the grand staircase of the Tuileries, and led them forthwith to the blue drawing-room of the Empress. The heir-apparent and Baron von Moltke, who had had no time to change their clothes during the journey, had taken the precaution to wear full uniform and the insignia of

their orders. Napoleon wore the uniform of a field-marshal of France, and the broad ribbon of the Black Eagle of Prussia. The Empress's dress was dark green and black, with a high bodice, and very simple, but in the best of taste. In the evening her guests beheld her in a much more elaborate costume, a white satin gown, showing bare neck and arms, which von Moltke thought incomparable. She had a coiffure of deep red, and around her neck a double row of priceless pearls. She lavished nice sayings upon her guests, so much so that her spontaneous amiability seemed somewhat excessive. The exuberance of her manners was the result of her early education at Carabanchel.

"Her delivery is fast and fluent," said von Moltke, "and her bearing is hardly that which one expects to find in such high station."

His judgment of Napoleon was not very flattering, for notwithstanding his grave appearance, he seemed to discern a certain amount of awkwardness.

"In his own drawing-room," he wrote, "he does not display an imposing attitude, and in conversation he exhibits a certain amount of constraint in his demeanour. He is an Emperor, but not a King."

Frederick William occupied the Castle, while a suite of rooms in the Marsan Pavilion, formerly

occupied by the Orleans Princes, was placed at the disposal of Baron von Moltke. They seldom remained in their apartments, but spent their time sight-seeing, observing and studying the town. The future field-marshal admired and criticized in turn. A thorough soldier, he noticed, and observed in a letter to his wife, that the barracks, though elegant in appearance, were bereft of cleanliness or sanitation, and that in the march past at the review the troops broke step and carried their rifles in a slovenly fashion.¹ This was at the end of 1856. Von Moltke returned to France on two occasions, first in 1867, and, alas, again in 1870!

The year ended with the conclusion of peace, the submissive peace to which the Russian Government had to bow. The year 1856 had witnessed another great event, which raised the prosperity of the Napoleonic family to its zenith. We refer to the birth of the Prince Imperial.

In April 1853 fond hopes had already been nurtured in the intimate *entourage* of the Tuileries. Veiled indiscretions had inspired definite prognoses. The Empress had been seized with sudden illness. She had committed the imprudence of taking a warm bath, which

¹ "They seemed to attach no importance to this detail, which in our Army would have earned extra drills for all concerned" (Von Moltke, *Letters to Baroness von Moltke*).



THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCE IMPERIAL,
16th March, 1856: from a lithograph by R. de Moraine



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caused acute pain, and induced the result that frequently occurs in similar cases. She was confined to bed for several weeks. As a result of all this, the drawing-room talk of Paris was monopolized by women who hoped to become mothers and by those who had just done so. This novel subject of gossip brought back to one's memory the letters of Madame de Maintenon to the Princesse des Ursins, in which is frequently mentioned with circumstantial details the interesting condition of the ladies at the Court of Louis the Fourteenth. When discussing such matters, Parisian society evinced little sympathy towards the Empress and the Napoleonic dynasty, for the *régime* of the Coup d'État was as yet but grudgingly accepted, and the proud aristocracy of France could not forgive Eugénie de Montijo for having ascended the throne without being at least a Princess of the blood.

In the month of May she had to take carriage exercise. She seemed fatigued and suffering at the great Court reception of the 1st January, 1854. Eventually she recovered. There followed similar inklings and false alarms, due to real or imaginary pallors, but the Empress was in despair at her hopes not being fulfilled. The Palais Royal rejoiced at the delay. On the 16th May, 1856, the secret joy of Jérôme Napoleon was cut short and his hopes of becoming heir-presumptive

dashed to the ground by a report that was echoed far and wide and confirmed by the salvo of a hundred and one guns. Louis Eugène Napoleon had been born in the midst of the Tuileries festivities.¹

Endless illusions filled the heart and the imagination of those most interested in prolonging the happy dream. From the windows of the Palace one could hear the joyful celebrations of the city. It seemed as if each of its residents had become the recipient of worldly wealth through this happy birth. Court poets, such as Théophile Gautier and Barthélemy, had attuned their lyres to sing in the language of the gods the coming of the providential child. Three days after the confinement of the Empress, the various State deputations were solemnly led past the cradle where he indulged in his first slumbers.

Three months elapsed. It was common knowledge that Pope Pius the Ninth had consented to become godfather to the Imperial babe, though the

¹ "19th March, 1856. I learn from a letter from de Persigny that the Empress has been safely delivered of a son. The Emperor did not leave his wife's room for a minute, and was in a state of nervousness that baffled all description. He cried incessantly for fifteen hours. When the child was born he kissed the first five people he found in the adjoining room. Then, remembering that his action was somewhat undignified, he exclaimed, 'I really cannot kiss you all'" (*Memoirs of a Late Minister*, by Lord Malmesbury, p. 230).

Army and public opinion in general wanted the child to have a military godfather.

Cardinal Patrizzi, the papal legate, and Princess Stéphanie of Baden were to act as sponsors for His Holiness and the Queen of Sweden.

The 14th June was indeed a red-letter day. Endless lines of troops in brilliant uniforms glittering with gold, silver and steel, an endless procession of carriages conveying to the metropolitan church the members of the Government, Ambassadors and distinguished guests, followed by the Imperial equipages and the cee-spring coach. In it was seated the nurse, a native of Burgundy, dressed in her best, who carried in her arms the infant Prince, the object of all these demonstrations, the source of all this hope. The military bands played the National Anthem the while the huge crowd pressed into the depths of the basilica. Surrounded by his clergy, the Archbishop of Paris received the Emperor and Empress at the principal entrance. The organ pealed forth a triumphant march. Notre-Dame displayed to the fullest its religious pomp. The Imperial Protocole had surpassed itself in the imposing grandeur of this baptismal solemnity!

On that day the upstart of the 2nd December could honestly boast of having reached the zenith of human joy, or at least of such joy as he could aspire to, not being in possession of gifts

that are only the appanage of youth. Heaven, Fate or Providence, whichever name one chooses to give to this unknown power that forges the chain of circumstance, had showered upon him remarkable proofs of kindness. He reigned peacefully over one of the most flourishing empires of the world. A child in the cradle, and a companion beautified by the untold charms of maternity, smiled to him and loved him. Other women, pretty and attractive, would fain vary his impressions and solicit his attention, ready, aye willing, to bow to his caprice, to submit to his desires. If, on the one hand, he had good cause to rejoice in the national prosperity, he was also bound to admit that he had had a lion's share of personal and intimate joys. The fate of the spouse was as happy as that of her husband, though her freedom was somewhat curtailed in comparison to his.

During the year 1857 weeks and months followed each other in the lap of abundance and security. Quick to seize upon the advantages of important concessions granted to the Church and to Christian society, Napoleon and his Consort had just visited Catholic Brittany with a success akin to triumph. What a pilgrimage it was to Brest, to Notre-Dame d'Auray, to Saint-Servan, to Saint-Malo! They were met everywhere with religious enthusiasm by deputations headed by



THE EMPEROR, THE EMPRESS AND THE PRINCE IMPERIAL.



priests and preceded by banners. In the evenings they were spellbound and surprised by the unwonted sound of the Breton bagpipes and the hautboys, to the strains of which the peasants danced. The children of Armorica were filled with love and ecstasy for the fair Sovereign, so beautiful, so bewitching in her robes of pale-blue tulle, seamed with gold and silver thread, whose bows and smiles were lavished upon the respectful and gazing crowd. Eugénie must still remember the warm ovation afforded her by the Breton people in those days whose morrows were not to be so pure or replete with joy.

1857 was perhaps the greatest year of Napoleon's reign. He feared no attack from without, while at home public opinion sang so dumb that no criticism, no hostile feeling was expressed. In peace and in the company of his chosen companion, he enjoyed his happiness to the full, while complacently watching the growth of the heir-presumptive to the throne.

The happy course of these enchanted days was varied by peaceful interviews. After the visit to Osborne, Queen Victoria's favourite residence in the Isle of Wight, where the ties of friendship between France and England were made tighter, Napoleon met the Emperor of Russia, his erstwhile enemy. This interview took place at Stuttgart between the 25th and the 28th Sep-

tember. It was noticed that the Empress of the French had not been bidden to share in the honours of conversation, and her absence, it was surmised, was the outcome of a secret understanding the object of which was to keep her aloof. Any doubt upon the subject was dispelled by the knitting together of significant circumstances. The Empress of Russia, then at Darmstadt, had announced her intention of not repairing to Stuttgart. No doubt she feared the ordeal of competing with elegance and wit in a meeting at which she might have suffered defeat. According to Rothan, the practised diplomatist, who saw her at Stuttgart, the Empress Marie, whose origin was shrouded in mystery,¹ was in no way imperial in her bearing or her manners. She exhaled the atmosphere of a little German Court, that dullest of all provincial atmospheres. Much against her will, Eugénie had also to forego this journey. But at the last moment the Czarina changed her mind, and insisted upon being present at the interview of the two Emperors. A somewhat legitimate feeling of resentment and pique sprang to the breast of Eugénie, and such a feeling did not tend to improve the existing relations between Paris and St. Petersburg. She had just been reminded in a telling, if indirect manner, of

¹ She was supposed to be the daughter of one Monsieur de Grancy.

the prejudices obtaining among the high society of Germany and Austria, which rendered admission to its midst much more difficult for women than for men, and almost impossible to such women as were not born within its pale. But this impression of pique was not a lasting one. A few balls and parties sufficed to drive it away, and she sought and found consolation in assuming her share of the spontaneous and great success scored by her husband at Stuttgart, where the personality of Alexander was almost unheeded.

The Empress continued to dream dreams of sweet long hope. The newspapers, as usual, lauded in every key her eagerness to relieve social misery and human suffering by the creation of charitable institutions, in which creation her spirit of benevolence found full play. One opportunity alone was needed by a fulsome Press—that of proving that she was also possessed of a soul as brave, as valiant as it was kind. A tragic event soon afforded the missing opportunity. It was the attempt upon the lives of the Imperial couple made by Orsini and his three companions, Gomez, Petrie and Rudio. On Thursday, the 14th January, 1858, it was made known that their Majesties would attend the performance of the Opéra. Due preparations were made in expectation of their visit, and at half-past eight the Royal procession made its way across the Place

de l'Opéra. The first carriage, containing the officers of the Imperial household, had already driven past the peristyle of the theatre. A detachment of Lancers of the Guard followed, preceding the Imperial carriage, in which sat the Emperor, the Empress and General Roguet. As it slowed up at the entrance reserved for the Sovereigns, loud explosions rent the air. Three bombs charged with bullets had exploded between the wheels, projecting at haphazard their deadly engines and strewing the ground with numerous victims, while by a miracle the one object of the attempt had been spared. Napoleon's hat was pierced through and through by a bullet, while the eye and cheek of the Empress were cut with broken glass. Her white dress was besmeared with the blood of one of the horses of the escort. She did not utter a cry. Her emotion was betrayed only by her pallor. Eye-witnesses declared that as Napoleon and Eugénie walked from the carriage to the Imperial box, the Emperor seemed completely unnerved, while his Consort displayed intrepid calmness. During the performance, that no one witnessed or heeded, a host of distinguished people foregathered in haste. Eugénie showed them General Roguet's cloak, riddled with bullets, and, pointing to the Emperor, she jokingly said, "We have to thank His Majesty for this little treat."

The plots of the Hippodrome and the Opéra Comique had been forgotten since many years. Other attempts upon the life of Napoleon the Third had been averted without trouble, but the repercussion caused by the circumstances of this terrible night proved much greater and more enduring. Paris was grievously shaken, and public emotion rose to the highest pitch during the trial of the Italian revolutionaries, who were prosecuted by Chaix-d'Est-Ange and defended by Jules Favre. The thought of a crime whose deadly effects had overtaken so many innocent victims at first stirred the soul of the Empress to righteous indignation, but little by little she yielded to a feeling of pity towards the culprits, especially towards Orsini. The strange phases of his youth, the romantic side of a life full of trouble and turmoil, his feats of daring courage, his escape from the citadel of Mantua, whence he was rescued by the help of a lovely woman, his wrong-doings even, caused by savage doctrines and wild theories, made a deep impression upon the imagination of Eugénie. The sinister and violent logic of Orsini, which led him to believe that he could best bring about a revolution in Italy by provoking one in France, the inception of which must be the murder of the Emperor, all awakened in her breast feelings of revolt, but also of keen interest. His was blind patriotism, no doubt, but it was patriotism, and

she considered it both just and humane: she considered it her duty to beg and pray for his pardon.

“Orsini was urged to murder,” she would say, “by the exultation of a generous sentiment. He passionately loves liberty, and he hates oppression with no less energy. I, too, remember the hatred we Spaniards bore towards the French after the wars of the First Empire. He didn’t wish to kill the Emperor of France,” she added, “he only wished to strike the friend of the Emperor of Austria.” A few days before his execution, the Italian conspirator was the subject of conversation in her presence, and, endeavouring to exculpate his homicidal deed, she boldly stated, “Orsini is not a vulgar murderer, like that wretch Pianori. He is a proud and daring man, and he has my full esteem.”

In and out of time she pleaded energetically in his favour. Her soul was truly republican. Hitherto no thought of protest had quickened her heart and conscience at the sight of the cruel reprisals indulged in by the authorities, who assumed the right to proscribe all suspects without judgment, and to imprison them without stating their motives for so doing. But the case of Orsini had played upon the chords of her heart. An outburst of sincere generosity made her crave for mercy in his behalf at the hands of the

Emperor. With tears she implored of him to spare the life of the assassin, and by so doing to bring a blessing upon their infant son. The last words of the sentenced man, his patriotic appeal to Napoleon the Third in the name of Italy, had moved her to tears. But she could not relieve the capital sentence which condemned him to die ; the magnitude of his crime excelled that of the greatest clemency. As a direct consequence of the drama and the upheaval which it created, her own individuality acquired an unexpected greatness, both moral and political. Her courage in danger had elicited unanimous admiration. Then came the period of reflection, followed by meditations upon possible events of the morrow. Her faithful adherents foresaw the risks suddenly born to the succession to the throne : the Emperor murdered by the bullet of a revolutionary and the beautiful Empress with her prattling babe asking the Army to protect her and to save France. The public mind had so much dwelt upon this theme that to many it almost became an accomplished fact ; the Emperor was forgotten for the moment, the French nation looked upon him as a negligible quantity, though in fact he reigned and shaped the destinies of the Empire. Napoleon, whom the bombs of Orsini had brutally reminded of the promises made by him to the Italian Liberals, but

never kept, Napoleon was borne down with care, the while Eugénie revelled ingenuously in her triumph as a heroine. Among the military addresses of congratulation forwarded after the attempt, signed by generals, colonels, officers of all ranks, and containing protestations of their devotion towards the Imperial babe and the eventual Regent, two went so far as to compare her with Marie Thérèse, the great Empress. The dominant note of the thoughts and purposes of the day was undoubtedly the preoccupation of all concerning the dynastic inheritance in case the Emperor were removed by the hand of a murderer.

On the night of the 19th February a strange conversation took place in the presence of the Empress. With soldierly frankness, General Espinasse was unfolding his plans in case he were called upon to repress Republican acts of disloyalty. He would, he said, lay a heavy hand upon some, expel or hurl others into gaol, and thus nip the evil in the bud. Carried away by the heat of his own eloquence, he did not measure the terms he used, and coloured them with the addition of frequent curses. At last he remembered that he was talking to a lady, that he was in her drawing-room, and he apologized profusely. The Empress, who willingly excused the broad language of Espinasse because of the intentions which im-

pelled it, replied: "Go on, continue, General; repeat what you have said: I love to hear it." This regency was to come to her in due course, and in peaceful circumstances, although her counsellors had foreseen its advent amid a sea of trouble and anxiety.

The bursting of Orsini's shell was a brutal summons to Napoleon to set his hand at once to the great business of his reign, the reconstruction of Italian nationality. Towards this goal he felt himself fatally urged. Motives for war with Austria were easily invoked. In his impatience to follow in the lines of his famous uncle and to prove to the world the military aptitudes which he believed he possessed as an heirloom, the Emperor announced his determination to assume supreme command of his troops. This decision seemed inopportune, if not daring, considering the newness of his reign. Not a few among his followers cast the responsibility of it upon the excited and hasty counsels of the Empress. Later it was fully recognized that she had in no way charged her mind in the sense of these bellicose undertakings, but that for once, at least, she had cast her lot in the direction of prudence and common-sense.

Napoleon, however, had settled his departure. Having had the opportunity on the 14th January, 1858, of appreciating the power of her moral

resistance, under the appearance of frivolity, he conferred upon the Empress the official regency, thus enhancing her personality by increasing her authority. His act evoked no surprise on her part, and with the help of her Ministers she endeavoured to perform her duties without trouble or affectation. There was no immediate cause for alarm. Political eventualities of the day were not pregnant with grave peril. All was well in home affairs, and public confidence had been won. Eugénie had only to let herself be borne along by favourable currents. With much complacency, her prudence and premature maturity were lauded to the skies. The governing authorities assumed an air of conviction as they pretended to hold in deep respect and consideration the attitude of the Empress and the beneficial effect of her presence at their deliberations. She took to her new calling with fulness of heart, for she was intimately flattered and pleased to discover within herself such unexpected resources and unsuspected abilities. In the course of a matutinal visit Mérimée once found her deeply engaged in studying to the letter the Constitution of France.

Truth to tell, no incidents of much moment occurred during the regency of Eugénie in 1859. Some minor occurrences were easily solved by the intervention of the Empress—strikes, to wit, such as that of the cabmen, which she brought to a

speedy end by ordering the soldiery of the Commissariat and Remount departments to take whip and reins in hand and drive the Parisians to their destinations. The Government machine was self-propelled, and proceeded without a hitch.

Foreign news of a most satisfactory nature continued to pour in daily. On the 13th July the Empress and the Prince Imperial drove from the Château of the Tuileries to Notre-Dame to be present at the *Te Deum* of Solférino. Their carriage, filled with bouquets, the gifts of the National Guard, wended its way upon a bed of flowers. On her return from the cathedral a greater ovation still awaited her, and these joyous, popular outbursts betokened the speedy conclusion of the war. Such presages warmed the heart of Eugénie.

As we have already stated, she did not encourage the campaign of Italy. Quite the contrary. Before it was inaugurated, her ultramontane faith became alarmed at the dangers which that campaign spelt to the papal sovereignty. Moreover, on learning that the Emperor had decided to direct the active operations, her heart was filled with apprehension. She shuddered at the thought that while risking the deadly chances of a battle, he might leave upon the plains of Lombardy not only his life but his crown, which was obtained too recently

to have yet acquired such stability as would maintain it upon the head of a woman or a child should its present wearer be taken. As the soldiers marched past the Tuileries on their way to action, the crowd had seen the Empress bathed in tears upon the balcony. In tears she bade good-bye to those who went to meet their fate, not knowing why, and who greeted her with wild enthusiasm. At that moment she thought, no doubt, that in their serried ranks were many youths who would be snatched from life, from their aspirations of joy, happiness and love, in order to accomplish the designs of a Piedmontese Minister. Such influence as she exerted upon the events of the war of Italy tended to hasten its peaceful solution. We know how the suddenness of its conclusion surprised the minds of the keenest political auguries. To the armaments of Prussia, to the concentration of German troops beyond the Rhine, to such reasons as the humanitarian sentiments of the Emperor, rudely shocked by the horrors of the field of battle, could be assigned the sudden halt upon the road to victory. But this halt was not brought about upon the banks of the Adige, nor yet upon those of the Rhine. It was due to secret influences that sprang from an Imperial source. We have the proof of this in the unpublished and interesting testimony of the

late chaplain of the Empress, Bernard Bauer. Long after the French Empire had ceased to exist, save in the far-away memory of days gone by, and then only in the light of a by-gone greatness, Bauer was in Geneva, where he met Elizabeth, Empress and Queen of Austria-Hungary. It was during the month preceding the attempt, inane because it was unjustifiable, to which she fell a victim. Four or five times the wandering Sovereign and the priest, who had voluntarily left the bosom of the Church, had met upon the beaten tracks of Europe. Their conversations had never borne upon politics and the thorny themes arising therefrom, which she loathed. Their intelligences found it pleasanter to commune under the profane species of a common cult for the genius of Henri Heine. On this last occasion Bauer had come to do homage to the giant in his marvellous town of Leman, and Elizabeth directed her conversation for the first and the last time, alas! upon the visit in 1867 of the French Imperial couple to the Austro-Hungarian couple at Salzburg. It was a visit of painful condolence, for Maximilian had just fallen, riddled by the bullets of the Juarists. Francis Joseph's heart still bled from the horrible wound inflicted by the political murder of his brother, and his sorrow of it was kindled by the loss of two precious jewels in his

crown, the provinces of Lombardy and Venetia. But in the midst of Court ceremonials, and during the exchange of empty compliments dictated by Court Chamberlains, the Monarchs who yesterday had been at each other's throats and to-day were linked by the bonds of hospitality, could hardly find words of sincere condolence in which to express their personal feelings. The one left the land of Austria without having told his secret; the other, a reticent man, has kept it ever since.

The Empresses were more expansive, and an echo of their conversation reached the ear of a visitor during a garden-party, on the last day of relaxation, of her who was soon to be stabbed by Luccheni. The august and weary traveller, whose previous conversation had merely touched upon the vague impressions of art and poetry, dwelt at full length upon her recollections of the meeting at Salzburg. Having expressed her personal sympathy towards the widow of the last Emperor of the French, she added, "I know that she met with keen opposition during the war of Italy, and yet its termination was to a great extent her work. To ourselves she had expressed her deep regret at her inability to prevent or stay the fateful battles. But her comfort lay in the thought that she was at least able to curtail the sufferings brought on by them."

(Would that she had always been as wise in her counsels!) The 16th July was the last day spent by the Emperor upon Italian territory, and his departure was as pleasing to his allies as to himself. King Victor Emmanuel, the Prince of Carignan and the numerous suite had accompanied him as far as Suza, the terminus of the railway. The two Monarchs had parted after an effusive accolade which could scarcely hide their mutual coolness. As Napoleon's cortège was borne away in the travelling barouches that had to ascend the heights of Mont Cenis in order to reach Saint-Jean de Maurienne, the King of Italy had returned to his State saloon on his way back to Turin. When the train steamed out, he heaved a sigh of ungrateful relief, and said, "At last he is gone!" The Italians bore their liberator a grudge for having stopped half-way, instead of securing for them their full freedom at one blow.

That his departure was more or less regretted was a matter which did not weigh long with Napoleon. On the 17th July he was back in the Castle of Saint-Cloud, the most beautiful of all the castles of France and Navarre. He had emerged from a war which had almost proved disastrous to him on two occasions, and now his one ambition was to recover from the unpleasant shock it had caused. Having delivered official speeches

to the bodies of the State and spoken solemn words to his subjects, he basked with delight in the company of Eugénie, of his infant child and his intimate friends, to whom his return had brought peace and happiness. It was the period of the year when, flying from the heat and dust of Paris, the Court sought its pleasures in the shaded groves of parks and forests. The Emperor enjoyed a halt replete with charm, and thus prolonged his vacations. Our narrative must now suspend its course while we describe the tableaux and incidents born of the change of scene. They afford an important background to the story of the Emperor's private life. Fontainebleau, Saint-Cloud, Biarritz, endless chronicles could be written about them!

CHAPTER VI

The summer months—Journeys of the Court—Saint-Cloud—The Empress's antipathy to the place—Eugénie spends long hours alone in the Château—The arrival of the Emperor and his Court lends animation to the receptions of Saint-Cloud—Various pastimes at Court—Joyous doings at Villeneuve-l'Étang in May 1853—From Saint-Cloud to Fontainebleau—Royalist reminiscences in this majestic frame—Excursions and hunting-parties in the forest—The last lap between Paris and Versailles—Return to Paris for the anniversary of the 15th August—Departure for Biarritz—September on the Spanish frontier—How Eugénie de Montijo created Biarritz—The Villa Eugénie and its prevailing tone—Foreign guests, among them Mr. de Bismarck—Nomadic tastes of the Napoleonic Court—Compiègne—Hunting-parties, receptions, balls—Theatrical performances—Sunny days and rainy days—A faithful sketch of the existence of the Court at Compiègne, with the figure of the Empress in the centre—Ending of the holidays and resumption of official festivities.

As soon as the month of May began, all was held in readiness for the departure from the Tuileries to Saint-Cloud, where the Court adjourned for several months of the summer, with an intermediate visit to Fontainebleau at the end of June and the beginning of July. On returning from Biarritz, and pending the opening of the hunting season at Compiègne, the Court was again in residence at Saint-Cloud.

One of Nature's marvels, situated between Paris and Versailles, it was a spot beautified by every art. The River Seine bathed the foot of these

grassy slopes, and in front of the Castle the waters spurted in mid-air, falling back in cascades upon the marble steps. In the offing, the immense panorama of the capital. Within, superb apartments, disposed with artistic luxury and furnished with admirable taste, opened on to the flower-beds situated upon the outskirts of the park. Such was the Royal domain in perspective and *ensemble*, of which Charles X, the last of the Bourbons, spoke thus, when exiled in Bohemia—

“I deplore the loss of two things—Saint-Cloud and my kingdom of France; but I deplore the loss of the former more bitterly than that of the latter.”

The Emperor, too, was enamoured of the place. As he grew older, the little Prince was wont to display his keen joy each time he returned there; Eugénie alone derived small pleasure from her sojourn in this peaceful residence.¹

One would have thought that she could have realized in Saint-Cloud the legendary splendours of the flat roofs of Babylon, created for the pleasure of the haughty Sémiramis, but she never took much interest in it, and it grew weaker each year after she had created Biarritz. Saint-Cloud was not furnished according to her tastes, nor was its disposition the result of her work, as in the

¹ “You know that the Empress cannot bear the sight of Saint-Cloud” (Mérimée, letter to Panizzi, 22nd August, 1864).



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(1858).



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case of the apartments at Fontainebleau, or of her marvellous residence at Compiègne.

But those who were bidden to share the pleasures of the Royal palace did so, however, to the fullest extent. A certain amount of *laisser-aller* was tolerated at the house-parties of Saint-Cloud. The animation that reigned was proportionate to the presence or the absence of the Emperor. When he went to Plombières or to Vichy to take the waters, the expenditure at Saint-Cloud was somewhat restricted, and the receptions far from numerous. Barely a dozen guests sat down to dinner each night, far too small a number to afford an atmosphere of life or animation to such lofty apartments.

Each morning the Empress would drive out with her reader in a light phaeton drawn by two black ponies, and driven by herself. Towards five in the afternoon she drove again around the Bois in a Daumont. After dinner, on fine evenings, she would often drive again in an open *vis-à-vis* through the lanes of Meudon as far as Versailles, and the rest of the day was spent by her reading, drawing or writing in her private apartments.

Life and gaiety returned to Saint-Cloud as soon as the Emperor repaired there. The Council of Ministers was held twice a week, and the members of the Cabinet and of the Privy Council remained

each time to lunch. With common consent the worries of official business were forsaken for the nonce; conversation turned upon general questions, and the only reminder of their official positions proffered to the State officials was that afforded by some lady in waiting who sought to obtain from these exalted statesmen some favour for a friend or relative.

The salons at Saint-Cloud were thrown open for magnificent receptions, especially during the first years of the reign. In 1853 the ball given in honour of the Duke of Genoa was attended by 1500 guests.

Save in such exceptional cases, the mode of living was extremely simple and homely. No serial invitations were issued, as was the case at Compiègne and at Fontainebleau. The trammels of etiquette seemed abolished. The men dined in frock-coats, and one and all did as they pleased. At times there were slight variations in the ordainment of the day's distractions, such as luncheon-parties under canvas, garden-parties, races on the water at Saint-Cloud or Villeneuve-l'Étang. On such occasions the guests indulged in childish frolics. At Villeneuve-l'Étang, on the 7th May, 1853, much merriment was caused by a sham military action, the recollection of which lingered long in the memory of those who took part in it. The fortress was represented by a grass-

covered *mamelon*, which the Empress and her ladies in waiting had to defend vigorously against attacks from without. The men, headed by the Emperor, effected the assault with incredible bravery, and naturally took the position. Though he played an important part in the proceedings, a foreign ambassador mentions in his impressions that the whole farce was enacted with far too much levity and familiarity.

During the long and warm days of June and July the scene changed. With the majestic galleries of its palace, its works of art, its treble girth of parks, its thick forests, and its vine-cradles, Fontainebleau had the honour of becoming the official residence.

What Royal souvenirs had not left their traces, since the gallant days of the Valois, in the halls, gardens and woods of this fastuous residence? Under the monarchy of the Bourbons hunting-parties, festivals, banquets and adventures of love had come and gone. The public Treasury was mulcted in five or six millions of francs whenever Louis XV, surrounded by his numerous Court, spent six weeks at Fontainebleau. But who dared reckon the expenditure of the King? "The Well-Beloved" was followed thither by the best actors and the actresses who had gained fame through their talent or their beauty, and contemporaries all state that, during those six weeks,

Fontainebleau was more brilliant than Versailles. It maintained its reputation under the Second Empire.

The ceremonial observed there was the same as at Compiègne. The guests arrived by special train on a determined day. The Royal equipages awaited them at the station, and they were swiftly borne to the palace through the streets made gay with bunting. When they reached their destination the landaus and the brakes wheeled in to the Horse-shoe Courtyard, and the travellers set foot before the great stairs of honour. They entered the first vestibule, proceeded through the gallery, so beautifully ornamented with wainscotings and paintings of the greatest value. Hence they passed into the apartments prepared for them, where they spent a week or a fortnight, according to the Imperial invitation. We find in the diary of Count Hubner a faithful description of the life at Fontainebleau—

“On an autumn day the Emperor, the Empress, Princess Mathilde and a number of guests, ladies and gentlemen, appeared at lunch in hunting attire. The meeting was to take place at La Croix de Toulouse, about a mile and a half from the Castle. The Emperor was mounted on an English thoroughbred and Eugénie upon a white Andalusian horse. Both huntsmen and guests did marvels. When the party returned, the pro-

vincial authorities and the Ministers who had come to attend the next day's meeting were invited to a dinner of one hundred covers. When the repast was over, the hunting-horns sounded the quarry in the park. The guests rushed out to witness it. They returned in time for the ball, which began to the strain of a barrel-organ, the handle of which was turned alternately by General Rollin and by Bacciochi, the Chamberlain. During two and a half hours the ears of the guests had to be satisfied with this elementary music, the hearing of which caused surprise to strangers when first bidden to appreciate it. The Emperor would then explain to them that he could not bear the presence of musicians in his apartments. The organ-grinders and the dancers were afforded intervals of rest, during which 'innocent games' were indulged in, as well as occasional charades. Then polkas, waltzes and quadrilles were resumed, till the Emperor led off a final round, at the end of which the guests retired to rest, hoping that they might dance again to the sweet strains afforded by General Rollin and the Chamberlain Bacciochi."

Eugénie enjoyed her stays at Fontainebleau. She delighted in its majestic scenery, its ample galleries, and the Chinese drawing-room, filled with the precious booty of the Summer Palace, the proceeds of Palikao's plunders in

China. She loved her little boudoir, where she often retired to indulge her taste for smoking. She endeavoured to her utmost to make her guests share her pleasure. They would have done so to the full, especially those among them who possessed more thoughtful, sober natures, had they been allowed to roam at will alone or in twos and threes, and thus derive full benefit from the beautiful forest and its surrounding landscape.

One and all, however, admitted that the host and hostess were most attentive and thoughtful. After the midday repast, the guests at the Palace would stroll away along the water, or wander through the paths of the forest, on the lawns, or amid the thickets. Many of the ladies wore dresses copied from the figures of Winterhalter, the painter, consisting of a short and full skirt, and red Garibaldi blouses. Their head-gear consisted of light, wide garden hats. Upon the lawn, sloping towards the river, a bevy of elegant men and savants somewhat out of their element gathered round the Empress in company with famous authors and the notabilities of the day. They vied with one another in witty conversations, scented with all the fragrance of the *Decameron*.

The following description by one of the guests gives one an idea of the delightful picture presented by these gatherings—

“ On the arrival of the Empress we repaired to

dinner. It was served in the gallery of Henry II, the most beautiful banqueting-hall that I have ever seen. The Guards band played during the repast, and coffee was served at the dinner-tables. The guests then repaired to the Chinese drawing-room on the ground floor looking out on the lake, where a little steam yacht was anchored in the midst of sailing craft. Some of the party went for a sail, and the vision in the twilight was one never to be forgotten.

“The Empress remained in the drawing-room, chatting with the Archbishop of Sens, and bade me sit by her side. Conversation lasted over half-an-hour, after which she rose and disappeared, to return in a quarter of an hour for tea. Meanwhile she had changed her dress, having discarded her long white-and-blue train for a short narrow dress, cut very low. She wore little white slippers all embroidered in silver. I make bold to say that no Diana, no Corisandra, no Gabrielle, ever made a more graceful, a lighter or more triumphant entrance than hers. In appearance she was twenty years of age. She sat on a large sofa, her back turned to the wide window that opened on the left. As I sat facing her, I beheld a stretch of distant verdure, and luminous waters with a background of starred and spangled azure. Conversation lasted till midnight, and touched upon subjects of all sorts—the Palace, the recollections

it evoked, Marie Antoinette, Monadelschi and Madame de Motteville. We then joined the Emperor, who was playing chess in the next room. It was indeed a gay and happy evening."

Now and again collective distractions claimed those present. A long line of brakes, in which one was never sure of being paired off to one's liking, awaited the guests on certain days, and bore them away to a destination which had been determined beforehand. All were expected to take part in these excursions, to the discomfiture of a Prosper Mérimée or an Octave Feuillet, who little relished taking their pleasure on the co-operative system.

Eugénie displayed a tyrannical spirit on these excursions, which, when decided upon, had to take place regardless of the weather or personal discomfort. The first carriage contained the Imperial Family, ladies in waiting and such guests as could lay claim to special consideration. The second brake was packed with aides-de-camp, equerries, chamberlains, orderly officers and lady companions, separated or not from their legitimate companions; and so with the other vehicles, that were filled haphazard. At a rapid gait the party was borne away through valleys, gorges and cross-ways until the appointed destination was reached—the "Longues-Roches," for instance, a real mountain that extends over two miles in the midst of the

forest. Ever daring, Eugénie would decide upon an ascent of the rocky heights, and it was no sooner said than done. Led by the Empress, the intrepid members of the party followed in her wake, while the laggards, weighted with years and obesity, perspired, puffed and sighed, murmuring the while that such excursions were certainly not without their drawbacks. Then a storm would break out, and the climbers, overtaken by a down-pour, were seen to beat back drenched and disconsolate. More sighs, more lamentations! If wise counsels had been heeded, how rapidly a return to the Castle would have been effected! But the Empress, undaunted, would stand admiring the landscape, that derived still more interest from the dark shadows falling upon it and the background of black clouds rent here and there by streaks of lightning. The courtiers endeavoured to share the enthusiasm of the poetic Sovereign. As the elements began to show their teeth, the timorous members of the party sought in vain for safe shelter. Alas! they were surrounded by mounds of stones, with here and there a few trees studded in the barren wilderness. Heavy drops began to fall with crackling sound, and leisurely, with an arch smile, the Empress opened an elegant parasol with a handle of Cornaline and chiselled gold. Then, and only then, did the painful descent begin. Down the long ridge of

slippery rocks, the party, drenched and truly miserable, was conveyed at last back to the Château. The bulletin of the morrow invariably notified the fact that two or three Academicians suffered from heavy colds, and that half-a-dozen Counsellors of State were laid up with lumbago!

The Empress herself did not always escape with impunity, and was often laid up as a result of these escapades on land or water. In one of his numerous letters to Panizzi, Mérimée mentions that Her Majesty "is laid up with a heavy cold, which she contracted while testing her gondola on the lake, in shocking weather."¹ And he added in a postscript, "I cannot imagine how she gets under the 'felice' with her crinoline, nor can I imagine how the gondola is steered unless Venetian gondoliers have been commandeered."

Boating was one of the favourite pastimes at Fontainebleau. On the large pond, pompously termed the lake, one beheld all sorts and manners of little craft, canoes, Constantinople caiques, manned by Caikdjies, and Venetian gondolas propelled by Venetian gondoliers. On one occasion the Emperor's canoe was so awkwardly

¹ Octave Feuillet wrote as follows: "No Empress at dinner last night. She is suffering from bronchial catarrh. I sat facing His Majesty, who was in the best of humour. He quoted to us the menu of a dinner conceived by Alexander Dumas, containing, among other dishes, a roast octopus."

paddled by him that it capsized. The untoward emersion of His Majesty was a thrilling event.

Canoeing, hunting, shooting, dining, supping, amateur theatricals, charades, such were the occupations of the Court. At Compiègne and at the Tuileries, at Saint-Cloud and at Fontainebleau love intrigues held sway, as they ever will where young folk, thirsting for adventures, are brought together, leading a life of idleness. There was a regiment of chamberlains, aides-de-camp and equerries known as "the lively clan." Its members did everything to deserve this appellation. As soon as they could escape from the guest-chamber, where staid men were assembled, they repaired to the ground floor drawing-room, which served as a club for their lady friends and themselves. Here many sayings and doings were often indulged in, to which the grave and austere women took offence, without saying so, for the Empress tolerated such levities, and was even accused of fostering them by her silence. Truth to tell, even the austere members of the Court found delectation in the life at Fontainebleau. They had barely time to write short epistles to their folk at home, for their time was fully occupied by excursions, hunting-parties, sailing expeditions, and the other pursuits indulged in.

As soon as the residence at Fontainebleau came to an end, the Court indulged in a further summer

spell at Saint-Cloud before repairing to Biarritz. From Saint-Cloud the Royal party came to Paris for the 15th August. Was not this the date on which the bells rang joyfully, the drums beat tattoo, the date on which the streets were full of bunting, in honour of the feast of the Chief of the State? Was it not Saint Napoleon's Day, a new saint in favour of whom the calendar of the Apostolic and Roman Church had gracefully been augmented? The Duke of Cambacérès was wont to issue a thousand invitations to the members of the Imperial Family, Court dignitaries, Senators and Deputies who were bidden to the official reception at the Tuileries. Those chosen by the Protocole foregathered in the Apollo drawing-room before High Mass was sung by the leading artists of the Opéra and the choruses of the Conservatoire. A procession was then formed, which, headed by the Sovereigns, proceeded to attend a ceremony, religious so far as its object was concerned, but profane owing to the seductions offered by the music, the perfume and the worldliness of the congregation. When Mass was over, the Emperor received the congratulations of his courtiers and his leading subjects in the hall of Peace. The night was given over to popular demonstrations and street rejoicings; public monuments were profusely illuminated. Long strings of lamps linked up the trees of the leading avenues and

boulevards, and the Place de la Concorde was girthed by a belt of fire tempered by opaque globes that looked like a circle of stars. Fireworks lit up various points of the capital, and a thousand acclamations heralded the pyrotechnic insignia of Imperial power. Public rejoicings were re-echoed at Saint-Cloud on the anniversary of the 15th November. The Feast of Eugénie was celebrated in a more intimate way, however, and in a more discreet manner. The apartments of the Castle were filled with flowers. From all parts bouquets, baskets and floral offerings were sent to the young Empress. The reception over, a theatrical performance was given, while the park and grounds were one blaze of multi-coloured lights.

Napoleon and Eugénie found time to change their residence between the 15th August and the 15th November. When the soft breezes of September succeeded the overpowering heat of July and August, it was to Biarritz that the Empress repaired, on French soil it is true, but within a short distance of the land of boleros and castanets. Was it not on account of its facility to Spain that she discovered and created Biarritz? Before she selected it as her favoured watering-station, Biarritz, to-day invaded by a noisy cosmopolitan colony, seemed lost on the map. It was but a hamlet, even in the heraldic

times when the Biarritz fishermen harpooned the whale in the deep waters of the Bay of Biscay. The name of the obscure village, composed of a few humble huts, was never mentioned in society. As Mademoiselle de Montijo, Eugénie had often stayed at Biarritz during her trips from France to Spain, or Spain to France. She had been struck by the beautiful beach of finest sand, by the quaint-shaped rocks, emerging here and there along the shore, by the poetic grottos and the majesty of the surrounding mountains. All this had created in her mind the impression of a savage, grandiose, majestic spot.

She was seduced not only by the beauty of the place, but by its proximity to her country, and its affinity to the customs and climate of her native land. She expressed to the Emperor her wish to settle there during September, and to build a modest residence for that purpose. The effect of the Imperial residence would be most beneficial, she added, to a beautiful district which had been most unjustly ignored. She resolved to do for Biarritz what the Duchess de Berry had done for Dieppe. For the first time, Napoleon went to Biarritz in 1853 with the Empress. The Imperial Consorts occupied the Château de Grammont, the property of Monsieur Labat, Deputy for the Basses-Pyrénées. The Emperor admired the neighbourhood, and was won over to it. The

following year, the foundation stone of the Villa Eugénie was laid, and it was decided that each year this residence would afford their Majesties complete rest and freedom from the exigencies of Court ceremonials which still hampered them to a certain extent at Compiègne and at Fontainebleau. Their original intentions were more than modest, for it was decided that they should live there on a very quiet footing. In fact, they contemplated leading quite a bourgeois, family existence. But little by little the family circle grew wider, invitations became more frequent, courtiers followed their Majesties to Biarritz, and Eugénie soon found it well-nigh impossible to satisfy her yearnings for a simple life, the enjoyment of which was always subject to the condition that at a moment's notice, if it so pleased her, she could ascend her throne and become once more "The Empress."

It was at Biarritz, at the dinner-table where Mérimée and a few elect were bidden, that she revealed herself in the most unaffected and natural manner. She lent animation to all around her. Her conversation was more or less unhinged, for she gave free vent to her thoughts with the vivacity that was hers. She spoke so fast on such occasions that at times she gave utterance to very awkward sayings. These were attributed to absent-mindedness or to a certain ingenuity cloaked by ingenuous appearances. The follow-

ing incident affords a good example of such indiscretions, slips of the tongue or slips of the mind. The seraphic personality of Saint Teresa, patron saint of Spain, was the subject of conversation one evening. Eugénie de Montijo, fired by the traditions of her country, spoke enthusiastically of the famous mystic to whom God was present in all things, but whose ecstasies and continuous absorption in the dream of a divine idealism did not prevent her from leading an active as well as a contemplative life, as proved by the high administrative talents she displayed in reforming her order and in the many foundations she effected. The Emperor let her continue in this strain as he smoked the eternal cigarette. Baron Hausmann smiled. His was a sceptical smile, that of the courtier whose subtleness cloaked the irony of the Voltairian.

“You do not perhaps know, Baron, that Saint Teresa was one of my ancestors.” This was said thoughtlessly, but it expressed the pride that Eugénie de Montijo displayed when speaking of her forefathers.

“How was that, your Majesty?”

“Why, through different alliances contracted during the twelfth and fourteenth centuries between the Montijos and the Ahumelas.”

“So, then,” interjected the Imperial smoker, “you are really descended from Saint Teresa?”

“Certainly.”

“In a direct line, do you say?”

“In a direct line, Sire.”

So earnestly were these words pronounced, that all present had to screw their lips to avoid bursting into laughter.

“But,” continued the Emperor, “how can that be, since Saint Teresa died a virgin?”

“Oh, Sire, you’re making me talk nonsense.”

All present indulged in hearty merriment, in which the Empress joined.

Within a short time, Biarritz became the headquarters of Spanish society, which the Empress so dearly loved, while Saint-Sebastian, the neighbouring town, still remained a little fortress bereft of decent hotels or comfortable residences. To Biarritz came personages of the highest rank. Princes and kings, kings and princes, dukes and duchesses foregathered round the Emperor and Empress. It was here that Napoleon found a golden chance of pursuing his extra-official policy, and when in residence at the Villa Eugénie he avoided as much as possible all intercourse with his Ministers. Twice a week his attachés brought him the diplomatic valise from Paris, and returned thither bearing his instructions. In 1865 Biarritz witnessed the famous interview between Napoleon and Bismarck, France’s deadliest enemy. Bismarck,

wittily described by Hanotaux as a great amateur of thermal diplomacy, had come to resume the conversation which had been interrupted at Plombières. Moreover, he wished to dispel the painful impression caused by the convention of Gastein. The daring ambition of Prussia, the growing rivalry between the two German Powers, the personality of Bismarck, a great man in the opinion of some, a laughable politician in that of others, the more interesting to study as he was much criticized, all this lent great importance to his visit. Until his arrival, the conversation of the little party at Biarritz had borne upon various subjects, such as the illness of the King of the Belgians, the recent demise of General de Lamoricière, the unforeseen marriage of Princess Anna Murat and the Duke de Mouchy,¹ the

¹ "Your friend Princess Anna Murat is about to marry the Duke de Mouchy, one of the most brilliant young men of the period. He is her junior by about a month, has two hundred thousand francs a year, and pleasant features. He is very polite and less affected than the average gilded youth. Strange to say, he is related to the most uncompromising legitimists in this country. The Duke de Noailles is his uncle" (Mérimée, letter to Pannizzi, 2nd November, 1865).

The same chronicler, whom we must always consult on questions concerning the intimate life of the Imperial Court, complained of not having been admitted to the secret concerning the interview of Biarritz. For this slight he avenged himself by telling anecdotes about all concerned. On the 13th October, 1865, he wrote from Paris, "Madame de M——, being German, has great admiration for Mr. de Bismarck, and we

tidings of which had created great commotion among the residents of the heraldic faubourg. With fulsome admiration the guests commented upon the heroic courage of the Empress, who had gone to the death-bed of a child suffering from a most contagious malady, but their enthusiasm was all the greater as the victim was the child of Emile de Girardin, a political

teased her mercilessly about the forward ways of the great man, whom she certainly encouraged. A few days ago I drew the head of Bismarck, and a very good likeness it was. That evening their Majesties and myself went to the bedroom of Madame de M—— and placed the sketch upon her pillow and a bolster between the sheets that represented a human form. Then the Empress tied a handkerchief around the forehead of the drawing and made it look like a night-cap. In the twilight the illusion was perfect. When their Majesties retired to bed we kept Madame de M—— chatting a while, so that they could hide at the end of the corridor, then we all pretended to retire to our rooms. Madame de M—— entered her room, but suddenly rushed out and knocked at the door of Madame de Lourmel, and exclaimed in pitiful tones, 'There is a man in my bed.' Unfortunately Madame de Lourmel could not keep her countenance, and as the Empress burst out laughing at the other end of the corridor, the joke was spoiled. It was rendered all the funnier by the fact, which we learnt later, that one of the Emperor's valets had previously entered the room of Madame de M——, and seeing what he thought was a man's head upon the pillow, had retreated in all haste, eager, of course, to bear the tidings to the servants' hall. They discussed the matter at length, and some of the servants suggested that it was, perhaps, M. de M—— who had come to seek the hospitality of his spouse, but this hypothesis was negatived by a large majority. Thus did Biarritz spend its time while the storm was gathering without."

adversary of the Napoleons. On the appearance of Bismarck all gossip ceased, and small talk was at an end, save upon such subjects as concerned the German Chancellor. The pourparlers between the two jousting, alas! unevenly matched, were prolonged to an extent that kindled the greatest curiosity among those who were not admitted to the secret conclave. It was little known by them that the main point at issue was not the subject of these interviews, where only matters of a secondary order were discussed. Some time previously the Prussian statesman, a tempter and a deceiver, ever ready to lavish vain promises, had met the Duke de Grammont, French Ambassador, at the country house of Count de Rechberg, in the neighbourhood of Vienna. He had held out to him the hope that in exchange for France's good-will the Rhenish provinces might be conceded to her. The time seemed ripe for reminding him of this skilful indiscretion, and for asking him what was really meant by it. Napoleon had himself spoken the following words to Monsieur de Goltz: "The eyes of my country are turned towards the banks of the Rhine." Now he was afforded the opportunity of clinching the matter. But ever hesitant, he failed to make his views clear. Instead of reaching the goal, by tackling the German question, he wandered off towards Mecca and Con-

stantinople. He wasted the precious minutes of Bismarck in long dissertations upon the precautions that should be taken against cholera. He spoke at length about the Moldo-Wallachian provinces. In Berlin, great fear was entertained of the military power of the Empire. That of Prussia had as yet only dealt the first blows against a weakened adversary. The opportunity was exceptionally favourable, but what conclusion could be come to with a man like Napoleon, who ever dreamt of receiving, but never dared extend his hand to seize the prey! Bismarck left his Imperial host much pleased, for he felt that henceforth his hands were free. So things pursued their usual course at Biarritz, impeded only by the vagaries of the weather.

The Imperial hosts of Biarritz avoided all State ceremonial when in residence there. Their carriages were of the simplest, and all excursions were effected in wagonettes. They often drove to Saint-Sebastian, in the Town Hall of which are still preserved two beautiful silver urns which they presented to the town together with their portraits. They indulged in the classical excursion to la Rune, followed by their courtiers on horseback, while the ladies drove in mule-litters. Eugénie, ever fond of adventures, much preferred excursions at sea. They were more exciting, because of the turbulent condition ever prevalent

in the Gulf of Gascony. These excursions gave rise to many serious alarms.

One of them nearly had a fatal termination. The Empress, accompanied by her son the Prince, had intended to sail down to Saint-Jean de Luz, where the Imperial yacht, imperially called the *Eagle*, lay at her moorings. The naval officer who was steering her boat missed the narrow entrance of the harbour and bore on to a rock, heedless of the respectful remonstrances of one of the able seamen, a native of Siboure. An impact was imminent, and without uttering a word, the poor sailor jumped into the water and made a buffer of his body between the rock and the stem of the skiff. His chest was stove in by the crash, and he died the following day, having saved the lives of the Empress and the young Prince.

The owners of the Villa Eugénie dearly loved their little nest. They felt there as if they belonged to themselves for a short spell. They could run down to their bathing-machines from their apartments by means of a little stairs and gangway, the supports of which were drilled into the rock. Above this stood a little pavilion, jutting out on to the sea, whence, unobserved, they could enjoy the healthy breeze of the rising tide. Of all this nothing is left save a few

supports and iron girders eaten by rust and twisted by the storm.

No sooner had Eugénie discovered Biarritz, than its natural beauties became evident to all, and within a short time villas and hotels were erected with incredible rapidity. They rose as if by magic along the crest of the hills, and soon occupied the heights that overlook the ocean.

From October to December, the Court, ever fond of change, repaired to Compiègne. During the first weeks of their residence, before the guests arrived, the Imperial hunt met constantly. An elegant and skilful horsewoman, Eugénie seldom missed a meeting.

Then came the three series of visits. Most of the guests were invited for one week, while the Imperial hospitality was extended for two weeks in the case of high State dignitaries. The invitation on vellum bearing the Imperial arms conveyed to its recipients the fact that they were bidden to attend the hunt meeting at Compiègne. The reception of this document was naturally an event eagerly looked forward to by all the subjects of Napoleon. Did it reach its destination while the fortunate recipients were at the seaside or in the country, they hastened to terminate their absence and rush back to Paris, there breathlessly to complete or perfect their wardrobe, pending

their early departure for the Imperial Castle. There, indeed, they would know the fulness of joy. They were to be housed, and provided with a seat in the Imperial box at the theatre, and a mount at the hunt meetings. Their residence at Compiègne would afford them the highest social position. A summons to Compiègne was equivalent to letters patent of nobility.

The privileged ones that frequented the Tuileries were borne to their destination under the most pleasant auspices. Court equipages, placed at their disposal, conveyed them to the station, where a special train awaited the Imperial guests. After a pleasant journey, the town of Compiègne, gay and bright with bunting, afforded them a charming sight. There, they were awaited by the Royal equipages, driven by postillions powdered and wigged, and followed in the distance by numberless vehicles, containing the luggage and the servants.¹ After a short drive from the station the Court of Honour was reached. The guests were led to the guard-room, where the officers told off for such duties took charge of those whom they had to lead to their apartments. Each lady was thus provided with an aide-de-camp. After

¹ The ladies did not fail to carry as many toilettes as they could afford to buy. The result was an endless amount of luggage. That of the Princess Metternich alone required a whole van to itself.

a short interval, during which they dressed for dinner, the guests were presented in the card-room, which afforded a dazzling sight of extravagant and lavish display. Everywhere one witnessed ostentation in dress and jewellery, and so keen was the emulation and rivalry between the women, that many of them squandered their capital and that of their husbands so as to hold their rank on these occasions.¹ Not one of these pretty and charming women could possibly have remained away from such entertainments, but to be present at them they paid a heavy price. It was well known, and it was whispered audibly, that the exigencies of this refined luxury had caused many falterings of feminine virtue, and that it was not always the husbands who paid the dressmakers' and milliners' bills of their wives.

As a rule, about eighty guests were bidden to lunch, and a hundred to dinner.² During the

¹ One of the lady guests of the first series was heard to say, "I have been bidden to Compiègne, and have had to sell a flour-mill." The chronicler to whom this was said, adds that she must have spoken the truth, but that she still had a considerable amount of flour on her face.

² In his book, *Son Excellence Eugène Rougon*, Emile Zola has left a highly-coloured description of the Compiègne dinners, a description semi-romantic, semi-historical, the details of which were no doubt furnished by his imagination, but most interesting for all that. "All through the meal one heard the strains of music, of a far-off music that seemed to come from the ceiling. At times the guests, awakened by the clash of the

intervals between these meals, time was occupied by excursions and various parties. In the evening, dancing was indulged in when there was no theatrical performance. The first years at Compiègne were the gayest.

“One derives appalling pleasures from a stay at Compiègne,” said Countess de la Pagerie, with a sigh of lassitude.

Those who were fond of peace and quietude, whose souls were not wrapt up in worldly pleasures, generally had a surfeit of these festivities at the end of a week. The pleasantest days of their sojourn were those on which the Imperial hosts left their guests to their own devices. This happened when there was a Council of Ministers, which the Empress insisted upon attending for two or more hours. They blessed their fate if an unforeseen

brasses, would raise their heads, endeavouring to catch the aria that pursued them. Then they heard no more; the tender sounds of the clarionets commingled from the furthest end of the gallery with the silver sounds of the plate that was carried in huge piles from the service-room. Around the table an army of servants moved silently, ushers in light blue uniform with sword and three-cornered hat, powdered footmen wearing green liveries braided with gold, wine butlers and others performed their duties with utmost dignity. Comptrollers, directors, the first carver, the head wine butler, saw to the perfect carrying out of the complicated manœuvres, and the multiple courses were served, washed down by numberless wines of infinite value, without a hitch. The private servants of their Majesties looked the acme of dignity as they saw to the wants of their Imperial masters.”

event, such as a Court mourning, stayed the onrush of pleasure. "I am still remaining a week at Compiègne," wrote Mérimée. "To-day the Germans, De Metternich and Count de Goltz, are expected. They are anything but cheering. Let us hope that the death of the King of Denmark may spare us the lavish toilettes and the waltzes of the ladies." Each day after lunch, at about 1.30, the brakes, driven by powdered postillions, with out-riders covered with silver bells, drove up to the terrace of the Castle, there to await the guests. The party often drove to Pierrefonds, where the Empress watched the rebuilding of this ancient castle of the Middle Ages. Archæology had become a passion with her, and she was spending millions in reconstituting history by its means. On her way there and back she was keenly interested in the conversation of Viollet-Leduc, to whom she had entrusted the task of transforming the superb ruins of Pierrefonds into a semi-feudal manor. With keen enthusiasm she would entertain her guests with the description of the elaborate feasts and receptions that she meant to give after 1868 in the halls of the valiant knights and graceful dames of Pierrefonds. Fate, alas! was doomed to interfere with her project!

The party always halted on the way, and as at Compiègne and at Fontainebleau, the Empress enjoyed an excursion on foot, regardless of the

weather. In walking she displayed both energy and strength, much-admired virtues by her suite, many members of which, however, would have been gladly spared the ordeal of following her.

One afternoon, after a freezing rain had fallen for hours, she decided to go and meet the Emperor, who was out shooting. When she arrived, it was pouring. Undaunted, she walked through the wet grass, followed by her ladies in waiting. The ladies fired some shots into the covert, replete with pheasants, thanks to the game-keepers and beaters. Princess de Metternich displayed more zeal than skill, and those near her trembled lest her shots might miscarry. When these great feats had been accomplished, the party returned to tea at five o'clock. Next day, most of the guests suffered from heavy colds, but two days afterwards the Empress sallied forth on a similar errand, and in weather still more awful.

After lunch the guests had seen the brake drawn up on the terrace, and they trembled at the prospect of another wetting. To their intense relief, the carriages were sent back, and those who did not favour a walking expedition in torrents of rain were happy once more. They felt they were their own masters, and forthwith proceeded to devise some pleasant means of whiling away the afternoon. Octave Feuillet, Gounod, Paul de Musset, Bida, had agreed to lock themselves up in the foyer

of the theatre, where there was a piano. Gounod had promised not only to play but to sing the whole of Mozart's compositions, as well as his own. Due notice of the happy event had been sent to Madame de Montebello, who was passionately fond of music. She gave the word to Princess Poniatowska. The happy circle had foregathered in its cosy corner, heedless of the weather, when suddenly the Empress appeared in shooting costume, wearing a short hairy coat, a little Tyrolean hat, and carrying a thick walking-stick in one hand and an umbrella in the other. Behind her came four Scotch bare-legged lairds, to whom she had promised to show the shooting preserves. She insisted that all her guests should share this pleasure. They had to thank her for her thoughtfulness, and to follow her with a light gait and a pleasant smile under torrential rain, through the park and along the muddy roads.

A Spaniard to the core, whose heart had been steeled from her childhood by the sight of the blood-stained bull-ring, she delighted in the spectacle offered by a stag-hunt.

Luncheon was always served earlier on the days the hounds met, and the party left the Château before midday. The rendezvous was generally fixed on the border of the forest. The Imperial hunt was under arms, so to speak, mounted hunts-

men wearing red cloth breeches and hats covered with gold lace. The whippers wore black shoes with silver buckles, so as to better run through the coppice. "The carriages of the invited guests, members of the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood, formed a semicircle, facing the pack, while groups of Amazons and horsemen in uniform formed in the centre, a picture not unlike that of a hunt-meeting under Louis XV."¹

It is needless to describe once more the merry band of huntsmen and hunting-women, clad in the traditional livery or wearing the green habit and three-cornered gold-laced hat, urged by cruel ardour upon the trail of the frightened stag. A picturesque sight, no doubt, but a cruel one was offered towards the fall of day by the maddened animal rushing into the pond of Saint-Pierre, with the savage dogs on its heels, while on the bank, the horsemen, the occupiers of the carriages, and those on foot witnessed the pitiful agony of the poor quadruped. This was what they termed a hot quarry.

When the guests were not compelled to run through the woods to the strains of the hunting-horn, tea was served at five in the apartments of the Empress. All were not admitted to this intimate function, only those whom she wished to honour. Having been notified of the fact in the

¹ Emile Zola, *Son Excellence Eugène Rougon*.

morning by Mlle. de Larminat or by the future Countess Clary, they joined the personal friends of Eugénie, her standing guests on all occasions. To take tea with the Empress was a favour much sought after. It caused many heart-burnings among those whom the Mistress of the Household did not deem fit to honour.

It was at these intimate gatherings that the Empress was fondest of displaying her conversational powers. She would choose a subject grave or frivolous according to the mood of the moment. One afternoon the famous advocate Lachaud riveted the attention of all present with anecdotes of some *causes célèbres*. Her Majesty joined in the conversation, and related some curious details concerning the Duke and Duchess de Praslin. She had met the tragic couple at the Delesserts'. A few weeks before the murder, in the dead of night, the Duchess, on awaking suddenly, had seen, standing beside her bed, a cowled monk, who disappeared suddenly as she reached out her arm to ring the bell. "It must have been the Duke," said a dramatic author to the Empress; "he was no doubt rehearsing the awful drama." Whether it was so or not, the fact remains that on the night of the murder all the bells had been cut.

Now and again the Empress enjoyed a game of patience, and while playing she would talk at random. One afternoon the Marquis de Toulon-

geon was helping her, while around her stood the keenly interested group. She proceeded to tell them that she often received letters from mad people, especially in March and December. Persigny, who had a fair experience in such matters, proceeded to supplement the Empress's anecdotes with some of his own. He observed that one of the most characteristic symptoms of the fixed idea, or insanity, was to underline the words of a letter, even the unimportant ones. The Empress, visibly concerned, exclaimed, "Pray do not say that. Are you sure it is a sign of lunacy? I underline a great many words."

"Your Majesty, it is only a symptom of the first degree of madness."

"Yes; and I am sure that you have already reached the second and third," replied Her Majesty.

Those present did not know exactly how to take the remark, and Persigny, whom the Empress disliked personally, seemed very much perturbed.

At Compiègne there were many gloomy and moody hours, as gloomy as the weather during these autumn days. The afternoon was often spent aimlessly, sometimes devoted to childish pursuits, such as spilling ink upon a sheet of paper, folding it, and going into ecstasies upon the curious drawings that resulted from the stain. At other times *ennui* was warded off by innocent

games such as crambo, little papers, or by the still more harmless game of dictation. Some one who had prepared a passage would dictate it to the assembled guests. Of course it contained most difficult words, and an amusing sight was afforded by eminent men of letters and scientists racking their brains to effect the proper spelling. The Emperor made innumerable mistakes, while the Empress did not even try her hand at the dictation. From her early childhood she had been on very bad terms with French orthography. On one occasion the prize was awarded to de Metternich, a foreigner; again, Madame de Sancy-Parabère, lady in waiting to the Empress, won the day in this childlike competition.

So for aught one might think, and notwithstanding the legend, the guests did not always enjoy their stay at Compiègne, at least not those among them who cared sufficiently for their reputation to follow the regulation programme of each day. As to the others, fast livers, coquettes, and heedless creatures little harassed by prejudices, they found plenty of means to cheat the official boredom of their stay. In the morning and at night, oftentimes in the middle of the day, assignations were kept, and pleasant hours whiled away under the reliable shadow of the old tree.

In 1852 Eugénie had made her first appearance

at Compiègne as a guest. The following year she reigned there as Sovereign and mistress of the house. On the 16th October *La Philiberte*, a play by Emile Augier, was produced in the theatre of Compiègne by such artistes as Bres-sant, Lafontaine, and Rose Cheri. She followed the action of the play with the keenest interest ; and having complimented the author on his work, she asked him what she could do for letters—she who had just ascended the throne. “Your Majesty’s task is a simple one,” replied Augier. “You will best serve letters by loving them.” The performances that took place were given in a large hall. It was deemed unworthy of its object, however, so it was decided to build a large and suitable theatre. It never served its purpose, because it was only completed after the fall of the Empire. The programme of the performances varied according to the vogue of the plays that were being enacted, or to the whims and tastes of the Emperor and Empress, who had to be satisfied in turn. Napoleon favoured light comedies and farces, while the Empress inclined towards romantic and melodramatic performances, displaying a great liking for the popular drama, clad in darkest hues. The companies of the Comédie Française and the Gymnase performed at stated dates at Compiègne, but there were also more intimate performances given there under

the direction of the Princess de Metternich, an amateur actress of no mean merit. All the dilettanti at Court, the theatrical enthusiasts, were eager to take part in these amateur theatricals, so as to receive their share of plaudits and be complimented upon their performance by the prettiest lips in creation. Their pleasure became to them a duty and a task, and after many rehearsals, when thoroughly drilled and trained by Madame de Metternich, the society troupe of actors and actresses would beard the footlights in one of the large halls. The scenery and properties were provided by the Imperial storehouse, the stage manager was the famous architect Viollet-Leduc, while the list of artistes included such names as Pauline de Metternich-Sandor, the Marchioness de Gallifet, Lord Rothschild, Baroness de Poilly, Count Aguado, the Marquess de Caux, Viscount Fitz-James, Count de Solms, and the *élite* of the nobility. The Empress herself had played a part in the *Portraits de la Marquise* of Octave Feuillet. She gave his cue to Count d'Audlau, then in high favour and at the zenith of his power. Octave Feuillet, Mérimée, and Louis de Sauley, his amiable compeer, were the providers of mirth and fun, for they wrote short plays and invented charades for the company. Mérimée had just written a somewhat vivacious playlet for "Doña

Eugénia" entitled *The Blue Room*. He signed it "Mérinée, Jester to Her Majesty." Finding himself at Court without being a courtier by nature, he affected to complain of being compelled to talk or to play when he did not want to do so. In his letters he deplored having to wear short breeches or tight trousers, and being compelled to go to Mass on Sundays, he who could not bear priests, Jesuits, or the Pope. But he had to resign himself to these petty and menial deeds of serfdom. He was really attached to the Empress, and as he had to be at Court, owing to her wish, he tried to amuse others there as well as himself. He devised or invented the drawing-room comedies, giving the cue to the theatrical diletantism of the Duke de Morny, and if necessary playing a comic part himself. The brains and wit of Feuillet were requisitioned at all times, but he was never taken unawares, because before coming to Compiègne he provided himself with charades, short plays and "sainetes," or Spanish farces, which he had tested on his own family circle before producing them in the presence of their Majesties. It was natural that he should devote the best care to such work, because the Empress was never tired of giving him proof of personal affection and regard. She personally saw to his comforts during his residence at the Château, where his favourite apartments were



LE DUC DE MORNY.



always kept for him. His windows gave on to the park. There the poet could dream for long hours, gazing upon the forest that lay half-hidden in the gilded mists of the morn, upon the marble gods, the arbours of leafy vine, and, in the distance, upon the heights of Pierrefonds. So he performed his duties with zeal and eagerness. When plays and *tableaux vivants* were not the order of the day, the idle company resorted to dancing and to gossip. *Jeux d'esprit, reparties* and witticisms also provided food for fun. Under the presidency of the "lady of the house" the Sainte-Beuves, the Feuilletts, the Mérimées had to uphold their reputations as conversationalists and men of wit. They had in Eugénie the best possible audience, but Napoleon preferred conversations in a lighter vein, during which he could lavish compliments right and left upon the prettiest women of his Court. In this pursuit he never spared himself. He would sit with this one or with that one, charming them all in turn with amiable sayings that helped him at the same time to satisfy his gallant inclinations. Every woman at Court was devoured by the keen desire to attract the attention of the Emperor, were it only for a moment. The most eager among them would change their seats five or six times so as to find themselves in his way.

The Sovereigns usually retired towards mid-

night. The guests were free to follow them or to remain in the drawing-rooms. As a rule, the ladies disappeared one by one, but often foregathered again in the apartments of one of the Princesses, where privileged coteries, unheeded and free from all restraint, enjoyed the delightful gossip of these over-flow meetings.

In December the Court returned to Paris. Napoleon and his Consort once more occupied the Palace of the Tuileries, where etiquette claimed all its prerogatives. As soon as she returned to the capital, the Empress had to devote herself to preparing for the great State balls that were held in the winter.

CHAPTER VII

Ten years of a prosperous reign—Early political views of Eugénie—How she acquired her firm hold upon the situation—The various reasons to which this was assigned—A few traits of her intimate life—The true cause of her sudden departure to Scotland, and, three years later, of her hurried journey to Bade—Compensations afforded to the Empress in atonement for the injuries done to the wife—The Emperor's journey to Algeria—A second regency—The Empress acquires the habit of governing—Criticisms caused by the active and personal part she played—The Empress and Prince Napoleon—The speech of Ajaccio—Refusal to propose a toast in honour of the Empress—Other protests against her regency—How a letter from the Duke de Persigny to the Emperor, concerning the Empress, fell into her hands—Growing influences of Eugénie—Her two great political passions—The Roman question—Clericalism at the Tuileries and in Government circles—Failure of the proposed journey to Italy—Bad feelings caused by it—Another interview with Prince Napoleon—The Mexican dream—Period of fervour and enthusiasm—Curious features of this enthusiasm which was far from general—Her significant conversation in the drawing-room of Admiral Jurien de la Gravière—Bad news follows the announcement of victories—A period of pious retreat and ardent prayer—The climax—General feeling of the nation—Excessive sincerity of an official—"The Austrian woman and the Spanish woman"—Unpublished anecdotes—The lesson taught by events.

FOR ten years the Imperial star had shone without interruption. It was the golden age of the second Empire, then at the height of its prosperity. It was the honeymoon of financial speculation, the happy time for all those who profited by continuous success. There was a vast concourse of foreigners in the French capital, who willingly spent their

money in exchange for the joys they found there. They were dazzled by this Parisian existence in which everything seemed to belong to Dreamland, seduced the eye and deceived the mind. More than ever was the Empress the recipient of homage and adulation.

This did not satisfy her. To be a decorative sovereign whom the claws of time had not yet scratched, pleased her looking-glass but did not satisfy her self-pride. She yearned to prove herself possessed of more important gifts, to show that she was highly gifted as a politician. Her true friends would have wished to see her maintain her brilliant and dignified position in a centre calm and serene, inaccessible to party strifes. But how could she have done so when her temperament, her imagination, her proud nature urged her to transform her impulses into active participation? To direct the affairs of the State rather than participate in them was indeed the course she aimed at and the one she followed in more than one instance, with dire results to France and to herself!

The miraculous stroke of luck which had made her Queen was soon followed by Eugénie's first efforts in the political arena. They were tentative efforts that she indulged in, pending the day when she could boldly take possession of supreme power. From time to time, at her Monday at homes,

she would broach the subject of politics, expressing her opinion on a given question with firmness and vivacity. She did so with all the more zest in the presence of representatives of the Corps Diplomatique. Towards 1853 and 1854 Prince Jablonovski, the personification of an Austrian general and grandee, and Hübner his fellow countryman, a subtle diplomatist, the acutest of men (with the exception of Metternich and Nigra), were often called upon to refute her sudden questions and her unforeseen attacks. The respective conditions of the different powers interested her keenly, though she discussed such grave matters without much sequence or preparation, often indeed with levity. Austria, Italy, The Papacy and Spain provided her with subjects upon which she delivered her judgment that often went forth like a rocket. At times she would entertain her guests with her views upon the fate of Spain, foretelling a Spanish Revolution at no distant date, to be followed by the union of Spain and Portugal under the sceptre of the house of Braganza, a Union that was not to be.¹

¹ On the 13th September, 1853, Baron de Hübner wrote as follows: The Empress was in a very chatty mood last night, especially when the Emperor, who was suffering from a headache, had to retire from the dinner-table. I reminded her of our dinner-party at the house of Gudin the painter, the day on which her marriage had been decided, and she spoke of Spain, foretelling a revolution for the following October and the

On another occasion, shortly before it became known that diplomatic relations between Paris and Vienna had been broken off, she took Count Hübner to task with extraordinary vivacity, asking him point blank what were the intentions of his Government. She constantly acted under the impulse of her mind, intervening suddenly in a debate, in a discussion about to be closed, or criticizing a plan long matured by others but suddenly abandoned through her intervention. Thus, during the period of 1863, she thwarted the arrangements come to between the Government and the Press with a view to influencing the public mind by means of the latter. The elections of Paris were lost because she had chosen to favour certain individuals, and in so doing to beard the Council of State.

Nevertheless, she persevered in this direction, endeavouring more and more to cultivate tastes for serious pursuits as, in the course of years, she became less attached to the frivolous and dissipated doings of her Court.

The Emperor afforded her full leisure for in-

coming union of Spain and Portugal under the sceptre of the house of Braganza. This is, of course, the well-known device of the progressists. As a matter of fact they care little for the house of Braganza and are only aiming at a Republic. Doña Eugénia's remarks were probably but the echo of Marshal Harvaez, one of her intimate friends. I laughingly told the Empress that it would hardly pay her to become a progressist.

dulging in her new mode of life, because, gradually but surely, he saw less and less of her in private. He loved her and yet neglected her. This was common knowledge. Though profoundly attached to his wife and child, constancy was by no means a virtue of his. His wandering instincts, his desire to explore fresh fields of affection, were amply provided with opportunities to which stronger men might easily have yielded. Was he a victim of personal weakness, belated sentimentalism or prolonged curiosity? Be that as it may, it is but fair to say that he was not alone responsible for the number or the excess of his gallant adventures. More than ever he was obliged to yield willingly to certain attacks that were driven home with vigour. On one occasion, when dining with Princess Bacciochi in Brittany, he said, "As a rule man attacks; I have to defend myself and often to capitulate."

He did not have to throw down the gauntlet, it was snatched from his hand. The most seductive women courted his caprice with a provocative audacity that was scarcely veiled by a thin remnant of worldly delicacy. They were well aware of his natural inclinations.¹ He was will-

¹ "Napoleon has been described as the prototype of the libertine in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*; he was in truth a Werther" (Arsène Houssaye). We do not subscribe to this statement of the author of *Les Grandes Dames*, satisfied as we are

ingly led away, though he should have fought against temptation, for he rapidly wasted both physical strength and moral energy in the sensual pursuit of pleasure. He seemed to ignore the fact that at a certain age one should beware of the aftermath of love. If he was duly cognizant of the dangers of revivification and resuscitation, he paid little heed to them.¹ He was weak with women, and wavering with men.

There were many differences between their most Christian Majesties, caused, no doubt, by the Emperor's indiscretions.

Clouds foregathered and their collision resulted in severe storms. With a nature so despotic as his, Napoleon I would soon have silenced all such jealous fears. He would not have taken the trouble to defend himself, but feigning one of his violent outbursts of temper, which never reached beyond his throat and therefore never affected his brain, he would have thus addressed his forsaken Consort: "You must submit to my

that his ever transient intrigues were tinged with a modicum of delicate feeling.

In the midst of women, he unremittingly sought "The Woman."

¹ "I do not think you have been accurately informed about Monsieur's (the Emperor's) health. He is very active and obeys his doctor's orders. His one weakness is his excessive affection for petticoats, a dangerous complaint in *a young man of his years*." (Mérimée, *Letters to Panizzi*. 27th October, 1864.)

will, and be content to see me obtain some relaxation where and how I choose. I am above all other men and cannot be dictated to by you or any other human being." Napoleon III was not possessed of this despotic spirit. He preferred to bow his head under the vehement reproaches of the woman whom he deceived but also loved. Calmer times followed periods of storm and conjugal peace was once more restored, until yet another excursion to the land of Cythera rekindled the flames of uxorious wrath. Her honour, her personal dignity, if not her love, were wounded by the volatile behaviour of her husband, and the knowledge of his many love caprices.

Her sudden departure for Scotland in the autumn of 1860 seemed more like a flight, for she was accompanied only by the Princess of Essling and Madame de Sauley. It was one of the very few incidents that afforded the public a glimpse of the stormy relations that at times existed in the Imperial *ménage*. These painful relations were, however, within the knowledge of all who between 1860 and 1863 frequented the Tuileries, Saint Cloud, Compiègne and Fontainebleau. The sudden arrival of the Empress, in November 1860, had caused universal surprise in London. This journey, in no way foreseen, was much commented upon. Some said it was due to the delicate state of her health, which had been severely

shaken by the recent death of her sister, the Duchess of Alba, and that she was going to Scotland for change of air.

The journey to Schwalbach in 1863 was really undertaken on account of her health, as she had been suffering for weeks from sore throat and vomiting. Endless silly explanations were vouchsafed for this trip, but some of those put forward rested upon a substratum of truth. It was said that shortly before her departure, the Empress had called upon one Marguerite Boulanger, the beautiful and impudent mistress of the Master, and had asked her not to remain in residence at Montretout, as it was too painful to behold her villa from the windows of St. Cloud. The fact remains that there is no lack of concordance between what was stated and what really occurred.¹

Mental troubles, caused by the ill-concealed levity of her husband's conduct, aggravated the nervous

¹ Let us read between the following lines penned by Mérimée to Madame de Montijo—

“ 11th October, 1864.

“Before my departure from Paris, last Friday, I saw my friend from Biarritz. I had a few hours' conversation with her, and you can readily guess the subject of it. She felt she wanted to unburden herself. The whole thing is very sad, even more *so* than you can imagine, but do not breathe a word about it. I think I have given good advice, without forgetting the proverb: ‘Do not put your finger between the tree and the bark,’ but I do not know that my advice has been followed.”

affection of the stomach from which she suffered. She was advised to take the waters at Schwalbach, in the idyllic duchy of Nassau, which had not been absorbed by the Prussian conquest.

German watering-places were then much frequented by French tourists and invalids.

At 8 o'clock, on the evening of the 5th of September, she left St. Cloud by the Imperial train, which met her in the very centre of the Park. Had it not been for the vibration, she might well have imagined that she still occupied her own apartments. The walls of the saloon were covered with tapestry, and the whole furniture upholstered with variegated satins, while the ceilings of the Imperial carriage were covered with white moiré silk. Thus did the Countess of Pierrefonds cross the eastern frontier.

It had been arranged that she should preserve a semi-incognito under this name, which would enable her to avoid the fatigue entailed by State ceremonials. During her stay at Schwalbach, the Empress refrained from appearing at official or public ceremonies.

Eugénie prolonged her stay beyond the period fixed by the medical faculty. She lived in seclusion, refusing all invitations, royal or princely, and ignoring the urgent requests of her own friends, who eagerly asked her to return to Paris. "They say that all the telegraph wires on land and at sea

are conveying to the Empress the urgent supplications of her friends to return to Paris" (Xavier Doudan, October 17th, 1863). She returned in her own time, having duly decided upon the line of conduct she meant to follow. She would remain the faithful companion and the Sovereign, but henceforth Eugénie would cease to be. Henceforth there would only be an Empress in her. Napoleon, who loved his wife, wanted peace and tranquillity above all things, and lived in dread of the fits of jealousy and offended dignity to which his conduct so often gave rise. A great friend of his explained this to a writer in the following terms—

"The Emperor has such a dread of noise and worry in his house, that he would set fire to the four corners of Europe in order to avoid one of those family scenes caused by his infidelity."

Urged somewhat by contrition, somewhat by lassitude, and also by weakness, he conferred upon the Empress a large amount of authority and the right to interfere in public matters, thus compensating her for the losses she suffered through his lack of constancy. Eventually Eugénie took a very serious view of the part she had to play. She yearned for the opportunities of proving herself possessed of virile qualities, she who had so long been reputed a giddy and amiable woman. Sceptics expressed

their doubt as to the efficacy of these good intentions. Had they been questioned as to the political capabilities of the Empress, they would willingly have proffered the answer made by Count Gortschakoff when asked what he thought of the statesmanlike qualities of a famous woman under the third republic,—“Madame Adam has very fine shoulders.”

Eugénie had a high opinion of her moral individuality. She contracted the habit of speaking, advising, and acting politically. At the meetings of the Council she endeavoured to remain silent. When she did intervene in the discussion, she spoke with moderation and gave her advice in measured terms. This tranquillity was of short duration. Her natural exuberance soon asserted itself in vivid expression and, breaking through all bounds, she was wont at times to go to extremes, becoming impassioned on such questions as interested her, though at times she predicated sensible solutions that were adopted with good results.

She was no more the young woman of former days thirsting for worldly adulation and frivolous enjoyment. She had become a woman of experience absorbed by public questions which she could assimilate if she could not understand. She displayed much ability in discussing them, and much self-confidence and courage in upholding her

views, however misdirected. The Emperor, on the other hand, a prey to the invading malady that brought about his end, exhibited little energy, and gave but intermittent signs of strong will. She did not attempt to weaken the authority of the Emperor, but she felt that both her intelligence and her status gave her the right to co-operate in his work. Napoleon III had not reached that degree of physical decrepitude which later on urged Eugénie to govern her husband and to govern France through her husband. Gradually personal opinions were formulated in the mind of the Empress, opinions that were heeded, applauded, and followed, though they were not always shared by the Emperor.

Two currents were thus formed, two parties called into existence at Court, that of the Emperor, and that of the Empress. The latter was composed of ambitious and energetic men, whose one desire was to set up a second power against the existing one.

At first there was no flagrant signs of the true condition of affairs. Napoleon had just conferred upon Eugénie the most striking proof of his confidence on the eve of his departure to Algeria, whither he had repaired as an invalid as well as in his official capacity. For the second time he had appointed her Regent of his Empire during his voyage, which was undertaken mainly with a view

to obtaining relief from sufferings that had become acute. He did not only confer upon her the prerogatives of this temporary power. He had thought it wise and prudent, owing to circumstances that did not call for such precautions, to assure her complete preponderance. To that effect he drew up the following will, that was not doomed to be repeated a second time—

“I recommend my son to the great bodies of the State, to my people and to my Army. The Empress Eugénie is possessed of all the qualities needed to ensure an efficient regency.”

When he left she did not urge him to curtail his absence from Paris. He proceeded as far as the desert, receiving everywhere proofs and testimony of full submission from the Arab chiefs, who bowed before him as though he were a glorious son of the Prophet, and not the leader of those Christians whose invasion of their country in bygone times had wrought so much havoc in their midst. He enjoyed his triumphant progress, and apprised his consort of the fact, describing to her how, on the confines of the Sahara, large ostriches and whole oxen were served up for his dinner. The picturesqueness of the country and its inhabitants, the warm caresses of the sun spreading its dazzling rays upon the scenery, the transparency, the depth of the Algerian sky, all helped to create the best impression in Napoleon's mind. It was that of

two civilizations living side by side in each other's grasp, inoculating one another without, however, losing any of their distinct characteristics or suffering mutual absorption. The one represented the most enduring traditions of the East, while the other exemplified all the movement and conquering expansion of modern life. He was happy to linger in a country so full of interest, the while Eugénie indulged the height of her ambition by governing in his absence. Save for minor incidents connected with the cab strike, when she took upon herself to replace the strikers by drivers of the Army Service Corps, nothing of importance occurred during this regency. Its peace was only broken by an ill-advised speech delivered by Prince Napoleon at Ajaccio in May 1865. The naughty boy of the house of Bonaparte advocated therein a policy in direct contradiction to that of the Emperor and the Empire. "The Empress is severely blamed," wrote Mérimée, "for not having rebuked him more sternly."

She displayed, however, a considerable amount of annoyance as soon as she became aware of the seditious harangue. She forthwith apprised the Emperor of it, and forbade the official organ, the *Moniteur*, to publish it. The Empress's dispatch was handed to Napoleon in the midst of his Algerian followers. He frowned, crumpled the paper, and withdrew at midnight. He summoned

de Gallifet : " You must leave immediately for Paris ; here are two letters, one for the Empress and one for Prince Napoleon. Please deliver them personally into the hands of those to whom they are addressed. Inform Her Majesty that I have had a splendid journey and will return next week."

" If His Imperial Highness questions me, what shall I answer ?" said de Gallifet.

" Tell him to go and hang himself." On his arrival in Paris Gallifet got into uniform, rushed to the Palace, and handed the Empress the Emperor's letter to his Consort. She was still quite upset by the ill-advised action of the Prince, who had ordered four hundred thousand copies of his speech to be printed and circulated when he heard that the publication was suppressed in the *Moniteur*. Such a scandal must be averted. De Gallifet had not a moment to lose. He flew to the Palais Royal. The aide-de-camp on duty, Colonel Ragon, received the letter, and requested de Gallifet to wait while he bore it to the Prince, whose instructions he would take. His Royal Highness was busy, and for over an hour the turbulent de Gallifet had to mark time. At last, Jérôme consented to receive the Emperor's Envoy, whom he greeted with the following words : " I did not think the Emperor harboured such affection for me as to send you all the way from

Algiers to enquire about my health. I am profoundly touched by such a delicate attention."

"Your Imperial Highness has received a letter, of which I was the bearer. What shall I say to the Emperor?"

"Tell him to go and hang himself."

On his return to Algiers Colonel de Gallifet reported upon his mission.

"Did my cousin give you no message for me?" said the Emperor.

"None, your Majesty," replied the Colonel.

Meanwhile the *Moniteur Officiel* had published the Imperial letter brought from Algiers to the Tuileries, and France was apprised of the severe chiding that had been administered to Jérôme. He gave vent to his rage, stormed at leisure, but soon consoled himself.

Though the Empress could obtain no influence over the undisciplined cousin of her husband, she acquired considerable influence in other quarters.

"She is far too hot-headed," said one quiz, "ever to make a Regent like Blanche de Castille."

While the Emperor remained among the Kabyles, administering his affairs from afar, his Ministers felt bound to acquaint the Regent with all the instructions they received and carried out. As a mark of deference they met in her apartments, and there kept her duly informed on all

important matters, upon which they constantly took her advice. She was treated as a State personage, not only during the Emperor's absence, but after his return.

Such a course could not meet with universal approval. Many censors in her immediate surroundings deemed the task allotted to her far too heavy. The members of the Imperial family, notably Prince Napoleon, whose words always expressed his feelings, and the Highnesses of the first and second degrees still enjoyed the various distractions and entertainments at Court, but in a somewhat dull and sulky mood that testified to their aloofness from the Empress. A flagrant proof of this spirit had been afforded two years previously, during one of the autumn receptions at Compiègne.

The 15th of November is of course the day consecrated in the Catholic calendar to the name of Eugénie. On that particular 15th of November, as dinner was nearly over, the Emperor asked Prince Napoleon to say a few words in honour of the Sovereign whose feast day it was.

No sooner was this request made than the Prince's clean-shaven face was distorted by a grimace, though of course he had not been taken unawares. The Empress smilingly said to him that she feared his eloquence as much as she appreciated it, but for some futile reason

he declined to avail himself of the honour conferred upon him. All the guests had risen to their feet, awaiting in silence the delivery of the speech, and little knowing what was happening in the Imperial group. Prince Jérôme Napoleon had given as his reason his inability to speak in public, though his abundant and powerful elocution was of universal knowledge. The Emperor repeated his request.

“Do you not wish to propose the health of the Empress?”

“If your Majesty will kindly excuse me, I prefer not to do so.”

Cut to the quick, the Emperor turned to Joachim Murat and asked him to replace his cousin. Prince Joachim proposed the toast, and the guests left the table suffering from a feeling of discomfort which they could not disguise.

It was little surprising that, feeling so little affection towards his august cousin, Prince Napoleon should have little sympathy with the zeal she displayed in governing the nation. He accused her publicly of being responsible for the abortion of the Italian policy.¹

This was not his only grievance, for where she

¹ After Villafranca she would have liked to see the creation of a Confederation, the effect of which would have been to leave Victor Emmanuel in possession of the North of Italy, the King of Naples master of the South, and the Sovereign Pontiff in possession of the centre.

was concerned every fashion was a fault. Less hostile minds, trusted partisans of imperialism were alarmed at the dangers threatening the Government and its calm and measured policy through the neurotic and blundering actions that are invariably born of the feminine mind. The faithful Persigny, who many times had sorely tested the personal sympathy of Napoleon III by the brutal frankness of his advice and admonitions, had had the courage to send the head of the State a long report upon the grave disadvantages of divided power. For many years Persigny¹ had deplored the successive failures of French diplomacy in the affairs of Poland, of the Roman states, and of Denmark. He ascribed such failures to the influence of Eugénie. While casting no blame upon her personality as a Sovereign he deprecated her presence at the Council of Ministers. He contended that it set up one policy against another, by creating dual control in the State. The one policy was bound to annul the other and, in his opinion, to prove an incentive to intrigues and a source of grave uncertainty. Would it not be wise and prudent, if not necessary, to adhere to the unity of Government? How could this be effected if both the internal and external enemies

¹ Persigny had been Home Secretary in 1861. A somewhat fantastic individual, he was honesty personified, and had the courage to serve his Emperor without ever flattering him.

of France were provided with formidable weapons by the active part played in State matters by the Empress? Persigny had dared to express these convictions and to embody them in a report addressed to the Tuileries from his private estate of Charmarande. The Duke had hoped that his letter would be delivered into the hands of the Emperor, and that its contents would not be made known to her who provided the subject-matter of it. Unfortunately, the dangerous document fell under the eyes of the Empress. The Emperor was confined to bed, and at his bidding she opened his correspondence, among which was the famous epistle.

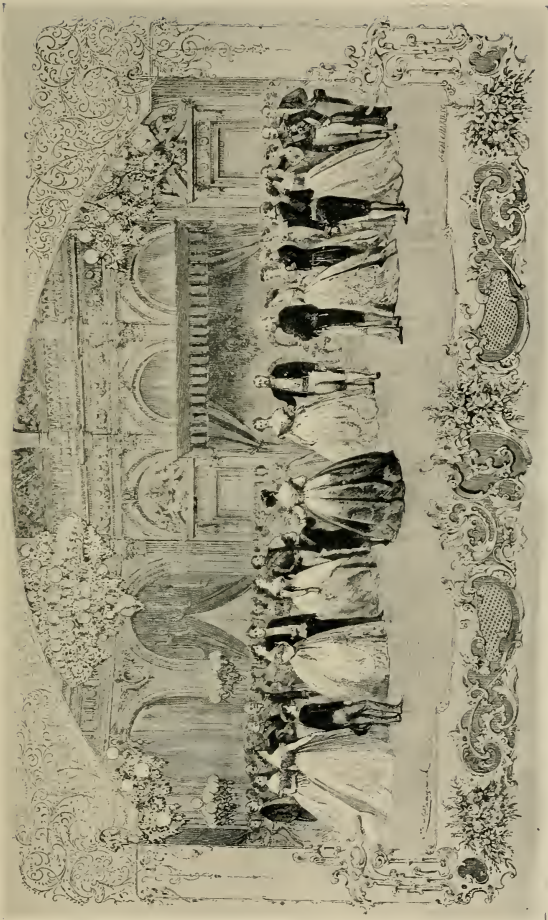
It is easy to surmise the impression produced by it upon the impetuous character of Eugénie. She had not forgotten that Fialinde Persigny had offered the most strenuous objection to her marriage with Napoleon III. This fresh wound revived her old resentment. Acting under the impulse of spite and anger, she declared that as the proof given by her of her devotion to public welfare was interpreted as a source of evil and danger, she would not again appear at State Councils. This announcement was made in such a way, however, that the Emperor, as a dutiful husband, had to combat his wife's expressed desire for retirement and self-effacement. He urged her not to persevere in this course, and laid the whole blame of the matter upon the audacious Counsellor.

Without attempting to answer or refute the main arguments propounded by Persigny, he replied to him in his own handwriting that the attendance of the Empress at Cabinet meetings was fully justified, as it was necessary to initiate the eventual Regent into the knowledge of State matters. A second letter soon followed, the eight pages of which were in the close and nervous handwriting of the Empress herself. She denied with the utmost energy that there had been any interference on her part in the events of the past, though she declared herself ready to assume responsibility in the future in order to relieve the Emperor of State cares. She would refrain, however, from setting foot in the Council Chamber, since her best intentions had been misunderstood, and henceforth events would prove, she added, whether her presence there had been beneficial or not. For how many days or weeks did she really mean to remain in retirement? As long, no doubt, as her good intentions prevailed. Very soon after this renunciation Napoleon III informed the late companion of his adventures that he could not consent to the continued absence of the Empress from the Council Chamber, as it would undoubtedly give rise to ill-natured comment. He therefore insisted on her attending Cabinet meetings. In no other instance did the personal influence of Eugénie upon the mind and will of

the Emperor assert itself in so peremptory a manner as in all the details of this incident. By means direct and indirect, she brought her influence to bear upon all matters of importance. But two unfortunate and obstinate passions asserted themselves in her throughout her life ; the defence of the temporal power of the Head of the Catholic Church (who was, in her mind, the direct and living image of Christ), and the expedition of Mexico, which she considered as a far-off revenge wrought in behalf of the land of her birth.

She took little interest in matters external connected with such parts of the world as had not been included in her political education. The affairs of Egypt, Roumania or Greece, the progressive growth of Prussia's power in Germany did not arrest the attention of Eugénie in the year 1866. She was completely absorbed by all questions appertaining to Rome and Italy.

At the outset her spirit of ultramontanism differed widely from the Emperor's views. His keenest desire had been to put a stop to the occupation by French troops of the pontifical states. Twice, in 1861 and in 1862, he had thought of withdrawing his troops, and would have done so had he not been threatened by Garibaldi. In the summer of 1863 he took advantage of the absence of Eugénie at Schwalbach and summoned General Menabrea to Vichy in order to settle the conditions



THE EMPRESS AT NANCY IN 1866: THE ROYAL QUADRILLE AT THE TOWN HALL
(from a drawing by Emile Bayard, taken from "A Voyage in Lorraine," published by Henri Plon).

of the evacuation with the Envoy of Victor Emmanuel. Then began his customary tergiversations. Pius the Ninth's Nuncio and the clerical party at Court had begun their campaign. He therefore found it difficult to uphold temporal power and then forsake it. Eugénie's constant efforts to counterbalance his personal sympathies afforded ample explanation for the vacillation of his decisions. He invoked political reasons and his own positivism. She extolled religion and its laws. While he declared that he was particularly anxious to ensure the success of the Italian Revolution, she upheld on high the banner of the Catholic cause.¹ The intervention of the Empress, formerly intermittent and rare, became more and more frequent. The Roman question absorbed her daily, and her zealous efforts to secure the maintenance of the integral authority of the Pope were warmly applauded by the ultramontanes. Political men like Buffet, who were generally deemed possessed of sagacious and tempered minds, re-echoed the sentiments of the Empress, declaring that any decrease of the territory of Pius IX would cause a European catastrophe. Foreign diplomatists played her game and urged her not to give way. Among them were her

¹ Mérimée said that the Pope and Garibaldi should have been compelled to fight their battle in a closed ring, because they were as dangerous and as bigoted one as the other.

intimate friends the Ambassador and the Ambassadors of Catholic Austro-Hungary. If Napoleon and his consort had not the same reasons for affording protection to the Holy See, the result was the same, the effect identical. Pius IX remained Pontiff and King. "For a short time," says Bauer, in his manuscript notes, "the imperial couple was spared the storms that frequently were caused by the Roman question, storms overheard through closed doors by many courtiers ever on the *qui-vive*."

This costly, equivocal and ill-assured protectorate had weird results. It satisfied none in the very country upon which it was imposed. On the one hand, the Ministers of Victor Emmanuel were irate at this continual interference from without in the affairs of the peninsula. On the other, the out-and-out partisans of pontifical sovereignty deplored the lack of energy among its supporters who dealt but in words, measuring their means of defence and gradually curtailing them. It was pontifical Rome that spoke in 1866 the following words of prophetic anger against Napoleon III—

"Napoleon deserts Pius IX and leaves Rome. May God be blessed! We shall soon witness the funeral of the Second Empire. Its obituary notice is already written and can be divided into three parts: Germany, Mexico, Rome. Germany and Mexico point to the eclipse of the military glory

of Bonaparte, while Rome foretells that of Catholic traditions which can never be forgotten by France. Napoleon will soon be enveloped in darkness. It will overtake him before the night has come. How can France continue to tolerate the deeds of this magnanimous man who is always retiring before danger? Fearing Russia, he retires from Poland. Fearing needle guns, he retires from Germany. The fear of the United States drives him from Mexico, and he withdraws from Rome, terrified by Orsini, Mazzini and the Revolution. Two things seem very certain in the present uncertainty, the eventual victory of the Pope-King and the final downfall of the Empire. On the 18th June, 1816, as some one reminded Bonaparte that it was the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, he exclaimed, 'An incomprehensible battle made up of a concourse of fatalities.' And covering his eyes, he added, 'Everything failed when everything had succeeded.' Let Napoleon III prepare for a similar fate. To him will also come a great day of reckoning, and he will have to repeat the words of the founder of his dynasty, 'Everything failed when everything had succeeded.' Rome is fatal. It shall be fatal to the Second Empire as it was to the First."

The Empress did not hesitate. She had thrown her whole soul into the Roman question, and on it she staked her all. When the Emperor

wanted to liquidate a situation as difficult as it was ill defined, one that did not even beget the gratitude of the papacy which never thought itself sufficiently defended, when he sought a way out, some compromise, Eugénie would warmly plead the cause of Pius IX. She reminded her husband that he had pledged his word to stand by the Pope, and was relentless in her efforts until she had regained all the lost ground. Napoleon III's instructions to his diplomatic agents once more were couched in firm language. He declared that in accordance with the Convention of the 15th September he was compelled to withdraw his troops, but that he meant nevertheless to remain on the alert, ready to uphold the temporal power by every means. It was thanks to the influence of the Empress and to his Minister Drouyn de Lhuys that in October 1862 he had refused to foster the hopes of the Italians in favour of the occupation of Rome. Those endowed with common-sense and foresight conceived a very different idea from the following letter which he wrote with joy to his friend Arése, the chosen intermediary. These are the words he penned under the foliage of the secular trees in the park of Saint-Cloud: "I wish it to be known that in so far as the Roman question is concerned I shall not yield one inch. While I am decided to give effect to the Convention of the 15th

September I shall not allow the temporal power of the Pope to be prejudiced or violated in any way." The servile band of Court officials and politicians applauded the Empress while in the name of Heaven and in that of the Pope she worried the Emperor and perturbed the minds of his subjects. As Mérimée observed: "All the senators had become Capuchin monks. Even the women whose private lives were open to our criticism swam in the waters of devotion and piety." As a fervent Catholic, Eugénie was radiant. Meanwhile clouds of anger foregathered at the Court of Florence, and the obstinate and aged occupier of the Vatican, harassed by the advice of French diplomacy, did not express more satisfaction at the conduct of his protectors than at that of his adversaries.

Eugénie was more sensible than any one to the complaints to and appeals of the Papacy. The day on which the French occupation ceased, and Montebello and his officers took leave of the holy Father, was observed by her as a day of mourning.

The question of her visit to the Eternal City had been seriously discussed. It was a project which appealed immensely to her. General Fleury had been sent to Florence officially, to take the sense of the King of Italy and his Ministers upon the advisability of a visit to Rome, which was

deemed most inopportune by the French Cabinet. Eugénie conceived that it would be interpreted as a proof, indirect but most significant, of the security that still was to be afforded by the Imperial Government to the Holy See.

Napoleon's advisers discouraged the programme lest it might seem to be a disavowal of the evacuation of the French troops. The Emperor patiently awaited Fleury's letters, which were to throw full light on the situation. What would Victor Emmanuel and Baron Ricasoli think of it all? What would the Pope say?

The forthcoming answer was not pleasant reading. As might well have been foreseen, the King gave a very lukewarm hearing to the proposal of this invasion of the Roman states. Pius IX, from whom liberal concessions had been expected as a fitting passport, had proved intractable. While asserting his keen desire to receive the visit of the Empress, he sternly refused to countenance such reforms as those upon which the journey depended. Thus Eugénie had to postpone indefinitely the realization of a dream that she had nurtured for months.

She remained more opposed than ever to the Italian influence, and the bad temper provoked by her failure found vent on every occasion. With her eyes turned towards Italy, where the antagonism of Rome the capital and of papal Rome

was being fought out, she followed every phase of the strife upon which she could not pass a judgment or offer any criticism. Under exceptional circumstances the King of Piedmont had delivered a speech in the Chamber of Deputies which, re-echoed beyond the Italian frontier, had awakened the attention of Europe. Eugénie had not found in this speech the formulas of complacency towards Pope and Emperor that she desired. She considered this harangue too proud and too presumptuous. Forgetting that since Solférino the relations between France and Italy had altered sensibly and that foreign friendships had interposed with a view to making the latter less dependent of the former, she had joked and jeered at the Royal utterance with much imprudence. Dealing a straight thrust at Prince Napoleon, the terrible cousin Napoleon, son-in-law of Victor Emmanuel, and by no means her friend, she exclaimed point blank, "Have you read the last speech of your father-in-law? What does he mean by referring to 'great feats effected in a short time?' Can this be an allusion to the great feats performed at Custoza?"

"Madame, I am not responsible for the speeches of my father-in-law."

Jerome Napoleon had skilfully avoided a difficulty, and the subject might well have been

dropped, but the obdurate Empress would not desist. Driven at bay, the Prince added—

“I would prefer a defeat like a Custozza, that wins a province, to a victory like that of Mexico, which cost an empire.”

The sting was keenly felt by the Empress, who bit her lip and turned away.

The Mexican venture? Why, she had thrown herself into it, heart and soul. She had had no part in the motives that caused the Crimean War. She was opposed to the war of Italy, the consequences of which she feared for the sake of the Pope. How had she come to encourage this hazardous enterprise with so much zest? That in this matter she displayed a feverish enthusiasm is amply proved by the manuscript notes left by one of her faithful followers. He says: “I have often heard her say, ‘The war of Mexico is my war.’” The same follower witnessed an incident, the details of which leave no room for doubt as to the extent to which that campaign interested her.

A discussion had arisen between the Empress and a North American diplomatist. The unerring coolness of the United States citizen contrasted strangely with the heated animation of her who on that occasion acted more like a Mexican patriot than as the Empress of the French. The pitch of the conversation had become so high that it bordered upon an altercation.

“Madame, the North will conquer. France will have to abandon her plan, and this war will have an unhappy ending for Austria.”

“And I assure you,” replied Eugénie, “that if Mexico were not so far, and if my son were not still a child, I should wish to see him lead the French Army, whose sword is at present engaged in writing one of the finest pages of the history of the century.”

“Then, Madame, you may thank God that Mexico is so far and that your son is still a child.”

With prophetic foresight and sagacity, the American diplomatist had made an accurate prognosis and had truly judged the situation. Filled with ardour, the Empress frowned at him. Words of anger rushed to her lips, but the Emperor intervened and appeased the quarrel with an enigmatic smile. The belligerents were parted, but Eugénie harboured feelings of keen resentment against her outspoken guest. Neither he nor his charming daughters were ever asked to another “Monday At Home.”

Various influences were at work in the pursuit of the Mexican dream, but they escaped the languid mind of Napoleon. He thought he directed the events of the world, but in reality he was the puppet of the ultramontane party—led by the Empress—and of some wealthy men like Morny, who speculated on their own account

upon the recovery by force of certain doubtful debts. With the pretence of obtaining a commercial and financial indemnity, an expedition had been equipped with the real object of founding in America an autocratic and Catholic monarchy, vassal of France, in the room of a liberal republic. Politicians had schooled Napoleon in the conviction that the United States were a menace to Europe, and that it would be wise to check their progress by means of a Latin power which would serve as a bulwark against their inroads. Eugénie was more carried away than any one in this direction. With all her might, with all her eagerness, she endeavoured to hasten the accomplishment of a daring plan. Thanks to her illusions, such a plan spelt glory without peril. From the moment she ascended the Imperial throne under such bewildering circumstances her soul had never become detached from her native soil. She had remained the passionate daughter of the land of heroism, where all the expressions of thought, all poetic images, are couched in words of exaltation. The Spanish flame and sentiment vibrated in her as in the days of her youth. Her imagination enabled her to take part in the astonishing ventures which centuries ago had brought the blessed caravels of Hernando Cortes to the Mexican shores. When dreaming of these marvellous and legendary

expeditions, she would close her eyes and thus avoid the sight of the ruin and devastation which, like a burning sea, marked the onward progress of conquerors, and swept away flourishing and happy countries in their wake.¹

The early conquest, followed by cruel oppression, had brought about the loss of the colony, but Eugénie dreamt of resuming the work thus interrupted, of effecting the resurrection of that Spain beyond the seas under the united flags of France and Mexico. Such great prospects were doubtless seductive to a spontaneous nature like hers, which had not yet been tempered by reflection. Everything had been admirably ordained at Etioles, the property of Countess de Walewska.²

There, the Emperor and his Minister Walewski,

¹ "The Spaniards appeared on the scene. They threw themselves on these happy districts hungering for prey and carnage. In the name of the gospel, in the name of a God of Peace, for days and months they killed, massacred and pillaged relentlessly. Whole races were swept away. In a few years the Mexican and Peruvian civilizations were stifled and swept away, though they could trace their origin as far back in the dim past as Babylon and Niniva" (Frederick Loliée, *Histoire des littératures comparées*, p. 200, 201).

² This historic demesne dated from the time of Madame de Pompadour, and was immortalized by Voltaire in his correspondence. It had been purchased by Walewski the Minister. There he was the host of the Empress. During her residence, a great display of fireworks was given on the lawn of the park, and on that occasion the Sovereigns presided at the public inauguration of the bridge that leads to the station of Ivry-petit-Bourg.

with the Empress and Madame de Metternich, enjoyed to the full the happy vision, combining the details of a landing at Vera Cruz with the stages of a military march to the gates of Mexico, whose inhabitants were to sally forth to meet the conqueror. The benefits derived from this excursion into one of the states of the new world were set forth at length. The wonderful climate of Mexico, the wealth of its soil, the abundance of its silver mines, and its wonderful situation between two oceans, were extolled by the quartette, to whom the dream had already become a reality, the phantom a prey.

Eugénie was so elated that every one in her entourage feigned the same ardour, the same enthusiasm about Mexican matters. In the private apartments of the Tuileries, books and pamphlets concerning Central America and Mexico, written in different idioms, were strewn on every table. So much had this American literature imposed itself upon the Court that its effects were witnessed at even fancy dress balls. The surest way to gain favour with the Sovereign was to applaud this generous project, known as the greatest of the reign. It was an opportune time for Mérimée. A sceptic in most matters, he treated the Mexican question at length, when corresponding with his friends, in that free and easy manner so becoming

to a senator, a man of wit, satisfied with himself and his master, and who saw no earthly reason why a few thousand useless wretches should not be hanged or shot down.

On the 21st August, 1863, he wrote: "The Archduke Maximilian has sent an eight-page letter to the Emperor. He accepts the latter's offer in terms that lack neither gratitude nor eloquence. It is said that things are progressing favourably in Mexico. Colonel Dupin has received orders to pursue the Juarist guerillas with African spahis and Mexican counter guerillas. He began as one should begin with such rabble, by hanging or shooting every man he caught. This course has met with the full approval of the natives, who are eagerly helping us as spies. In a very few months this man-hunt will render the country quite secure." General Forey stated in his proclamations that the war was waged so that the streets of Mexico might be illuminated at night.

The inception of a reign, of an alliance, of a marriage, or of a foolhardy undertaking, is invariably bathed in dazzling light, like that of the dawn of day. France was at that time imbued with the Mexican faith, but some maintained a prudent reserve, and did not dare to express their opinion quite frankly. They were wont to shake their heads ominously, fearing that Mexico might bring

about a tragic end. Among such was Admiral Jurien de la Graviere. He spoke with authority, having been in command of the fleet and the landing party at the outset of the campaign. In the course of a dinner, at which several officials of high rank were present, the gallant sailor had beside him the Mexican Hidalgo (a warm favourite at the Tuileries), who had striven with all his might to secure the French intervention. When the expansive time for smoking had come, Jurien de la Graviere thought it befitting to address some words of sympathy to his guest, upon whom public attention was then riveted.

“ Now, let us speak of your country.”

“ My country,” replied the Hidalgo. “ One word will express what I think of my country. Its name is spelt ‘ Chaos.’ ”

On returning from the smoking-room to the drawing-room the admiral seemed distressed. The frank admission justified his own fears. He imparted them to the Abbé Bauer, and, knowing how much the Empress favoured him, he besought of the priest to use the whole weight of his eloquence in endeavouring to stop her on the downward grade, which, in his opinion, must lead France to a precipice. Bauer declined to interfere, adding that he would only compromise himself uselessly in so doing, but the admiral insisted upon his rendering this immense service



MGR. BAUER.



to the nation. The reason invoked was a powerful one, and the Abbé acted. The following day the Protonotary Apostolic was in the presence of the Empress. He related to her his patriotic fears, and was preparing to address to her his most ardent supplications when she stopped him short, saying, "How does this matter concern you?" The conversation was thus abruptly ended.

The optimists had every reason to congratulate themselves upon the first tidings from the seat of war. In quick succession came the news of victories and triumphant bulletins. They had been received in various ways at the Castle. Ever faithful to his system, which consisted of being impenetrable, the Emperor observed profound silence, replete no doubt with deep thought. This silence, however, was really due to his sole desire not to have to speak. The Empress, on the other hand, displayed the fullest satisfaction. The young Prince Imperial felt very proud when he was told that the imperial eagles had won the day at Puebla. He drew sketches of soldiers, encouraged in this by General Forey. What more could be wished for?

But a short time previously his mother was travelling in Spain, full of hope and imagination. During many charming excursions which rekindled the memories of her youth she did not forget France

in Mexico. She had given the child full proof of her joy in the first lines of the following letter, the original of which is in our possession—

“MY DEAR LOUIS,

“I have thought a great deal of you since I left you, notwithstanding the pleasure I feel in being in my own country and in hearing my native tongue. On arriving at Cadiz, I saw French troops that were sailing for Mexico ; they seemed very happy.”

This trip to Spain had been decided upon quite suddenly during her stay at Biarritz in the autumn of 1863.

A series of trips through the Iberian Peninsula was arranged in spite of the remonstrances of her followers and of timid friends, who trembled at dangers that did not exist. They had contended that election riots, and the restless spirit of the Spanish army might cause grave disturbances, owing to which she might compromise her name, her position, and her country. The circumspect Councillors went so far as to express their fears about a Press which had just obtained its independence. They said it might be abused with reference to the august traveller. Some of her intimate friends had openly opposed the idea of her journey. When she answered that she thought herself free to do what any private lady

could do, they tried to prove to her that a great Sovereign had to bow and submit to reasons of a superior order, saying, "The King is less free and independent than any of his subjects." They assured her that they spoke words of wisdom when asking her to abandon her projected visit. She did not allow herself to be influenced by these chimerical apprehensions, and the journey took place under the happiest auspices. She merely passed through Portugal. In all the provinces of Spain her impressions were both vivid and varied. When riding in Andalusia, she adopted the national costume, the boléro trimmed with sequins, and the round hat with curled brims. The chroniclers of fashion did not fail to notice that the use of the graceful boléro, so favoured by feminine taste, owed its inception to Eugénie.

She was greeted everywhere with warmth and enthusiasm. Not a hitch occurred at Cadiz, Seville, Granada or Marseilles, through which she passed on her return to Paris. During her absence, events had forged ahead in Mexico. The roseate dawn of the early days had faded. The triumphant flourishes were soon followed by discordant notes, by news of a serious nature, by tidings of defeat and by cyphered dispatches of a grave nature. The abandonment of Mexico by Bazaine, the re-embarking of the French troops at Vera Cruz, and the investment

of Quéretaro, such were the consecutive items of news that reached the Palace. Instructions were given there that no sign of anxiety should be indulged in. These instructions were useless, because one and all betrayed signs of anguish. The Empress increased the number of her devotions, urged by her credulity and her temperament. She ordered masses to be said, specifying that they should be offered up for the repose of the souls of both parties. She burnt numberless candles at the shrine of Notre-Dame des Victoires—which was rapidly being transformed into Notre-Dame des Défaites by those who invoked her.¹

In the early hours of the morning, and in the strictest incognito, she partook of communion at frequent intervals, hoping, no doubt, that by such acts of piety she would induce Heaven to help the French and Austrian Catholics against the Mexican Catholics. She prayed with unremitting fervour, and spent many hours in meditation in her private oratory of the Tuileries. Masses, communions, candles, rosaries and supplications were of no avail. The shell burst, and its effect was all the more terrible as news had reached the Tuileries but a few hours before the execution of Maximilian, at Quéretaro, that his life would be spared. Napoleon and Eugénie were not the first

¹ Bauer's *Memoirs*.

to receive the tidings. It had been hoped that the news could be kept from them until after the solemn distribution of awards of the Exhibition. But on the very morning of that day the Sovereigns were apprised of the fatal tragedy. Pale and undone, they were compelled to preside at the national Festival, and to acknowledge the applause and exclamations of the crowds.

Rouher's defence of the Imperial policy could not hide the painful consequences, both political and financial, of the Mexican imbroglio.¹

This bottomless pit had engulfed twenty-four millions sterling of the national Treasury's resources and twelve millions of the moneys subscribed towards the Mexican loan. On the 8th October, 1867, Juarez was re-elected President of the Mexican Republic. Order had been re-established in the different institutions of the country, and all that was left of the Imperial venture, prolonged in vain through the obstinacy of Maximilian, was his widow, an unfortunate Princess hurried away in the shades of lunacy, and his own corpse, riddled with bullets, borne back to

¹ "M. Rouher states that the French Eagle soars in clouds beyond our view and far above our vain prudence; that it suddenly bears down on what seems to us a folly, pouncing upon a prey the value of which escapes us. He adds that the world is thus staggered. May I say that the world has good cause to be staggered?" — Doudan's Letter to M. de Broglie.

his native land, whence he had started full of youth and hope.¹

The wound of Eugénie's heart was an enduring one. For many days she harboured her grief and solitude alone. None had access to her save her most intimate followers. Humiliation and despair bade her keep aloof from the Court. In a lamentable disaster she had witnessed the destruction of her ambitious projects, the undoing of a plan so infallible in her opinion that it was not exposed to the smallest hesitancy on the part of Fate. The tricolour flag had had to yield before the star-spangled banner of the United States. She understood at last that the prestige of the Imperial Government had been rudely shaken. The tears she now shed were shed on account of the future as well as of the present.

Eventually she decided to appear once more in the semi-publicity of the inmates of the palace, in the narrow circle composed of gentlemen and ladies in waiting. All who saw her were shocked at her appearance. She was clad in deep mourning; her swollen features, her deep-sunk eyes, afforded ample testimony of her grief. But some months previously Eugénie, ill at ease and much perturbed, had received the visit of the Empress Charlotte, who had crossed the seas to come and remind

¹ "Never was an attempt against the right of nations so drastically punished."—ÉMILE OLLIVIER.



M. EMILE OLLIVIER.



Napoleon III of his promise not to forsake Maximilian. Charlotte then urgently pleaded for help that was sadly needed.

It was during the first fortnight of August 1866. Things were very dull at Saint-Cloud, for it was raining, and the Emperor complained that so few distractions were afforded him. The reappearance of the sun on the horizon was eagerly awaited. Instead of the fine weather it was the Empress of Mexico who arrived, and he had to perform the duties of hospitality towards her. His intimate friends, who, like Mérimée, were delighted at being able to dine in frock-coats without a vestige of etiquette, were much upset at the prospect of a gala reception being held in honour of Her Majesty the Empress of Mexico. "They will give her food," said Mérimée cruelly, "but I do not think she will obtain subsidies or troops." The poor Empress Charlotte had little leisure or opportunity to discuss the subject of her visit. The painful circumstances which attended her visit, the incident of the glass of lemonade, the sudden attack of madness of Charlotte, and the permanent condition of insanity which visited the unfortunate Princess for ever, are incidents that have been related time and again.

Eugénie was deeply affected, but, she had not yet drunk the cup of bitterness to its dregs. She had to sustain another conversation with the widow of

Miramón, whom the Juarists had shot by the side of Maximilian. This young and beautiful woman had had the courage to follow the two victims on to the execution ground. It was most painful to listen to the harrowing details given to her of her husband's death. The Empress wept bitterly as she listened to Madame de Miramón, conjuring up in her mind the picture of the tragic deed. Two firing parties were commanded for the execution, one composed of practised marksmen, the other of recruits. As soon as Maximilian and Miramón stood before their executioners, the commanding officer bade the Emperor take up his position in front of the squad of veterans. This was a supreme concession to his exalted rank. Turning to his faithful lieutenant, Maximilian said, "I wish to give you one last proof of my friendship. Take my place, I insist upon it." Miramón obeyed, and the Emperor took up his stand before the rifles of the recruits. Miramón was killed on the spot, while Maximilian met with a long and painful death. He was butchered by the ill-directed bullets of Juárez' recruits. Juárez! This name, pronounced by Eugénie with its Spanish accent, seemed to express immense contempt and undying hate.

Dissatisfaction had become rife in France. It began to find vent in the daily Press, and the cause of it was duly assigned to her who had pro-

voked the war. On the morrow of the day when the news of Maximilian's death had become known, Hyrvoix, Chief of the Secret Police, was ushered into the Emperor's study at the usual early hour when he was wont to report to His Majesty upon the condition of public opinion.

"What says the country?" inquired the Emperor.

"The country says nothing, your Majesty." Hyrvoix' features betrayed anxiety, and his answer was hesitant.

"You are not speaking the truth. What says the country?"

"Well, Majesty, since you command me speak, I shall do so unfeignedly. The nation is profoundly irritated by the consequences of this Mexican war. It is adversely criticized in terms of strong reprobation. Nay, its critics openly state that this misfortune has been caused by——"

"Caused by whom? I insist upon knowing!"

"Sire," stammered the official, whose conscience urged him to speak the truth while prudence bade him be silent—"Sire, under Louis the Fifteenth, the fault was always laid at the door of the Austrian woman!"

"Yes; well, go on!"

"And under Napoleon III they say that all this has been brought about by the Spanish woman!"

No sooner had these words been spoken in the calm atmosphere of the study where Hyrvoix thought he was alone with the Emperor, than the Empress suddenly appeared from behind the tapestry ; she had overheard the whole conversation, and there she stood, shaken by anger, clad in a white dressing-gown, her beautiful hair floating on her shoulders. With one bound she sprang towards the man who had dared to repeat with so much frankness the statement that was on every lip.

“Pray repeat, M. Hyrvoix, the words you have just spoken.”

Taken aback, Hyrvoix moved away, but he soon recovered his composure, and said—

“Certainly, Madame ! Your Majesty will surely forgive me if I speak the truth ; it is my duty to do so, in obedience to the Emperor’s expressed wish that he should be informed of the condition of the public mind after the sad event which has just occurred at Querétaro. I was telling His Majesty that the Parisians to-day are speaking of the Spanish woman in terms similar to those applied to the Austrian woman seventy-five or eighty years ago.”

“The Spanish woman ! The Spanish woman !” she repeated, with teeth clenched. “I have become a French woman, but if needs be I shall indeed prove to my enemies that I can still be a

Spanish woman!" Having thus spoken, she disappeared, leaving the Chief of the Police awed and abashed. He apologized to the Emperor for having spoken thus.

"You only did so in obedience to my wishes," replied Napoleon, as he grasped the hand of his subordinate.

The approval of his master, thus expressed, did not prevent Hyrvoix from being dismissed a few days later. He was sent to the province of the Jura as Comptroller-General. The Empress had insisted that he should not again cross her path.

The unvarying law of events carries within it a superior force, to which, sooner or later, the haughtiest must submit. The effervescence of an ambition betrayed by fate had now given way to inevitable regrets. The proud Spaniard had to confess her error, and also the full extent of her illusions. To one of those most keenly opposed to the Mexican campaign she said, "Why was your advice not needed? Had your counsels prevailed Maximilian would to-day be leading a happy life under the shades of Miramar, with Charlotte by his side. Instead of which he is but a corpse, and his poor Consort a raving lunatic. What a ghastly ending to it all!"

At intervals she would endeavour to control herself and once again resume command of the situation. She asserted that never had she desired to

witness the abandonment of Maximilian. She justified her conduct, explaining what she would have done under similar circumstances—how, like him, she would have stuck to her post, fighting, resisting, as he had done, notwithstanding all defections. “No doubt we have made mistakes, but we should not be compelled to bear the burden of them alone, for others in Europe have their share of responsibility in this matter.” Then, overcome with emotion and bathed in tears, she would add, “We seem to be besieged by misfortune. No sooner has one sad incident ended than we are confronted by another. If the Prince Imperial had reached the age of eighteen we would abdicate.”

Such a thing as the unforeseen does not exist in this world. The Mexican failure had only come to add its unfortunate consequences to the disastrous effect produced by Sadowa, the consequences of which shook France to her very foundation in 1866. Dark and threatening signs appeared upon the horizon, the unmistakable forerunners of a future fraught with danger. The most devoted supporters of the Empire could not be deceived when after witnessing such glorious times, they recalled the memory of its rapid decline. Twenty years later Field-Marshal Canrobert spoke thus of the events

of 1870 and of the causes to which they were due—

“Mexico! Mexico!” he exclaimed. “Had it not been for Mexico, we should never have witnessed Sedan.”

General Fleury developed the same idea, with more precision, in the account which he gave the Abbé Bauer of a conversation he had had with the Czar Alexander II. We quote it from the unpublished Memoirs of the Abbé—

“I was seated, very uncomfortably seated, beside the Emperor in his sledge, listening with keen attention to his conversation. It turned upon the expedition of Mexico.

“The French nation will never know what a nefarious influence was wrought on the events of 1870 by this Mexican folly. I can tell you all about it, for I speak knowingly. Had it not been for the Querétaro tragedy, Austria would have mobilized in 1870, thus giving Prussia a solemn warning which might have been interpreted as a threat. Francis Joseph harboured the very legitimate desire to avenge the defeat of Königgrätz. In order to do so he would have had to grasp the hand stained with his brother’s blood. This he would not do.”

For a few more months these gloomy pictures were relegated to the background. The recent

sad events became more or less forgotten, and the nightmare, hideous as it was, eventually gave way to pleasant dreams, conceived in the dazzling light and the gay concourse of the Exhibition of 1867.

CHAPTER VIII

A short halt on the downward grade—The year 1867 and the glories of the Exhibition—How politics were forgotten by Kings and Emperors amid such dazzling splendour—Consequences of this interval—Alexander II, Queen Augusta and the Empress—The journey to Salzburg—The two Empresses—An imprudent remark of Eugénie concerning Count de Beust—Clouds foregather in France—A rude test for a mother's heart—Episode of the 3rd August, 1869, at the Sorbonne, which occurred between young Cavaignac and the Prince Imperial—The impression it caused at Fontainebleau—Serious nervous breakdown of the Empress—Her journey to Corsica—Her more extensive expedition to the East—Eugénie goes to Egypt for the solemn inauguration of the Suez Canal—Her letter to the Emperor written on the way—Various anecdotes—Ferdinand de Lesseps, the Empress and England—Ismail's dinner-party—Excursion to the desert—Return to France—Bitter disappointment—The Liberal Cabinet defines and restricts the position of the Empress—Striking example of her diminished power—Home and foreign questions—The Empress, Rome and the Italian alliance—Fears caused by imminent events.

THERE was a short halt in the decline of this brilliant Empire—a halt that marked a period so full of promise as to seem the apogee, the acme of its glory.

1867 and the Universal Exhibition! What banners and bunting were displayed while it lasted! The ground was strewn with flowers, that hid from the view the awful abyss which was being excavated under the feet of the all-powerful Masters. On the day of the opening, business came to a standstill. Paris wanted to see, to

admire from far or near. The doors of the Palace of Industry were thrown open early in the morning. Thousands of flags lent their brilliant colouring to the buildings, filled with huge crowds. The Emperor soon appeared, wearing evening dress, with the broad ribbon of the Legion of Honour. The Empress wore a dress of shot silk, lace mantle, and a black-and-white bonnet with a garland of violets and a long aigrette. The Prince Imperial did not accompany them, for he was not in good health.¹

As the cortège passed, slowly as becomes official cortèges, those who composed it were easily recognized and named by the onlookers. Prince Napoleon, her sister Mathilde, the Princess of Wales, the Count of Flanders, the Duke of Leuchtenberg, Haussmann, Schneider and many more were mentioned, both going and coming. The same actors and the same public were soon to meet again. On this second occasion, Napo-

¹ "The little Cæsar's health was slightly impaired. His malady," wrote Mérimée, "has had at least the good result of convincing their Majesties that he was very badly brought up. He partook of late dinner at his parents' table, and remained up late in the drawing-room in the overheated atmosphere of the Tuileries. The child was prudent and plucky while his illness lasted. He refused to be chloroformed, and insisted that his mother should not be informed of the operation which he had to undergo. It was not a very serious one. He was merely incommoded by an impediment which prevented him from sitting down."



THE PRINCE IMPERIAL.
From a picture by Adolphe Yvon.

leon III was the recipient of one of the most grateful honours and the most complete marks of approval that a popular monarch could aspire to. In the presence of the Empress and of all the State dignitaries, and surrounded by a huge concourse of his subjects, he received at the hands of the Prince Imperial, his son, the prize awarded by the International Jury for the best model farm and workmen's dwellings. He had himself inspired the building of both, and his efforts, thus rewarded, earned at the hands of those present thunders of applause.

Festivals and receptions succeeded each other without interruption. Parades, processions and cavalcades followed in quick succession. London and Berlin were jealous of the splendour of the French capital, graced by the affluence of Royal visitors. It was said with truth that the simultaneous presence of so many illustrious guests caused much work and worry to the Emperor's household. Twelve Emperors and Kings, six reigning Princes, a Viceroy, nine heirs-presumptive, to say nothing of an army of Highnesses, had been the guests of Paris since the spring.¹

¹ By a strange coincidence, many of the Princes who visited the Exhibition were doomed to a dramatic ending. Napoleon III died in exile, after losing his throne and undergoing untold sufferings. Alexander II was killed in the streets of his capital by the explosion of a bomb. Abdul-Aziz stabbed himself to death in his harem with a pair of scissors.

The thurifers of the throne were in ecstasies over this list of royalties. They might well have repeated the words spoken in 1809 by Segur: "It is impossible to circulate through the streets of Paris, for the traffic is blocked by Kings."¹ During this fairy life of six months, amusements and distractions were so numerous at the Tuileries that the occupiers thereof forsook business for pleasure and totally neglected affairs of great moment. While the stalls and circle of the Theatre of Varieties were filled to overflowing with autocrats, the Emperor and Empress found no time to entertain them on subjects less futile. They would have been well advised to hold serious converse with some of those noble foreigners, friendly but envious just then, who were their likely enemies of the morrow. One evening it was noticed that Monsieur de Bismarck, a somewhat rough-and-ready man, but a *bon vivant* withal, had thrice applauded Hortense Schneider and the three lunatics commanded by General Boum. Many present wondered what his thoughts might be at more serious moments, what opinion he had formed of the political inertia of those who

¹ One day Napoleon I had upbraided Count de Segur, his Chamberlain, for being late. "Sire," said the astute courtier, "I owe a million apologies to your Majesty, but now-a-days one cannot move in the streets. My progress was impeded, as the traffic was blocked by Kings." In 1809 there were not more than six reigning Highnesses in Paris.

provided food and laughter and asked for nothing in return. His opinion, alas! was duly formed. He had no hesitation in concluding that Napoleon was a great nonentity misjudged. At the interview of Biarritz he had already discounted him at his proper value. The Emperor William shared the views of his Minister. As to the Emperor of Russia, he had one day begun a conversation that might have proved interesting had not the sudden and rustling arrival of the Empress cut it short. The said conversation was never resumed; the phlegmatic Napoleon III had not seized the opportunity of feeling the ground in the matter of practical combinations, either with Bismarck or with Gortschakoff. Acting with excessive reserve or misplaced prudence, he had avoided discussing general politics with his guests, each of whom expected him to do so. On the other hand, the Empress, less pusillanimous and less discreet, had broached them in her usual heedless way, thus adding difficulties to the situation and hopelessly shuffling the cards, quite innocently, as usual. The granddaughter of Charles of Saxe-Weimar, whose education had not rendered her sympathetic towards Prussia, and whose marriage had made her a Queen, but also a wife opposed in taste and sentiment to all the ideals of her husband—Queen Augusta—was indignant at the secondary position assigned to her at the Court of Berlin, and

was, moreover, a great friend and admirer of France. During her stay in Paris she met Arles-Dufour, a humanitarian philosopher and a great propagator of lofty ideals.

“I do not think,” she said to him, “that your Foreign Minister, the Marquis de Moustier, M. Rouher and Napoleon III want to go to war with us, but the Empress and a portion of the Army would be glad if war were declared.”

“The Empress? Why does your Majesty think that?”

“Because as she drove me back to the Embassy to-day she said to me, ‘We will declare war against you.’”

Although the occasion of the French Exhibition seemed one that called for the discussion of peaceful subjects only, General Ducrot and Count Bismarck had an angry discussion about the forthcoming inevitable struggle between France and Germany.

If such a contingency was really meditated, one would think that common-sense would have urged those in power to meet it, if not avert it, by contracting useful alliances. Such a policy could not have been expected from the Emperor himself, who, through some inconceivable illusion, was always inclined to favour Prussia, and disposed to love her rather than to hate her. The obtainment of such secret alliances was certainly

not facilitated by the Empress, who, as we have shown, missed a golden opportunity for deriving real advantages from this meeting of Kings and Emperors in the capital of France. Alexander II, a man of generous impulse though of weak character, was dissatisfied with the results of his visit. Gortschakoff had obtained nothing. Bismarck had promised nothing. The results of the journey to Salzburg during the same year had also proved negative.

The 17th August, 1867, was the appointed date for the visit to the Sovereign of Austria-Hungary.

The Emperor had left Châlons camp, accompanied by the Empress. He had previously notified to the Chanceries of Europe the reasons of courtesy that bade him visit Francis Joseph. Anxious to lull the susceptibilities of Germany, ever ready to assert herself since the pride of German statesmen had been enhanced by victory and by their confidence in the strength of their country, he had commissioned Goltz to afford the King of Prussia the most assuring explanations of the course he was pursuing. Goltz was to dwell upon the propriety of one family offering its condolences to another when both had had to mourn a common loss.¹

The Imperial journey was effected under happy auspices, although it was stripped of official

¹ This referred to the recent death of Maximilian.

ceremonial, as Napoleon was travelling incognito. The Imperial couple were met at the station of Ulm by the King of Würtemberg, and the next day at Augsburg by the reigning Prince of Bavaria, who accompanied them to the border of his State. A huge crowd greeted the son of Queen Hortense when at Augsburg he visited the house in which his mother had resided and the college where he had begun his studies. The Empress noted with keen pleasure these testimonies of German sympathy.

Three years later her satisfaction was to give way to feelings of anger and hatred, owing to the political upheaval which occurred.

There followed a series of happy days, and notwithstanding the mourning she wore, she was afforded a reception on a magnificent scale, being received by Francis Joseph, who was accompanied by Beust, Andrassy, and all the members of the Austrian Cabinet.

On several occasions the Empress Elizabeth had expressed the wish to meet the Empress Eugénie.

She once said to the French Ambassador, "Do you not think that one or the other of our watering-places would suit Her French Majesty?"

Now her wish was accomplished. The two Sovereigns were rivals in grace and beauty. Francis Joseph and Napoleon had repeated con-

versations full of reciprocal amenity, but in the course of which the greatest prudence was preserved on both sides.

Count de Beust, the Saxon Minister, had joined the service of the Habsburg dynasty after Sadowa. With all his might he tried to effect the restoration of Austria-Hungary's greatness, and for that reason he felt disappointed at the meagre result of the Imperial interviews, from which he had expected much more than a formal exchange of mutual congratulations. At one time he had even harboured the hope of seeing a formal agreement effected between the countries. Napoleon and the Emperor of Austria had almost decided to sign a convention based upon the following lines: The maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and the determined opposition of the signatories to the development of Prussia into a German Empire. Beust began to nurture great projects. But his diplomatic ardour was sensibly chilled by one phrase of Eugénie, which was repeated to him: "Monsieur de Beust is too eager, too anxious, to bring matters to a head." Count de Beust felt discouraged before he had begun his work in earnest, and later he explained the whole situation in the Parisian salon of Madame Adam: "There was every need to hurry. Prussia was ready before we had begun to arm. While the Empress

thought that we were acting too promptly, the Emperor taxed me with a lack of initiative. What could be expected from such a contradictory policy?"

The fruitless visit to Salzburg meant the loss of a golden opportunity to impart fresh life to a *régime* that was at the same time weak and prosperous. One by one the most faithful supporters of the Empire were disappearing from the sphere of politics. Morny's death was almost a national calamity. "His influence," said de Girardin, "was really the safety-valve of the Second Empire. Alone, he could impose a Cabinet of his own choice upon the versatile Napoleon; alone, he dared tell him the truth in the midst of his hypocritical surroundings." With Morny, the Emperor lost his compass and his bearings. Other trusted advisers, like Walewski, passed away. Field-Marshal Niel, the one energetic organizer in the French Army, was a grave loss to the Sovereign and the country. A wicked fate seemed to attend France's international relations. A feeling of uneasiness weighed upon the whole country, and it seemed aggravated rather than relieved by the recent granting of liberal concessions. Public opinion had mainly used them in order to express its condemnation and discontent. Red was fast becoming the prominent colour in the political horizon. No

sooner were the last dikes removed, than the democratic wave began to flow impetuously. The Empress, imbued with the craving for authority, anxiously and angrily watched the growth of the storm, the rising of the flood.

On an August day in 1868 she received a heavy blow. It struck the Empress and the mother, and left an impression of disenchantment that was never dispelled.

At the beginning of the month, the Court was in residence at Fontainebleau. The Prince Imperial came to Paris to preside at the distribution of prizes obtained in the General Competition between the public schools. The laureates received from his hands their prizes and their crowns of laurel. Among them was young Cavaignac, who had scored a signal success by carrying off a great number of rewards. In the ordinary course of things he should have ascended the official platform to receive them from the Prince, but the son of the old Republican, victim of the Coup d'État of the 2nd December, remembered all his father's sufferings, and, obeying the instructions of his mother, the real incarnation of a true Republican, the lad refused to receive his prizes at the hands of the young Prince.

His action was applauded by his school-fellows of the Lycée Bonaparte, and the incident was widely commented upon in the Press.

The young Prince returned to Fontainebleau full of sadness, and on learning the cause of his grief, the Empress exclaimed, "My poor boy, they will not spare us now!" This public insult had inflicted upon her heart a wound that could not be healed in a moment. The Emperor and his son remained silent, while Her Majesty seemed much preoccupied. It was noticed that General Frossard, the Prince's military instructor, was in a worse temper than usual.

After dinner, coffee was served in the Saint-Louis drawing-room, and the company soon retired by the gallery leading to the Court of La Fontaine. Among the seven or eight guests who remained were Conti, the Emperor's private secretary, and Octave Feuillet, the writer. They were both seated together, when a sudden outburst of laughter interrupted their conversation. "It is the Empress who is laughing," said Conti. Feuillet shuddered, as he realized that Eugénie was suffering from a hysterical seizure. The shrill laughter became louder and louder. The two men rose and went into the next room. Pietri closed the shutters, and sent in haste for Corvisart, the Emperor's physician. The Empress was seen to her apartments, but there again she became convulsed with laughter. The courtyard was filled with an eager crowd of courtiers and servants, whose blood was con-

gealed by those awful outbursts that were re-echoed by the walls of the old Palace. The Empress had broken down under the insult offered to her son—she who had so often faced personal danger with the greatest courage!

An hour later she came into the garden. Five or six of her most faithful followers gathered around her. She inhaled ether, and reclining in an arm-chair, gazed aimlessly at the storm-laden sky. She seemed quite heedless, despite the efforts of those present to divert her thoughts by conversing on different subjects. She tried in vain to follow the trend of the conversation, but her speech was incoherent, and with repeated sighs she exclaimed, "My poor little boy!"

"There were very few of us in attendance upon her," wrote Octave Feuillet; "it seemed as if misfortune had already overtaken her."

At eleven she retired, like a ghost.

Troubled times were near at hand.

The news had spread beyond the Tuileries that the Emperor was far from well, and that he was not suffering from rheumatism only. The unfavourable reports of his health had a bad effect upon the Stock Exchange, the quotations of which were far from steady. The reports circulated in the official bulletins, mostly of an optimistic nature, could not remove the general feeling of apprehension based upon the facts that

the Emperor was in the hands of his physicians and that he was not always master of his own house. With a view to reassuring the public mind, Eugénie decided to go to Corsica, there to visit the birthplace of the founder of the dynasty, whose centenary was being celebrated. She started, leaving the Emperor to his thoughts. These were far from gay, for he felt weighed down by the cares of State and worn out by suffering. The complications from without were sufficiently grave to draw him from his normal condition of lethargy and indolence. The day was far away when a high military commander had said, amid the applause of the assembly—

“ Let us place our whole trust in the Emperor ; he is the strongest man of the time.”

He himself had believed in the fixity of his star. Mexico and Sadowa had tended to lessen, to shake this confidence in the power of his own genius. He had found himself obliged to change his system of internal government in every detail, and to revert to the parliamentary *régime*. He had soon come to the conclusion that otherwise he could not succeed in making the profits tally with the losses. He had endeavoured to find distraction in the pursuit of study, and now attempted, under the auspices of Julius Cæsar, to find glory by composing an apology of the Dictator and of dictatorship. The Press, however, had the

cruel honesty to tell him that what he wrote was poor matter, or, if the matter met with their approval, the critics said that it was not the product of his own pen, and that in publishing his work the publisher had made a very bad bargain. The expression of these opinions drove him into a state of profound melancholia. At Saint-Cloud he seemed enveloped in a dark mist, the while the Empress sought warmth and light on the grassy slopes of Corsican mountains, under the heavenly sky of Ajaccio. She had started rather late in the year. It was noticed at the time that the second century had set in six days previously for the protector of the Confederation of the Rhine. She had endeavoured to preserve a calm demeanour before the inhabitants of Toulon and Ajaccio. In truth, well-founded anxiety concerning the physical and moral health of the Emperor had taken full possession of her mind. Her journey was effected in pursuance of the official programme, but not as satisfactorily as might have been wished. With the exception of enthusiastic welcomes duly rehearsed and made to order, she was received everywhere with marked coolness. As she drove past, flowers were strewn before her, but they were few and far between. The hurrahs were somewhat hoarse and muffled. In a word, she suffered disenchantment in the course of her visit. The recollection of it was

still obscured by disappointment when she was offered ample compensation in the guise of a more romantic expedition to the East.

In the course of the summer of 1869 the Viceroy of Egypt had come expressly to Paris to solicit a personal favour from the Empress, to wit, that she should graciously consent to symbolize and represent France at the inauguration of the Suez Canal. Ferdinand de Lesseps had added his humble request to that of the descendant of the Pharaohs. She did not struggle long against her own desire to attend a function unprecedented, under the gaze of the East and of all Europe. (She made very few objections to the proposal, nor did her followers try to dissuade her from accepting the pressing invitation. One of them, Mérimée, jocosely opposed the project on the ground of the ill-famed morals of Ismail.¹) The Empress would have to learn by personal experience that the qualities attendant upon a perfect education were

¹ Ismail was a Prince who indulged in lavish extravagance. Fond of display, astute like most orientals, sensual, materialistic, but devoured by a passion for greatness, he was active and daring. Notwithstanding his prodigal ways, his malversations, his financial improvidence, he had paved the way to an era of exceptional prosperity, such as Egypt had not enjoyed for centuries. There was nothing majestic or imposing about his personal appearance. He was squat and short, with blinking eyes and commonplace features. His only characteristic resided in the great mobility of his facial expression, as a result of which he in no way looked like an Eastern satrap.

lacking both in the deeds and speech of this oriental. (That it was so is duly proved by the following passage, contained in a letter from the Imperial traveller to the Emperor, her husband—

“ This Ismail says things to me that positively make my hair stand on end.”)

She did not deem it necessary, however, to discount such matters in advance, or to deprive herself, on their account, of witnessing one of the most beautiful sights in the world.

She was glad to get away, to avoid a period of intense agitation caused by the general elections. She left behind her the strife of passions and personal interests, and lost sight for the time being of those unmistakable signs of hostility towards the Empire which she had already noticed. Surrounded by luxury so fastuous as to recall the magnificence of Cleopatra sailing down the sacred river, she fed her soul and her intelligence upon marvellous impressions. In the beginning of October Eugénie crossed the Bosphorus, where her eyes dwelt with delight upon the luminous panorama of Constantinople. On the following day she was keenly interested in the picture afforded by the three cities merged into one—Scutari, Stamboul and Pera-Galata. Her ear had already grown accustomed to the oriental clamour, to that weird collection of noises germane to Constantinople. Travellers are wont to recog-

nize these noises from among all the noises of the inhabited earth! In her diary, however, one finds less impressions recorded upon nature and the picturesque than notes referring to the visits paid by this Catholic Sovereign to palaces, schools, and to the interior of churches. On the 7th October, before pursuing her journey, she sketched the details of it for the Emperor, in that simple, expansive and conjugal tone in which she addressed him—

*“Imperial Palace of Beyle-Bey,
“7th October, 1769.*

“MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

“I have time to catch the Wednesday mail from Constantinople, so I send you herewith an account of to-day’s proceedings, which were very tiring, but interesting for many reasons. I went to hear Mass at the Armenian church, and from there to the French Embassy, where I gave audience to the principal French merchants of the town and to the religious orders who are under the protection of France. I replied to the speeches, but in doing so I trembled like a leaf. I was afforded a wonderful ovation by the crowds in the streets. The Turkish women look as if they would like to throw their yashmaks to the winds, but I hope they will keep them on. Further generations must be born, endowed with sufficient education to afford them a check upon liberty and

freedom that would now become licentiousness pure and simple, should the womanhood of Turkey adopt European dress and habits.

“Poor Metternich !

“I fancy he must have been dealing with a lunatic,¹ for it is impossible that he should be blamed for anything that occurred, considering the number of intrigues that the lady indulged in. There must surely be safety in numbers, unless she is a woman of the lowest type, and this I absolutely refuse to believe. At any rate, to cast mud at one’s own children is surely the act of a madman.

“Louis has written me a delightful letter. With fondest kisses, I remain your ever devoted

“EUGÉNIE.”

It had not yet become the custom of sovereigns and heads of States to be accompanied in the course of their journeys by an army of reporters. So the papers published descriptions, more or less accurate, of the wonderful reception afforded her by the Khedive, and of the romantic circumstances that attended the various stages of her journey through the land of Egypt. While she sailed up

¹ This refers to the duel which Metternich fought with Monsieur de Beaumont, who crossed swords with two other members of the Jockey Club in order to defend the compromised honour of the Countess to Beaumont.

the Nile in a darabieh the Emperor went alone to Compiègne, where he was followed by the Prince Imperial. Wishing to afford his son some distraction, he invited a number of guests. There were hunting-parties galore, with the usual display of huntsmen, beaters and trumpeters. A quarry by torchlight, in the Court of Honour, caused enthusiastic admiration on the part of those who witnessed it.

On the 15th November, 1869, Suez witnessed the removal of the last obstacles which prevented the union between two oceans.¹ The inter-oceanic Canal, open to the vessels of all nations, had absorbed two thousand leagues of soil. This gigantic work, one of the most marvellous ever wrought by the genius and perseverance of man, calls for some special reference and for the relation of certain facts connected with its history.

Seven or eight years before the unforgettable 15th November, 1869, several guests of high standing foregathered around a hospitable table in the Rue de Greffulhe. The host was Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, member of the French Academy, and among those present were Ferdinand de Lesseps, Bernard Bauer, Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, General Trochu and Count de la Guéronnière. After dinner Lesseps asked the Court preacher, Bauer, to speak at the

¹ The 15th was the anniversary of the Empress.

opening ceremony of the Canal. His offer was accepted, not without fear but with joy, as is recorded by Bauer in his notes. The guests' expenses were to be met with great lavishness by the Khedivial Treasury. It was not possible, however, to fix any remuneration for the address which the Protonotary Apostolic was to deliver at the blessing of the Canal. De Lesseps, with his usual generosity, would have liked the labourer to be duly rewarded.

"You are going to speak of us and in our behalf," he said to the preacher. "I don't know what you are going to say, but I am certain that you will speak of us as your friends. The proverb says, 'Little presents cement big friendships,' so I will ask you on that account to accept a little present from me."

"If you mean your portrait, I shall be delighted."

"Oh no, I mean something much more substantial than that. We have created a certain number of founders' shares, like all similar companies. Allow me to offer you one at par. At present it only represents a sheet of paper, but some day, perhaps, it will mean a fortune to you, my dear Abbé."

Bauer little knew just then of the enormous folly he was committing through his disinterestedness, when he refused a sheet of paper which

forty years later represented one million and a half of francs, or £60,000.

His Highness the Khedive celebrated the solemn occasion at Ismailia by a banquet, which was served with the greatest luxury and refinement. The sacred orator was among the guests, and in warm terms he expressed the enthusiasm of those present. He has left us in his manuscript notes the impressions he formed while listening carefully to the conversation of the Viceroy and his guests.

Two figures seemed prominently engraven upon his memory, those of an old man and a young girl, the two extremes of human life. The young girl, whose eighteen summers coupled captivating beauty with accomplished grace, was the *fiancée* of the great Frenchman, as Ferdinand de Lesseps was called. The old man was the Consul-General of the Netherlands. A personal friend of de Lesseps, he had been an early witness of his homeric struggles. He related them with keen zest, quoting the following fact, which is but little known.

After untold efforts, as costly as they were prolonged and dangerous, Ferdinand de Lesseps had at last succeeded in obtaining the firman of the concession. He was overcome with joy. The works were to be begun at once, and nothing henceforth should delay him. Suddenly,

however, the whole edifice seemed to totter. The Empress Eugénie, who was related through her mother to the Lesseps, wrote him thus, after being the faithful protagonist of his great scheme: "The Emperor bids me tell you that you must abandon your chimera. To put it into effect would bring about a war between France and England. We must bid good-bye to our beautiful dream."

Lesseps had received this crushing news at midnight. He and the Consul of the Netherlands were alone. The latter endeavoured forthwith to direct the train of his friend's thoughts towards other projects worthy of his genius. At two o'clock in the morning he said to him—

"Well, my friend, what are you going to do now?"

Calm and collected, Lesseps replied, "It is two o'clock, so I am going to bed."

It was evident that this man of energy had not abandoned his colossal enterprise. He did not seek much comfort from sweet slumber, for at five o'clock he knocked at the Consul's door.

"What is the matter?"

"I have come to bid you good-bye."

"Are you going?"

"Yes, in ten minutes."

"Where are you rushing so suddenly?"

"To England."

“But with what object?”

“I am going to convert the English, by proving to them the necessity of throwing open to commerce one of the great thoroughfares of the world, which has been closed by a whim of Nature. I shall go from town to town, from village to village, and from house to house, if needs be, delivering the same speech thousands of times, but I shall prove to them that by listening to me they will best serve their own interests, and that the Canal will bring them wealth, glory and commercial salvation.”

Accompanied by an interpreter, he reached his goal. We know the rest. His efforts begot success, his success became a triumph. The English lent an ear to him and understood. They opened their eyes. They opened their purses. None can tell how much they have made in return.

The dinner of Ismail came to an end as this interesting conversation closed.

A few days later the Empress returned to Cairo after her trip through Upper Egypt. The Khedive went to meet her at the Pyramids. He had the delicate attention to invite Monsieur Bauer, one of his French guests, to drive with him in his victoria. The drive was a memorable one. The splendid equipage, with its escort of brilliant uniforms, proceeded along the road lined by

motionless fellahs, who awaited but a sign from their master before bowing to the ground. The Viceroy was very chatty, and spoke about women, the country and politics.

“In Europe,” he said, “woman is an object of worship, at least when she is young and handsome. With us, she is only an article of luxury. We keep harems just as you keep stables or kennels. I admit that Europe is superior to the East. It is all a question of education. The greatest of all European women is the French woman, and the Parisian woman is the first among French women.”

The Viceroy still harboured happy recollections of his journey to Paris, and his excursions through the demi-monde. Dismissing this frivolous subject, Ismail began to treat of quite another matter, which offered a strong contrast to his earlier conversation. He acquainted his guest with the number of precautions worthy of an Eastern despot which had been enforced by his order before the Empress landed at Alexandria.

“Alexandria, you see, is a town unlike others. Its population is composed of people from every country, and to a large extent of the scum of every country. Murder is rife in Alexandria, which is very unpleasant. I thought of this as the French ship that bore your gracious Sovereign was about to reach our shores. I said to myself, ‘This is

not *chic*' (His Highness Ismail Pasha had not forgotten the Parisian expression); 'we shall be looked upon as savages, so this state of things must stop.' I sent for the Chief of Police, and told him that he must immediately clear the air of Alexandria. To this effect I gave him full power. Twelve days later I received his report—a very *chic* report, the substance of which was as follows: There were about a hundred bad characters in Alexandria—Turks, Arabs, Albanians, Greeks, Italians—an appalling rabble. They were seized, gagged, garotted and thrown into a ship's hold. When the cargo was completed, they were counted. There were eighty-seven of them. It was easy to surmise what they really needed, eighty-seven sacks, and three heavy stones to each sack. Towards midnight the ship put off. An hour later her engines were stopped, and eighty-seven times in succession a splash was heard. Each time the sea had swallowed up a blackguard. Every one was delighted in Alexandria. By the way, I was forgetting to tell you a detail. Among the convicts there were two brothers, Greeks, one a respectable man, the other a ruffian. The police made a mistake, and it was the former who went *splash*. This, of course, was regrettable, but it could not be helped."

The Viceroy's peculations were enormous, and during his reign the Egyptian debt rose from

twenty-four millions sterling, the amount due by Saïd, his predecessor, to ninety-six millions sterling. He was, therefore, fully qualified to hold forth about the great importance he attached to honesty in general, and to that of his followers in particular. He spoke to Bauer upon these matters, and mentioned the name of a French official who had been attached to his person for several years. The Frenchman's daughter was about to be married, and Ismail, who took a great interest in her, asked her father what dowry he was giving her.

"She will have £3400, your Highness."

"Per year, you mean?"

"No, your Highness; in all."

"But why are you giving her such a measly sum?"

"Because it is all I possess."

The Viceroy was taken aback. Being a Prince with wide ideas and vast plans, who had put them into effect by borrowing from Eastern money-lenders at an exorbitant interest, he could not understand.

"If after spending so many years in my service you have only £3400 you must be an imbecile. I always thought you were an intelligent man."

Thus he spoke to a faithful and honest retainer. The conversation ended there, for the cortège of

the Empress was in sight. The drums were beating, the cannon roaring.

On the following day the Viceroy's French guests went for a ride in the desert. It almost proved a fatal one. Towards five o'clock the horsemen were about thirty miles from Ismailia, when suddenly rose the hot wind, the simoom. The sky became laden. The setting sun had a violet and livid hue. The panting breath of the storm lashed the sand into a vortex. Dumb and motionless, their faces covered with their handkerchiefs, the travellers expected every moment to be engulfed or suffocated. As night set in the storm subsided, but they could not make their way through the sandy desert in the dark. As the anxiety of the travellers was great, Lesseps jokingly said to them, "Let us trust to the instinct of our horses. If they lose their way we shall reach Mount Sinai in about forty days. The monks there will give us dinner. Of course we shall find no water, no pasture and no inns on the way. That is the only drawback."

After galloping an hour, the party saw a vague light, and knew they were near Ismailia. They hurried on, and were filled with joy as the soft strains of the Angelus told them that they were safe at last.

On her return the Empress had resumed the direction of France and Paris. She noticed with

grief that the situation had undergone a great change, and that it showed forebodings of grave events. Alas! the happy hours had flown for ever.

The attacks of the German Press became more violent each day, and they did not spare herself.¹ The former elements of opposition had now become elements of a radical and systematic antagonism. Mistrust and disaffection had not yet permeated the masses, but had obtained a strong hold upon social and political circles, anxious as they were to know how long they were likely to enjoy their present privileges. Although animated by the best intentions, the new Cabinet had provoked more fears than hopes, more jealous hatred than sympathy. Old Imperialists like Magne Ougher, Persigny and Haussmann, rent the air with their complaints. Fleury, the Master of the Horse, had been heard to say, "I do not need to buy new carriages for the Emperor. He will not wear out the ones he has."

¹ She keenly resented pin-pricks and unkind allusions to her in published plays and novels and freely commented upon by the daily Press. George Sand had recently sketched her in her novel (*Malgré tout*) in true colours, perhaps, but with very little kindness. The book, with the passage well marked, had been brought to her. She consulted Mérimée as to the line of conduct she should adopt towards the brilliant writer, who had forgotten the many occasions on which she had sought and received marks of favour from the Empress. Mérimée, the sceptic, advised her to close her eyes, saying, "De minimis non curat prætor."

Pietri, Chief of Police, had referred to this unrest of the public mind, and had embodied his conclusions in a lengthy report, which was read by the Emperor and the Empress.

She was helpless. The days of her omnipotence had gone. The Empress was compelled to efface herself before the Liberal Cabinet, which governed against her wish. If on certain occasions she glided furtively into the Council Chamber, she did not speak a word there, but reserved her criticisms for other spheres. In truth, had the advisers of Napoleon III so wished, she would have been relegated to her private apartments, and kept there, the prisoner of her own luxury, without the right to speak or act. A *modus vivendi*, a compromise between Liberty and Cæsarism, which some have thought could become a lasting treaty of peace, was already beset by enough difficulties. To add to them the risk of a feminine intervention, ardent, impulsive and dictatorial, was a step that could not be contemplated for a moment. Those in power informed their followers that the good graces of the Ministry could only be obtained by combating all the ideas and principles of the Empress. To this theory both Ministers and followers readily subscribed. Under such circumstances there was little benefit to be derived from her personal recommendation, in proof of which I quote once

more the diary of Bauer. It affords a striking example of the systematic opposition offered by the authorities to the influence of Eugénie during the latter months of the Empire.

In June 1870, a few days after the proclamation of the plebiscite in the Louvre, some friends of the Imperial chaplain, members of one of the so-called irreconcilable families of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, asked him to invoke the protection of the Empress in behalf of a relative of theirs. These noble families pretended to ignore the Imperial Palace and its residents, but did not hesitate to seek favours at their hand. Bauer's influence was sought in this case by the friends of a Royalist who had been weak enough to solicit an official position from usurpers like the Bonapartes, and who, in return, had only been appointed to a third-class shrievalty. One so highly connected, who had nobly lost his fortune at the game of lansquenet, could not possibly mould any longer in a little country town of two thousand inhabitants. It was urgent that he should be promoted at least to the second class. This important mission brought the Court preacher to the Tuileries for the last time. He ascended the splendid staircase, which a year afterwards was doomed to disappear—burnt down by the petroleum of the Commune. He was at once struck by the extraordinary changes that had

come over both the masters and servants of the Palace. Still beautiful and elegant, the daughter of the Countess Montijo gave one that impression of gravity and sadness which is always depicted in the Roman matrons of old. Her deportment and her costume were unusually sober. There was no rush of courtiers, no applicants at her doors. The ante-rooms hitherto crowded were now empty, and there was no visitor to follow him when he was introduced into the Imperial presence. He found the Empress in an expansive mood—that mood which overtakes those who feel they must relieve their fears and steel their courage by relating their woes to a sympathetic soul. For a moment the object of the visit was quite forgotten. The audience lasted a long time, and the subject of conversation was the imposing ceremony of the plebiscite, where, for the first and only time since the beginning of the reign, she had shared the Emperor's throne. Hitherto she had always witnessed the great political ceremonies from a raised tribune. Bauer wondered why she had been called upon to assume the attributes of sovereignty at a time when her rightful prerogatives were so bitterly contested. It was one of those ironies of fate of which history affords us so many instances.

The conversation proceeded, bearing upon the subject of Marie Antoinette, to which she seemed irresistibly attracted. She had recently purchased some relics of the unfortunate Queen whose tragic end she could not forget. "Never," she said, "do I walk down these stairs without being haunted by the memory of her, and each time I go out of this Palace I wonder if I shall ever return to it alive." Having conversed about the martyr Queen whom she worshipped, about her own fears and personal feelings, she referred to the date of her birth, and to the significant and mysterious fact that it coincided with that of the death of Napoleon I, who had passed away exactly four years before she was born. Remembering that Bauer had a request to make, and noticing the petition he held in his hand, she asked him what it referred to. He told her of the request that he had been asked to make of her. She took the envelope from his hand, placed it upon the table, and said—

"In former times I would have said to you, 'I promise that it shall be done.' To-day I can only say, 'I promise that I shall place this petition before the Emperor.' There my power ends. But let me give you some advice for the sake of your *protégé*. He must not let the Home Office know that I wish him promoted. If he does,

instead of being raised from the third class to the second, he would be reduced to the fourth class, if such existed."

Had her power dwindled to such an extent that she did not deem it sufficient to secure the promotion of a sub-sheriff? It would seem not, for soon afterwards that same power provoked a storm and caused an upheaval from the results of which Europe has not yet recovered.

She chafed, and attributed the existing state of things to the revolutionary tendencies that prevailed, hoping that fortuitous circumstances might soon enable her to impose once more the yoke of authority upon a rebellious nation. Instead of this, circumstances did occur with consequences far different from those she wished for.

While Napoleon was struggling against the jealous rivalry of political parties and individuals, and while the Empress was pouring forth her soul in ardent prayer on behalf of the Vatican, Bismarck's infernal power was spent in weaving a tighter web around the French Empire. Of this there had been ample warning, which only escaped the attention of those most interested in the question. To wit, the letter from the Queen of Holland, written on the 18th July, 1866. It was a strikingly true prophecy.¹

¹ Queen Sophia wrote: "I am sorry that you think me personally interested in this matter, and sorry indeed that you

The Emperor constantly received full reports concerning the hurried armaments of Prussia. The Liberal party in Italy was grieved to see France gravely threatened while its Government and even its internal enemies, apparently as blind as the Government, did not appear to realize the danger.¹ In vain did he beseech his fellow-

do not realize the danger of a powerful Germany and a powerful Italy. It is your dynasty that will suffer eventually. I say so because it is the truth, which you will have to recognize by and by. Do not think me unfair or mistrustful because of the fate which has overcome me in my own country. When Venice had to be ceded, you should have helped Austria, proceeded towards the Rhine, and there and then imposed your conditions. To have allowed Austria to be estranged was worse than a crime. It was a mistake."

¹ In truth, the Opposition was as much to blame as the Imperial party. Both parties seem to have been affected by the same blindness, and must be made to share the responsibility of the misfortunes to which it gave rise. History has showered praises upon Thiers for his foresight during the war of the Duchies and on the eve of the Austro-Hungarian conflict. But when Marshal Niel, speaking in the name of the Emperor, informed the representatives of the Nations of the dangers accruing from Prussian armaments, Thiers made light of the whole matter, and deprecated the idea of increasing the military power of France, though by so doing he would have enabled her to repel a possible invasion. With the exception of a few writers such as Nefftzer, no one seemed to see the real peril contained in the foreign policy of France. If such peril was mentioned at all, it was as an excuse for attacking the Empire, just as if the peaceful occupiers of the Tuileries were the only enemies that France had to fear. The Chamber of Deputies ruthlessly cut down all military expenses. "The hour is near at hand," said Nefftzer to Pelletan. "Germany is ready. Such unconscious treason as I witness will cause my death."

countrymen to be prudent. In vain did General Türr travel from Vienna to Rome and from Rome to Paris. A useful alliance was rejected, because it might have saddened the Holy Father. Eugénie had plainly stated to Nigra the Ambassador that she would oppose with all her might any understanding with Italy by which the Pope would be sacrificed. What she called "sacrificed" on the one hand and "spoliation" on the other was really but the natural progress of Italy's destiny, which compelled her to reassume possession of her capital.

Austria, with the help of Hungary, conceived great projects, the realization of which would have enabled France to escape from her isolation and to confront her ambitious and troublesome neighbour. General Türr was entrusted with a special mission. In January 1870 he approached

The annual contingent had been reduced to sixty thousand men, and members of the Extreme Left considered that number excessive. Jules Favre and Pelletan demanded the abolition of the permanent army, saying that it was a menace to Liberty. "You poor French," wrote a Bavarian to one of his Parisian friends, "poor French! You do not see what Bismarck is hatching with that hatred and contempt for you which he thus expresses loudly to his intimate friends. We are well served by Napoleon III, who believes all we say, by his diplomatists, who do not mistrust us, and the Opposition, which fears one danger only, the political danger." The Bavarian added, "You are rushing headlong, like lunatics rushing to defeat and invasion."

Napoleon III and suggested a closer understanding between Italy, Austria and France. Better acquainted than any one with the designs of Bismarck, he possessed strong arguments. His intimate relations with the German Chancellor while the Roman question was discussed had afforded him an insight into his most secret combinations. At first he thought he had been understood, and he lost no time in informing Victor Emmanuel of the progress which he believed he had made. He returned to Vienna, where he saw Count Beust, and proceeded to Budapest, knowing beforehand that he would receive the full assent of Hungary. It seemed as though he had secured the adherence of France to a strong alliance, which would guarantee the peace of Europe by checking the threatening progress of Prussia. Türr inwardly rejoiced at the success of his diplomatic efforts. He had reckoned, however, without the weakness of the Emperor and the opposition of the Empress. He made fresh efforts. Since France did not wish to increase her military expenditure, to fortify her offensive and defensive power, he could hesitate no longer. He knew that the head of the State and the French Minister for War had themselves to contend with the opposition of the Chamber, and all the while alliances were urgently needed. The Emperor went on dream-

ing between heaven and earth, dreaming of pontifical Rome, and apprehending discussions with the Empress on a subject that was to prove fatal to his reign. He was ill, and could not come to a decision, while Eugénie, on the contrary, contended that the Conventions of this triple alliance were inadmissible, and that by joining hands with Italy against the Papacy he would bring a curse upon his Empire. Never had State interests been more lightly sacrificed to religious scruples. Negotiations were broken off. As he left, Türr exclaimed, "If the French are beaten, if France is soon ruined, let her know that she owes her defeat to the Pope." On the plea that he could not be false to the promise he had given to the Pope, Napoleon refused Victor Emmanuel's offer of help. He had neglected to avail himself of the kindly feelings of Alexander II, who meant to intervene against Germany as soon as France had rescinded one clause of the Treaty of Paris relating to the neutralization of the Black Sea. Napoleon now stood alone. His weak, diffuse and wavering policy was about to bear its dire fruits.

CHAPTER IX

Waning days of happiness—A thunderbolt in a blue sky—Spain Prussia and France—Influence exercised by Eugénie in these bellicose incitements—Towards the Rhenish frontiers—A characteristic anecdote—Spoken testimony of Emile Ollivier—Extra-ministerial Council at Saint-Cloud : result of Eugénie's interference—Hurried events—Impressions produced on the brilliant gathering at Saint-Cloud by the news [of the war—Detailed description by an eye-witness—Departure from this enchanting residence—The Emperor at Metz—The Empress at the Tuileries—Three weeks of regency and of daily anxiety—Supreme catastrophe—The fears for the morrow—Help needed for the Empress—A touching episode—Riots at the gates of the Palace—Eugénie's departure—The parts played by Metternich and Nigra on that occasion—Doubts and suspicions to which they gave rise—At the house of Dr. Evans—Vicissitudes of the journey from Paris to Deauville and from Deauville to England—Chislehurst—Precarious position of the exiles—A midnight removal from the Tuileries in the interests of the Empress—Consecutive trips to Camden Place—Descriptions of this property—Was it only to afford a temporary residence for the exiles ?

THE poet says, "When winter has frozen the surface of the stream, one can still see through the ice the floating, quivering fragments of summer days." The first months of 1870 provided some warmth and brightness that made one look forward to happier days. A supreme ray of hope shone forth on the dawn of this year of suffering.

The one question asked was whether the Emperor was still possessed of a will. Suddenly, as if in reply to it, an unknown spring seemed

to have galvanized his fading energy. Through lassitude or opportunism, or for the sake of novelty, he had abdicated the exercise of a will uncontrolled. Public opinion had raised him to the height of a constitutional Augustus, and unexpected proofs of confidence were afforded to so much wisdom and prudence.

A very heated altercation had taken place at the Tuileries when the plebiscite was declared. As soon as the results of the Ballots in Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Toulouse and Saint-Etienne became known, a sense of fear overcame the custodians of the throne. The Empress was ever hostile to liberal reforms, which she deemed excessive and imprudent. She showed her keen dissatisfaction. The young Prince shared his mother's views, and with all the exuberance of his age he exhibited signs of violent temper. Their followers were indignant at the ingratitude and the defection of the country. Napoleon III, steeled by experience, calmly awaited the revenge which the conservative instinct of the country boroughs would afford him. Suddenly, things looked much brighter. The general results from these boroughs had upset the calculations of the Opposition. An enormous majority of votes was recorded in favour of the throne. The plebiscite meant a new lease of life that would last as long as the Emperor preserved peace. All fears were

banished. The Empress laughed at the apprehensions she had indulged in. The Ministers proceeded with the elaboration of their great programme. The Prince resumed his studies and his games. Serene and unctuous words were spoken to the nation from the official tribune.

“Whichever way one looks, one fails to find any question that might cause irritation, and never has peace been more completely assured.”

So everything was for the best. During the previous summer the Prince Imperial had met with signal success at the camp of Châlons, to the delight of his mother and his friends. The public Press re-echoed the praises showered upon him at the review. There he had given proof of so much self-possession and dignity before the assembled Army that he looked the very reincarnation of his father. The Empire never knew a more peaceful month than that of June 1870. A few days later, the thunderbolt was to fall, setting fire to the edifice, and bringing it down with a crash. We have already shown that its advent had been foreseen for a long time.

It was much to be regretted that, owing to the strained relations existing between the Empress and Prince Napoleon, he should have been compelled to keep aloof from the counsels of the Emperor. He had given proof of acute pre-

science concerning the impending storm. In 1868, on his way through Munich, he dined with Prince Hohenlohe, Louis II's Prime Minister, and broached the burning subject of a conflict between France and Prussia. Hohenlohe expressed his surprise at the imprudence of Paris in fomenting this war. Jérôme Napoleon replied that this was but a sign of the natural turbulence of the French character. Great was the confusion in public affairs. Instead of awaiting the opportune hour, as did Germany, France thought that all her difficulties would be ended by a war the favourable result of which was not questioned for a moment, while its risks and cruel surprises were completely ignored.

Jérôme said, "Personally I consider the war will be an immense misfortune, a calamity that should be avoided at any cost. It is bound to have fatal results, from which you Bavarians will be the first to suffer. German unity will be accomplished to the advantage of Prussia. You have therefore every reason to wish for peace."

Soon afterwards Bismarck said to Hohenlohe, "A war would tell in favour of Prussia because France is not ready. An alliance between Italy and France would now be valueless. The Italians would not move even if Victor Emmanuel, who would do anything for money, were to conclude a treaty with Napoleon."

He was well informed. The agents of his secret diplomacy promoted his plans in Rome, Paris and Madrid. They kept him fully posted upon the views of Italian statesmen, especially of the leaders of the Left, such as Crispi, who was even then his accomplice.

The awful crisis began on the 3rd July, 1870, when General Prim informed Europe of the choice of a Hohenzollern Prince as candidate to the throne of Spain. Forthwith Emilio Castelar wrote thus to one of his friends of the Liberal party in Paris: "Beware, for this candidature is wrought with danger for France." A swift and brutal corroboration of this was near at hand.

What part did Eugénie play in the incitements which made the war of 1870 an unavoidable one? The question has often been asked, but never solved with any regard to the truth. As soon as she ascended the throne she had manifested the wish that a victory might restore to France her natural frontier, the Rhine. The following unpublished anecdote affords proof of this: An Alsatian journalist, Charles Muller, formerly attached to the *Indépendance de l'Ouest et de Laval*, a Mayenne paper, had come to Paris, there to found an organ, *La Liberté*. His policy was to preach the restoration of the Rhenish frontier. He was full of zeal but short of money, and his paper was

doomed to early failure. Knowing that the Empress shared his views, he had asked one of the Chamberlains at Court to obtain the promise of her support in the shape of a subvention. The Empress did not like to discuss politics save with politicians. A deputy of the Mayenne approached her. A few days later he reported in the following sense to the founder of *La Liberté*—

“I have seen the Empress, and this is word for word what she said to me: ‘Such aspirations meet with my full approval. But as the Emperor does not seem inclined to foster them, I cannot obtain an official subvention for the paper. I wish, however, to prove my good-will to Muller, and would therefore ask you to hand him this sum as a present from me.’” She sent him ten thousand francs. She often referred in conversation to the frontier question. She observed the frequent and important annexations made by Prussia on the other side of the great river, and deplored that France did not raise her voice sufficiently loudly to be heard, and that she did not even insist upon her share of the spoils. She laboured under the influence of an obstinate aspiration more than of a firm resolution. In 1870 she prayed for the success of a campaign, the epilogue of which would cement the abolition of a Parliamentary Empire and the resumption of the Cæsarian Constitution of 1852. But as a matter of fact

she had no effective hand in the determining causes of the conflict. I mean to imply that she did not directly bring it about. She inspired a diplomatic act, however, which under existing circumstances was equivalent to a declaration of war. She advised it most imprudently at a time when a condition so fraught with snares and pitfalls should have claimed the utmost coolness and circumspection.

In Government circles the news that the King of Prussia had approved of the withdrawal of the candidature of Prince Leopold was hailed with the greatest delight. Immediate peril was averted. Emile Ollivier said to Thiers, "Let us remain quiet. We now have secured peace, and must not lose it." The Emperor forthwith warned General Bourbaki in the following terms: "You need not prepare your war equipments, for the withdrawal of Prince Hohenlohe has removed all cause of rupture." But the Sovereign and his Minister reckoned without the bellicose party of the Empress, ever eager "to drown this Government composed of lawyers" in the waters of the Rhine. The war party had not disarmed. When Bourbaki became aware that a peaceful solution was likely, he exclaimed, "What a pity; I should have liked to accompany the Emperor to Berlin at the head of my Guards." These words had struck deep into the heart of the ambitious heart of the

Empress. Conciliation and prudent measures were ignored. They might have averted the danger. An extraordinary meeting of the Council at Saint-Cloud brought about the climax. Gramont and the zealous members of the Imperialist Right, known as the "Wrong Right," were summoned to it at the instigation of Eugénie. The President of the Council, Emile Ollivier, and the other members of the Government had not been invited to attend. The situation, hitherto so clouded, had become brighter, but the signs of general appeasement were not deemed sufficient. Forgetting that she was widening the breach, the Empress urged the Duke de Gramont to exact more, and to obtain from William the written proof of his good intentions, the famous letter of guarantee. Gramont, a man of dangerous and impetuous nature, was only too pleased to follow her instructions. He had good cause to regret it if it be true that he spoke the following words in 1890 to the writer Arsène Houssaye: "I was wrong to be a gallant man towards the Empress instead of proving myself a gallant man towards France." On the evening of the 12th the Minister dispatched a telegram by which he informed the French Ambassador of the new claims of his Government. Thus he called upon the King of Prussia to fall back, to effect a retreat, which Wilhelm naturally refused to do. As the Council of



PRINCESS LEOPOLD OF HOHENZOLLERN.

Ministers had not been informed of the measures taken at Saint-Cloud, it could not approve of them. I learnt from Emile Ollivier himself, thirty-six years after these terrible events, that the Cabinet decided not to make a *casus belli* of the refusal to give this guarantee. The Ministers decided that the incident should be considered at an end until such time as a better opportunity might occur for fighting a duel that now seemed inevitable.

On the 13th July everything seemed to be settled. The Emperor breathed freely, as one who had thrown off a terrible load. Physically weakened, morally depressed, he could at last hope for some rest and perhaps for a complete cure.¹

The Minister for Foreign Affairs seemed suddenly frightened by the consequences of his rash acts, and he tried to pull up on the brink of the precipice. He had suggested a referendum to a Congress as the only means of extinguishing the fire kindled by his own hands. The Emperor eagerly adopted this suggestion, for his one idea was to avoid trouble. On the 13th he wrote a

¹ His increasing weakness was noticed by all around him. They had seen him shudder on a very warm day, and they knew that in midsummer he had ordered fires to be lighted in his apartments.

On the 3rd July a medical consultation was held at the Castle, as a result of which it was decided to operate upon him without delay. It was not surprising that many questioned whether the wishes quoted as his were really ever expressed by him.

note to Marshal Lebœuf in which he deplored that on the previous day it had been decided to mobilise, adding that such a serious step could have been avoided. It expressed the wish that the Legislative Council should be apprised forthwith of the proposed appeal to a Congress. The impact would thus be postponed for one day and averted thereby.

On the 14th the Emperor returned from the Tuileries to Saint-Cloud, where his courtiers listened with dismay to his conciliatory remarks, which greatly damped their bellicose ardour.

Then occurred a solemn halt in the course of this strange and tragic adventure. Monsieur de Piennes, chamberlain to the Empress, related the incident to Marshal MacMahon, who in turn repeated it on the 2nd April, 1890, to a late Minister. Monsieur Grivart de Kerstat, his son, has favoured us with the memorandum of his father's conversation, the gist of which we append.

The time had been reached when the fate of two great nations was at stake.

The Emperor came through a drawing-room where the Empress was seated with Monsieur de Piennes. He was on his way to the Council Chamber and stopped to read to the Empress the speech he had composed in a most peaceful note. She listened with eyebrows knit, and when the reading was concluded, she shook her head dis-

approvingly, and accompanied her husband to the meeting of the Council. The Emperor repeated to his assembled ministers the words which Eugénie had just heard. He was about to take the votes which he knew beforehand would be given in his favour, when he fainted and had to be removed from the Chamber. When he returned half-an-hour later, his ministers had changed their minds. The Empress had had time to influence them, and as a result, the war was voted by a majority of four. She justified her wish to precipitate events by quoting the telegrams received by her from Gramont, who informed her that the King had practically dismissed the French Ambassador, that the demands of Bismarck were becoming more and more preposterous, and that Prussia considered herself entitled to exact an apology from France.

MacMahon proceeded to analyse the trend of the Empress's mind for the benefit of his hearer, twenty years after these events had occurred. "The main idea of the Empress was that the endorsement of the home policy of Emile Ollivier was fraught with danger to the Empire, and that a war would produce a diversion that would save the situation. In her opinion two or three weeks would suffice to provide France with numerous victories, when peace would be concluded. The Emperor, once more in possession of his prestige, could then safely withdraw certain concessions

which he had granted. The advisers of the Empress had made a present of so valuable a trump card to Prussia, that Bismarck was not the man to neglect playing it. He sent the famous Elms dispatch, truncated, mutilated and disfigured. It was a slap in the face of France. What could be done in such a case, but send one's seconds to challenge the offender? This meant war, to be followed by invasion.

At the first clash of arms, Lord Granville had proffered British mediation. But his advice was ignored, as had been the advice of Lord Lyons and of Thiers. In reply to his offer, the Tuileries Cabinet hesitated and felt its way. All negotiations became useless.

The old system of alliances upon which the peace of Europe depended was broken, the equilibrium upset for the benefit of Germany, and international rights torn to shreds. The British Cabinet, which had endeavoured in vain to step in between Berlin and Paris, and had been slighted through the extraordinary infatuation of the Imperial Government, had now no other object than to circumscribe the war by preventing other Powers from helping France.¹

¹ The conditions of things had indeed changed. In former times every threatening influence in Europe was confronted and checkmated by suspicious England. Henry VIII, aided by Francis I, opposed Charles V; Elizabeth sought and found the help of Henry IV against the House of Austria; William of

The adversaries stood face to face, but the contest was indeed an uneven one.

The Emperor, the Empress, and their Ministers had made a grievous blunder. They were not the only ones who were blinded. The misconception of the state of affairs was general. With the exception of a few intellectuals who for some years past had clearly beheld the Empire rushing headlong to a catastrophe, every Frenchman of exalted or of modest birth endorsed the responsibility of this disastrous conflagration. Public opinion, which had formerly opposed the plan of a serious reorganization of the Army and had insisted willy-nilly upon the necessity of reducing the military expenditure, now heralded suggestions of victory and of conquest on the borders of the Rhine, forgetting that French troops lacked effective strength because they had been denied the means of fostering it. Their fate had to be accomplished. The Empress was superstitious and the Emperor a fatalist. Before the inevitable clash of arms occurred, they both wished to consult a fortune-teller who was brought to the Tuileries. Even this did not protect them against their destiny.

Orange fought Louis XIV while Pitt called on the whole of Europe to crush Napoleon. In 1870 Great Britain followed a policy of complete and systematic abstention, absorbed as she was by her commerce, her material prosperity, and her industrial development at home and abroad.



Napoleon was ill, isolated in Europe, and unprovided with men or war material, yet he declared war with that same incredible want of logic which urged Prussia to attack the conqueror of Europe in 1806, without the help of an ally, after hesitating to join Austria and Russia against him in 1805. The Prussia of 1806 and the France of 1870 were like one another, as like as two inimical sisters might be. The army of Frederick William, like that of Napoleon III, had only an outward appearance sufficient to stand the test of a review or a march past, but she filled Berlin with her boastful vapourings. In 1870, Paris beheld a similar military party, disorganized and very rowdy. Like Frederick William, Napoleon III feared defeat. Both were confronted by the same dilemma : they must continue to reign with honour or forfeit a crown. To make the likeness more faithful, there was a Queen of Prussia akin to the Empress in France, who urged her country to extreme measures with all earnestness. Paris might have repeated the famous line of Sorel, "Armida in her madness, thrice set fire to her own palace."

The Court had settled at Saint-Cloud sooner than usual, as the Emperor and the Empress had expressed the wish to reside there during June and July. Eugénie's nieces, the daughters of her sister, the late Duchess of Alba, were staying

with her, and she did her best to afford them such distractions as she could devise in this enchanting residence. A feeling of stupor overcame this brilliant assembly of guests when games, pastimes and amusements were suddenly interrupted by the news that diplomatic relations had been broken off with the King of Prussia, and that war was declared. Those who had no immediate cause for alarm soon recovered from the effects of the blow, and shouted eagerly so as to trick themselves into enthusiasm. Politicians and courtiers, who gathered round the Empress at this critical moment, thought they were quite safe. They considered that their personal positions could not be shaken, and this caused them to display all the more ardour in their patriotic demonstrations.

This ardour had not yet subsided at one of the last dinners given at Saint-Cloud at the cost of the Emperor's civil list. Napoleon III was evidently suffering intensely, and remained more silent than usual. His looks betokened sadness and anxiety. Eugénie endeavoured to inspire confidence, wishing that she herself might become imbued with it. The guests were weighed down by a feeling of uneasiness which they could not shake off. Suddenly a rumour—in no way official, but contained in a private telegram—was reported to His Majesty. This alone proved how relaxed

had become the observance of the rules of etiquette, owing no doubt to the gravity of the circumstances. The telegram was read aloud. French scouts had made contact with a German patrol, and sharp-shooting had been indulged in. The enemy, severely mauled, had had to cross the frontier hurriedly. The casualties of the French detachment were five dead and eleven wounded, and those of the Germans four times as many. The news of a great victory could not have caused more joy than that of this little skirmish. The Empress, with ingenuous spontaneity, underlined every word of it with exclamations, "The enemy" (which meant a few men) "have fallen back across the frontier. But then we have won." Those present congratulated one another upon this happy augury of a successful campaign. No one thought of pitying the first victims of this barbarous fatality, which urges men to attack each other without being impelled to do so by mutual hatred. This is war!

Great joy filled every heart. One of the guests of this occasion tells us that a delightful evening was spent in the freshness of the park and its fragrant bowers, while the Prince Imperial and some young companions of his sang the "Marseillaise."

Forgetting his sufferings and overcoming his

depression, the Emperor took a short walk with a high official who knew a great deal about Germany, having resided there for years. Napoleon questioned him as to the sentiments of the Rhenish populations, and asked him if he did not think that the fact of their being mainly Catholic would induce them to secede from a Protestant country and throw in their lot with a conqueror belonging to their faith. His friend replied that if such hopes depended upon the results of a plebiscite they would prove chimerical. The Emperor paused a while, tracing a map of Europe upon the gravel. He then expressed the following thoughts, which were not justified by the course of future events—

“On this side we are guaranteed by the neutrality of Belgium and Switzerland, but on the other the road is exposed to German invasion. It is there that we shall have to create a buffer state which we shall call a German Belgium.” Then, wishing to prove that he cherished no ideas of conquest as a result of the war he had undertaken against his will, he added—

“I shall never annex by force populations that do not wish to become French. I do not want to create another Poland. I have given proof of my views on this subject when dealing with Nice and Savoy.”

The Empress was not present during this

conversation, for she had retired early, wishing to partake of communion the next day. Whenever she was overtaken by sadness or misfortune, her devotion seemed sensibly increased.

For the nonce, her ideas were in the ascendant. Soon she hoped to witness the end of a war which was inevitable, feeling sure that it would be as glorious as the Crimean campaign, and as swift as that against Austria. Happy days were in store for her dynasty, and with this conviction she stood again in a prominent position before the footlights of politics. Her power would soon be great enough to enable her to alter certain decisions that had been come to in case war broke out. These decisions bore upon the part to be played by Napoleon III, and upon the disposition of the different army corps. She urged him to assume command of the army of the Rhine. It is but fair to add that the Emperor's physicians had not acquainted her with the gravity of his condition, and that she did not suspect it, for Napoleon heroically bore without a murmur the untold sufferings caused by stone. Before starting for the Eastern frontier, so often steeped in the blood of the invader, he had entrusted to General Lepic the care of the Empress and of the Tuileries. The old soldier complained bitterly at not being allowed to share the perils of the campaign, but Napoleon endeavoured to comfort him by saying

that the position assigned to him might prove more dangerous than service in the field. Gloomy presentiments filled the soul of Napoleon III. The Count left Saint-Cloud on the morrow of the sad defeat of Wissembourg. Eugénie returned to the Tuileries. General Lepic took up his quarters in the apartments of the Prince Imperial, between the Pavilion of Flora and that of the Horloge. The look of the place had altered. Dispatch followed dispatch, bearing explanations and bad news. To hold them back, to give to them a meaning they did not convey, to curtail their sense, was the one object of the officials. The officers of the household and the high dignitaries assumed an air of indifference or of mystery, and endeavoured not to see or understand the gravity of the situation. At the same time, narrow egotisms, petty and jealous ambitions took umbrage at seeing signs of devotion and self-sacrifice in others, and tried to prevent such cases from coming to light. A witness at Court has described these officials, and these phantoms of the last days of the Tuileries, spreading good or bad reports, fear or hope alternately, according to the turn taken by succeeding events. Their one care was to rescue their goods and chattels from a tottering building.

There were signs of peril, of the impending *sauve-qui-peut*.

Eugénie proved herself courageous and determined in the midst of all this confusion.

She had yearned for the opportunity of exercising her power. From 1853 to 1870 she had only played an intermittent part in the affairs of the State. She was now called upon to exercise an effective regency in troubled times, and under very trying circumstances. She threw herself into her work with ardour, endeavouring to atone for past mistakes by rising to the height of a position worthy of testing the greatest courage. Withal she displayed the greatest dignity. In August 1870, when illusions were still permissible, Mérimée wrote to his friend Panizzi—

“The Empress is admirable. She conceals nothing, but displays heroic calmness by an effort which costs her dearly, I am sure.” One thing is certain. The idea never struck her of saving herself from the results of a crushing catastrophe, against a definite downfall. Was it because she did not foresee such rapid and formidable consequences of events, or because her mind was completely absorbed in the discharge of her duties? Whatever the cause, she did not seem to reckon with a disastrous future near at hand. Her friends watched over her. One of them, whose devotion was well known to her, had suggested that in case of extreme danger he should act as her body-guard. With this intention he sent her a con-

fidential message asking for an audience, which was granted on the 27th August, before the fall of Sedan. As the envoy was ushered in, Eugénie held a telegram in one hand and a handkerchief in the other. She was sobbing. She handed him the telegram containing the desperate but energetic statement of the commander of the frontier forts—

“We shall hold out until the last, and the last man shall be blown up with the forts.”

Certain deep emotions are best conveyed without words. The object of his visit had, however, to be discussed.

“I beg of your Majesty,” said the visitor, “to forgive me if the subject of my visit is so little in accord with so much heroism, but I must fulfil my mission.”

“What is it? Speak!”

“Madame, it is not easy to discuss a question of money when one has just been afforded an example of heroic self-sacrifice bordering on madness.”

“A question of money, did you say? What, at such a juncture?”

“It is because of the gravity of the juncture that I have to mention money.”

“But who has sent you?” On hearing the name of her well-wisher, she exclaimed, “He is a true friend and a noble soul! Pray proceed.”

She invited him to be seated, for he had remained standing since the beginning of the interview.

“Madame, nothing is lost. Everything can yet be saved; but it is indispensable to survey eventualities with the greatest calmness. To prepare for a retreat does not necessarily mean to despair of victory, but merely to secure the morrow’s bivouac.”

She listened with surprise, and did not seem to understand.

“Well, Madame, the friend whose noble sentiments and devotion are well known to you, has bade me ask if your Majesty has taken the precaution to place her personal property, her jewels, valuables, securities, in safe keeping. I am to add that if your Majesty feels inclined to do so, your devoted friend places himself at your disposal, as his position enables him to act both swiftly and efficaciously.”

For several minutes she remained silent, motionless, and deeply moved, as she made an effort to regain her calmness. She spoke in trembling voice words that history will be pleased to remember, because they were uttered so sincerely—

“Tell him that I thank him from the bottom of my heart, but that under present circumstances I shall never consent to remove a tittle of the

national funds or of my own fortune in order to send the proceeds abroad."

She had, alas! to do so later, and it was from abroad that she had to write claiming what she then refused to store away in safety.

The messenger insisted in vain, invoking the interests of the Emperor and those of the Prince. He went further, and, taking from his pocket a deed that had been drafted in advance, he placed it before the Empress and made a supreme appeal to her.

"Madame, for Heaven's sake sign this. It will be sufficient."

Eugénie took the document, tore it up, and handed the pieces of it to the envoy. Her refusal spelt courage and determination.

Clouds were gathering fast upon the horizon. The three weeks that elapsed between Napoleon's departure for Metz and the fatal September 4th were one long agony. The die was cast! She now realized the horror of the situation. She had been informed quite frankly of the impossibility of snatching a victory on the Rhine. France had deceived herself, lulled to sleep in chimerical dreams. She was short of men, commissariat and ammunition. Eugénie betrayed no hesitation, and clung to hope. As was her wont, she decided and acted in accordance with the spontaneous dictates of her nature.

She was less inclined to listen to reason than to the impulses of her proud nature, for she had schooled herself to the conviction that Napoleon could not return to Paris before securing a victory. She could not even harbour the idea of his being beaten back to his capital. She said so to all, and wrote it to the Emperor in energetic terms—

“If you come back defeated, a revolution will ensue.” This was what she telegraphed to the unfortunate Sovereign whose authority was merely nominal, and who, thanks to the regency, had now to follow his troops instead of leading them.

Emile Ollivier (the President of the Council) did not share her views. He felt that such a determination would hasten a revolution and precipitate the downfall of the Empire. He insisted upon the inadvisability of a resistance to the death. Eugénie brought about his downfall by pitting her friends and the left centre against him. Wise folk held that while France still possessed an army around Metz and a powerful reserve at Châlons, it would be wise to lead these troops on to Paris for its protection. But MacMahon, whose plan it was to fall back upon the Seine, had to obey orders given by political authorities. Urged to execute his plan by the receipt of a telegram from Bazaine stating that he would meet him half way, he had begun the march to the north-east, that fatal march which

hurled him into the abyss of Sedan, instead of effecting the meeting of the two army corps. The incredible defeat of the 3rd September cost Napoleon his crown. The Empress was driven to desperate decisions, caring little whether they were constitutional or not. What mattered if she did transgress her legal rights as Regent, when our lines had been forced, our country invaded, the head of the State defeated, without prestige, without moral force, without a command, and therefore deprived of the means of executing his plans!¹

¹ One evening, at Chislehurst, Napoleon III proceeded to sum up in writing the consequences of his misfortune. He endeavoured to lessen the weight of his own responsibility for the cause that had produced it. He drew up a veritable indictment against the regency. Here is the manuscript note which he confided to Count de la Chapelle. "When going to the front, the Emperor established a regency, thinking that from head-quarters he could still keep a hand upon the helm of the State. According to the precedents of the First Empire, the regency should only have taken practical effect the moment the Emperor left the French territory. This was what occurred in 1859, during the campaign of Italy. But in 1870 the regency assumed the reins of government as soon as the Emperor left Paris, and though letters patent had only conferred constricted powers upon the Empress, the fact of her presiding over a Cabinet declared responsible by the Constitution, set up two Governments instead of one. One seat of government was with the army and possessed all the attributes of sovereign power but none of the legal means for exercising it, while the other in Paris was composed of all the depositories of authority, though bereft of the prerogative of power.

"The Regent had a responsible Cabinet but could not

A Government crisis was at hand. No one was in power. In convening the Chambers without consulting the Emperor, now a prisoner who had lost control of the mainsprings of Government, the Empress did not remember that she was slighting her husband and his advisers. As the ship of State was sinking she hung on desperately to its last wreckage. She had hoped that a glimmer of inspiration, that salvation might result from the meeting of these men. Alas! it was too late. The invasion of the Corps Legislatif had nullified the proposal of Thiers to the effect that a committee of defence

exercise the right to summon or dismiss Ministers, to make a military or a civil appointment, or to exercise the right of pardon.

“The Chambers were summoned without the Emperor’s consent, and Parliament could not be legally summoned unless by a decree bearing the Emperor’s signature. To convene the Chamber after military defeats was tantamount in France to hailing a revolution, for when public disasters occur human passions obtain the upper hand. The reverses sustained by the nation afforded the opposition ample chances for increasing its influence, and, far from upholding the Government from motives of patriotism, its political adversaries used every effort to bring about its downfall. The defeat of the Ollivier Cabinet and the formation of a new Ministry were the immediate consequences of the first meeting of the legislative body. The new Ministers were unconstitutionally appointed without the consent of the Emperor, and as soon as they assumed office they were compelled by public pressure to fill all vacancies, to appoint generals-in-chief, in a word, to decide every question without appealing to the Emperor.” (Manuscript notes of La Chapelle.) But was there still an Emperor?

chosen among the members of the assembly should be forthwith constituted. All that was left of the Imperial *régime* was blown to the winds by the mighty impetus of the Revolution.

Riotous meetings in the streets, the angry noise of which was re-echoed by the walls of the Palace, caused grave apprehension at the Tuileries. Through fear of a night attack, the guard had been reinforced, and the night of the 3rd was spent in fear and trembling. The arrival of a deputy, or of some official bearing tidings of the parliamentary debate, was awaited with feverish anxiety. The hours seemed interminable, but no one came. Silence reigned in the deserted Palace during the early hours of the morning. At two o'clock Madame de Selves announced the proclamation of the Republic. Every minute became more precious. What should be done? Hurried plans were formulated by Eugénie. To offer resistance to the rioters, to appeal to the generosity of the country, to ride through the streets of Paris, and thus effect by courage a complete revulsion of feeling in their favour—Eugénie thought of one and all of those measures. She was so unpopular, however, that public opinion would hardly have espoused her cause, whichever plan she had adopted. The popular wave was about to swamp the Imperial apartments. Two foreigners, Metternich

and Nigra, Ambassadors of Austria and Italy, prevailed upon her to leave the Tuileries and fly from France. Knowingly or not, they thus greatly facilitated the task of diplomacy. There was no more Sovereign, no more Regent at the Tuileries, so their respective Governments were thus absolved of such promises as might have been given, and at any rate of all compulsion to help the absent ones. The last words spoken by Eugénie to those who gathered round her and kissed her hand were indeed pathetic. "In France no one has the right to be unfortunate." Many more or less accurate accounts have been given of her flight. She threw a dark mantle over her shoulders, and feverishly tied the strings of a black bonnet under her chin. In her reticule she hurriedly put a purse, a handkerchief and a note-book, and, leaning on the arm of Prince Metternich, she cast a longing look at the apartments in which she had held sway for seventeen years. Admiral Jurien de la Gravière had placed the Imperial refugee under the protection of the representatives of two European Powers. Had not Metternich firmly declared, "I answer for everything"? The course of this historic flight is well known. It had been decided that the party should go through the Imperial apartments, across the Louvre, and thus reach the gate towards the Place Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. It rapidly

crossed the left wing of the Tuileries, passed through the Museum gate and the picture-gallery, down the stairs leading to the Assyrian Palace, and eventually reached the gateway that gave on to the square. The ex-Regent quitted the Louvre, while a huge crowd assembled at the opposite side; she still leant on Metternich's arm. Nigra and Madame le Breton, Bourbaki's sister, accompanied her. They halted. "Wait for me here," said Richard to the two women; "I am going to fetch my carriage. It is a plain one, with no coat-of-arms; it is drawn by a white horse." Metternich and Nigra proceeded in search of the brougham. During their prolonged absence, the crowd grew greater and more violent. Madame le Breton hailed a passing cab, pushed her Sovereign into it, and gave the coachman the address of one of her friends—"Besson, State Councillor, Boulevard Haussmann." The rest is common history—the drive to the Avenue de Wagram in search of Piennes, Chamberlain to the Empress, who was also out, and eventually Eugénie's arrival at the house of Dr. Evans, Avenue du Bois de Boulogne.

In the meanwhile, what had become of Metternich and Nigra? They may have been cut off from the ladies they were protecting by the angry rush of the populace. They were guilty of a grave imprudence, however, not to say of a dereliction

of duty, by leaving the Empress at such a time, alone, in a frenzied crowd from which she had everything to fear. Such is the accusation brought against them by Imperialist writers when relating the events of the 4th September.

Her Majesty had knocked at the door of Dr. Evans. This American citizen possessed an immense fortune, a European reputation, and a golden heart. He had known the Empress for many years. She was still Mademoiselle de Montijo when, as a friend of hers, he helped towards the attainment of her exalted position. She now came to him in misfortune, saying, "They have all forsaken me; you can save me—you must save me. Afford me the means to escape from this hot-bed of revolution to the shores of England." Evans was deeply moved at the sight of the Empress in tears, as she came to beseech of him to rescue her from Paris and from France. She had indeed fallen from the giddy heights of her greatness—a greatness that she had deemed unassailable. He mastered his feelings and weighed up in a few minutes the responsibilities he was assuming towards her, towards the French nation that he loved, and towards history. He asked her to remain alone in the drawing-room, and sought Dr. Crane, a friend and fellow-countryman. Having told him what had happened, he asked him to note carefully

what he was going to do, and to prepare to leave with him. It was Dr. Crane, who, thirty-five years later, published in detail the memoirs of Evans. Dr. Evans besought of the Empress to postpone her departure till the morrow, and placed at her disposal the apartments of Mrs. Evans, who was at Deauville. On the 5th Her Majesty rose, having enjoyed a good night's rest, and informed the doctor that she was ready to start. She wore the same toilette as on the previous day, having, however, put on a bonnet and a very thick veil belonging to Mrs. Evans. She stepped into the landau, accompanied by her reader and the two doctors. The carriage bound for Deauville, passed through the barrier of the Port Maillot, which was defended by National Guards. At Mantes another carriage awaited them, and throughout the journey relays were effected with difficulty, but the goal hove at last in sight. "During the journey," says the author of *An Orderly Officer's Diary*, "the Empress was sad and depressed. At times she seemed to be dozing, when suddenly, as if moved by weird thoughts, she would become gay and talkative. But her merry mood soon subsided as she burst into tears." On the evening of the 6th Eugénie reached Deauville, and, entering the Hôtel du Casino, where Mrs. Evans awaited her, she heaved a deep sigh, and said, "I am saved!"

Was she really in such danger as she thought? Her arrest had not been ordered in Paris, nor had it been contemplated by the governing authorities, who were then confronted by the most terrible state of affairs that any Government was ever called upon to face.

Her existence had been forgotten in the midst of general confusion and collapse.

Evans went down to the harbour to charter a ship. The weather was anything but encouraging, for a strong wind blew down the Channel and a violent storm raged at sea. There was only one yacht available, belonging to Sir John Burgoyne, an intimate friend of the Emperor. He demurred, and even refused to weigh anchor, as he thought it would be very dangerous to attempt the crossing. He went so far as to say that they could not possibly reach the other side. Was he in reality stopped by the fear of some other danger incurred by the Empress? Evans pleaded with eloquence, invoking every argument that could appeal to the heart of a man. That night, towards eleven o'clock, Burgoyne reluctantly consented to pilot the craft during her dangerous voyage. The *Gazelle* was nearly swamped. She sailed at half-past twelve, so as not to awaken the public attention, and was soon labouring through the heavy seas. Eventually the wind abated somewhat, and the yacht made

the harbour of Ryde. The passengers were drenched, and found it difficult to obtain admittance to a hotel. They eventually did so at the York Hotel, where they partook of a hasty meal. From Ryde the Empress travelled by rail to Hastings, where she spent twelve days at the Marine Hotel. Hence she repaired to Chislehurst, to the property that Dr. Evans had purchased for her. She had no sooner taken up her new abode, which she hoped was only a temporary one, than she proceeded to disentangle and join together the many threads that had been so rudely broken. She began at once a voluminous correspondence with her friends in France. On her arrival in England, Count de Bernstorff, Prussian Ambassador in London, had led her to hope that, as Regent, she might sign a treaty of peace, the conditions of which would be the payment of a £400,000 war indemnity and the surrender of Strasburg to the conqueror. Communications with a view to securing peace had been exchanged between her and the King of Prussia, who on the 25th October wrote her the following letter, the authenticity of which has never been contested by any of the parties mentioned in it :

“MADAME,

“Count de Bernstorff has telegraphed to me the words which you have been good enough

to address to me through him. With all my heart I wish to restore peace to our two countries, but before this is possible, we must at least be fairly sure that France will accept the result of our deeds without our being compelled to wage war against the whole of the French forces.

“I regret I cannot at present accede to the negotiations proposed by your Majesty owing to the political feelings of the army of Metz and of the French nation.

“(Signed) WILLIAM.”

With or without the King's consent, Bismarck was propounding to General Boyer, whom Bazaine was sending on a mission to Versailles, the conditions upon which the army of the Rhine should abandon its entrenched camp if an Imperialist restoration were effected. The said army must proceed with arms and baggage to neutral ground, where the Empress Eugénie, her son, the Legislative Council and the French Imperial Senate would be assembled.¹ The army of Metz!

¹ All idea of capitulation was to be set aside for the time being. The object to be achieved was that the army of Metz should remain faithful to its oath of allegiance and become the champion of the Imperial dynasty. Then the Field Marshal would issue a public proclamation that would make this clearly known so that the nation might know that he could be relied upon if it were the nation's wish to rally to the Bonapartist standard.

In this way the army's relations with the Republic would

It was indeed an imposing force! At the German headquarters it was still supposed to have stores and ammunition far in excess of what it really could dispose of. It was an element of resistance that must be reckoned with by those who did not really know its internal condition. All the time the investing circle grew tighter and tighter around the citadel of Lorraine, while the Chancellor was cajoling the much-deluded marshal with false hopes.

The Empress was well aware of the various steps taken by such emissaries as Duparc and Régnier, with a view to establish between Metz and Versailles such communications as might be conducive to the interests of peace and of the Napoleonic *régime*. She had sent a photograph of Hastings to Régnier,¹ who made use of it as a

become embittered and Monsieur de Bismarck would be able to weigh the effect produced in France by this declaration. (Report of General Boyer to Marshal Bazaine, 17th October 1870.)

¹ Régnier had also received from Monsieur Augustin Filon another stereoscopic view of Hastings signed by the Prince. Count d'Hérisson has noted the fact that the Napoleons always accredited their secret agents by means of portraits or photographs. In this way, while they avoided compromising themselves, they made their agents known to those they had to see.

The report of the Bazaine trial contains the following passage on page 572 :

Monsieur Jules Favre: "The Council is aware of my presence at Ferrières on the evening of the 19th. There I had a very long interview with Monsieur de Bismarck. It was

passport to gain access to Bismarck. Upon it she had written the following words: "This is a view of Hastings which I have chosen for my good Louis. (Signed) EUGÉNIE."

If it be true that Eugénie did not encourage these negotiations and that she refused to see Régnier at Hastings, it is likewise true that she could not remain indifferent to a strange undertaking the stages of which were Metz, Versailles and Wilhelmshöhe, and the object of which was to bring about a treaty of peace between the Empress-Regent and Prussia. She was fully aware of the Bonapartist and diplomatic intrigues that were indulged in during the siege of Metz, although she always repudiated them. The mysterious Régnier represented himself to Bazaine

adjourned until the following morning, when Monsieur de Bismarck showed me a photograph before I had time to address him. At the foot of this photograph, a view of Hastings, were written the words: 'I have chosen this view of Hastings for my good Louis. (Signed) EUGÉNIE.'

"Monsieur de Bismarck put this photograph under my very eyes."

The President: "Is the honourable deputy quite sure that the signature appended to the photograph was that of the Empress?"

Monsieur Jules Favre: "Monsieur le President, many doubts have arisen in my mind since the inception of this trial, but I am enabled to assert that it was the signature of the Empress, as I recorded the fact in my report the moment I became aware of it, and I can almost see the photograph now, bearing the signature of Eugénie."

as the confidential messenger of the Empress, without even producing a written proof of his statement. Yet he was powerful enough to obtain the release from Metz of Bourbaki, one of France's most able generals, and to send him on a mission to Eugénie. We know how easily Bourbaki crossed the enemy's lines thanks to the connivance of Prussia, how he reached Camden Place by the quickest route, and how cordially he was received by his late Sovereign, who thanked him for this fresh proof of his devotion. We know how she invoked the misfortunes of France and her own sad isolation, and conjured of him to take charge of the Prince Imperial, to accompany him back to Metz, in the midst of his soldiers, under the French flag. We also know that Bourbaki declined to accede to her wishes. A strange situation indeed, in which Eugénie's patriotism forbade her to interfere, as long as the dangers and sufferings of the French nation lasted, while on the other hand her excusable ambition urged her to foster the possibilities of some agreement with the Conqueror, an agreement the forfeit of which was nothing less than her own throne! The army of Metz was, alas! without means of subsistence and on the eve of capitulation. On the morrow of that deadly disaster, on the 1st November 1870, Thiers and Bismarck were seated together talking. The Chancellor happened to

mention the name of the ex-Empress of the French :

“What!” exclaimed Thiers, “the Empress, who informed us through Monsieur de Metternich, that she would have no part in all these intrigues, she who refused to see General Boyer, who . . .”

“Do not trust the Empress,” replied Bismarck. “I can show you messages that we have received from her which will soon put a different complexion upon her conduct.”

Events were growing more serious. The last hopes had vanished. Even admitting she had given up all idea of being a source of further trouble to the country which had disowned her, circumstances would not have enabled her to create any disturbance. She realised that the exciting condition of affairs bade her await further events with resignation.

On the 20th November she clearly defined her attitude in a letter written at Camden Place: “As the motives which compelled me to act with great reserve are still in existence, I prefer to remain silent and to wait. But I deny indignantly having had any relations with the Government of Tours.”

In the same letter she proceeded to explain her action at the critical time of the capitulation of Metz, the abandonment of Trochu with all its consequences.

“So far as the incident¹ of the 4th is concerned, I can only answer that General Trochu deserted me, if he did not do worse. He never set foot in the Tuileries after the Chamber was invaded, and I only saw three members of the Cabinet since then. They all insisted that I should leave immediately, but I did not wish to do so until the Tuileries themselves had been invaded. Upon this, as on many other subjects, the truth will eventually be known.” Referring to the prospects of the war, she added, “The news from France informs us that Gambetta, the lunatic, seems bent upon setting up agitation in the room of much-needed organization. The success of the Army of the Loire gives one some hope, but I tremble lest it should undertake a march that will cause its destruction, like that of the Army at Sedan. May God protect it. It seems to me that the end is in sight. Here public spirit is much agitated. The war is of course discussed, while a Congress is devoutly hoped for.” She had one glimmer of hope for the future of her dear ones and herself. England favoured a restoration of the French Empire. Austria did likewise, and Raimbaux, a member of the Emperor’s household, was on his way to Russia in the hopes of inducing the Tzar to join the combination. Bismarck himself had

¹ “Incident” was indeed an indulgent term to apply to such an upheaval, to such a revolution.

declared that he objected to dealings between nations that compelled one to meet and discuss with *the rabble*. But the tide turned once more. After fresh fights and fresh victories, the Chancellor became quite reconciled to meeting *the men in the street*. He had come to the conclusion that he could impose upon them terms much more drastic than those which would prove acceptable to men of a different social standing.

Day by day the Empress followed the course of the drama that had been enacted, judging men and things as best she could, studying the state of opinion in France, noting such chances as she saw of her eventual return and reinstatement, and exhibiting sincere sorrow when she heard that France had sustained yet another blow. She often said, "If I were at the Tuileries I would do this or that"; but she was no more at the Tuileries, a fact that she began to realize, not only through the loss of a throne, but also through the simple conditions of her existence.

The early days at Chislehurst were indeed precarious. Napoleon III had been accused of accumulating vast wealth and hoarding it abroad, but he had not even had the prudence to do so. He had a supreme contempt for money. A fatalist in the most optimistic sense of the word, he had blind faith in the stability of his fortune, which was identified with that of France. As a

result he was most improvident. When the late Lord Hartford wished to present him with the magnificent estate of Bagatelle, Napoleon thanked him in the following proud but cruel terms: "The heir to the Imperial throne can only accept presents from God and France." He had so acquired the habit of reigning, that, like the Bourbons, he had fashioned a sort of divine right unto himself and his successors. He found himself without money the day that his generous civil list was stopped—a list that included large sums expended both on charitable and frivolous objects.¹ Moreover, he had handed over his last million to the Army at Metz. The personal effects of the Empress had not yet been realized, and her financial condition would have been more precarious still if, on the night of the 3rd September some faithful friends had not rescued from the wreck her jewel-box, con-

¹ Napoleon III very often untied his purse-strings, but his was a purse that might have belonged to the daughters of Danaüs, for it was often empty. The fact is proved by the following anecdote: "'I was often asked by struggling folk to intercede for them,' wrote that most charitable of men, Dr. Conneau, the keeper of the Emperor's privy purse, whose duty it was to dispense alms and donations on the behalf of his Imperial master. Conneau deserved and enjoyed the full confidence of Napoleon, for he died very poor, although millions unchecked by any one passed through his hands. He often said to me, 'Never send me any one at the end of the month, because at that time we never have a penny.' Few people were aware of the charitable profligacy of Napoleon III" (Unpublished diary of Bauer).

taining superb pearls and diamonds. Some of them were sold by trusted emissaries across the Atlantic, where they became the property, not of Queens or Princesses by right of birth, but of American women wielding a power more secure—the uncontested power of millions.

In the hurry of her departure, that was more like an affrighted flight, she had left all her clothes, linen and personal effects at the Tuileries. Fortunately they were saved from the looting of the Palace, which so soon was to be fired by the torches of incendiaries. Romantic souls waxed eloquent over the sacred duty of returning to this unhappy woman the personal effects she had possessed. The task was undertaken by Captain Charles d'Hérisson, an orderly officer of the Governor of Paris, who had a chivalrous nature, and was only twenty-five.

On the morning of the 5th September he went to the Prefecture of Police to obtain the necessary passes. Count de Kératry had just taken office as Police Prefect. Having listened to the young officer's request, he advised him to seek Ernest Picard, who had just been appointed Minister of Finance. The Minister granted the application, saying, "I give you full power to act. On your return, your conscience may alone tell you that you did right, because the events of to-morrow are

most uncertain ; but to-day I authorize you to satisfy your desire."

It was not sufficient to obtain access to the Tuileries ; the personal guidance of one who had belonged to the Imperial household was sorely needed. Without knowing the "Seraglio" and its recesses it was no easy task to find the clothes and effects that had been hidden away. Charles d'Hérisson had the address of one of the ladies'-maids of the Empress. He asked her to meet him that night at the Palace, and the two proceeded to the bedroom and dressing-room of Eugénie, and thence to the upper apartments, that contained huge oak wardrobes filled with beautiful silks, laces, cambrics and hundreds of dresses. A number of empty boxes and cases were hurriedly filled by the light of a few candles. The lady's-maid picked out a thousand different articles of apparel, which the officer and his orderly packed away. Twenty such trunks were filled by them, but the wardrobes still seemed to be replete. Several expeditions had to be made. The little group worked hard, and the first assignments were addressed to Chislehurst. Others, consisting of more precious effects, were sent to the Austrian Embassy. D'Hérisson did not spare his efforts, for he endeavoured to obtain possession of the Imperial property wherever he found it.

One day he removed from a house on the Boulevard Haussmann twenty thousand pounds' worth of furs belonging to the Empress. He was a constant caller at the Treasury, where the officials chaffed him about his mission. "Are you still bound for the Tuileries? How long do you think this will last? Is there any use in taking so much trouble?" They added that either the absent ones would return, and then in all likelihood they would forget what he had done; or months or years of exile would elapse, and then they would probably conceive a bad impression of those who had cleared their goods away from the Tuileries, as if there had been no chance of their ever returning there.

Such were the views set forth by Ernest Picard, who was a philosopher. The young officer, however, continued his daily pilgrimages, urged by his noble sentiments. He was rewarded only by grievous disappointment. The Empress forgot to thank him, and his bitter resentment was duly expressed by him in his historic depositions. Meanwhile, Eugénie lived in great simplicity at Camden Place, where her son had joined her, and where the prisoner of war from Wilhelmshöhe was soon to find comparative rest. Chislehurst, like Arenenberg, lacked the proportions of a palace and the appearance of a castle. Its style of architecture was far from pure, but it possessed beautiful grounds and a splendid park. The entrance hall

was narrow. Beyond it came a gallery furnished with a certain amount of comfort ; on the right a very ordinary staircase, on the left a drawing-room where no luxury was displayed, and a dining-room remarkable only for the beauty of its wainscoting. The rest of the house was provincially uniform. In the drawing-room there were a mantelpiece of majolica with figures in relief, a few portraits hung here and there, and some flowers in the vases. In front of the mantelpiece was a round table covered with books and newspapers. Such was the middle-class appearance of Chislehurst, and such it remained for years. It was there that, in March 1871, the Emperor and Empress met once more !

CHAPTER X

The meeting at Chislehurst—Departure and arrival of Napoleon III—The first intimate conversations—What was said and planned at Camden Place, in the intimate circle of the Empress—An unpublished account of these political and familiar chats—Hopes of an early restoration of the Bonaparte dynasty—Real conjuration—What the course of a second trip to Elba might have been—The final catastrophe upsets all these calculations—Napoleon III dies in the arms of the Empress—Consequences of his demise—An interview between Eugénie and Jérôme—Complaints of the latter concerning certain deeds and the will which could not be found—Eugénie retires to Arenenberg during the first period of her mourning—Her delusions and deception—She withdraws from the struggle and devotes herself to the education of her son—Retrospective details—Anecdotes—Description of the Pretender and of his nature, identical with that of his mother—His views and illusions concerning the future—The anxious uncertainty of expectation tries him sorely—He adopts a sudden resolution—Departure of the Prince for Zululand—General consternation—What could be the reasons for such a determination?—Was it dictated by self-pride or by some love-lore?—Was it a desire for adventures or a yearning to put a stop to a tutelage prolonged to excess?—Private impressions of the Empress—Her state of anguish and isolation during the period that followed the Prince's departure—How she had regained confidence and self-control just as she learnt of the death of her son—She renounces politics for ever—Her belated reconciliation with Prince Napoleon—The death of Jérôme Napoleon, cousin of Napoleon III—A sketch of him, of his character, of his misjudged or barren capabilities, and of the part he played—The Empress remains alone after these successive losses—Her new residence at Farnborough—Her private life there—Her journeys abroad—Her meeting at Mentone—Imposing interviews—Last impressions and last recollections.

ON the 18th March, 1871, the day on which the conquerors of Belleville and Montmartre occupied the Hôtel de Ville, Napoleon III was set free

and prepared to leave Wilhelmshohe. He advised the absent one, whom he had not seen since the visit she paid him in that ancient palace of King Jérôme, converted by another Bonaparte into a jail.

At six o'clock the next day, the ex-Emperor of France left Cassel, while Thiers and the National Assembly handed Paris over to the triumphant Revolution. Napoleon was escorted by a German Guard of Honour, commanded by the Governor. General de Montz, aide-de-camp to the King of Belgium, met him at the frontier. So anxious was he to terminate his journey and meet his son, from whom he had been separated since the 25th August, that Napoleon travelled straight through Belgium in the Royal train, and sailed in King Leopold's steam yacht.

He was met at Dover by the Empress, the Prince Imperial and Prince Murat. An enormous crowd followed the Imperial party on the pier. Loud acclamations welcomed him on landing, as if those present wished to alleviate his sufferings. He smiled and saluted through force of habit. The harbour-master, a captain of the British Navy, reminded him that fifteen years previously he had had the honour of receiving him on the occasion of his visit to Queen Victoria. It was an auspicious date, the opportune recalling of which cast a ray of brightness upon this inception of his

exile. He reached the Lord Warden Hotel, and proceeded to the station. It was with difficulty that he did so, for the police had a most difficult task to perform in clearing a way for him through the vast gathering of welcoming friends. He was met at the station by Eugénie. Deeply moved, she embraced him passionately. The young Prince fell on his father's breast, and the witnesses of this pathetic scene shared the keen emotion of the Empress. Surrounded by such tokens of fervent hospitality, and followed by their suite, Napoleon, Eugénie and the Prince boarded the Royal train in waiting, and entered the saloon, upholstered in pale pink silk. By a strange irony of fate, at that very moment members of the Commune in Paris, ferocious democrats, took possession of the three or four carriages belonging to the ex-Emperor. They had been removed to the Hôtel de Ville during the first siege. During the journey of a few hours between Dover and Chislehurst, the Imperial Family indulged in endless subjects of conversation, upon the incredible events which had taken place.

At heart, Napoleon enjoyed a quiescent condition of mind. He spoke of his tragic fate with great philosophy. He expressed in obliging, kindly terms, his appreciation of the way in which the Germans had treated him, explaining events after his own fashion, with no resentment

towards any one, save Trochu, a General of the Empire in the morning, a General of the Republic that same evening. As soon as he had taken up his residence at Chislehurst, the faithful adherents of his party made frequent pilgrimages to that shrine.

The violence of the storm had scattered the guests of the Empire to the four winds. Such old *habitues* of the Tuileries as General Fleury, the Dukes of Montebello and of Albuhera, Marshal Canrobert and his wife, the Countesses Walewska and de Beaumont had all fled to Brussels. Several diplomatists had asked for their letters of recall. After the Empress's flight Prince Richard de Metternich expressed to his Emperor his wish to return to Vienna. He was asked to remain in Paris. He resumed his position there, and as early as January 1871 the Princess spoke of returning to Paris in case the Republic showed any chance of maintaining itself with stability.

If the noble strangers, the Ambassadors and Ambassadors, who shone at the Court of Eugénie, found it easy to steer their course towards other horizons after the fall of a monarchy of which they were not subjects, it was quite a different matter for those who existed only by the Empire and for the Empire. Whenever chance offered itself they sought one another through-

out the world. The most compromised amongst them repaired to Chislehurst, faithful, eager, consoling, and asserting their undying devotion to the *régime* which had given them so much. Thanks to it, they had enjoyed pleasure, power and wealth; and now they sought instructions which might enable them to wield once more the influence of the Empire, the permanent abolition of which they sternly refused to admit as possible. From 1871 to 1873 a whole series of plans was evolved, correspondence was secretly circulated, and verbal arrangements effected at Camden Place. Eugénie took a brilliant part in such conversations, as bore upon the present and the future. The young Prince listened to them attentively, for in them he found food for much hope. More than once the placid Napoleon prolonged these talks, arguing his policy, explaining and endeavouring to justify the deeds of imprudence and foolhardiness which had hurled him into the abyss. He hoped that his words would be repeated. He endeavoured to prove that he was not responsible for the disasters of Sedan, or that if he declared war before the proper time, it was because he had been deceived by the Ministers who advised him to do so. One afternoon he referred to the accusation levelled against the Empress of having ardently wished this fatal conflict. He endeavoured to defend his com-

panion and himself before history—that sternest of judges. These are his words, though they were not perhaps the exact expression of his intimate thoughts—

“The Empress and I are accused of having wished this war, so that victory might provide us with a sheet-anchor, and enable us to give strength and vitality to our weakened power. We never harboured such an idea. No one could discount victory, and in this case it was all the more dubious and uncertain, as we had before us the reports of Stoffel.”

On that day the conversation did not proceed further. It was interrupted by the arrival of a Grand Duchess of Russia, who had been met at the station by a hired carriage of more than modest appearance, which hardly recalled the splendour of Imperial equipages of by-gone days.

In France, the early restoration of Imperialism was warmly discussed and hopefully referred to. The word of command was awaited from London and from Napoleon. The fallen Emperor had received offers of vast sums—the indispensable sinews of action—and each day the private fortune of Eugénie became sensibly increased.¹

¹ In addition to the value of her jewels and personal effects (a considerable portion of which she sold), and without taking into account her Spanish properties and her expectations, the

Zealous agents offered to organize a propaganda. Daring writers were anxious to begin the campaign, and one of these apologists had already published a pamphlet, entitled *They have Lied*, the object of which was to prove that the misfortunes of France were not caused by the Empire, but by the Government of the 4th September.

With beating heart, Eugénie listened fervently to the discussion of these plans of campaign. She had understood the necessity for silence so long as the awful duologue between French and Prussian cannons had lasted. She had only broken that silence when, discouraged and undone, she wrote to the Sovereigns of Europe, the Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Austria, and Queen Victoria, beseeching them to become the arbiters of an honourable peace. The indifference of the neutral Sovereigns did not yield to her voice any more than it did to the

Empress's fortune at the time of Napoleon's death was computed as follows: Two buildings in the Rue d'Albe worth £36,000, three houses in the Rue de l'Elysée worth £80,000, the Jonchere estate £20,000, that of Solferino in the "Landes district" £60,000, the Biarritz £40,000, one in the Basses-Pyrénées £48,000, the Imperial Palace at Marseilles £64,000 (this was not yet finished; the sale of it paid for the debts of the civil list as well as that of the Vichy Châlet); £75,000 in cash added to the above sums gave her an income of about £80,000 a year, which was greatly increased by further legacies, and also by thrift.

patriotic urgings of Thiers. She witnessed in perfect quietude and with apparent resignation the efforts of the Government of National Defence. But as soon as peace was signed she was tormented by a keen desire to return to her palaces.

The Bonapartists already raised their heads in the confusion of parties which, amid the ruins caused by war, were seeking to establish the foundations of a throne. Though its fall was so recent, its reconstruction was already eagerly discussed. Corsica had returned Rouher at the elections of the 11th February, 1872. This filled with joy the heart of Napoleon's wife no less than his own, and it inspired the Imperialist propagandists with enormous confidence in their strength as well as in their right. Papers were founded in its support. In France, public and private manifestations occurred, inspired one and all from Chislehurst. The Prince of Orange spread the report, that was repeated everywhere, of an undertaking about to be signed by which Germany would surrender Alsace and Lorraine to Napoleon, taking possession of Belgium and Holland instead of the French provinces. A bevy of agents went from village to village, from inn to inn, asserting that the recall of Napoleon was the best means by which the liberation of the country could be accomplished, and

the national misfortunes attenuated. These good words were constantly transmitted to England by telegraph. Full of unshaken confidence, Napoleon repeated to his followers that he would not long remain an exile. "I know that I am the only solution possible." He stated this in January 1872, less than a year after the occurrence of the fatal events for which he was held responsible.

Eugénie also believed it, and was making her arrangements accordingly. She would leave Chislehurst at an early date not yet determined, and as the Tuileries were burnt down, the Sovereign would reign in the Louvre. They would go less often to Compiègne and more frequently to the Trianon. In future, the Court, desisting from its whilom frivolity and its too frequent festivities, would apply itself to a more serious existence. The indispensable Rouher, the chosen one of Corsica, would of course steer the ship of power through its early storms, without awaiting the formulation of a complete official programme. With unfaltering devotion they would all work together for the good of the country. Above all things, energy was needed. From the first she had mastered her feelings in the belief of an early recovery, and had not yielded long to the weakening influence of depression. She was well aware that Bismarck had thought at one time of recalling Napoleon III to the throne. Bazaine also knew



*The Emperor Napoleon.
From a photograph by Downey.*

this when, engrossed by politics instead of by warfare, because he was corresponding with the Prussian Minister until at last it was too late for him to force the enemy's lines. However, the hesitant views of Bismarck suddenly changed. All things considered, he concluded that his conquest would be rendered more enduring under an unstable Republic. He hoped that popular disorder and political convulsions would continue to shake to its very foundations the conquered nation which he did not deem sufficiently humiliated or sufficiently weakened. He turned his back on the Bonapartes.

Eugénie then built up her hopes upon the promises that came from the conquered provinces. A vague attempt at a Bonapartist plot was effected. A vote of dethronement or forfeiture, and Thiers' accession to power, dealt a death-blow at this incipient conspiracy.¹ For some months silence reigned. Once more the Bonapartist buzz was heard. I fancy I can see this Court circumscribed by fate, but with ambitions as great as ever, listening anxiously, watching every opportunity, and heeding the smallest reports that might be the forerunners of the events they so ardently

¹ "Do not attach the slightest importance to the Bonapartists' doings and sayings. They are talking a lot, but they have neither money nor occupation" (THIERS, 12th February, 1872).

wished for; I can fancy the members of that Court busy reckoning, and computing the profits, the benefits that were soon to accrue to them.

Since the support and help of political legality could no more be expected, one means only was left, that which imposes itself by the power of the accomplished fact, to wit a surprise, a *coup de force*. This was in accordance with the traditions of Brumaire and of the 2nd December, and quite to be expected from a Napoleon. The bellicose temperament of Eugénie was kindled by the dangers that were bound to accrue from such a course. The loss of her great position was keenly felt by her, and the hopes of her reinstatement whipped her imagination, exalted her ardour, already great, owing to her maternal ambition. She was quite decided that in future she would not allow the Emperor's weakness to be the accomplice of liberal effervescence. If in the past the union between her lord and herself had been subjected to certain differences, and strained upon questions of an intimate nature, they had now agreed to act in complete accord.

A conspirator to the end, Napoleon found sufficient strength, though unnerved and physically worn out, to make a supreme effort to manipulate the threads of a conspiracy in which were enrolled political men, prelates like Cardinal de Bonnechose, Prefects, and what was more

essential still where a *coup d'état* was concerned, Generals on active service. Hypnotized by his Fatalism, he could not believe that he had run his course, nor could he stop to reflect upon the fact that France, having had so many dire experiences of Saviours, was sick of them at last. Until now, in good and evil times, he had followed the historic example of the founder of his House. It was therefore in the order of things that he should attempt a second landing from the Island of Elba. For this he made full preparation.

The time for action had been briefly discounted. It could not be long delayed, for it was deemed urgent to deal a blow before the vote of a Constitution was recorded which would have prevented the Pretenders from raising the question of the form of government to be adopted. The date was almost fixed. It was in March 1873 that France was to have enjoyed this pleasant surprise.

Success was assured, according to all appearances. Towards the end of 1872 Napoleon had tested his strength by a long ride in the avenues of Chislehurst, but he was reluctantly compelled to recognize the necessity for surgical intervention in his case. He decided to turn his illness to good account, and to repair to Cowes on the pretext of his convalescence. His sojourn there would lull the activity of watchful Republicans and put them off the scent. In due time, he meant to sail

for Ostend, and proceeding hence through Cologne and Basle, he meant to meet his cousin Jérôme at Nyon. All their arrangements were perfected. Their plan was to cross the Lake of Geneva, to land on the French coast and reach Annecy. They did not doubt but that the cavalry regiment quartered there would follow them to Lyons, commanded by Bourbaki, whose devotion to the Empress made them feel certain that he would lead such cohorts as gathered around the Imperial flag. Napoleon III was so full of his dream that he already saw himself riding from Lyons to Paris at the head of an army that had secured victory without a fight. So deeply was he imbued with this strange illusion, that he thought he would be acclaimed as a liberator and greeted as a master. The National Assembly was a stumbling-block which could be quickly removed by holding up the Parliamentary train between Paris and Versailles. He had already constituted the Ministerial Cabinet. Count de Kératry, a late Prefect of the 4th September, who had soon abjured his Republican faith, was chosen as Home Secretary, while Marshal MacMahon was appointed Minister for War without even being consulted. General Fleury was to be Governor of Paris. Relations were begun with several representatives of foreign Powers from whom encouragement, and, if necessary, active protection might be expected.

It was said that Prince Orloff, the Russian Ambassador, strongly favoured Napoleon's plans; that Count Arnim, the German Ambassador, openly applauded it, and that Prince Bismarck, whose army was still on French soil, was in no way opposed to the scheme. Circumstances therefore favoured immediate action.

All these calculations were upset by death.

On the 9th January 1873 Napoleon breathed his last at Chislehurst, in the arms of the Empress. A week previously the complaint from which he suffered became acute, and impeded all active work on his part. His physical sufferings were intense, but the inaction caused by them was what he felt most. That was why he decided to undergo the operation known as lithotrity. It was not successful, and had to be repeated a second time on the 7th January. On the 8th, the condition of the patient became much worse, and the surgeons decided upon a third operation. Napoleon did not live to undergo it, for he expired on that day at 10.45.

His widow was at first weighed down by sincere and intense sorrow. She soon realized the need for much reflection and prudence, and prepared to deal with such consequences as might ensue from her present loss. Forthwith she undertook a close perusal of all the documents left by the late Emperor. It has been said that certain

of these political documents contained matter directly connected with foreign Powers of so important a nature that no time could be lost in setting them in order and in suppressing them if needful. Later on it was stated that they could not be found, and that certain deeds had been removed by some faithful servant previous to the Emperor's death.

Prince Jérôme arrived at Chislehurst the day after his cousin's demise. He was received by the Empress in a darkened room and had to feel his way to a chair. Some preliminary conversation took place, in the course of which the sudden death of the Emperor was discussed, but soon urgent matters of the gravest importance, such as the immediate performance of certain duties, were discussed by the Empress and the Prince. She asked him to take possession of Napoleon III's study and to draw up an inventory of all the deeds it contained. Having first declined to undertake the task, he eventually acquiesced. Most of the cabinets containing the deeds were locked and sealed, and Jérôme observed that he saw no sign of judicial authority, but merely the private seals of the Empress's secretary, M. Franceschini Pietri. The latter broke the seals one by one in the presence of the Prince, who did not trouble to disguise his annoyance at this mistrust. Having ransacked everything and taken



THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE.

From a photograph by Downey taken in 1873.

cognizance of different documents, he came to a drawer in which he had seen the Emperor place an historic deed of great value.¹ He could not find it, nor many other documents which he knew should have been there. Instead of them, there were numerous letters from French officers asking for money. The will was the same unique text without modification or addition, the old will without codicils, which the Emperor had signed before the Campaign of Italy at the Palace of Tuileries. It had never been altered, notwithstanding the extraordinary changes that had taken place since it was made. On reading it, Jérôme Napoleon felt he need not pursue these investigations.

“I need go no farther,” he said, “for I see how matters stand, and I realize that there is nothing for me to do here.”

There and then he left Chislehurst. Before his departure he had refused to assume the guardianship of the Prince Imperial, declaring that after all he had seen or guessed he did not feel he could effectively defend his interests. The abyss between the ex-Regent and himself, who was termed a broken-down Cæsar, was deeper than ever. The prospects of the Imperialist cause

¹ This was an acknowledgment of a treaty signed between Francis Joseph and Napoleon III, promising the help of Austria to France in case she went to war with Prussia.

were seriously damaged by these family quarrels and by the bitter recriminations of Prince Jérôme, the news of which was of course imparted to those whose interest or duty it was to know of them. The funeral of Napoleon III took place at Chislehurst on the 15th January, and was attended by a host of ancient retainers who harboured the hope of holding high office under the third Empire. During her first period of mourning, Eugénie sought peace, if not consolation, on the borders of Lake Constance, at Arenenberg Castle, so full of souvenirs and mementoes of the one she mourned. She knew how much Napoleon had loved this residence, where his youth had been spent with his mother, Queen Hortense. There she buried herself. Now and then friends who were travelling in Switzerland or Germany would ask that they might be allowed to offer her their condolences. As a rule, such visitors stopped at Constance and waited there until a day and time had been assigned for an audience. Among the visitors who came to the modest Manor of Arenenberg was Mme. Octave Feuillet, wife of the famous author of *Monsieur de Camors*. She related one of these pilgrimages, and more than once in the course of her conversation she has entertained us with details concerning it. She did not remember the road leading from Constance to Arenenberg, for

it lacked picturesqueness until the village of Ermelingen, where the lake abutted, leaving behind it a trail of greyish mud. Past Ermelingen the landscape was both charming and original. It was still part of Switzerland. On reaching the summit of the hill leading to the house, the carriage drove through a dark avenue bordered with ravines and thickly wooded. The lake running at the foot of the trees glistened between their branches like the Mediterranean does between the olive groves of Villefranche. The carriage stopped before the house usually dubbed "The Castle," owing to the social position of its occupiers. It was only a cottage, hidden in an arbour. A white-haired man-servant opened the door and ushered the visitor through a simply furnished hall into a drawing-room upholstered like a tent. Its ceilings and walls were covered with tent-cloth. Nothing had been changed in the house since the death of Queen Hortense. There were the same pieces of furniture covered with linen and the same cabinets placed at the same angles. On the cold mantelpieces the same clocks with colonnades, like mausoleums; on the walls, family portraits. The one representing a bright-eyed child chasing butterflies was that of Hortense de Beauharnais. The romantic-looking hero in a blue frock-coat climbing the heights of the Oberland was Louis Napoleon at the age of

twenty. Old frames contained the portraits of his brother Charles in a red velvet coat and of Prince Eugène de Beauharnais brandishing a sword, "upon the horizons of apotheosis." As Mme. Feuillet was studying these somewhat gaudy portraits the door opened. Marie de Larminat, followed by Mme. le Breton, entered the room.

"The Empress wishes to see you alone before dinner," said Mme. le Breton. "Will you kindly come with me to her apartments?"

The etiquette of presentation was still observed, but the surroundings were different indeed. Instead of the vast galleries and majestic staircases of the Tuileries, the first floor was reached by a winding staircase, such as exist in provincial shops, which led to the boudoir and the bedroom of the hostess of Arenenberg. The boudoir was in keeping with the rest of the house, with cretonne hangings. A writing-desk occupied a sort of niche that was like an alcove. Here and there small tables upon which albums and views of Switzerland were strewn. In the bow of a window looking out on the lake was a large arm-chair, and in the front of the arm-chair an easel supporting that splendid photograph of the Emperor, in which he is represented with his head leaning upon one hand. The whole scene was

sad and peaceful in the extreme. The visitor had not long to wait, for soon through the door leading to the bedroom there was seen the figure of a lady clad in deepest mourning. There was no need to announce the Empress, who could easily be recognized by her walk. The first word she uttered to Mme. Feuillet was "Thank you," and she burst into tears. Having mastered her feelings, she sat down in the chair opposite the portrait and invited Mme. Feuillet to be seated by her. When the dinner-gong sounded, she had not exhausted one-tenth of the conversation begun upon all those members of her brilliant entourage. She spoke with that vivacity and rapidity so characteristic of her, but she had yet much to say as she proceeded down the narrow stairs, the curve of which was delineated in undulating lines by the long train that she wore. With the same pomp and solemnity once observed at the Tuileries, the door of the little dining-room, upholstered in tent-cloth was thrown open before her as were the doors of the Marshal's banqueting hall. Among her guests were the Grand Duchess of Bade, the Countess Stéphanie Tascher de la Pagerie, Mme. le Breton, Marie de Larminat, the Duke of Bassano, Pietri, the Marquis of Tascher, and Mme. Octave Feuillet. During dinner she seemed to forget her sadness, and engaged in

bright conversation, recalling theatrical events in Paris, and chatting about Chislehurst, Woolwich, and Arenenberg.

“ I found this place very small, years ago, when I came from Fontainebleau with the Emperor. I used to feel suffocated here, but now I like Arenenberg.”

The repast had come to an end, and the guests went into the conservatory, the verandah of which gave on the lake. This was the only apartment in the whole house that had any pretensions to elegance or modern comfort. It contained handsome furniture hidden away by green plants. Round the table were large divans, and in a dark recess there was a beautiful bower of roses from which protruded a bust of Joséphine, a background for which was provided by Indian cashmere.

The weather was stormy and the conversation somewhat flagged. One of the guests referred to the great care which Eugénie, as Empress, had bestowed upon the furnishing of her apartments. She took up the subject and referred to the value one attaches with a sort of unreasoned tenderness to certain articles and objects that seem to become part and parcel of one's life. A simple little ring, a little gold box containing the pumice-stone which she used, and a little pincushion of no value were, she said, so many fetiches with which Napoleon never wished to part.

“I have lost all the little knick-knacks that I loved,” she said: “they were either burnt or stolen at the Tuileries.”

Every word she uttered, every circumstance recalled by her, showed how bitterly she regretted by-gone days. Mme. Octave Feuillet could not help reverting in her mind to certain occasions in the past when the Empress held other views. She remembered how one night at Fontainebleau, when her every wish seemed to be gratified, Eugénie, surrounded by her Court, and gazing at the stars, exclaimed capriciously, not knowing what she really did want, “Oh, how I would love to live alone in an old castle, and to hear the wind howling through the corridors.”

A strange upheaval, a concourse of fatal circumstances, had effected the accomplishment of that strange wish. She remained a few months at Arenenberg absorbed by her grief, crushed by her mourning. But she did not forget that she had not yet abdicated. Much less had she renounced the pretensions to the throne of France of her son the Prince Imperial, who was then pursuing his military studies at Woolwich. The Bonapartists had found it difficult at first to get over the shock caused by Napoleon's death.¹

¹ Referring in his rough language to the impossibility of resuscitating the Napoleonic dynasty after the disasters of Metz and Sedan, Bismarck said upon hearing of the death of

It indefinitely postponed results which they thought within their grasp, and the most hopeful view they could take of the situation was the possible advent of the Prince, twelve or fifteen years hence. A regular crisis of madness overtook the zealots of the Napoleonic Dynasty. They thought that the hour of reparation must be preceded by a long series of revolutionary excesses. They considered that France was lost, almost ruined, and they hurriedly made away with all their goods and funds, which they invested abroad.

The party leaders endeavoured to rekindle the courage of their followers, but the political passions, revived somewhat by foregathering round the heir-presumptive, were weakened by internal rivalries, and those irreparable family dissensions which also decimated the Monarchist camp. While the minority composed by the Liberal independent followers of Jérôme adhered to revolutionary traditions which had given birth to a fully armed dictatorship of the Empire, the majority led by the Empress represented official Bonapartism, in which pseudo-legitimist and clerical tendencies prevailed. On his deathbed, Napoleon III had entrusted to the ex-Empress and to Rouher, the late Minister, the leadership of the Bonapartist party, the official

the exile of Chislehurst, "He has not only killed a living son but he has reentered a deceased uncle."

head of which was his son the Prince Imperial, who was not yet seventeen.¹ The Empress disposed of the funds, upon which she kept a very tight hand, while Rouher, nicknamed "the Vice-Emperor" when at the summit of his power, advised, directed and administered. Great hopes were built upon this indefatigable worker, who assimilated rapidly all that he studied and developed the strength of his mind by quick action. He was, however, exclusive, narrow, and had but one passion, the desire to dominate every one and everything. He lacked that quality so indispensable to the success and existence of public leaders, a thorough knowledge of men.

Eugénie had to play a transitory part which was neither pleasant nor easy. She had to combat the Republicans, who had paid so

¹ The education of the Prince had suffered interruptions that were the inevitable results of events. Although his distinguished tutor, Augustin Filon, had as coadjutors two specialists, one a German, the other a mathematical master, his father felt that his education would be incomplete if he was not placed under regular discipline. He therefore requested Queen Victoria to allow the Prince to enter the Royal Academy at Woolwich. In October 1872 the Prince passed his entrance examination, though the authorities had wished to dispense with it. In October 1873 he was twenty-third in a class of thirty cadets, but when he left in 1875 he was seventh, and the college register contains the following entry, Fol. 84. Bo. 3880. "Prince Imperial seventh out of thirty. Should he wish to enter the service of Her Majesty he has qualified to do so either in the Corps of Royal Engineers or in the Artillery."

dearly for their preponderance that they defended it with all their might. But she had also to contend against the adverse factions of the two branches of the House of Bourbon, not to mention the awkward ambitions of Prince Napoleon. Thiers was President of the Republic, Henry V was at Chambord, Count de Paris at the Castle d'Eu, the Duc d'Aumale at Chantilly, and Jérôme Napoleon at Prangins. They were indeed too many at a time, and however great her activity, she suffered nothing but disappointment.

The Constitution of 1875, the failure of a Reactionary policy and the retirement of Marshal MacMahon were blows that fell in quick succession. She gave up the struggle, and hoping that in years to come the career of her son would afford her ample compensation, she devoted herself entirely to his education. This was a task which she never neglected. She accomplished it with the greatest care when he was only a child, feeling at times the necessity to complete, if not to alter the paternal direction thereof. She soon deemed it prudent to impart firmness and gravity to the performance of a duty which the Emperor accomplished with too much tenderness. As little Cæsar grew under the delighted gaze of his parents, the Emperor ingenuously exaggerated the adulation which he bestowed upon his son.

Though he had thought fit to put into practice the old observances of royal ceremonial so far as his courtiers were concerned, he did not apply them to his intimate relations with his son. It is generally known that royal children under the *régime* of divine right barely approached the authors of their days. They were entrusted to the care of a governor or military tutor whose duty it was to regulate, hour by hour, their precious existence. A few moments were devoted each morning to the task of going to salute the Queen, their mother, whom they called "Madame," and the King their father, whom they addressed as "Sire." Napoleon did not argue in this wise. He remained the chosen one of the people upon this question, for he did not wish to turn his precious love for his child into a ceremonious masquerade. He would have liked him constantly by his side, and on many occasions he took him away from his studies or his games to gatherings where the little Prince was not expected. Thus did the Emperor believe that he was contributing to the education of his son. On several occasions he took him to Cabinet Councils in company with the Empress, so that the affairs of the State were really administered in a homely fashion. The child played in a corner while the high dignitaries discussed weighty matters. When he

chose to join in the conversation he would interrupt it abruptly. No one present feigned any surprise. The President, that is to say the Emperor, would gently ask the brat what it was he wanted to know, while the Empress showed less indulgence and scolded him, saying that well-brought-up children should preserve silence in the presence of their elders. Acute and subtle Ministers, as good courtiers that they were, seized the opportunity to flatter their Imperial master. They would fall into ecstasies over the precociousness of His Highness, and Monsieur and Madame would smother "Lou-lou" in caresses. As soon as the interlude was finished, important discussions on finance and politics were resumed.

The paternal fibre of Napoleon III would grow tender on the smallest provocation. Octave Feuillet affords an instance of this in his correspondence. The incident related occurred at Compiègne. The Emperor came into the drawing-room where tea had been served to the Empress. He addressed her saying, "Eugénie, a huntsman wants to speak to you." And throwing the door wide open he ushered in a handsome boy wearing the braided coat of a huntsman, with breeches, white stockings, plumed hat and hunting horn, and holding two dogs on the leash. The Emperor gazed at him tenderly

and his eyes filled with tears. Prince Louis, for it was he, was greeted with applause. Every one told him how charming he looked, and eventually he regained his freedom. But a minute afterwards the Empress had him recalled, and insisted that he should recite a fable in the small circle that had gathered around her. As an obedient son, he began to recite by heart the first few verses in a clear and pleasant voice, but stopped short, having forgotten the next. The Empress grew impatient and threatened to send him away, but Octave Feuillet prompted the boy, who finished his task.

Eugénie used every endeavour to keep the young Prince aloof from flatterers. She would not allow discipline to be broken in any way because of his rank, and he had to pursue his studies in accordance with general rules. As she was naturally inclined to exercise her authority, her severity towards her son was perhaps exaggerated. It is but fair, however, to state that she had good reasons to fear the weakening influence of the Court and the snares of flattery which confronted the young Prince. She knew how lenient her husband was, and how little protection he afforded the child against the wiles of courtiers. Accordingly, she decided to foster by every means the growth and development of his mind, and to keep it straight and healthy in this centre of adu-

lation and corruption. One can hardly credit the mean and petty temptations placed in the way of the young Prince, sometimes unconsciously and sometimes with malice aforethought by those who were ever ready to grovel before him as soon as he got away from his mother or his military governor, General Frossan. He was barely out of swaddling clothes when he was made the object of slavish attention in no way justified in the case of a child who had barely left his cradle. Of this we have many proofs, such as the following one.

One evening after dinner the conversation turned on astronomy. Le Verrier had just discovered as the result of marvellous calculations the presence of a star situated at such a distance that the electric spark which encircles the terrestrial globe nine times per second would require to travel during an incalculable number of years before reaching this celestial body. The scientist himself was explaining these remarkable facts to the child Prince, who, together with the ladies-in-waiting and the chamberlains present, was able to follow the clear and lucid statements of Le Verrier. Keenly interested, young Louis Napoleon put ingenuous questions to him, which he endeavoured to answer with great urbanity. Just then the Sovereigns joined the circle of respectful courtiers. "What are you talking about?" inquired the Empress.

“Madame,” replied the eminent man, “His Imperial Highness is good enough to afford me his views on astronomy, and very remarkable views they are.”

Young Louis Napoleon did not question the truth of the compliment for a moment, but showed his extreme delight. His mother did not, however, allow him to harbour this high opinion of himself and his scientific attainments. “Oh, sir,” she said to Le Verrier, “pray do not flatter the poor child, who never has a chance of hearing the truth. As to his ideas on astronomy, I can quite imagine what they are.” Then turning towards the heir-presumptive, she added somewhat sternly—

“It is very good of Monsieur to listen to you at all. You are only a small boy like any other, and the best lesson you can get in astronomy just now is to go to your bed.”

Words of wisdom. At that time she joined issue with her husband in shaping the mind of the young Prince. But Napoleon III was no more. When she remained alone with her young son, she refused to share the ascendancy which she exercised upon his moral nature. She maintained in exile the strong sense of Cæsarian and oppressive authority, that same sense which had caused her to object in loud terms to the Liberal Empire, born of the Constitution of 1852. She shaped the mind of the young Pretender to such an

extent that he unreservedly adopted her likings and antipathies, her religious and political views.

In May 1874 the political majority of the Prince, then eighteen, was proclaimed in England in the presence of a large number of Imperialists. By a strange coincidence, about eight thousand people met in the little English borough, and among them were sixty-five Prefects, who had been dismissed on the 4th September, twelve late Ministers of Napoleon III and several members of the National Assembly. In obedience to the instructions received from his mother and from Rouher, the Prince boldly vindicated his Napoleonic rights before the deputations which had come to make their obeisance at Chislehurst.¹

The young Prince had both character and determination. He was intelligent, though somewhat impregnated with tendencies towards absolutism which were begotten of maternal teaching.

¹ The following article appeared in *The Times* of the next day—

“The heir to the Bonapartes thus disposes of a complete Government. He holds the second Empire in his hands and only awaits a favourable opportunity to convert it into a third Empire. Though the second one was defeated by the Republicans and the Prussian invasion, its organization is intact, and both the Empire and the Prince Imperial are mentioned in Paris more than ever. The subject is ever being discussed as if no other political perspective existed. Beyond the restoration of an Empire there is nothing apparently but darkness and chaos.”

Exile, misfortune and the terrible lessons imparted to him by recent events had ripened him, however, and added a considerable amount of prudence and tact to the spirit of pride and chivalrous enthusiasm which he owed to his Spanish blood. Stimulated by the encouragements of those around him and urged by the incitements of those who wished to see him play an important part before long, he threw himself into work with wonderful energy. Weeks and months seemed all too short for all he wanted to learn. Constitutional history and the art of governing men were subjects which he made his own.

He was only twenty-two, and yet his ideas were fashioned, his opinions were original, and his principles rested upon firm bases. His plans were well known, his programme was published. He did not mean to have a Parliamentary Government, but would so modify universal suffrage that it would cease to exist. It was also a matter of common knowledge that he meant to give as little control as possible to the deputies, because they would only constitute a third power in the State, very much beneath the House of Peers which, reconstituted, would form the true social aristocracy. So far as opposition was concerned he would admit of none, because he would have suborned all the newspapers, who would not dare to attack the Government that

afforded them the means to live. He would reward men of merit and distinction. Those who endeavoured to live by disorder, to make a stepping-stone of Revolution, would meet with scant mercy at his hand. "I will shoot them," he said, declaring upon this subject, as on many others, what his course of action would be as though he already wore a crown. "I will do this, things shall be effected in such wise, for such is my wish. When it is necessary to act I shall act."¹ Such determined expressions were repeated from mouth to mouth, and from his unevenly balanced pen came proclamations, memoirs and essays on constitutional subjects.²

¹ This was the Absolutist programme which was drafted in conformity with the theocratic ideas of the ex-Empress. It was hardly likely to commend itself to the majority of French citizens, however, for they were not inclined to become once more the passive subjects of an arbitrary *régime*.

² Memorandum for the drafting of an Imperial constitution:—

"A country of 36,000,000 inhabitants cannot govern itself upon the bases of a democratic constitution by which all the citizens should share directly in the administration of public affairs, which must not, however, become the monopoly of the individual.

"The complication of political questions proper, questions of law, administration and military art which has increased with the development of national unity and the spread of education; the extraordinary inequality, both moral and intellectual, which exists between the inferior and superior classes of society, and has become more marked owing to the output of science and the division of labour, prove that the reins of government should remain in the hands of the ablest

While tolerating the advice of many men of experience, who with one accord implored of him

citizens and that public positions should become permanent careers.

“It is therefore necessary in order to ensure respect for authority, stability and progress, as well as the efficient discharge of public duties, to create a governing class which shall become the practical aristocracy of which Napoleon I laid down the basis.

“From a social point of view, an aristocracy is likewise indispensable.

“Without an aristocracy there can be no polite society, no progress in matters intellectual or artistic.

“An aristocracy constitutes a competent jury upon questions of honour, good taste and intellect. Such sanction as comes from it raises the mind and stimulates merit. A French aristocracy must be one *in fact* not one *by right*.

“Its constitution should depend on the following conditions: ‘Firstly, public functions, charges and positions should be rendered independent of the central Government. Secondly, a nursery school of officials should be founded by creating families of public servants and educational establishments for the sons of the chosen classes.’” (This paragraph was struck out by the Prince Imperial.)

“Without reverting to the feudal *régime* or violating individual equality, it will be necessary to institute governing families, whose children’s ambition will be to serve the commonwealth, and worthily bear a name intimately linked with national glory. An aristocracy of *optimates* worthy of the name will thus be formed in France, when political power and French administration will have been reconstituted upon the following lines—

“Clause 1. The sovereignty does not reside in the majority of the nation, but in the properly constituted political bodies permanently representing France, not the French population, and acting in accordance with the people and the sovereign.” (This too was struck out by the Prince Imperial.)

to atone for the mistake his father committed, by granting too much freedom to the nation, the

“Clause 2. All citizens shall be equal in the eyes of the law, but shall enjoy different political rights in accordance with their social positions.

“Third, the social rank shall be determined by the positions held by citizens, such positions being their personal property, in no way venal, but awarded to merit and withheld from incapacity.

“Clause 4. Every citizen who by his talent, his fortune or his birth, is raised above the commonplace, shall have a distinct position in the State.

“Thus shall all the forces of the country be used in the best interests of the country.

“Clause 5. The obtainment of official positions shall be open to all, and those who hold them must be sufficiently independent of the Government to eschew favouritism, thus enabling the *élite* of all parties to serve the State under another *régime* than their own. Apart from the numerous staff of clerks and Government servants who hold positions too humble to enable them to play a part in the affairs of the State, we possess in France a class of politicians developed by Parliamentarianism, which at present constitutes the only national aristocracy.

“It must be broken up and scattered to the winds.

“Popularity is the only career that these tribunes can look forward to, and, side by side with them, we find a class of rich Jews and company promoters whose only calling is speculation. They, too, exercise considerable social and political influence. Bereft of religion, of patriotism or of any sense of duty, they wield immense power derived from capital.

“This class too must be scattered, abolished. So long as it remains on foot, immorality and envy, inspired by the ill-acquired fortunes of the millionaires, must inevitably eat France away like a hideous leprosy.

“It is not our desire to deny the great progress effected by our century nor to ignore Imperialist ideas.” (This last

young Prince dealt with unknown quantities in the most authoritative manner. His followers cannot sufficiently praise his resolute character. "He is indeed the son of an Emperor. His letters to his partisans are couched in terms of friendliness but also of command." Extreme eagerness was displayed by them, for one and all prayed ardently that the time might soon come when their Prince might put his daring projects into effect. They hoped that soon the repeated blunders of the Republicans would hand the Republic over to wiser and stronger masters.

In France the agitation was intense. Generals had their hand upon the hilts of their swords awaiting the word of command. Oh, if Marshal MacMahon would only speak it! Alas! he does not yield to the urgent invitations of those who advise the Coup d'État. He remembers that he has pledged his word to maintain the existing order of things! The progress of Radicalism caused him much regret, and no doubt he would have liked to come to an understanding with the

sentence was crossed out by the Prince.) "We do not wish to get into the bed of the Bourbons, but we deem it indispensable for the sake of France to confer upon her institutions, consecrated by the experience of centuries, and not by vain theories, and to hand back to her those traditions which made her France.

"(Signed) NAPOLEON.

"*Chislehurst, March 1878.*"

Empire. He was the subject of daily complaints. They said he was weak, inconsistent, blown hither and thither by every wind, and they despaired of ever attaining their object through him. "Where are we drifting? What will become of us?" Such were the complaints expressed each day. While the authors of the Restoration, that had so often proved abortive, deplored this indefinite conduct of the Marshal, and expressed their sorrow as often as the opportunity arose, an incredible item of news suddenly threw confusion in their minds and senses. The young Pretender, tired of doing nothing and of being nobody, had resolved upon a most unforeseen course. In a public letter addressed to Eugène Rouher, he informed his adherents of his departure for the Cape, where he meant to throw in his lot with and share the dangers of the British expedition in Zululand. Such a determination seemed incomprehensible at first, for they could not understand that the Empress should have consented to the departure of her son. The brains of the Imperialists were racked for a satisfactory explanation, and as a result, reasons plausible or imaginary, positive or romantic, were adduced.

Some said that the decision of Louis Napoleon was due to his love-affair with a young foreign Princess, who urged him to earn distinction and the applause of his countrymen by the

committal of brave deeds. More circumstantial was the gossip concerning a less idealistic attachment, the results of which were supposed to have been as awkward as they were regrettable. Miss Charlotte Watkins was the person mentioned.¹ She was in a humble position, and did not for a moment suspect the real identity of her friend, as he had told her that he was merely a young man inspired by ardent love but with ambitions as restricted as were his means. Well-informed persons said they knew the place where the assignations were made and kept by the incognito lovers.

¹ "The merest chance brought me into touch with a lady who had known Dumont, the French hairdresser in London whose clientèle was composed of members of the British aristocracy. She kindly provided me with the following details concerning this love episode of Prince Napoleon—

"When the Prince grew tired of the monotonous life he led at Chislehurst he used to come to London, where he stayed in Dumont's house. There he had very modest quarters, the quarters of a second lieutenant, as he used to say laughingly. (They are still preserved intact with their furniture. The bedroom contains the bed, a dressing-table and cupboard, with a few chairs only.) The Prince Imperial, abandoning all etiquette, used to receive his friends in this modest abode, and it was at this address that he received his private correspondence. He used to come and dress there when dining in town, and Dumont has still preserved the last ties worn by him previous to his departure to the Cape.

"It was during one of his trips to London that the son of Napoleon III met a young girl travelling alone, as English girls very often do. On the journey they made each other's acquaintance, and when they arrived at the station their

Later on, a fairy tale and legend woven upon this question with the aid of all sorts of matter as indiscreet as it is interesting, was published by Alfred Darimon. Letters were also published.¹

It was related that one day Miss Charlotte Watkins, the "dear Lottie" of Louis Walter (Louis Napoleon), had come to Camden Place with her child (their child) and that she had been sent away from the Castle. A book, nay a novel, which was really but a novel,² was published on the subject.

There was an appearance of truth in the detail of this passing *liaison*, which was a natural one at the age of the Prince, but as to its results and consequences, they were purely imaginary. Louis Napoleon had no son in England, and upon this question his conscience was quite at rest when he left England and Europe. We have perused the

friendship had already begun. It is interesting to note that Miss Watkins little knew she had conquered the heart of the son of Napoleon III, for he never declared his identity to her, for two reasons. Firstly, he feared the publicity that such a *liaison* might give rise to, and secondly, his mother kept him so short of money that he found it impossible to create a position for his lady-love adequate to his own social standing and high birth" ("Old Paper," by A. Darimon, in the *Figaro*, the 10th January, 1887).

¹ Clifford Millage of the *Daily Chronicle* was the first to publish the so-called letters of the Prince Imperial to his beloved Lottie.

² In our work *The Women of the Second Empire* we were ourselves misled, for we endorsed this inaccurate version.

baptismal certificate of "Walter Kelly," the supposed offspring of this princely love affair, and we have compared dates.¹ The extract of the registry of Corpus Christi Church in London affords no doubt as to the fact that the child was born thirteen months after the death of the Prince Imperial and seventeen months after his departure from England, and that during that time his mother never left London.

The cause of the Prince's departure must be sought elsewhere. Some endeavoured to explain it by the awkward position which had sprung up between the Empress and her son

¹ "Walter Kelly" was sent with the children of servants and artisans to the Christian Brothers' School of St. Joseph at Issy. The monthly fees, amounting to 34 francs, were paid by a protector whose generosity was somewhat limited, for that was the minimum amount for which a child could be kept. Walter Kelly was never visited by any one. The Abbé Eugène Misset, who solved this mystery, described to me one day how he did it. He made up his mind to find the "Prince Imperial," and with that object he called upon the Superior of the little school of St. Joseph, to whom he said, "I wish to have full information concerning your pupil Walter Kelly."

The Superior replied: "He is the only boarder here about whom I can afford you no information, but you are quite welcome to peruse the list of the pupils." That was all the Abbé Misset wanted. He compared the entries of the school registry with the copy of the baptismal certificate in his possession, and was satisfied that Walter Kelly, or young Watkins as he was, was not a legitimate or illegitimate descendant of the Bonapartes. On the following day he called upon the child's protector, and proved to him, figures in hand, that such was the fact. He had attained his object and was satisfied.

since he came of age. Louis Napoleon was deeply attached to his mother, and she loved him intensely, but with an affection that could not help being domineering and all-pervading. Moreover, he felt somewhat ill at ease owing to the limitations placed by her upon his enthusiastic and somewhat romantic nature. The maternal will, too eager to protect him against the impulses of his generous heart, too anxious to curtail the enjoyment of to-day's pleasures in the interests of his future, kept him in a state of penury such that he made barely sufficient money for his actual wants. This was well known in his *entourage*, and is well illustrated by the following anecdote, which I take from the diary of Bauer. Shortly before his departure for Zululand he invited some friends to dine at a London club, but as their number was greater than he had foreseen, he had not sufficient money to pay the bill, and was obliged to borrow some from one of his guests. He often declined invitations, because he felt he could not adequately return them. "The Empress," says the author of *Napoleon IV*, "did not seem to realize that the child had become a man, and the woman who several times had been Regent of France could not efface herself in the presence of her son, now the head of the family. Awkward conditions ensued, such as the withholding from Prince Napoleon of the fortune

bequeathed to him by Princess Bacciochi during seven long years, at the end of which a private court of arbitration was appointed to inquire into the financial position afforded to the Prince by his father's legacy and the seven years' accumulated interest on the Bacciochi fortune. Billault, Grandperret and Pinard, three late Ministers of Napoleon III, were entrusted with the task. The fortune of the Prince was declared to be sufficient, but no hurry was displayed when it came to handing it over to him, and his position remained as precarious as ever. Sooner than exist in dire poverty he preferred to seek distinction in Africa. The tutelage under which he lived had proved too drastic and, in many ways, impolitic, notwithstanding the best maternal intentions that dictated it. Moreover, a thirst for glory and the desire to assert himself urged him to gain distinction, whether in the Balkans or in South Africa. Some of his partisans were dumfounded, some enthused. The former were terrified by the prospect of the dangers of the sea voyage, the climate and the campaign, at a time when an appeal might be made at any moment calling upon the Prince to return to France. "He must not abandon us; his departure must be prevented at any cost," they said.

The optimists declared that he should be encouraged and applauded in the accomplishment

of this heroic deed. Daring exploits were best accomplished at his age, and he would return from a distant campaign covered with glory, with increased prestige. His acts of courage and devotion would definitely earn for him the respect and esteem of the French nation. They went so far as to say that the return of Louis Napoleon would recall that of Napoleon I from Egypt, when he came back from an expedition which, in accordance with the expressed wish of the British commander, was to imply nothing but a military spectacle on African soil, so far as the young Prince was concerned. The situation was more accurately judged, and its just proportions better respected, by calmer critics. General Pajol, ever ready to unsheathe his sword and lead the Bonapartist troops against Republican institutions, formally disapproved of this adventure under the British flag. He admitted that the action of the Prince would rivet public attention, but was this action in accordance with his exalted destiny? The risks it offered were far greater than its somewhat uncertain advantages. He endeavoured to explain this to the son of Napoleon III, but the Prince had previously declared on more than one occasion that once he made up his mind no one could induce him to alter it. He attempted to prove it on this occasion.

He was as pious as he was wilful, having

inherited these two maternal traits. He declared his intention to hear Mass and partake of Communion before leaving Chislehurst. Having done so he left at nine o'clock and was seen off by the Empress and a few intimate friends, Baron Tristan Lambert, Franceschini Pietri, Baron Corvisart, the Duke of Feltre, and five other people. He soon set foot on the vessel which bore him to his sad fate.

The British nation followed his movements with great sympathy. All the sovereigns of Europe had sent private messages containing kind wishes to Napoleon's widow. With marked solicitude Queen Victoria proceeded to comfort the mother's aching heart. At the risk of wounding the susceptibilities of the French Government, the Queen of England and her ministers did not deem it their duty to limit or constrain the expression of British sentiment, and when the ship weighed anchor the Tricolour flag was run up the mainmast and the echo repeated the acclamations of the crowd. The Empress sobbed until she reached Southampton, and that night she cried bitterly at the banquet. While Generals proposed toasts in her honour and that of the Prince, while the young officers drank the health of the members of her suite, her gaze wandered in the direction that absorbed her anxious thoughts and seemed to follow her child, her only son, not the Pretender to a throne, not the heir to the name and fortunes

of the Bonapartes. At the last moment, at the moment of parting, she tried to master the emotion which racked her. She embraced him with effusion, then snatching herself from his arms she reached the upper storey of the hotel and watched the final preparations for departure. As the ship steamed slowly out of harbour, and became lost to sight, her strength betrayed her. Prostrate and unconscious, she fell. Her followers bore her to the train, which started an hour before its time. The next day scores of testimonies of devotion and words of consolation reached her at her residence. In order to comfort her maternal heart, she was told that God would protect her son and preserve him for the salvation of France. She read these letters and telegrams over and over again, endeavouring to place full faith in such expressions of encouragement and confidence. Nevertheless her heart was pierced by mortal anguish and dread presentiments. Her fears increased when she received the first tidings from Africa. They informed her that the passage had been a very rough one, and that on landing the Prince had been seized with fever. She had barely recovered from the emotions and sadness caused by his departure, and her condition became so unsatisfactory that she could not leave her room. She refused all consolation, and remained alone, bearing her sufferings in silence. She had sent word to all

her friends that she could not see them. Little by little she became more peaceful and resigned as she received bright and encouraging messages from the Prince Imperial. The fact that he had gone to the front was sufficient proof of his recovery.

General Lord Chelmsford had just arrived by special train from the Lower Tugela and had appointed the Prince on his staff. On hearing the news the Empress wrote a charming letter to Lady Chelmsford, which was graciously acknowledged. Due precautions had been taken to protect the Prince against the consequences of his own bravery. He did not conceal his joy at taking part in the campaign with British troops. His charming nature begot the affection of all around him, who appreciated the serious side of his character as well as his physical prowess and his powers of endurance. He was an excellent horseman. In England, the news from the Cape was eagerly commented upon. Some unfortunate occurrences had been notified, but they had been contradicted in two most interesting letters.

One of them was written by the Prince to his old friend Rouher. He described how he had effected a long ride on horseback under a scorching sun, without feeling the slightest ill effects from it.

The second letter emanated from the Empress. She stated that though at first she had felt keen apprehension, she was now much more mistress of herself, and that all reports to the contrary were inaccurate. She went on to say that on the eve, Cardinal de Bonnechose had informed her that each day during Holy Mass he invoked the protection of God upon her son. As Louis wore around his neck blessed medals, she felt that he was fully protected against all danger. But, alas! Heaven, so often implored by her in days of stress, remained deaf and indifferent to her prayer and could not see its way to change the course of events that left her a lone widow, robbed of her only child.

Alarming rumours were suddenly spread, mysterious and ill-defined, like presages that impart all the more fear as they are surrounded by dark shadows. Each minute they became more precise, more pessimistic. The Empress was the last to hear of the death of the Prince Imperial, the news of which had long since reached London and Paris. The awful blow was struck quite soon enough. On the Friday a letter marked urgent and addressed to Jean Pietri was delivered by hand from the railway station. Pietri was out and the Empress received the letter, the contents of which she suspected, owing to the unerring instinct by which the human heart is never de-

ceived in the case of grave misfortunes. She hurriedly broke the seal, tore open the envelope and read, without quite understanding, a portion of the awful truth. Just then Lord Sidney called on behalf of Queen Victoria. The mission entrusted to him was a heavy and a difficult one, and the Duke de Bassano, an old and tried friend of the Imperial Family, offered to perform it in his stead. He entered the Empress's room. At the first glance she understood that an awful calamity had occurred.

"Madame, there are bad tidings, very bad tidings of the Prince."

"My son, my son! Is he ill? Is he wounded? Oh, I wish to join him! I shall start forthwith for the Cape."

"Madame," murmured Bassano, whose voice was choked with tears, "Madame, it would be useless to do so. It is too late."

She uttered a low cry and collapsed.

Gloomy days followed. The coffin was expected in England. The Empress did not leave her apartments, which remained closed to the light of day and to all visitors, save a few intimate friends such as the Duchess de Mouchy and Viscountess Aguado. There she lay, heedless of food, absorbed by her grief, referring to the one and only subject.

How had he been so cruelly taken? By what

appalling concourse of circumstances? What did he say? What did he suffer on that distant African soil?

It had been decided not to apprise her of the arrival of the remains until they had been conveyed to the hall in Camden Place, their last stage but one. All arrangements had been made by the British officials, who ordained a funeral worthy of him and of the country he had served.

During the early hours of the 10th July, the Admiralty yacht *Enchantress* was to receive in Spithead harbour the mortal remains that had been conveyed in the *Orontes*, a transport commanded by Captain Seymour. When the translation was effected the *Enchantress* returned to Woolwich; the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Connaught, the Duke of Cambridge, and other princes of the blood were assembled on the pier.

The coffin was landed and placed in a room draped in black, where the preliminary formalities took place. The supposed identification of the mangled body was certified owing to the presence of certain marks upon it. It was borne by officers of the Royal Artillery, placed upon a gun-carriage drawn by six horses, and thus conveyed to Chislehurst.

A large body of troops attended the funeral on the 12th July. One hundred thousand people surrounded the little church. The sad

ceremony has been repeatedly described in books and newspapers. The delicate consolations afforded by Queen Victoria to a weeping woman, not to a Sovereign but to a mother,¹ the enormous concourse of people who came from different directions to attend the funeral, and the honours paid to the poor Prince have been dealt with at length.

The Prince's room was transformed into a chapel while that of the Empress remained in darkness. She wished to see nothing, to hear nothing. Each boom of the cannon from without made her scream, and brought on a nervous attack. It was in this darkened room that, moved by pity, Queen Victoria came to see her before taking her seat in the tribune that had been erected for her as Sovereign, and from which she witnessed the march past of the immense gathering. All Bonapartist France was there. Prince Jérôme Napoleon led the mourners, wearing the broad ribbon of the Legion of Honour. The Empress had sent word to him that, though crushed by grief, she would receive him after the funeral. He had come to perform a duty, and preferred to return

¹ The wife of Marshal Canrobert expressed her deep sorrow at the demise of a Prince prevented by his early death from giving effect to high, lofty and legitimate ambitions. The Empress replied, "It is the loss of my boy that I mourn."

to France without availing himself of her invitation. He knew the tenor of the Prince's will.¹

¹ It seems interesting to reproduce the document in its entirety. It affords us an insight into the personal feelings of the Prince, his fortune, which was comparatively small, and shows the influences wrought by one Eugène Rouher, the trusted adviser of the Empress, upon his mind and political opinions until his departure from Chislehurst.

“Camden Place,

“Chislehurst,

“26th February, 1879.

“This is my last will and testament—

“1. I die as I was born, in the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church.

“2. I wish my remains to lie by the side of those of my father until such time as both our bodies are transferred to the resting-place of the founder of our dynasty—among the French people that we loved so well.

“3. My last thought will be devoted to my country, in whose behalf I should like to die.

“4. I hope that when I am no more my mother will still hold me in remembrance as affectionate as I shall bestow upon her until I die.

“5. I trust that my private friends, my retainers and my political adherents may remain convinced, that my gratitude towards them will never falter as long as I live.

“6. I will die with feelings of deepest gratitude towards her Majesty the Queen of England, all the members of the Royal Family, and towards the country which for the past eight years has shown me such hospitality.

“I hereby appoint my well-beloved mother my universal legatee, subject to her discharging the following bequests—

“I bequeath: 200,000 francs (£8000) to my cousin Prince J. N. Murat.

“£4000 to M. G. Pietri, as a token of my gratitude for services rendered by him.

He felt that he could hardly meet her on a day when his position towards her had become well-

“£4000 to Baron de Corvisart, as a reward for his devotion.

“£4000 to Mdlle. de Larminat who has been so devoted to my mother.

“£4000 to Mr. A. Filon, my late tutor.

“£4000 each to M. L. N. Conneau, M. Lespinasse, and Captain A Bizot, three of my oldest friends.

“I request my darling mother to serve an annuity of £400 to Prince J. J. Bonaparte, one of £200 to M. Bachon, my late equerry, one of £100 each to Madame Thierry and to Uhlman.

“I request that all my other servants may be paid their wages during the remainder of their lifetime.

“I bequeath to M. Charles Bonaparte, to the Duke of Basano, and to Mr. Rouher, three of my most valuable works of art, to be chosen for them by the executors of my will.

“I also bequeath to General Simmons, to M. Strode, and to Monsignor Goddard, three souvenirs to be chosen by my executors among my valuables.

“I bequeath to M. Pietri a cat's-eye pin, to Baron de Corvisart a pink pearl, and to Mdlle. de Larminat, a locket containing the portraits of my father and my mother.

“To Madame le Breton I leave my enamelled watch with my initials in diamonds.

“To M. Conneau, Espinasse, Bizot, Murat, A Fleury, P. de Bourgoing, S. Corvisart, all my weapons and uniforms, save the last one worn by me, which I bequeath to my beloved mother.

“I bequeath to Madame la Comtesse Clary my pearl pin, and my Spanish swords to my cousin, the Duke of Huescar.

“The foregoing will is written by my own hand and bears my seal.

“NAPOLEON.

“Codicil :

“I need not request of my mother to defend the memories of my great-uncle and my father. I beg of her to remember that as long as a Bonaparte is spared, the Imperial cause will

nigh untenable, owing to the dispositions of a will inspired by Rouher, which disinherited him as head of the dynasty and conferred his rights and privileges as such upon his son.

Countless telegrams and letters of condolence reached Camden Place. A few weeks later the editor of an important London paper published a private message of the ex-Empress. It began with the following words—

“Henceforth I can find no comfort on this earth now that I have lost my beloved child.”

She suffered a fatal blow through the tragic end of this son, whose future prospects had absorbed her whole life from the day she realized that all other ambitions were denied to her. The mainspring of her energy gave way. She had played her part, and for the remainder of her existence she would be the Countess de Pierrefonds, endeavouring to lull her grief by travel, but always living between two mausoleums.

have representatives and followers. The duties of our House towards the nation do not cease to exist at my death; whenever it occurs, the task of continuing the work of Napoleon the First and Napoleon the Third will devolve upon the eldest son of Prince Napoleon, and I hope that by seconding him with all her might, my mother will afford this last proof of her love to those of us who are no more. I appoint MM. Pietri and Rouher executors to my will.

“NAPOLEON.

“*Chislehurst,*
“26 February, 1879.”

Sentiment with her was always the primary cause which made her speak or act, but reflection obtained the upper hand, as soon as the spontaneous impulse, the sudden crisis, or the irritation of the moment had subsided. When every vestige of hope had deserted her soul, she was pacified if not consoled.

In a like manner she became completely detached from political ambition, and endeavoured to wrench from her memory all recollections of past grievances and enmities. The Prince Napoleon, the most turbulent of all the Bonapartes, was appeased by her.

In 1883 a reconciliation took place between them. That it was not complete and unreserved, was due to the fact that Eugénie had not forgotten everything, or to the will by which the Prince had deprived him of the right of succession in behalf of his own son, whom Eugénie likewise favoured.

The family of Bonaparte was gradually thinning under the eyes of the ex-Empress.

The first to disappear was Napoleon III, the ephemeral restorer of the dynasty. He was soon followed by his son Louis, upon whom such brilliant hopes were founded. A few years later Jérôme Napoleon died.

During the month of March 1891 his barren and incoherent destiny came to an end in a Roman

mansion, situated close to the chapel where lie the remains of Princess Borghese, and to the palace in which the mother of the Great Emperor breathed her last, a blind, helpless and abandoned woman. Prince Napoleon's end was that of the majority of his race, which seemed doomed to exile and to early death. His adventurous personality passed away full of weirdness and mystery, and fate had denied to him even one historic hour. He nearly became Emperor of France and reigning Prince abroad ; he hoped to sleep in the bed of Napoleon I, and was almost proclaimed King of Hungary. Under the third Republic he attempted to play the part of a Caius Gracchus, and to triumph all at once over constitutional impossibilities and the fruitless chronicles of Parliaments. He had broad views and aspirations, but they ended in dreams, and all that he saw, all that he grasped, consisted of glimmers of success and the shadows of power.

A strange personality upon which we will dwell for a few minutes. After the downfall of the Empire, the third Republic forthwith deprived him of his rank. He had rallied to it by becoming citizen Napoleon Bonaparte in 1849. He assumed the airs of a Pretender before long, and issued Napoleonic manifestoes instead of radical professions of faith. In 1883 the walls were placarded with an Imperial proclamation which called for the dismissal

of certain ministers and resulted in his own expulsion. He had ended this, his so-called Liberal proclamation, by quoting a sentence borrowed from the most autocratic of men. "Frenchmen, remember the words of Napoleon I, 'Everything that is done without the consent of the people is illegitimate, illegal.'" A firm guarantee of freedom, forsooth, was afforded by the promises of such a shepherd of the people as the first Bonaparte. Notwithstanding the disavowal of Prince Jérôme contained in the will, the death of the Prince Imperial had really made him the dynastic heir. His famous letter of the 3rd April, 1880, written to a friend on the subject of the decrees of the 29th March, alienated the whole Conservative party from him. His newspapers abandoned him, his son Victor, who neither shared his religious nor his political views, yielded to the request of the Duke of Padua and of several political men whose instrument he was. He openly rebelled against the paternal authority. His revolt so angered Prince Napoleon that he threw this son out of his heart and existence, closing his door upon him, relentless in his anger, even in the throes of death.

His last conspiracy had been the Boulanger movement. He had no great faith in the personal value of Boulanger, but hoped to find his supreme chance of success in this venture, which he seized upon with avidity. Had it succeeded, the rebel

soldier and the exiled Prince would have submitted themselves to a plebiscite. The chosen one would have kept the stakes. Jérôme Napoleon harboured this last illusion, certain that he would win the day, thanks to the power of his name. When he failed his last hope vanished. He felt that the game was lost for ever, and retired to his Prangins estate, where he cheated the monotony of exile by playing chess with his secretaries and his guests.

Jérôme Napoleon was a revolutionary theorist and a partisan of stern authority. His doctrine was very involved and differed widely from the ordinary formulæ of Bonapartism. He strongly condemned the omnipotence of an assembly of privileged ones who dubbed themselves members of Parliament. He laid down as a dogma the principle of popular election, the sovereignty of the nation directly exercised by a plebiscite, the right of the country to elect its chief and adopt such *régime* as met with the approval of the majority. The Bonapartist policy, such as he conceived it, should exist for his own ends, should institute a Republic organized according to such principles of authority, responsibility and control as obtained in great democracies and in all representative governments. In a word, he wanted a Republic, the president of which should necessarily be a Napoleon. What capabilities

did this man dispose of for the application of such ideas?

His intelligence was both prompt and lucid. He possessed initiative and resolution. He was eloquent and wrote in a simple but most expressive style. He was a brilliant conversationalist and a man of keen wit. He had qualities which together with the prestige of his name seemed to entitle him to shine in the front rank. He could never put them to use, however, for he was always enslaved by the inconsequence of his nature, the want of popularity, the suspicion in which he was held by his own party, and the disappointment of a wasted life. During the last ten years of his existence he lived in the margin of the Republic, just as he had spent the previous twenty years in the margin of the Empire, in glorious irresponsibility. The hopeless turbulence of his character, the roughness of his manner, the heedless and insolent contempt with which he treated public opinion, such were the causes of his undoing. He never had the chance of showing his strength either under the Empire or after its downfall. When he could have occupied a prominent position at the height of the Imperial prosperity, everything was done to keep him in the background. The Emperor appreciated his cousin but feared his jealousy. The Empress and her camarilla, her counsellors, her intimate circle, all did their best to

nullify the Emperor's sympathy towards Jérôme. Such missions as were entrusted to him abroad were of no importance, and in most cases they were known beforehand to be abortive. His European intrigues displeased every one. His plan for reconstituted Poland, as a revenge for 1813, was looked upon as a dangerous chimera, although the Empress was the first to wish for a coalition in favour of the re-establishment of a Polish and Catholic monarchy. Often, he might have obviated serious blunders upon more solid grounds, but in such cases a deaf ear was always turned to his warning. Do what he might, write what he might, at no time of his career was Jérôme Napoleon ever able to outlive that unpopularity which was all the more egregious as it was based upon an ignominious legend. He was one of the most hated men of his time. He openly displayed his own hatred of men, and did not sufficiently hide his ardent love for women, the second, but most important portion of humanity. The middle classes disowned him. They considered that he had no morality ; he did not save appearances, but advertised his foibles.

This Prince knew how to speak but could not remain silent. With him, truth expressed itself by anger. He seemed to take pleasure in daring public sentiment and private susceptibilities on all occasions. Unaccompanied by virtues, his

qualities recoiled upon himself. Religious people were offended by his free-thinking statements. His noisy hostility towards religious ideas which are so precious in the eyes of the wealthy and the powerful, deprived him of Conservative support without winning over the Radical party. His frankness was termed cynicism. All parties mistrusted him. The Bonapartists would not accept him and the Republicans refused his advances. His partisans formed a very meagre escort, and no one among his intimate friends could withstand the onslaught of his imperious caprice. Prince Napoleon felt convinced that he could effect great purposes if once he obtained authority. As it was, he was compelled to stand with folded arms, notwithstanding the enormous advantages accruing to him from the name he bore, the political experience he had acquired, and the general views he had formed in the administration of business. Every attempt on his part led to disappointment. His appetites were greater than his ambition, and this explains in a word why he remained unto the last an expectant in politics and a self-indulging, unbridled member of society. With all his vices and shortcomings he was a Prince of high mind and stern character, but history would have none of him, though his views were wide and his aspirations exalted.

When he disappeared, it could in truth be said that the last actor in the Bonapartist drama had left the stage.

The ex-Empress remained like a great lonely shadow, and when she did not arrest the public gaze and the attention of the world, that gaze only beheld supernumeraries without a part, actors without a part, nonentities, the last representatives of a dynasty irrevocably doomed.

She left Chislehurst and came to reside at Farnborough, thirty-two miles from London and half-way between the Royal Military College at Sandhurst and Aldershot Camp. The property used to be called Windmill Hill, and was sold by Longman, the publisher, to the Imperial exile.

The beauties of the surrounding country would have sufficed to keep the Empress at Farnborough. Hidden in verdure, surrounded with oak and beech trees, with its fields of pink heather and a large park, its artificial lakes and wooded islands created by ingenious hands, this picturesque residence had yet another and a far greater claim upon the Empress. She had left Camden Place because she found it impossible to erect a mausoleum there to the memory of her husband and her son, having tried in vain to purchase a field to the west of St. Mary's Church, and adjacent to the Chislehurst estate. The owner had declined to sell the ground, and it was

then suggested to the Empress that she should build a commemorative chapel to the north of the church. She declined to do so, for she was most superstitious and remembered a legend of her youth to the effect that graves facing north never receive a ray of sun. She sought for an abode more hospitable to her dear absent ones and chose Farnborough. There she entrusted to a French architect the building of an abbey called St. Michael's Abbey. Monks were installed whose duty it was to hold daily services in the chapel and to show visitors the beautiful marble slabs of the altar, the tombs of Napoleon III and of the Prince Imperial, and also the burial-place which she had chosen for herself next to that of her son. A bridge was built between the abbey and her garden. From her windows she could see the monument which contained the remains of her beloved ones.¹

She became attached to Farnborough, the rooms of which she furnished with objects that were dear to her, and with family portraits. In the main hall is hung the canvas by Winterhalter, representing her at the Tuileries surrounded by her guests. The little chariot of the Prince Imperial, given to him by the Prince Consort fifty years previously, was also placed in the hall. The

¹ See the excellent work of Mr. Edward Legge, entitled *The Imperial Exiles in England*.

Bonaparte portraits adorn the reception rooms of the ground floor, upon which is the study of the Empress appropriately furnished, and also the library containing the principal works of modern English literature. The wide gallery which runs the whole length of the house is hung with marvellous Gobelin tapestries, and contains glass cases filled with Sèvres porcelain that belonged to Napoleon I. The iron drawing-room contains Napoleonic relics, forming a family museum, every object of which is a historical document. Farnborough is replete with everything that can interest the ex-Empress. The resting-room with its wide bow windows looking north and west, the school-room, a family shrine containing all the books and instruments of the late Prince, and the marble statue at the foot of which grows the African grass plucked by the Empress in Zululand. These plants were uprooted from the very spot on which he fell. For some years Farnborough proved a most desirable residence, but gradually she concluded that even there she had not found that complete peace which she had hoped for. The wounds of her heart were far from healed. The road which crosses the estate and leads to London is one of a thousand which feed the enormous traffic of the English capital. All day long it is used by carriages, drays and motor-cars, causing dust, noise and smoke. Hence her

frequent absences from Farnborough. Travelling became a constant necessity. On several occasions she was the welcome guest in the different royal residences of Queen Victoria. She went for several cruises, notably in Gordon Bennett's yacht. During one of them she stopped at Zucco, where she had first met the Duc d'Aumale. They both met there again, free from all political cares, their souls filled with similar disillusionments. On another occasion she met the Prince of Wales, and was struck, as well as gratified, by the wonderful kindness and attention bestowed upon her by the future King of England. Under the name of Countess de Pierrefonds she endeavoured to cheat her sadness and her thoughts in Scotland, Italy and Provence. During winter she elected to reside in her small villa at Cap Martin. She was attracted towards this grass-covered rock which, like a spur, projects from the French soil into the Mediterranean. There was no more Villa Eugénie, no more Biarritz for her, but at Cap Martin she enjoyed the same bright sky, and gazed upon the same vast horizon so fitting to those feelings and sentiments of infinite greatness that filled her soul. The contemplation of sea, this great mysterious chimera, evoked in her the deepest thought. The following lines in Bauer's diary afford a striking impression of these periodical journeys to the south of France: On a

fine afternoon the late preacher of the Tuileries was driving along the Mentone road. The carriage proceeded slowly, and as the priest was enjoying the marvellous beauty of this exquisite spot a modest conveyance hailed from the direction of Cap Martin, and stopped just as the two vehicles were about to pass each other. Two aged women alighted, the one very stooped, leaning on a stick and upon the arm of her companion. He at once recognized the Countess de Pierrefonds. She abandoned her companion's arm for a moment, and with the help of her long ebony stick she walked over to a parapet overhanging the sea. She leaned upon it and steadily gazed towards a point across the horizon where the contours of Corsica could faintly be discerned. Her mind apparently travelled back to the origin and downfall of the family with which Fate had so strangely linked her. Having long perused the undulating line of the Corsican coast she returned to her carriage without even noticing the presence of her quondam friend who had saluted her respectfully. "As the cumbersome barouche drove away I recalled the whole past, the Tuileries, the Louvre, Notre Dame, Saint-Cloud, Compiègne, Fontainebleau, the Imperial chaise, the Hundred Guards, and above all, the supreme power and the dazzling beauty of this woman. Of all this nothing remained."

Now and again some exceptional circumstance would recall her to the memory of this world to which she had ceased to belong. She was not a woman who could ever resign herself to being completely ignored, although she had torn from her existence the last shred of Shaftesbury's golden optimism. She supplied news of herself to Europe on the occasion of a princely visit or a sensational marriage, the knot of which she had helped to tie, such as that of her god-child, Princess Ena of Battenberg with the young King of Spain. Another match much spoken of had been arranged by her between the Duke of Turin and an Austrian Archduchess.

In 1906 the papers were full of the reception afforded to her by the Emperor Francis Joseph. On her way from Venice she stopped at Ischl. Francis Joseph had sent an Imperial train to meet her. On the 11th July, before eight o'clock in the morning, the Emperor, accompanied by Count Paar, his *aide-de-camp*, came to the station of Vienna in an open carriage, followed by a second one containing his youngest daughter and a lady-in-waiting. An enormous crowd lined the streets. As soon as the Imperial train stopped the aged Emperor helped her to alight. She extended her hand to him, and he kissed her on both cheeks and spoke words of affection to her. It was ten years since he had seen her at Cape

Martin. Having introduced the members of her suite to him, she chatted for a moment with Archduchess Marie Valérie, and then, leaning on the Emperor's arm, she walked slowly towards the carriage, while the crowd applauded vigorously.

In 1907 she had an interview more impressive, because it must have awakened in her memory strange recollections. We refer to her meeting on the confines of Norway with the Emperor William II, the grandson of him who had dispossessed her of her throne and deprived her of her power.

In the same year the French Press was greatly agitated on learning the news that a judgment of the Court had decided after thirty years of litigation that the ex-Empress Eugénie was entitled to recover from the national museums a certain number of valuable objects of art that belonged to her. This unexpected claim provoked more surprise than sympathy in France.

At certain intervals¹ the Empress has paid discreet and furtive visits to Paris. Yielding to a characteristic obsession, she chose to reside opposite the garden of the Tuileries that had been the jewel of her domain. What powerful reason urged her to come there each time to contemplate the picture

¹ As recently as 1908 she went to Ceylon in search of sun and warmth which she finds in winter at Cap Martin on the Mediterranean shores.

of her own ruin and of her by-gone splendour? "I walk every morning," she answered, as this question was put to her.¹ "I walk in the garden of the Tuileries looking for the spots where my child was wont to play." Besides this reason she could invoke others, and proudly say, "My destiny is ruined, but I wish to rise above the events of such destiny. I shall return to Paris whose incense burnt before me. I shall look upon this people that has disowned me. I shall live until the end upon my impressions and my recollections." There is undoubtedly greatness and dignity in this proud attitude which masters facts and lives them down.

¹ Madame Octave Feuillet relates another saying of the ex-Empress, which shows how painfully disabused she is. When asked to grant an audience to some one whom she had not seen since misfortune overcame her, she smiled sadly, and said, "Yes, I know, they come to see me as they would go to see the fifth act of a drama."

CONCLUSION

DURING seventeen years Eugénie de Montijo, Empress of the French, occupied an extraordinary position in the world. She was not truly a great and telling character, because there was too much of the woman about her for that. I mean to convey that she was too much subjected to the variations of the feminine mind.

It has been denied that she possessed natural wit, but she displayed such, however, and proved herself possessed of an intellectual disposition, quicker to rise than to develop and to extend. Her imagination was spontaneous and to a certain extent she was endowed with eloquence. In intimate circles she enjoyed the charms of conversation and was enthused by noble ideas. She completely lacked any literary spirit while at the Tuileries, for there she hardly read. She could hide a famine of thoughts under a profusion of words, and all through her reign she was at least able to adapt herself to the tone of a conversation. She liked to talk on politics, literature or history, and to discuss abundantly, urged as



THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE.
From a photograph taken at Paris, 1906.

she was by her foolhardy ignorance. During the first years of her reign her language was often incorrect, but always vivacious and highly coloured. She had no judgment, and a poor sense of proportion. In the heyday of her life her impulses governed her acts by leaps and bounds. The natural violence of her temper was held in check by assumed meekness enforced with great difficulty, and, as a result, she often transgressed. She did not know how to wait, and never learned to yield. Though not expansive, she could raise and precipitate her voice so as to appear exuberant and almost noisy. She was most changeable, and her thoughts seemed to fly from brightness to the darkest depths. Her stability was only shown by her unswerving adherence to the religious and domineering ideas with which she had been imbued in her youth.

She was proud but not vain. Keenly sensitive to any encroachment upon etiquette that affected her rank, she became impatient and even rough if provoked by it, though she always endeavoured to heal the wounds that she inflicted. She often mistook haughtiness for dignity, so much did she apprehend not being deemed sufficiently Imperial. To the ladies of her Court she extended liberties that bordered upon licentiousness, and when she thought that she had been too indulgent towards them she became imperious, and some said

tyrannical. Nervously sensitive, she would shed tears under the influence of music, the impulse of a strong impression, or of external circumstances either moral or intellectual. She was the victim of all the changes wrought by an irritable nature, and the results of this were not always confined to the domestic hearth. She had the good sense and tact not to introduce the frigidity of ceremonious etiquette into her conjugal intimacy, notwithstanding her haughty nature and the great airs which she assumed as befitting her position. Louis Napoleon was the Emperor in the eyes of the world, but she was his wife and spoke to him as to a husband, addressing him in the familiar "tutoyage" or "thee and thou" style. When no differences supervened between them on account of the frivolity of the lord and master of the Tuileries she displayed towards him great attachment, not to say love.

When Napoleon had once bestowed his affections he never sought to regain possession of them. Eugénie, on the contrary, was capricious in the bestowal of her favours. She recalled them as easily as she granted them, save in the case of a few of her intimate friends. On the whole, she remained faithful to the end, to true friendship. Thus in the most prosperous years of her reign she continued to visit Mme. Delessert, whose Orleanist tendencies were well known to her.

When taken to task about it she would say, "It is true, but she was very good to me before I attained my high position, and I do not forget my friends of yesterday."

As a rule she was not as much loved by those who surrounded her as was the Emperor, and she was never very popular in France. The respectful and ceremonious demonstrations of which she was the object could not hide the sense of constraint and silent resistance on the part of those whose duty it was to do homage to her. Hearts did not give themselves to her, and these compulsory acts of politeness were never warmed by flames of true affection. Through the days of her downfall and the long years of her exile, a few faithful souls remained firmly attached to the ex-Empress. She was sincere to a childish extent and always hated mendacity. She was the wife of a man who was systematically the incarnation of calculated deceit. As early as 1837 Baroness de Montel said of him, "Prince Louis Napoleon is a liar, like all the Bonapartes." She was aware that all those who came near her wore a mask, and this made her appreciate truth all the more keenly, though she did not admit that she should be spoken to with too much frankness. Whatever her prejudices and the evolutions of her character may have been, it is undeniable that she always spoke the truth, always acted

in a straightforward manner and kept every promise that she ever made.

Napoleon III had a good heart and remembered the services that had been rendered to him. He was more generous than the Empress, but had no regard for the truth. He had been badly schooled, and the example of his uncle was nefarious. Assuming that he was outside the law and above the law, that uncle had lost all moral sense. It was sacrificed to the exclusive desire for the attainment of success and domination. The soul of the first Bonaparte lacked true greatness because he discounted sincerity, and so little trusted others that he suspected the very appearance of true and good sentiments. He did not fear to lay down as a principle that he judged the qualities and capabilities of a man by his ability in lying. He liked to recall that when he was still a child, one of his relatives had prophesied that he would rule the world because he was such a liar. When speaking of the Austrian Chancellor, his diplomatic rival, he said, "Monsieur de Metternich is almost a statesman. He is a very good liar." Napoleon III also evinced surprise at any possible disinterestedness, and despising men, he was utterly indifferent to their morality or conscientious deeds. Eugénie would have inspired her son with loftier convictions.

The personal courage of the Empress is un-

deniable. She afforded numberless proofs of it in circumstances that called for much abnegation, and in which she had no need to intervene. Her true courage and supreme contempt for danger were exhibited by her during the cholera epidemic of Amiens. There she won the gratitude of the French people, for during this trying time she displayed admirable valour and fortitude. When the son of Émile de Girardin was attacked at Biarritz by a contagious disease she went to see him, and leaned over the child with more affection than prudence. In the heyday of her prosperity the repeated attacks on the Emperor's life afforded her food for reflection upon the instability of human greatness. On the night of the 14th January, 1858, after the attempt of Orsini, the first words she spoke on leaving the opera were, "Do not trouble about us; this sort of thing is in our day's work, but for Heaven's sake see to the wounded." Did she think while uttering these words that they would be repeated a thousand times, and thereby become a historical testimony to her courage? Perhaps so. At any rate, she displayed great coolness and self-possession.

No one denies that she was brave, but one cannot say that she was generous, although she behaved nobly and sometimes heroically in the dispensation of charity. She has been accused of prodigality and excessive parsimony. In the

most brilliant days of her Court she was accused of all its extravagance, but it was not remembered that this lavish expenditure brought into circulation the accumulated wealth of the privileged and self-indulging classes. On the other hand, when she curtailed her milliner's bill and endeavoured to set the example of thrift and prudence by starting a dressmaking room in the attics of the Tuileries, they called her a miser. The truth can be found between these two extremes. Her liberality was restricted when compared to that of the Emperor, and it is natural that when the Civil List was done away with she was less liberal in her donations.

The Empress was not devoid of courage, will, and firmness, but, unfortunately, these qualities were invariably displayed in unfortunate circumstances due to irreparable acts and ill-advised undertakings. Often they were called into action without good results, for, owing to a persistent fatality, all her attempts to impart to the Government an impulse in accord with her personal views on foreign politics had dire consequences for the general welfare of the country, and the stability of the existing order of things. How much better it would have been if the Empress had not thrown herself into the turgid waters of politics, which were made more troubled still by her turbulent interference!

An ardent Catholic, a Catholic belonging to the times and country of Philip II, she defended the Pope with an energy as much to be deplored as it was useless. With both hands she hurled France into the Mexican abyss. She caused dreadful shocks, and jeopardized precious alliances. The thousand and one documents filed in the archives of Farnborough, and all the testimonies they contain concerning people and things, will not shake the foundations of the historical statements made in these pages. But others will say with us, she was a woman, she felt but did not reason, she acted but did not realize whither her acts and impulses would lead the Emperor, France and herself.

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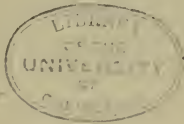
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