

Meanwhile it was observed by the old servant who worshiped the very ground on which she trod, that, although in the presence of her father and of that hated suitor, she bore up with a brave front against those small, and mean, and irritating persecutions, which act on a high and noble spirit as the incessant drip of water on the intrenchant granite that although she was calm and self-possessed, and dignified, nay, at times quick and high spirited, and prompt at eloquent and cutting repartee, she was, when left alone, another creature.

She, whose whole nature, in old days was gentleness and womanly mirthfulness, who never could walk across a room, or athwart a grassy lawn, but her gay soul would send her bounding like a happy fawn, in some unpremeditated dance-steps; she, whose lips poured forth, not from the lack of thought, but from the very superfluity of fancy, one constant stream of imaginative song, would sit brooding for whole mornings in dark silence, with her hands folded in her lap, and her eyes hard and tearless, and abstracted, riveted on those thin, wan, burning fingers; hearing no sounds from without, and if forced to lend her attention, starting with a wild stare from her reverie, and gazing around her like one awakened suddenly from a deep sleep, and answering sullenly, querulously, and times even harshly to addresses of the kindest meaning.

Evening after evening, when she could escape, favoured by the deep musings of her father, and the deeper potations of Sir Andrew, she would wander away into the deep, moist woods, heedless of the chill dews, and loathsome mists, roaming the desolate paths like an anguished ghost, and terminating still her melancholy walks at the margin of that deep transparent tank, beside which she had parted from her lover.

The old forester at first, who had known and loved her mother when she was as young and as fair, and almost as wretched as her miserable child, was wont to follow her steps at a distance, so deeply was he impressed with the idea that all was not right with her gentle spirit; and he had whispered once, into the ear of a fellow servant, as old and as faithful as himself, that he had seen her make strange gestures with her hands, and noticed that her lips moved constantly without giving utterance to a sound.

But it was not long before she discovered that she was watched; and the moment she discovered it, assuming instantly that calm and graceful dignity, she turned about, left the path which she was following, and walked directly up to the old man, where he stood half concealed by the bole of a huge oak, and alarmed now at the consequence of his own precaution.

Fixing her soft eyes mournfully, and with half reproachful glance on those of the old servant, she laid her hand lightly on his arm, and an attempt to be playful, as of old, which was in truth most melancholy. 'Ah, I have found you out for all your hiding, Jeremy. So you were watching me in these wild woods,' and then altering her tone in an instant, as if she had become aware that the effort was in vain, 'but no,' she added, 'no, no—you are mistaken; I am not mad, indeed I am not mad, only most miserable; though God knows, and he only, how soon they may make me mad also. Now listen to me, Jeremy, you must promise me here, and now, that you will do from this time forth whatever I may ask of you. I know that in old times you were good to my mother, and now, God help me, unless it be you alone, there is no one left to be good to her daughter. Say, will you promise me old Jeremy?'

'I will—I will, Mistress Margaret,' replied the old man, moved even to tears by the earnest incoherence of her address. 'I will if they kill me for it! I will do what you bid me, though it be to lose my own life, or—' and he bent his brows darkly, and clenched his hand and repeated in a deep whisper, 'or—or to take that of others!'

For one moment she gazed upon him so wistfully and so wildly, that he imagined that he had hit upon her meaning, and she only lacked the nerve to speak out her desires openly. He fixed his eye, therefore, firmly and confidently on hers, and tapping the butt of the heavy crossbow, which lay in the hollow of his left arm, with the fore-finger of his right, 'There is no doubt,' he said, 'nor any danger. I can send a broad arrow through his heart, as he rides home some night in his cups, I warrant me, and none the wiser.'

'Hush! hush!' replied the girl severely. 'You must not speak of such things, nor I think of them. You misunderstand me, and offend me.' But it was remarkable that her cheek did not pale, nor her lip quiver, nor her soft eye blanch, nor any start of disgust or horror shake her frame, at that dark and bloody proposition. A little month before, and she had recoiled in awe and loathing, had fled in utter scorn and hatred from any one who should have dared to impute such meaning to her words. But now she listened calmly, and though she refused and rebuked the offer, she did so with an unmoved and deliberate demeanor, as if she were herself familiar with thoughts of blood and death; as if she had accustomed herself to envisage such ideas calmly, perchance herself to look at man's worst enemy or best friend, as it may be no longer through a glass darkly, but steadily, and face to face.

It must have been indeed a strange misery, awful despair, which had changed such a being so merry and innocent, so delicate and womanly, and gentle, into one so resolved and

stern, and so calm in her resolution, whether for good or evil.

'No, no,' she continued, 'you must promise me, in the first place never, to follow or watch my steps any more, but, on the contrary, to observe others, lest they do so; and if you see or suspect any one attempting it, frustrate or intercept him. Do you promise me this?'

'I swear it.'

'It is well. Now tell me, how long shall it take with the utmost speed of man and horse, taking relays wherever they may be had to reach Oxford?'

'I will be bound to do it mistress Margaret between sunrise tomorrow and noon the third day hence; a younger man might do it quicker by well nigh a day; but I am near to four score years old now, and my limbs grow stiff, and my breath fails, but my will is good, lady, and my heart is as stout as ever.'

'I doubt it not Jeremy; and that will do right well. Now mark me. I may have need to send ere long to Oxford a messenger whom I can trust, and may have no occasion to speak with you. See here is gold, thirty broad pieces. Now observe this ring which I wear; if I send it to you any hour of night or day, or give it you myself, or drop it in your path that you find it, tarry not for one moment but take horse and ride—and ride, for life and—' here she dropped her voice, and caught the old man by the hand and whispered into his ear—'bear it to Lionel Thornhill, and with your own hand place it in his hand. Do you mark?—Do you comprehend? Will you do my bidding?'

'If life and limb hold out, I will.'

'Enough, I ask no more. God's blessing on your head, and a lone orphan's prayers for your spirit's rest, if you be true—The curse of Judas on your soul if you betray me. Farewell, and remember.'

She wrung his hard hand, and turned away abruptly, rushed homewards with a heart perhaps a little lighter that it had unbosomed thus to a true ear something of its sorrows. In the meantime events were drawing on rapidly, and the crisis was at hand yet more nearly and more suddenly than she imagined.

When the supper bell rung, which it did within ten minutes after her return, and she descended into the great hall, she found her father instead of sitting as usual, in his large armchair by the fireside half dozing, was striding to and fro across the oaken floor speaking with great animation, and holding in his hand a news letter, as the rare and incomplete Gazettes of the time were called, while Acton, listless as usual and without one spark of animation apparent in his inert but handsome features, sat toying with a terrier dog, and provoking it to bite at his fingers, and then beating it for doing so.

'Have you news from the host, father,' cried she, as she saw how he was employed, 'is it well for the good cause?'

'Great news and gallant doings, daughter,' replied the old man quickly. 'Basing-House has been gloriously relieved by valiant Colonel Gage, and a small band of partisans, who have slain thrice their number of the Roundheads; and the king's army has gone into winter quarters with higher hopes than it yet had cause to entertain of bringing this war to a close in the next campaign.'

'Great news indeed, and happy, let me see the news letter father.'

'Not now, not now, darling,' replied the old man; 'let us to table now, the goose pie is growing cold, and your lover here has been looking angrily at the baron of beef these ten minutes.'

'My lover!' she exclaimed, in tones of ineffable disdain, and gazed on him with wide eyes of cold astonishment.

'A very true, if a very humble one, fair Mistress Margaret,' replied the indolent baron sauntering up to her, and offering her his hand to lead her up to the table.

'No one can be a lover of mine, Sir Andrew,' she replied very shortly, 'who is not a lover of honor also. In times like these, no lady should smile on any suitor but him who dares the foremost, and does the most for the king's cause; and refusing his offered hand and walked by herself to the place, and did the honors of the coming meal, which passed in gloomy and unsocial silence.

[To be concluded.]

## THE EMPRESS OF FRANCE.

BY I. R. PERKINS.

She is the work of whose destiny  
The man of blood and victory obtained  
His more than knightly height.

When a few centuries shall have thrown their shadows upon the strange fortunes of Napoleon, and giving to everything about him the tinge of romance, the story of his first wife will seem to the student rather a fable than a fact; he will look upon her as we look upon Mary of Scotland, but with a deeper interest; for she, far more truly than her lord, was from the first to last 'the child of destiny.'

Told, when yet unmarried, that she would be a wife, a widow and then Queen of France. The entire fulfilment of the first part of the prophecy gave her courage to believe in the last part also when under sentence of death. When her bed was taken from under her because she had to die next morning, she told her weeping friends that it was not so, that she would sit upon the throne, on the ruins of which Robespierre stood triumphant; and when asked in mockery to choose her maids of honor since she was to be Queen, she did choose them, and they were her maids of honor when

half Europe looked upon her. On that night which was to have been her last upon earth, Robespierre fell. Had he fallen a few days earlier her husband would have lived; and he fell one day later, Josephine herself would have been among the ten thousand victims whose names we have never heard. But he fell that night, and her destiny was accomplished.

She married Napoleon. He was appointed to the army of Italy; step by step they rose, till at last the crown was rested on her head; the second part of the prophecy was proved true; and she began to look forward to that loss of power and rank which had also been foretold, and which was to close the strange drama of her life. And he that had wedded the child of destiny grew every day more strong and grasping. In vain did Josephine attempt to rule his ambition and chasten his aims; he was an emperor; he wished to found an empire, and by slow degrees he made himself familiar with the thoughts of putting her away.

When the campaign of 1800 was at an end, harassed and narrowed, the General came back to his wife, his former kindness was gone; his playfulness was checked, he consulted her but seldom; and seldom stole upon her private hours with that familiar love that made her heart leap. She saw her hour draw nigh.

It was on the evening of the 20th of November, the court was at Paris in honor of the king of Saxony. Josephine sat at the window looking down upon the river, and musing on the dark space before her, when she heard Napoleon's step at the door. She sprang to open it; using the exclamation 'mon ami!' he embraced her so affectionately that for an instant all fears and woes seemed vain. She led him to a chair, placed herself at his feet, and looking up into his face smiled through her tears.

'You are unhappy Josephine,' said the emperor.

'Not with you, sire.'

'Bah,' said he quickly, 'why call me sire? These shows of state steal all true joys from me.'

'Then why seek them?' answered Josephine.

The emperor made no reply.

'You are now the first of men,' she continued, 'why not quit war, turn ambition out of your councils, bend your thoughts on the good of France, and live at home among those that love you.'

'Josephine,' said he, turning his head from her; 'it is not I, it is France that demands it.'

'Are you sure of that my lord,' said his wife, 'have you probed your heart to the bottom? Is it not ambition which prompts you to seek reasons for repudiating me, for think not, Napoleon I misunderstood you; are you sure it is the love of France?'

Every word she spoke touched him to the quick, and rising hastily he replied, 'Madam I have my reasons, and now good evening.'

'Sire, sire,' said she, taking hold of his arm, 'we must not part in anger. I submit cheerfully. It is not my nature to oppose your will, I love you too deeply nor shall I cease to love you, Napoleon, because I am to leave your throne and your side. If still you go on victorious, I shall rejoice with you. If reverse comes, I will lay down my life to comfort you. I will pray for you morning and night, in the hope that sometimes you will think of me.'

Hardened as he was, Napoleon had loved his wife dearly and long; and her submission to his stern resolve; her calm but mournful dignity; her unshaken love moved even him, and for a moment his affectionate struggle with ambition. He turned to embrace her again. But in that moment her face and form had changed. Her eyes lit like that of insanity, and her whole person seemed inspired. He felt himself in the presence of a superior being. She led him to the window and threw it open. A thick mist hung over the Seine, and over the garden of the palace, all around there was silence; among the stars shining between them, there was one far brighter than the rest; she pointed to it.

'Bonaparte,' said she, 'that star is mine; to that and not to yours, was promised an empire; through me and my destinies you have risen; part from me and you fall. The spirit of her who foresaw my rise to royalty even now tells me that your fate hangs upon mine. Believe me or not, if we henceforth walk unseparated, you will leave no empire behind you, and will die yourself in shame and sorrow, with a broken spirit.'

He turned away, sick at heart and overawed by the words of one whose destiny had been strangely accomplished. Ten days were passed in resolves and counter resolves; and then the link that bound them to fortune was broken. Josephine was divorced, and as he said himself when at St. Helena, from that very hour his fall commenced.

Josephine was divorced, but her love did not cease; in her retirement she joyed in his successes, and prayed that he might be saved from the fruits of his wild ambition. When the son was born, she only regretted that she was not near in his happiness, and when he went a prisoner to Elba, she begged that she might share his prison and his woes. Every article that he had used at her residence, remained as he left it; she would not let a chair be moved. The book in which he had been last reading there, with the last page doubled down and the pen which he last used by it, with the ink dried on the point. When her death drew near, she wished to sell her jewels

and send the fallen emperor money; and her will was submitted on his discretion. She died before his return from Elba; but her last thoughts were of him and France; and her last words expressed a hope and belief that she had never caused a single tear to flow. She was buried in the village church of Rueil, and her body was followed to the grave not only by princes and generals, but by two thousand poor whose hearts had been made glad with the fruits of her bounty.

Her marble monument only bears this inscription:

EUGENE AND HORTENSE TO JOSEPHINE.

What a fund for fortune writers in her character and fate, and what a lesson to all of us, whether in prosperity or adversity!

## SWEETEN LIFE.

Oh, how glorious to make everything pleasant—to throw sunshine upon every cloud! Sweeten life by smiles, kind words and sunshine. Make joy to spring in your path and love to glow on every face. Instead of showing angry feelings to the boy who sweeps dirt upon you, say to him with a smile—'My dear little fellow, be careful,' and pass on. Depend upon it, the boy will not trouble you again. To the man who puts his doubled fist in your face, say, 'My dear sir, have more respect for yourself, and it will change his mind in a moment. Do you ever meet with a person down at the heel? squeeze his hand and point him to an acre of sunshine, resting on the far hill. Has poverty brought your friend the blues? Open your heart and your purse. A large heart and bright dollars will sweep the clouds from his face.—Sweeten life we repeat. There are sorrow and pain and disappointments enough in all conscience, without your adding to the amount. There is a loud call for smiles, love, kindness, sweet words and cheerful looks.—If you have nothing else these you can bestow, and add a large amount to the stock of human comfort and happiness.

## THE GOOD MAN'S DEATH.

The recent sudden departure of a distinguished philanthropist, recalls to mind a passage in Carlyle's eloquent notice of the death of Goethe:—

'The end! What a solemn meaning lies in that sound, as it peals mournfully through the soul, when a living friend has passed away! All is now closed, irrevocable; the changeable life picture, growing daily into new coherence under new touches and hues, has suddenly become completed and unchangeable: there as it lay, it is dipped at this moment in the ether of the heavens, and shines transfigured to endure even so—forever. Time and Time's Empire, stern, wide, devouring, yet not without their grandeur! The week-dayman, who was one of us has put on the garment of Eternity, and become radiant, and triumphant. The present is all at once the past; Hope is suddenly cut away, and only the backward vistas of memory remain, shone on by a light that proceeds not from this earthly sun.

'I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."'

## THE SAVIOUR'S MISSION.

'What think ye was the mission of Jesus, the Redeemer to man? He came to tell him that there was an immortality beyond the grave, but he also came to lift up the toiling millions of the human race from their degradation in this lower world. Yes, it is a truth eternal as God—Jesus came to visit the Poor Man in his misery; to clothe his bent form with a finer garment; to feed his mouth with better bread; to shelter his weary head with the roof of a dearer home.

'He came to the poor Man as a Brother.—His voice speaks even now, saying to the slave of the work-shop—Brother, arise, for the time is near.'

## THE DYING BED.

There is no place on earth like a dying bed. There is in no hour man's brief journey across this world, like a dying hour; so solemn, so impressive, and so full of dread interest to each individual when he arrives at that place, and feels that hour has come.—Then the soul makes a pause. She looks back on a recording world and onward into a dark, unfathomed eternity. There is no retreat. The hour of exchanging worlds has come. To have then a good hope of pardon, and of Heaven, how blessed and invaluable! To have no hope then, when flesh and heart fail, and all mortalities are about to be sundered, how dreadful beyond imagination to conceive! To avoid it is worth a whole life of ceaseless efforts and prayer.

## EXISTENCE OF A GOD.

There is a God! The herbs of the valley, the cedars of the mountains, bless him—the insects sport in his beams—the elephant salutes Him with the rising day—the birds sing to Him in the foliage—the thunder declares His immensity. Man alone, has said, 'there is no God!' Unite in thought, at the same instant, the most beautiful objects nature; suppose that you see at once all the hours of the day, all the year, a morning of Spring, and a morning Autumn; a night bespangled with stars and night covered with clouds; a meadow enamelled with beautiful flowers; forests hoary with snow and the fields gilded with the fruits of Autumn—then alone will you have a just conception of the Universe. While you are gazing on that sun which is plunging under