

THE STORY OF HIS LIFE.

ARCHIBALD FORBES, MEMOIRS OF NAPOLEON THIRD.

Extracts From an Interesting Book on the Life of a Great Man—His Birth and Incidents in his career—After the Battle of Waterloo and Other Stories.

Mr. Archibald Forbes has written what will probably be accepted as the authoritative "Life of Napoleon III." It will be published in this country by Messrs Dodd, Mead & Co. about September 1.

An advance copy of the book lies before me as I write. Mr. Forbes is an admirer of the Man whom Victor Hugo dubbed Napoleon the Little. But he does not carry his admiration to any absurd lengths. He weighs his hero in carefully adjusted balances and fully recognizes where he is found wanting. It is no demigod he presents to us, nor, on the other hand, is it the human monstrosity of Hugo and Kinglake's imaginations. It is a man of more than average mentality and force, who went through many strange experiences with credit, who built up for himself an extraordinary career through sheer self-confidence and belief in his own star, but who at the end found himself bested by mightier minds than his own, chief among them being Cavour and Bismarck.

Birth of Napoleon.

In fact, the vicissitudes which Louis Napoleon experienced almost from the cradle to the grave were probably all but unexampled. Born April 20, 1808, he was the third son of Hortense de Beauharnais, Napoleon's step-daughter, and of Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland, Napoleon's brother. Some doubt was indeed cast upon his birth. Hortense was no saint. It is unquestioned that three years later, in October, 1811, she gave birth to a son the father of whom was the Comte de Flahault, a son who was consequently a half brother of Napoleon III., and who was the well known Duc de Morny of the Second Empire. It was more than hinted that the future Emperor was himself the son of Admiral Verhuel.

Some color was given to the scandal by the fact that neither in features, in physique nor in mental characteristics did Napoleon III. resemble any other Bonaparte. It is also true that about nine months before the Prince's birth Queen Hortense and Admiral Verhuel were together in the Pyrenees. But, as it happened, King Louis was their also, and it may be added that if he was with his wife neither immediately before, during, nor after her confinement it was because he was excessively annoyed by her refusal to lie in at The Hague.

As he learned of Hortense's accouchement the King announced the event to the people of his capital collected under his balcony, and received the customary felicitations. He wrote to Hortense:—"I should like the little one to be solemnly baptized here in Holland, but I subordinate my wishes to yours and to those of the Emperor."

It seems evident, then, that King Louis was in the full belief that he was the father of the infant. He proved that conviction later by leaving all his property to Louis Napoleon, whom he described in his will as 'my only surviving son.'

An Imperial Heir.

The boy's birth was celebrated with great rejoicings throughout France as that of a presumptive heir to the imperial throne, for by the law of succession the crown, in default of direct descendants of the Emperor himself—and he at that time had none—could be inherited only by the children of two of his brothers—Joseph and Louis. But Joseph had no male offspring, and the sons of Louis, in consequence, became for the time 'heirs presumptive' until the birth of the King of Rome.

The Emperor himself stood sponsor at little Louis' baptism. When the child was still in his cradle the prospects of his brother and himself (the elder of the three brothers had died in childhood) were imperilled by the Emperor's marriage with Maria Louisa, and they were apparently blighted when in 1811 a son was born to Napoleon himself. Louis, however, was in great measure brought up at the Tuileries and was a favorite with the Emperor.

Last Sight of Napoleon.

A curious story was extant of the last words which passed between these two. It was at the moment when Napoleon was setting out on the campaign which proved to be his last. The little boy, on hearing that his uncle was to leave within an hour, became strangely agitated. He sought out the Emperor in his cabinet and taking hold of his arm burst into tears. The Emperor asked what ailed him.

'You will not go!' cried the child. 'The enemy will get you. I shall never see you more.'

Napoleon was deeply agitated, took the child to his mother, and said:—"Look well to him. Perhaps after all this little fellow is the hope of my race."

The little fellow's fears were only too

surely realized. These were the last words he heard his uncle utter. He never saw the Emperor again. But the words sank deeply into his mind, to awaken afterward as the voice of destiny.

Waterloo and After.

Louis Napoleon had scarcely attained his seventh year when the fortunes of the French Empire were overcast by the terrible reverses which culminated at Waterloo. He was a fugitive before he could speak articulately. After the death of his brother, of his uncle Joseph, of his father and of the King of Rome he became the heir of the Bonapartes. Nephew of the great Emperor, yet condemned to the vexations of an obscure youth, his kindred persecuted, while he himself was exiled from the country which he loved, and in which the memory of Napoleon was still alive. Louis Bonaparte looked forward confidently to the establishment of his claim. He believed himself destined to uphold the honor of the great name he bore, to punish the persecutors of his family and to reopen for his country a path to fame and glory.

But it was many years before his dream was even approximately to be realized. Those years were full of humiliation and even ignominy.

In the interval between his twentieth and his fortieth year he was a prisoner in Strasbourg, Lorient, Ham and the Conciergerie. He was an outlaw for more than half of his life. There were incidents at Strasbourg and later at Boulogne which brought upon him the mock and jeer of Europe. During his exile in England he carried a baton as a special constable in Park Lane on Chartists' Day. During his exile in America he lived in a dingy street in Hoboken, which Mr. Forbes describes as "a squalid suburb of Jersey City over against New York. He was half starved and presented 'as sorry a specimen of seedy gentility as one need look at, in wornout and threadbare coat.'"

President of the Republic.

Then by a sudden turn of fortune, he became president of the French Republic. The coup d'état made him Emperor of the French and thenceforth, for some fifteen years he became the most important figure on the Continent of Europe. It was said of him that on being asked whether he should not find it difficult to rule the French nation he replied:—

'Oh, no! Nothing is more easy. They only need a war every four years.'

This policy held good in a modified degree. The Crimean War was for him a success, although not precisely a triumph. The Italian campaign, in spite of its hard fought victories, ended abruptly in approximation to a failure. The Mexican expedition was an utter fiasco. Yet Napoleon might have gone on with his programme of a war every four years but for the circumstances that there happened to be in Europe in the middle sixties and infinitely subtler, more masterful and more ruse man than the dreamy and decayed Napoleon. When he and Bismarck walked along the Biarritz beach in October 1865, Bismarck expounded his political speculations as they strolled.

'He is mad?' the Emperor whispered to Prosper Merimee, on whose arm he leaned. Before another year was over the Schleswig-Holstein controversy had taught Napoleon that madness had no part in the character of Otto von Bismarck. The Prussian Premier was his superior in energy in determination and in finesse. At every turn he foiled the French Emperor.

Lack of Preparation.

After Sedan Napoleon could not but have felt assured that war between France and Prussia was inevitable sooner or later. Yet the French army was gradually deteriorating and its discipline and readiness for war were becoming more and more impaired. Looseness on the part of the higher officers occasioned carelessness and irregularities in the lower grades. Yet the reduction of the contingent of the year 1870 by 10,000 conscripts was held to be justified by the Prime Minister, who said:

'The government has no uneasiness whatsoever; at no epoch was the peace of Europe more assured. Irritating questions there are none. We have developed liberty in order to assume peace, and the accord between the nation and the sovereign has produced a French Sedan, the plebiscite.'

Those complacent expressions were uttered on July 2, 1870; before the month was ended France and Germany were at war with each other. On September 2, 1870, France met with her real Sedan at Sedan. The empire was a thing of the past.

Napoleon's Liberal Tendencies.

Mr. Forbes thinks that it was the liberal tendencies of Napoleon which hastened

his ruin. From his accession up to the autumn of 1860 he had ruled, in effect, an absolute monarch. 'He would have acted wisely if he had never communicated his resolution to liberalize the Parliamentary ground work of the empire. After he made this concession to a nation which was quite content to live under a regime of benevolent absolutism, he was always more or less involved in political troubles.'

'Constitutional reforms' were simply the vestibule to the arena of heated and venomous political conflicts. The Emperor was frequently compelled to express disappointment at the manner in which his acts were misinterpreted. So long, indeed, as he remained physically capable, constitutional government was tempered in a measure by the supreme sway of the sovereign. But about 1862 the germs of ailment which tortured him for the remainder of his life began to rack him. In most things an abstemious and temperate man, he allowed himself freedoms in a certain way. A list of his armours, from La Belle Sabotiere, of Ham, down to and beyond Margot Bellanger need not be given here. During his frequent and lengthened visits to watering places for the sake of his health constitutional government had a good deal its own way, and when he confided the government of France to the responsible ministry of which M. Ollivier was the head, he finally retired from the direction of public affairs, and resolutely restricted himself to the duties of a constitutional sovereign. With the appointment of the Ollivier administration the role of the Emperor as active ruler ended.

Domestic Difficulties.

Persigny has noted another source of weakness in the quality which disturbed the Imperial Council—the existence of two opposite parties, the difficulties which time serving Ministers felt in choosing between the Emperor and the Empress, and the vacillating, uncertain policy which was the result. His paper is valuable for the light it incidentally throws upon the scenes that must have occurred—the undignified contentions between man and wife, which scandalized the Council and brought contempt on the Emperor, and the unmixed harm which was wrought by the brilliant and accomplished lady, who, had she been allowed to act as Regent, with a full sense of responsibility and to surround herself by Ministers of her own choice, might have played a considerable part.

For, whatever Mlle. de Montijo may have been, the Empress Eugenie was a woman of brains, of heart and of conscience. The marriage had been opposed by the French people, but the admirable behavior of both parties to the contract from the time the announcement of the engagement was made had mollified the recalcitrants, and the recognition of Eugenie's beauty and grace had paved the way for that abounding personal popularity which the Empress was to continue to enjoy long after the Emperor himself had fallen from favor.

It was generally agreed that nothing could be in better taste than the announcement of the engagement made by Napoleon in the presence of the most influential members of his domestic and political household.

'When,' said His Majesty, 'in the face of ancient Europe, one is carried by a new principle to the level of the old dynasties, it is not by pretension to ancient descent or by the endeavor to push into the family of kings that one earns recognition. It is rather by remembering one's origin, by preserving one's own character, and by assuming frankly toward Europe the position of a parvenu—a glorious title when one rises by the free suffrage of a great people. Thus compelled to part from precedents, my marriage becomes but a private matter. It has remained for me to choose my wife. She who has become the object of my choice is of lofty birth. French in heart, by education and by the blood which her father shed in defence of the First Empire, she as a Spaniard, possesses the advantage of having no family in France to whom it would be necessary to give honors and dignities.'

Public Opinion.

French public and press showed themselves pleased with the modesty, yet dignity and self respect, of the speech. Even the London Times agreed that 'nothing could be better than the phrase in which the Emperor adopts the position of parvenu, keeping his origin clearly before him, and emancipating himself from the traditions of states in which the bases of society have not been destroyed nor monarchical institutions suffered ruin.'

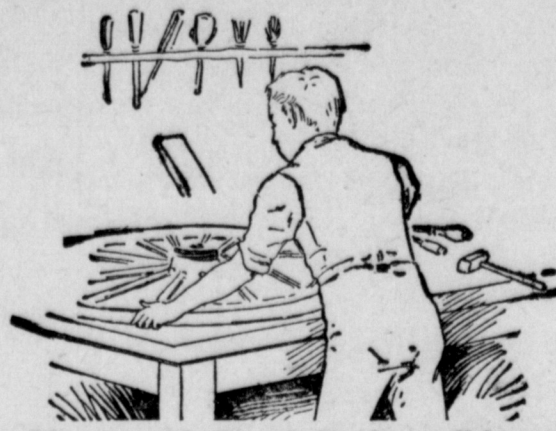
The Emperor had watched with joy the rapid progress which his beautiful betrothed made in the hearts of his countrymen. When the imperial bride declined to accept the costly diamond necklace presented to her by the Municipal Council of the Seine, desiring that its value should be devoted to

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charitable purposes, the kind hearted action was received throughout France with warm appreciation. Her husband's wedding gift of 250,000 francs she distributed among maternal societies and to beds in the hospitals.

The good impression thus made was deepened after the marriage by the same course of quiet charity and kindness. Moreover, the Empress preserved to the end her elegance and her beauty, two qualities which appeal strongly to the French. Perhaps it was the growing weaknesses of Napoleon which led her to wish to take a larger share in the government than either he or his Ministers desired. Perhaps her popularity had turned her head. Whatever the truth, it is certain that at the outset of the war she arrogantly called it 'my war,' and was probably not quite wrong in using this term. But if the war was hers, so also was its inglorious end.

The Campaign of Sedan.

Of the campaign which ended with Sedan Mr. Forbes gives a brilliant and effective word picture from the standpoint of an eye witness. Especially effective are the little sidelights of personal observation which he throws upon his canvass. This is how he paints the attitude of the Emperor just before the battle of Gravelotte. Under the guidance of the Prince Imperial Napoleon and his suite had gained a place of temporary safety in that village from the destructive fire of a Prussian battery on the Moselle. 'Thither, at least as yet, came no German shells, and the hunted Napoleons could draw breath. The Emperor, after resting an hour, took to tramping to and fro in front of the post house, which he had made his quarters, it was his habit in trouble. I saw him later doing just the same thing in the potato patch of the weaver's garden on the Douchery road, on the way from Sedan during the interval when Bismarck left him. As Napoleon stalked up and down pondering uneasily he was unconsciously making history, and just as unconsciously he was moving in the heart of a scene waiting to be made historical ere many hours had passed; for over against him was the old church of Gravelotte, on the edge of the graveyard of which the dead of the impending battle were to be utilized for breastworks.'

Napoleon's Magnanimity.

As an instance of Napoleon's generosity Mr. Forbes notes that he never made any imputation of misconduct against the commanders of the army which was defeated at Sedan, in marked contrast to the accusations made by his great uncle after Waterloo. Even in his letter to General Wimpfen, contradicting briefly two assertions of the latter, there is no trace of irritation. From his prison at Wilhelmshöhe he wrote a kindly letter to Bazaine while the army of the Rhine was still maintaining itself in the Metz position.

Even during his imprisonment, even during the exile that followed at Chiselhurst, Napoleon never lost hope of regaining the throne which he had lost at Sedan.

It was not merely to obtain relief from suffering that he underwent the painful operation which caused his death. Resolute to return to France, he knew it was necessary that he should ride into Paris on horseback at the head of an army. This he could only do in the event of a favorable result to the series of operations. In his own words:—"I cannot walk on foot at the head of troops; it would have a still worse effect to enter Paris in a carriage; it is necessary that I should ride." And it was with the object of doing so that he submitted to the operation under which he succumbed.

Had the operation been successful and effort would have been made to regain the lost throne. Every detail had been arranged. A private yacht was to be available for landing Napoleon at some determined port on the northern corner of France, or perhaps in Belgium. Landing secretly, the arrangement was that the

Emperor should proceed through France to the camp at Chalons, where forty of fifty thousand men should be assembled for the purpose of manoeuvres. Declaring himself he was to head his army and march on Paris.

The father who lost his life in the hope of being able to return to France and the gallant young son who fell, slain by savages, in an obscure corner of South Africa now sleep together in the mausoleum at Farnborough, each in his own sarcophagus. They may rest there indefinitely; but the burial place of the Napoleons, from Charles Bonaparte downward, the father of the great Emperor and the grand uncle of Napoleon III., is in the crypt, under the high altar of the Church of Napoleon at St. Leu, a pretty village on the northern verge of the forest of Montmorency.

In Cork-Screw Form.

American ingenuity certainly found monumental examples in the Great Wheel and the switch back railway. But the latest idea from our inventive cousins will surpass even those masterpieces. This is nothing less than an immense spiral railway running round a huge steel-frame column 5000 feet in height. Here is an illustration of the proposed structure. The cork-screw Railway, as it may come to be called, will be erected at the Pan-American Exposition to be held on Cayuga Island, near the Falls of Niagara, from which the electric power that is to operate the railway will be derived. The tower will be eighty feet in diameter at the base, tapering to fifty feet 400 yards up, at which height a platform will form the terminus of the line. The latter will consist of a double track. Every precaution will be taken for the safety of passengers. The cars will never meet or pass except on opposite sides of the tower, the two tracks being formed on parallel but independent spirals. Passengers will have magnificent views across many miles of country. At night the structure will be outlined in electric lights, while from the top a search-light will illuminate the falls, the rapids, and the exhibition grounds.

"MY FRIENDS DESPAIR."

La Grippe and Nervous Prostration Had Brought Captain Copp Near to Death—South American Nerve was the Life Saver.

'I was ailing for nearly four years with nervous prostration. I tried many remedies and was treated by physicians without any permanent benefit. A year ago I took La Grippe, which greatly aggravated my trouble. My friends despaired of my recovery. I was induced to try South American Nerve, and was rejoiced to get almost instant relief. I have used four bottles and feel myself completely cured. I believe it's the best remedy known for the nerves and blood.' Wm. M. Copp, Newcastle, N. B.

Quite a New Species.

The head of a certain drapery establishment in the north was scarcely satisfied with one of his assistants, whose intelligence was not of a very high order.

'You don't push, John,' he remarked to the delinquent on one occasion. You seem to have no idea how to effect a sale. Now, as soon as another customer comes to your counter let me know, and I'll show you how the thing should be worked.'

Accordingly, John promptly informed his master when a lady entered to look at some silk. She thought the article was rather expensive, and said so.

'Really, madam,' said the tradesman, 'I am offering this line at a sacrifice. You are no doubt aware that disease is rampant among silk-worms, and I assure you that in the near future prices will rise alarmingly.'

In the end a sale was effected. The tradesman was on very good terms with himself and John had learned a lesson. The next customer, as it happened, wanted tape. John was prepared for her criticisms this time.

'Really, madam,' he said, 'it is a sacrifice. There's a perfect epidemic raging among the tape-worms, and —' etc., etc.

But John failed to sell, and the lady took up her umbrella and left the shop.

SALT "I had Salt Rheum of the worst kind, as our family doctor called it, and could not get anything to cure me. I read of Burdock Blood Bitters, and determined to try it. I got one bottle and before I used half of it I could tell it was doing me good, and after taking six bottles I was perfectly cured, and to-day am a happy woman at being cured of that terrible disease." Mrs. MAGDALENA VOIGT, Rhineland, Ont.

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