The Turbulent Duchess

BARONESS ORCZY

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MARIE CAROLINE FERDINANDE LOUISE DUCHESSE DE BERRY.

THE TURBULENT DUCHESS

(H.R.H. Madame la Duchesse de Berri)

by
BARONESS ORCZY

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

I make no apology for referring to Her Royal Highness the Duchesse de Berri as "Caroline Ferdinande" rather than "Marie-Caroline," the double name by which she is perhaps better known. As a matter of fact, on her birth certificate there are no fewer than eleven Christian names, of which the first two are Caroline Ferdinande. On her marriage certificate, her names are given as Caroline Ferdinanda Luisa, with no mention of Marie at all, nor does the name Marie occur on the birth certificate of her son the Duc de Bordeaux.

FOREWORD

WHEN our mothers were still in their teens, when women wore crinolines, and chignons and prunella boots, when Queen Victoria sat, a sorrowing widow, on the throne of England, and her son could look forward with assurance to succeeding her one day, when one drove four days in a *calèche* from York to London, and it took six months to get to Australia, when there was no talk of S.A. and waists were eighteen inches round, there still lingered in the grim old fortress of Brünnsee in Bohemia a decrepit, obese, old lady who had once been Regent of France and had half Europe at her feet. She was Madame Marie Caroline Ferdinande Louise, Princess of Naples, daughter of Kings, niece of one Queen, great-niece of another, great-granddaughter of an Empress; she was the widow of the Duc de Berri, who would have been King of France but for the dagger of the assassin Louvel.

Crippled with rheumatism, so blind that she could no longer read, even with the aid of spectacles, she sat most of the day by the window in a high-backed chair, in a large ill-furnished room, a room full of memories, all of them sad, not one of them glorious; an empty bird-cage, a dog-basket, a spinet with broken cords, a mechanical toy which had once belonged to her son the Duc de Bordeaux, its mechanism now broken, the toy as useless as Madame's longings and dreams; a model of the ship *Carlo Alberto*, on which she had set sail one day, in order to reconquer the heart of France. All day she would sit and gaze out of the window with her dimmed eyes fixed on the dreary pine-clad mountains of Bohemia, as Napoleon did once, from the fastnesses of Saint Helena, on the turbulent Atlantic that framed in his place of exile. And as Napoleon used to murmur with sighs of longing: "France! France!" so did Madame murmur: "Sicily! my Sicily!" the land of palms and orange groves, of blue skies and sunbaked earth. Sicily, her home! If only she could have gone back to Sicily.

From the upstairs room over her head there would come at times the merry sound of the pattering of small feet; her grandchildren were up there. Their parents would bring them over from Italy sometimes to cheer granny's solitude. The children of her children, of Clementine and Isabella and Francesca, and of Adinolphe her Benjamin. They would come now and again, the whole brood of them, raising the echo of the grim château with their laughter, their chatter and their infantile screams: smashing a few more things, leaving after their departure the place just a little more dilapidated, a

little more ramshackle than it was before, and their granny a little more sad, a little more solitary, by contrast with their gaiety. They were her Italian family, the children and grandchildren of the only man who had ever loved her truly and faithfully. She hardly ever saw her French children, her son the Comte de Chambord, Duc de Bordeaux, was at Frohsdorf or at Goritz studying the difficult craft of kingship—a craft which he was never destined to exercise. Her daughter was in exile with her family.

And sitting alone in her high-backed chair, watching the twilight slowly creeping over mountain and lake, and the various landmarks fading into the gloom, Madame Caroline would close her weary eyes and, neither sleeping nor waking, see pictures of her past life rise out of the shadows. Memories, some of them glorious, some of them sad, most of them bitter, would crowd ghostlike around her; and she would see her sorrows, her few joys, her many disappointments and final humiliation pass like an ever-changing picture before her mental vision, causing a smile to break at times around her flaccid lips, but more often a tear to roll down her wrinkled cheek.

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BOOK I

THE FAIRY TALE

CHAPTER I

STORMS IN NAPLES

On the 5th of November 1798 there raged in the Bay of Naples and all along its coast a devastating cyclone, as well as the most terrifying thunderstorm within the memory of a living generation. And when the cyclone and the thunderstorm were at their height and the old castle walls trembled to their foundations under the lashings of the gale, there was born in the Château of Caserta a baby girl. She was born to the accompaniment of a deafening thunder-clap and a blinding flash of lightning, and as soon as she opened her eyes to the world she set up an unholy yelling, and continued to yell and to scream, so that the official personages commanded by law to be present at every royal birth (so that no kind of substitution or other trickery could occur) very nearly lost their countenance and sense of decorum by whispering as audibly as they dared that the royal infant ought to be well slapped.

The baby girl, however, was not slapped on this occasion. Etiquette forbade such a drastic proceeding, but destiny did the slapping later, much later, and did it very cruelly. As it was, her attitude when she had been less than ten minutes in this turbulent world was both pertinent and prophetic. The whole world in that year 1798 was in as great an upheaval as the Bay of Naples, political cyclones continued to rage all over Europe for many years afterwards whilst Caroline Ferdinande Louise raised her determined if feeble voice to assert her rights and to drown the thunder-claps of revolution and of war.

For the moment she was only a small bundle of humanity whom Monseigneur the Bishop held up in his hands and presented to the official personages, declaring solemnly that this puny little body was a child of the female sex, truly born on this 5th day of November to His Gracious Highness Janvier Joseph François, Prince of Naples and the Two Sicilies, and to his gracious Consort. After which solemn declaration the official personages, the Ministers of State, Municipal Councillors and other big-wigs were relieved of their unpleasant task, and made haste to return to their homes. They had been hauled out of their beds at five o'clock in the morning and had tumbled into their breeches with all possible haste. Some had come from Caserta Vecchia, a matter of three or four kilometres, and had scrambled into their chaises in the midst of drenching rain, clinging to their hats and squelching in the mud. The wildest of nights, and a wild,

yelling infant: they all shook their heads, and vowed that it was all of the worst possible augury.

No one had thought of letting His Most Gracious Majesty the King know that a granddaughter had been born to him. He wouldn't have cared one way or another about that, but he would have greatly cared if anyone had come to disturb him when he had just succeeded in shutting out the noise of the thunder from his ears, by stuffing cotton-wool into them, and burying his head under the blankets so that he should see nothing of those terrifying flashes of lightning. Anyway, the birth of a royal princess was Madame the Queen's affair. She was the virtual ruler of this turbulent kingdom of Naples, she wore the breeches: he was nothing but a nonentity, and as she bore the brunt of rebellions which were constantly breaking out among the crowd of rogues and of thieves over whom an unkind destiny had set him to rule, so let her bear the brunt of providing for the future of her granddaughter—if she could. As for their gracious Highnesses the father and mother of this very unwelcome princess, they didn't count at all, anyway. Nor did parents and grandparents worry further over the subsequent fate of the baby girl, born at Caserta on that tempestuous night. She was tossed hither and thither like a useless bale of goods, while they all looked after their personal safety. A few months after her birth the population of the Kingdom of Naples, long since tired of their supine, shiftless King and his domineering wife, broke into open rebellion. It was not the first time by any means, but on this occasion rebellion turned into red revolution and the people succeeded in sending their inglorious monarchs about their business; and there they remained until such time as it suited European politicians to re-establish them on their throne. But the transition period was as unsafe for their family as it was for them. His Gracious Highness Janvier Joseph François sought refuge on board a British warship, whilst his gracious consort, after presenting her lord with another daughter and a son, sought permanent refuge in death.

But in the meanwhile Caroline Ferdinande when only three months old was sent comfortably out of the way to Bocca di Falco in Sicily, where she acquired a love for its palms and orange trees, for its blue skies and sunbaked earth, a love which she never dissembled and which endured throughout her life. Sicily! Her Sicily!

Almost as soon as she could toddle she was the terror and despair of the unfortunate governesses who were set to look after her physical and mental development. She had made her presence in the world felt when she was less than an hour old, by yelling and screaming and upsetting the equanimity of

grave and reverend seigniors, and she continued to make her presence felt just as insistently in the orange groves of Bocca di Falco if her dominant will was in any way thwarted. She had inherited her father's fair skin, his blue eyes and curly hair; she had her mother's delicate hands and feet and diminutive stature, but neither her meekness nor her indolence. Her courage and domineering disposition came from her grandmother together with the obstinate Hapsburg lip. The ladies of the Court whom she had maltreated, and the Ministers of State whom she had ridiculed, declared that Caroline Ferdinande was an ugly little thing with a decided squint; but the young Count de Lucchesi-Palli at eight years old fought a duel with a boy four years older than himself in order to establish the fact that all she had was a fascinating cast. He received a rather serious flesh wound on that occasion, but soon forgot all pain because from that hour Caroline Ferdinande, who admired physical courage more than any other quality in the world, enrolled him as her playmate, the only companion she ever permitted to join in those wild escapades of hers, when the Comtesse de La Tour trembled for the life and limbs of her royal charge. He was as reckless, as fearless as she was, punishments held no terror for him, he gloried in them if they came as a result of his participation in one of Caroline Ferdinande's mad pranks. And she gloried in his allegiance. Being already inordinately vain, she loved to see him fight any and every boy who had in any way offended her self-love. With screams of delight and clapping of her tiny hands she would egg him on to prowess, while he pummelled an offender who might be twice his size. But when with bleeding nose and a bunged eye he came to her to claim his reward in the shape of a kiss, she would either grant it with a glance that turned his young head, or, more often than not, she would slap his face and run away laughing at his discomfiture. It all depended on her mood.

Once only did the worm turn, but it was with disastrous consequences.

The two children were playing in the garden close to the pond which was known to be quite deep in places. Ducks and swans swam on it and there were a lot of big fish in the water. The children had been forbidden to climb on the low balustrade that framed the pond. Forbidden? No one had the power of forbidding Caroline Ferdinande to do anything on which she had set her mind. And at the moment she was perched rather precariously on the forbidden territory of the balustrade, and from this point of vantage she was taunting young Hector de Lucchesi-Palli and making snooks at him.

"I dare you to jump in," she cried in her piping voice; "I dare you! I dare you!" And then went on: "You dare not! you dare not! Coward! You are afraid! You know they will whip you if you do!"

Now young Hector was an expert swimmer, nor was he the least bit afraid of a whipping, but he was accustomed to obedience, and so put up with the wilful little lady's taunts, and kept his temper under control, until the moment when, in her excitement, she seemed in danger herself of falling in the pond. The poor boy never knew afterwards how it all happened: he supposed that he got exasperated in the end, and didn't quite realize what he was doing. What he did do was to try and seize those tiny hands that were making rude gestures at him: he only wanted to steady her on her feet, instead of which he caused Her Royal Highness to lose her balance and to topple backwards into the water. Poor Madame de La Tour, who had snatched a few moments of quietude with her embroidery in an arbour close by, heard a scream and a splash. Before she could arrive on the scene of the disaster, however, there was a second splash. Young Hector had taken a header, and, very skilfully, was already bringing the gasping little lady back to dry land. Madame de La Tour called loudly for help. Lacqueys and ladies-in-waiting came running along. The two children, dripping and disconcerted, stood for the space of half a minute, side by side, wide-eyed and motionless, and then, suddenly and without any warning, Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, administered to her rescuer such a vigorous kick in that region of his body which is designed by nature for the purpose, that he lost his balance and the young Comte de Lucchesi-Palli, son and heir of the Duke della Grazzia, measured his length upon the ground. After which act of unparalleled injustice Caroline Ferdinande allowed herself to be led away.

For days and weeks after that, she would not speak to Hector; she would not tolerate him inside the palace or the gardens: she set up a scream if his name was mentioned. The servants had strict orders that M. le Comte de Lucchesi-Palli was never to be admitted if he called.

"If he comes near me," she declared, "I will set Léon on him"—Léon being a mongrel with decidedly savage instincts. She was quite convinced that the boy had deliberately pushed her into the pond, his jumping in after her being merely caused by the fear of punishment.

She tried other playmates, the young Marquis Malavieri, Duke de Giulio di San Martino, even her sister and little brother whom she hated; but not one of them would stand Caroline's tantrums for long, and after feeling the weight of her small hand on their faces, and the lash of her sharp tongue, refused to play with her any more. Feeling a little depressed in this new isolation, the little Princess took up music with her usual erratic ardour. Music masters were provided for her. Scales, arpeggios, piano, violin, guitar, she practised them all feverishly for a time, then abandoned them with equal

unreasoning caprice. She then demanded a drawing master. Palette, brushes, canvases were purchased and used with frantic energy, only to be soon cast aside. Learn anything useful she would not. To her dying day she never knew how to spell, and her speech was just a mixture of bad French and Neapolitan patois. She was the despair of the learned tutors who were set to teach her calligraphy and the elements of arithmetic. In the matter of religion she was little better than a pagan. Indeed, since her quarrel with Hector de Lucchesi-Palli she had been more difficult than ever before. The worthy Abbé Olivieri, her religious instructor, did his best to effect a reconciliation between the young people: “Her Royal Highness has long since repented of her injustice,” he would say to young Hector; “she bears you no ill will. Go and ask her forgiveness for the offence you may unwittingly have given her.”

But Hector too knew how to be proud when occasion arose.

“I have given no offence,” he said firmly, “I cannot ask pardon for what I did not do. She may hate me now, but if I humbled myself having done no wrong, she would despise me, and that would be worse.”

With a sigh of perplexity the good Abbé tried other tactics:

“Don Hector never did cause your Highness to fall into the water,” he explained to Caroline.

“How do you know?” she retorted; “you weren’t there. You were busy chasing the kitchen wench down the corridor.”

In the end it was chance that brought the playmates together again. It was during the unfortunate period when Joseph Bonaparte, and after him Murat, reigned in Naples, and King Ferdinand with his domineering Queen had been relegated to their kingdom of Sicily. The Court was at Palermo, and there too just as in Naples mild insurrections broke out from time to time among the populace. When the turmoil grew high, Their Majesties remained closely guarded inside their palace; but somehow or other on one occasion Caroline Ferdinande managed to give the guard the slip. Unnoticed she made her way out into the street. She was used to insurrections from early childhood, but she had never seen one at close quarters. While her governesses and ladies-in-waiting were huddled up together like so many frightened hens in that part of the palace which seemed most safe, the child —she was only twelve—slipped out of her room, down the grand staircase and out in the open before those responsible for her safety were aware of her escapade.

The great Piazza in front of the Palazzo Reale was full of animation: people running for the shelter of their homes, cavalry thundering past in the direction whence came the sound of the clash of arms, one or two pistol-shots and any amount of shouting. Caroline Ferdinande, in her little dark frock, a small atom in the midst of all this turmoil, was not recognized. She turned away very quickly from the approach of the palace and found shelter in an open doorway lower down the Piazza. Immediately opposite was the house which served as the quarters of the officers of the guard, and Caroline, gazing curiously about her, and delighted at having given all those tiresome attendants of hers the slip, saw two things that immediately engrossed her attention. She saw the captain of the guard leaning out of a window of the house opposite, shouting orders to a sergeant and men down below. He was in a flowered dressing-gown and his hair was unkempt: apparently he had no intention of risking his valuable life or wasting precious time in heading the charge against a riotous mob. Caroline immediately put him down as a coward, and, regardless of her own precarious position, started at once to run across the Piazza with the express purpose of telling that fainthearted captain of the guard just what she thought of him. And in her haste she collided with someone who was running in the opposite direction.

It was young Hector de Lucchesi-Palli. How he came to be there she never thought to ask. As a matter of fact, he had been out walking with his tutor when first the shouting and firing in the street had begun, and together they were hurrying home to the Della Grazzia Palace situated at the other end of the town. But Caroline asked no questions. Here was just the one person in the world who would know how to back her up in any prank she might devise for the punishment of that cowardly captain. Forgotten was her quarrel with Hector, his supposed offence and her unjust retaliation. She seized him by the hand, and dragging him after her, she shouted excitedly:

“Come and help me throw that poltroon over there out of the window! He makes me sick.”

Fortunately for everyone concerned, for Caroline, for Hector and for the captain of the guard, lacqueys, maids and ladies-in-waiting came running out of the palace headed by the Court Chamberlain and the Master of her household: they arrived on the scene just in time to prevent one of the worst scandals that had ever set Palermo talking. Incidentally that particular scandal would have turned the people’s contempt for the King into admiration for his plucky granddaughter: the army was anything but popular, and the discomfiture of one of the officers at the hands of a child

would have turned rebellion against the monarchy into loyalty for its youngest scion.

As it was, that royal scion was carried, screaming, protesting and kicking, back to her palace, whilst the young Count de Lucchesi-Palli followed in her train with glowing eyes and head erect, confident that the quarrel which had nearly broken his heart was now happily at an end.

CHAPTER II

CINDERELLA

Caroline Ferdinande sat at her piano and sang:

> Il était une fois une petite Cendrillon
> Toute digne de pitié!

And she sang to the end of its fourteen verses that doleful song which relates all the human miseries which a legendary little Cinderella was made very unjustly to endure.

She was now nearly seventeen and it became more and more manifest every day that she was not wanted, and that she would remain to the end of her days on the matrimonial shelf. Her education had been shamefully mismanaged: she was wilful, ambitious and was for ever chafing against her fate, which she believed could never be anything but dreary and inglorious. What prospects had she of being anything else but an old maid, at best the Mother Superior of an impoverished convent? She had no money, no estates, no influence. King Ferdinand, her grandfather, had sold or bartered every bit of land he could lay his hands on; the name which he had transmitted to his family was a byword in Europe, despised, derided and now even execrated. Oh, she, Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, was indeed a poor little Cinderella worthy only of pity! She was extremely sorry for herself: nothing consoled her, neither music nor painting, nor the orange groves which she loved. Hector de Lucchesi-Palli tried to comfort her whenever she gave him the chance, but these chances came at very rare intervals now, and the conviction of her dreary future became stronger and more insistent in her girlish mind.

Hector did his best to amuse her by provoking fights often with young men much older than himself and he brought as much zest into these fights as if his life depended on victory. An English sailor taught him boxing; and he threw himself with ardour into training for the noble art. As soon as he felt that he was fairly proficient in it, he arranged bouts with some of the young officers on board the English men-of-war that were at anchor in the Bay of Naples. At first, Caroline Ferdinande was interested; she even screamed and clapped her hands at tense moments during the fight, as she had done in the past. But the novelty soon wore off. She was a doleful little Cinderella whom nobody wanted.

“I can’t even marry Hector,” she said to herself: “they wouldn’t let me.”

"They" being her grandparents. Her mother was dead, her father had married again, a Spanish princess, who presented him with a new family, a round dozen of them in the end. Caroline Ferdinande disliked her stepmother intensely, and she simply wouldn't look at her baby stepbrothers and sisters as these were presented to her in rotation when they made their appearance into the world. Her pride, her wilfulness and decidedly sharp temper cut her off from companionship with children of her own age. Nor did she court that companionship. She felt that she was unloved and unwanted and was too proud to bestow affection where none was asked for.

For Hector de Lucchesi-Palli alone she harboured a kind of cool friendship, not unmixed with gentle contempt because of what she put down as meekness of spirit. He alone put up with all her tantrums, and though his own temper could be sharp enough on occasions, he never lost it even when she was most provoking. But what was the good of letting oneself care about him in any way but comradeship. "They" would never allow her to marry him, even if his father and elder brother happened to die and he came into the fine old title of Duke della Grazzia. Nor did he ever make love to her. She didn't think that he really cared for her in that way. So when she sang, "Il était une fois une petite Cendrillon . . ." and Hector stood behind her and tried to say something pleasant and comforting, she just swung round on the piano-stool and slapped his face—not hard enough to hurt him, but just to show him that she was not taken in by his sentimental talk.

"And," she went on tartly, "I don't know why you waste your time listening to my bad singing when Donna Anna has a voice like a nightingale and will sing to you most melodiously and entirely out of tune."

Donna Anna was the only child of the Marquis di Mauro-Ganari, the richest nobleman in Sicily, and it was common talk in Palermo that she was in love with the young Count de Lucchesi-Palli, and that both families would look with favour on an alliance between them.

Wasn't it enough to provoke a saint—and Caroline Ferdinande was no saint—to see the meek way in which Hector made no reply to her taunt and did not even take the trouble to declare that her singing was in every way superior to Donna Anna's birdlike strains? Donna Anna was one of those women whom Caroline Ferdinande disliked even more than she did her own family; not because she sang out of tune, but because she put on such superior airs, the airs of a rich young girl, round whom the masculine flower of Sicilian aristocracy gathered, as flies do around a honey-pot. When she was present at any ball or Court function, no other girl had a chance of filling her dance programme until Donna Anna's was full, and all the

attentions that Princess Caroline herself got from those young jackanapes were those which she commanded by virtue of her royal rank.

The only satisfaction that Caroline Ferdinande got out of Donna Anna's presence at such functions was that even the beautiful heiress of the Mauro-Ganari millions was obliged to kiss her hand.

CHAPTER III

WHEN THE FAIRY TALE BEGAN

THE fairy tale began with the greatest political upheaval Europe had ever known. It began with the victory of the Allies at Waterloo over Napoleon I, Emperor of the French, and his perpetual exile in Saint Helena. He had established the members of his own family on various thrones in Europe, among them his sister Caroline Bonaparte, married to one of his marshals, Joachim Murat, whom he set upon the throne of Naples.

But after Waterloo everything was changed. Louis XVIII was restored to the Throne of France and the various Bonapartes were swept off their mushroom thrones. Murat tried to keep his but was defeated by the allied French and Neapolitan armies, taken prisoner and shot: after which King Ferdinand, now a widower, retook possession of his throne. He entered Naples amidst popular acclamations: his domineering Austrian wife being dead the people hoped that he would inaugurate an era of liberalism and political liberty, as well as the constitution which he had long since promised that he would give them.

It was only the poor little Cinderella, Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, who did not join issue with the general rejoicings. She did not feel that in this new state of things her value in the matrimonial market had been in any way enhanced. Indeed her personal outlook for the future had never been quite so dreary. She had now a step-grandmother as well as a stepmother neither of whom cared much what she did or where she did it: and while her sister Christine was growing up a regular beauty she, the eldest-born, was voted to be ugly, ill mannered and disfigured by a decided squint. Hector de Lucchesi-Palli was in Palermo with his family and—Caroline had no doubt of that—was courting the accomplished and beautiful daughter of the millionaire Marquis di Mauro-Ganari. All of which tended to keep the poor little Cinderella down in the doldrums.

Indeed she became so doleful about this time that even her supine father felt that something ought to be done about it. At worst there were convents who would gladly welcome a royal princess as their Mother Superior. But frankly Caroline Ferdinande had not in her temperament the makings of a nun: and if thrust against her will into a religious community, she might provoke a scandal. One never knew with her. In the end, the King himself was persuaded to take a mild interest in the future of his granddaughter and, in the intervals of misgoverning his kingdom, to look about him and see if

there was not a bit of land left somewhere that could be offered as a bribe to some impecunious princeling to induce him to take Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, for wife. But unfortunately King Ferdinand had got rid of every estate he ever possessed, and had plundered his subjects to such an extent that there was little if anything left on which he could lay his hands. And there was the younger sister getting on to marriageable age. She was pretty and quite likely to attract one of the members of the Spanish royal family, boys who were anyway too young for Caroline Ferdinande, and it would be against all etiquette and Court usage for a younger sister to marry while the elder one was still on the shelf.

The matter did really seem absolutely hopeless until, suddenly, fairy godmother took the matter in hand and waved her magic wand. Over in Paris the obese and gouty King Louis XVIII was in as great a state of perplexity as Cousin Ferdinand was in Naples. In his case, however, the thorn in his flesh was not a granddaughter, but a nephew. This was Charles Ferdinand, Duc de Berri, younger son of His Majesty's brother the Comte d'Artois, and presumably, as his elder brother had no children, future King of France: a very naughty and dissipated young man, whose amorous adventures, especially those in connection with an English lady named Aimée Brown, were causing an unpleasant amount of scandal round the newly restored throne, and, what in a way was more galling, Charles Ferdinand's shocking reputation was spreading far beyond the borders of France. Both his uncle and his father were very much afraid that not one of the European monarchs who happened to have a daughter of marriageable age would ever consent to ally her with so notorious a scapegrace, and it was imperative that the Duc de Berri should wed a royal princess who would in due time provide France with an heir to her crown.

And that is where the fairy tale had its beginning, for suddenly the King of France bethought himself of his cousin Ferdinand over in Naples and of the latter's granddaughter Caroline, who was close on seventeen years of age. True, she was said to be ugly, but no girl is ever really ugly at seventeen. True, she had not much of a dowry and had been, so rumour had it, very badly brought up; but Charles Ferdinand Duc de Berri could not afford to be particular, and the present situation, in which Madam Brown loomed largely, had to be ended at any cost.

Towards the end of October there arrived in Naples a pompous middle-aged gentleman, the Duc de Blacas, special envoy to His Most Christian Majesty the King of France. The Neapolitan ladies made great fun of him and declared that if that figure of fun represented French aristocracy and

French culture, then give them handsome Italians all the time. Caroline Ferdinande was openly rude to him, when first he kissed her hand. It was a gala evening at the palace with orchestral music from the opera and the cream of the Italian *prime donne* and tenors to enliven the occasion. In spite of this, everyone was frankly bored, and young and old wondered why the King and Queen were so extraordinarily gracious to the pompous middle-aged gentleman from France. He was shaped like a huge pear, with small head, narrow shoulders and thick bowed thighs.

"He must look funny in his bath," Caroline declared, and at the back of her programme she sketched a caricature of the French envoy taking his morning ablutions, a spirited drawing which sent all the frivolous young people into a guffaw.

But a very few days later the Court sang a different tune. It transpired that the mission of the Duc de Blacas was none other than to ask on behalf of His Royal Highness the Duc de Berri, nephew of the King of France, the hand of Donna Caroline Ferdinande Louise of Naples in marriage. At this astounding news there was a regular flutter in the Neapolitan dovecotes: the chatter, the gossip, the backbiting that went on were the loudest on record. The backbiting chiefly, because Caroline was not really popular: her tongue was too sharp and her likes and dislikes too pronounced to attract many friends. But, as her virtue had never been assailed by the least breath of scandal, gossip-mongers turned their attention to the future bridegroom. The Duc de Berri, so they declared, was the worst profligate in Europe; he was fat and bloated and ugly. Some of the ladies went even so far as to say that not even the prospect of being Queen of France one day would induce them to wed such a repulsive personage. But that of course was sheer envy and nonsense, for one and all of these high-born Neapolitans would have given their eyes for the chance of sharing the greatest throne in Europe, even with a monkey.

The only one in Naples who kept calm and dignified through this social turmoil was Caroline herself.

"I knew I was going to be a Queen one day," she said with astonishing coolness: "I hadn't thought of France actually, but the crown of Marie-Antoinette will be quite becoming."

She said this in the intimacy of the family circle who had gathered round her at the first rumour of the astounding news. Her grandfather the King presided at this gathering, her step-grandmother was there, and so were her father and stepmother who had come up post-haste from Sicily, and her

sister and brother and some three or four half-brothers and sisters who had recently made their appearance in the world. They all clapped their hands, ejaculated "*Dio mio!*" in various degrees of emotion and kissed the reluctant Caroline on both cheeks to testify their joy at her great good fortune.

"I don't know why you are all so excited," Caroline went on with astounding aplomb: "haven't I often told you that I would be Queen one day. I remember," she concluded dryly, "that most of you laughed rather rudely when I said it."

Of course, not one of them remembered ever having been told anything of the sort, but no matter. For one thing the future Queen of France could no longer be contradicted. She might say anything she chose. In the turn of a hand Caroline Ferdinande, the little Cinderella, had become the most popular personality in the Kingdom. The ladies and gentlemen of the Court crowded round her now, almost sycophantic in their attentions. She was surrounded, adulated, flattered: how exquisitely Madame la Princesse sang, no *prima donna* could equal her! How perfectly she danced! Even Donna Anna would have seen her dance programme empty, while the handsomest cavaliers, forgetful of heiresses and their millions, hung round the adorable princess. Pity Donna Anna happened to be in Sicily just now! It was the one fly in the ointment.

The King, beside himself with joy at this alliance which would consolidate his position in Europe, made over to his granddaughter her mother's estates, which he had carefully withheld from her all these years for her own good. He also assigned to her the sum of a hundred and twenty thousand gold ducats, payable to her out of the public funds within the next eighteen months. And finally he placed a further sum of five hundred thousand ducats at her disposal for the purchase of jewels and a trousseau suited to the exigencies of the future Queen of France, and step-mama journeyed in person to Rome to purchase the laces and furs. The people of Naples clubbed together to present her with a tiara worth her grandfather's ransom; the Sicilians offered her an ermine cloak made up of a thousand skins whiter than snow. Gifts of jewellery poured in upon her, some of the most valuable coming from her prospective in-laws over in Paris. King Louis XVIII, not to be outdone in lavishness, assured her an income of a hundred thousand gold francs, to be continued in full in case of widowhood.

And Caroline accepted every gift with such charm and graciousness that presently all Naples came to the conclusion that she was pretty. Not beautiful, but pretty and extremely fascinating. That cast in her eye, for instance—who had ever dared to call it a squint?—was the most alluring

trait ever seen in a woman’s face. And the charm of her smile sent every man off his head. She was always smiling now. Her whole nature expanded under their adulation as a flower opens out under the sun’s kiss. She spent most of her time poring over fashion books, choosing dresses, bonnets, coiffures.

“They shall and will think me the most beautiful Queen France has ever seen,” she declared.

She held long consultations with Virginie, the renowned French milliner recently settled in Naples, who worked for all the aristocracy, but whose prices hitherto had been too high for royal purses.

“Whatever Madame la Princesse chooses to wear,” the obsequious Virginie said with an unctuous smile, “will become her. With Madame’s colouring, her blue eyes and lovely curly hair, she can wear any style and any colour.”

And Caroline lapped up all this incense as a cat laps up cream. She had longed for it all her life and always been deprived of it. She had been so near despair that she had even ceased to dream. But she was no longer the doleful Cinderella now: she was the fiancée of the most eligible prince in Europe.

She was married by procuration in the Cathedral of Naples on a lovely day in April. The Cardinal Archbishop performed the ceremony. The Count of Syracuse represented the bridegroom. Caroline, in a dress of silver brocade, with the tiara which had cost a fortune crowning her fair curly head, walked up the great aisle of the majestic building as if she were treading on air. She was conscious of the murmurs of admiration that accompanied her progress up to the chancel steps, where the elderly representative of her young fiancé awaited her. Close beside him, foremost among the young aristocrats privileged to sit inside the chancel, was Hector de Lucchesi-Palli. She was looking for him and caught his eye just before she knelt down on the velvet-covered *prie-Dieu*. Her face was irradiated with happiness: her eyes shone with joy, her mouth looked as if it could never cease to smile: and she cast a look of true affection on the playmate of her childhood’s days, the sharer of her girlish pranks and of her joyless days: here he was, she thought, a witness of her triumph and her happiness. But at that very moment the cathedral bells burst into a terrific peal, the organ filled the air with its thundering chord, there was a general hubbub, a *frou-frou* of silk dresses, the acolytes swung their censers, sending clouds of incense into the air. Caroline lost sight of everything and of everybody. She closed her eyes, feeling faint with the intensity of her emotion.

When she opened them again, Hector was down on his knees, his forehead resting on his hands, wrapped in earnest prayer; nor did Caroline catch his eye again throughout the religious service. That disappointed her a little. But the real fly in the ointment of this happy day was the fact that Anna di Mauro-Ganari was not there to witness it all.

CHAPTER IV

WHEN JOY WAS UNCONFINED

It was on the day of the marriage by procuration that Caroline Ferdinande wrote her first letter to her royal fiancé. It was a difficult task. She had never been very studious in the days when the worthy Abbé Olivieri tried to inculcate the first principles of arithmetic and grammar into her obstinate little head, and study of the French language had never appealed to her. But a letter to her husband—he was that now if only by procuration—was an important duty that could not possibly be shirked, and what's more, the letter must be written in French. How was it going to be done with the writer's very limited acquaintance with that elegant language? With outside help of course. But whose?

Caroline did not want to ask Madame de La Tour, who knew too much about the unruly Cinderella of old to take her expressions of love for an unknown husband seriously: and Caroline Ferdinande did not care to let any of her ladies into the secrets of her heart. There was of course the ever kind and ever loyal Hector de Lucchesi-Palli. He had been very well educated, far better than most scions of the Italian aristocracy, and spoke French, if not like a native, at any rate quite fluently. For a long time Caroline hesitated. For some reason or another she didn't want to ask Hector either, but in the end, as there really was no one else, she confided her wishes to him, and it was the Count de Lucchesi-Palli who indited the first love epistle which the Duchesse de Berri wrote to her royal lord. Allowance must be made, on becoming acquainted with the contents of this first letter, for the exuberant Latin temperament, and for the impetuosity of a young girl on the threshold of a new and brilliant life, so different from anything she had experienced before. Some of the phrases are perhaps fulsome, but there is no doubt that what Caroline Ferdinande wrote—or rather what Hector de Lucchesi-Palli helped her to write—was the genuine expression of her feelings.

> Monseigneur [she said in her letter], it is before the altar that I have made a solemn vow to be your faithful and loving wife. This title, so dear to me, carries with it certain duties which I take a pride in fulfilling from this very hour, by giving you an assurance of my sentiments towards you, which will endure throughout my life . . .

And so on, in four closely-written pages. Caroline's first epistolary effort had its reward a fortnight later in a reply from the Duke, her husband, a

reply in which he expressed sentiments every bit as ardent and as lofty as her own. His letter covers six closely-written pages. By the time it arrived in Naples, the bride was ready to start for France, there to commence her new life. The French Ambassador sent a special despatch on the 14th of May to Paris to the Duc de Richelieu, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

> Her Royal Highness the Duchesse de Berri [he said] was in excellent health and spirits when she embarked this morning on board the Neapolitan frigate *La Sirena*. The weather in the morning was perfect. *La Sirena* set sail for Marseilles accompanied by *Le Ferdinand*, a ship of the line, and by the brig *La Fama*. Her Royal Highness should have started on the 11th, but a fierce gale, which raged for three days all down the coast, compelled her to delay her departure until to-day. The French schooner *Momus* is escorting the squadron and will probably precede its arrival in Marseilles by a few hours.

Caroline Ferdinande did not altogether look forward to the sea journey which would last at least five days. She was a very poor sailor and suffered considerably from seasickness. But she was far too plucky to show signs of any disquiet before the large concourse of people of every station of life who came to see her off. The King, her father, accompanied her as well as her uncle the Prince of Salerno, the representatives of the King of France, the foreign ambassadors and a number of ladies and gentlemen of the Court, some of whom were going with her as far as Marseilles, and some as far as Paris, whilst half the population of Naples seemed to have congregated on the quay. As soon as the royal party stepped on board *La Sirena*, the crew set up rousing cheers of "*Vive le roi!*" and "*Vive Madame la Duchesse de Berri!*" whereupon *Le Ferdinand* discharged a volley of eighteen guns and the *Momus* followed suit with twenty-one. All this pleased Caroline Ferdinande immensely. There was nothing in the world she liked better than salvos of artillery and plenty of cheering, with herself the centre of popular enthusiasm.

Towards midday the King and the Prince of Salerno bade her good-bye, as did the representatives of France and the foreign ambassadors, and there remained in her entourage the Prince of San Nicandro, the Count de Lucchesi-Palli, and the Count and Countess de La Tour with their daughter. These gentlemen and ladies would remain with Her Royal Highness in any case until after her marriage.

La Sirena then set sail, and Caroline Ferdinande, waving a diminutive handkerchief and trying in vain to swallow the tears that came to her eyes, bade farewell to her native land.

The journey to Marseilles took seven days, for *La Sirena* encountered heavy seas in the neighbourhood of the island of Elba. Caroline Ferdinande, despite her determination and her courage, was very seasick most of the time. However, on the fifth day the wind dropped, the sun came out and the end of the voyage was everything that anyone could wish. On the sixth day Marseilles was in sight. And then a serious contretemps occurred: the French health authorities went out to meet *La Sirena* and informed her commander that owing to the recent serious outbreak of cholera in Naples, the ship must remain in quarantine for ten days.

And it was to the accompaniment of a salvo of a hundred guns from the fort that the frigate cast anchor outside the line prescribed by the law. Although the port was by then a dense mass of vessels of every shape and size, no one was allowed to approach *La Sirena*. A few enthusiasts caught sight of Her Royal Highness as she stepped down into the boat and was rowed ashore to the lazaret, where she and her suite were to spend the next ten days. Everything there had of course been done for the comfort of Madame la Duchesse and her suite, and Caroline Ferdinande, with her usual good humour, tried to make the best of the trying situation, more especially as the port authorities did what they could to keep her entertained. From the distance and with a pair of strong binoculars she could see the city and the curve of the quay where crowds of people moved about from morning to evening, hoping to get a glimpse of the young bride-elect. She could see the town all festooned with flowers and brilliantly illuminated at night with coloured lights.

The commandant of the port, Admiral Missiessy, placed a handsome boat at her disposal, and in her Caroline Ferdinande was rowed as near to the port as the authorities would allow. The Officers of Public Health always accompanied the boat in one of their own, so as to make sure that no other embarkation came nearer than was permitted by official regulations. But Caroline Ferdinande would stand up in the stern of the boat, and wave her little hands to all those who were lucky enough to catch sight of her. Once they came quite close to the quay of the Cannebière and a crowd of people saw her and cheered her to the echoes. She certainly looked ravishing in a dress of rose-coloured taffeta with sleeves and trimmings of tulle; she had a dainty shawl of striped cashmere round her shoulders and a big hat of white leghorn with a garland of lilies round the crown. She blew kisses to the

crowd that cheered her. Tears of emotion were running down her cheeks: "I am not usually a cry-baby," she said to one of her entourage, "but I feel that to-night I must let myself go."

It was during her stay in the lazaret of Marseilles that Caroline Ferdinande wrote some of those letters full of naïve expressions of ardour which have done more to reveal her true character than all the dry comments to be found in the *Moniteur* and the *Journal des Débats*. True, those letters appear fulsome to the modern mind, but all the same they have the ring of truth in them, and one sees this young warm-blooded Southerner simply bursting with joy at her sudden change of fortune and with longing to express her gratitude to the unknown husband who had brought about this wonderful change.

"I am very grateful, I assure you," she wrote to him, "and I long to give expression to my gratitude: but it is difficult for me to get over my timidity."

She also begged him to be her teacher, and to instruct her in the ways she must follow in order to please the King of France, his uncle.

And certainly the Duc de Berri was only too ready to respond to his young bride's ardour, by expressions of tenderness and admiration. Frequently in his letters he called her his dearly loved friend, his sweet and adorable wife. "Whilst waiting for that blessed day in June," he concluded, "which still appears so sadly distant, I can but reiterate that I love you and will do all that I possibly can to make you happy."

And so the ten days flew by in an atmosphere of happy expectancy. The 30th of May came at last and Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, Duchesse de Berri, made her triumphant entry into Marseilles.

CHAPTER V

AN ECSTASY OF HAPPINESS

LONG before dawn a stream of people converged towards the port. Women carrying flowers, bunches of roses, branches of lilac and syringa, girls carrying baskets with provisions for the day, men carrying their youngest-born on their shoulders, leading older ones by the hand, the whole crowd moving in the direction of the port where as soon as the tiniest streak of sunlight appeared above the horizon line a salvo of artillery ushered in the wonderful day. May 30th, 1816. The glorious day on which the future Queen of France would set her foot on French soil. That was why Marseilles was in a holiday mood. That was why the streets were beflagged and the port was a forest of masts fluttering their multicoloured pennants in the summer breeze. Now the bells of all the churches began to ring their peals, drowning the very thunder of the artillery with their united clangour, with the boom-boom of Notre Dame de la Garde and the ting-ting of the many convent chapels. Then the cathedral carillon started its merry tune, sending gamuts of sound soaring into the morning: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do; she is coming! she is coming! Coming from the land of sunshine and of song: the young princess is coming to wed our future King: do, re, mi, fa: do, re, mi, fa. She is seventeen: young as the dawn, fresh as a rosebud: she will put new life into this effete monarchy: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do.

By seven o'clock the quays are alive with a restless seething crowd of excited humanity. Already the sun is grilling: red faces, brown faces, old and young are streaming with perspiration: white teeth gleam through moist red lips: the medley of colour is so dazzling that it almost hurts: shawls, kerchiefs, shirts, red, blue, orange, green, every conceivable hue, all trenchant against the azure sky: men, women and children are perched in their hundreds on the roofs, hundreds more are crowding in the windows that overlook the quay: boys have swarmed up the drain-pipes or hung in precarious positions on cornices and balconies: a perch on a garden seat is paid for in silver coin. Vendors of souvenirs push their way through the crowd and do a roaring trade with beads from Sicily or coral necklets from Naples. Street singers in Neapolitan array, twanging guitars, sing sentimental songs about beautiful fairy princesses and lovesick swains. Everything is alive, palpitates with excitement, thrills with the joy of expectancy. Everything hums with life, like a swarm of bees: the soft patois of Provence mingles with the buzzing tones of Marseilles, and together merge in laughter, real, jolly, lighthearted laughter; laughter all the time.

Marseilles this day is in a holiday mood.

In the harbour the French warships rocked and swayed with gentle, rhythmic motion on the placid waters. There was the *Renommée*, the *Saint-François*, the *Marie-Christine* and several others all built by order of the great Emperor for the express purpose of wresting the kingdom of the seas from the English enemy. The white flag embroidered with golden fleurs-de-lis has replaced the tricolour: it flutters gently, peaceably in the breeze, with no hint of conquest, save the conquest of the heart of a fairy princess, who is about to set foot on the soil of France. Their crews are at attention: the officers tightly buttoned in brand-new uniforms: they are waiting for the first boom of the guns that will announce the arrival of their future Queen.

And that first boom when it came sent the huge crowd on the quay into the wildest excitement: it moved and swayed like a gigantic wave rolling towards the port. Children screamed and women fainted. Everybody wanted to see: necks were craned, elbows got to work to forge a passage through the throng. “Here she comes!” A gaily-decorated gig had just come in sight: manned by twelve oarsmen dressed in white satin, she made quick way through the lines of the French battleships. Guns were booming to right and left, bells pealing, carillon ringing. “Here she comes!” rose as an immense uproar from thousands of eager throats.

And here she really was, the fairy princess come out of the land of love and laughter. All in bridal white with feathers and a diadem over her curly hair, weighted with diamonds, smiling, waving her small hands, blowing kisses to the multitude who cheered her to the echoes, Caroline Ferdinande stepped lightly on shore. Already she felt a Queen. Not more than five foot high, she looked both a fairy and a queen. At once the crowd adored her. “Isn’t she lovely?” the women murmured, and threw bunches of flowers down under her pretty feet. She tripped along, still blowing kisses, followed, surrounded, embraced by shouts of welcome and a bombilation of “Hurrahs.” Immediately behind her came her suite, the Prince of San Nicandro, the Count and Countess de La Tour with their pretty daughter, the Count de Lucchesi-Palli. Half a dozen steps and they were met by the Duc de Lévis ready with his speech of welcome. He had it written out in Italian, but Caroline Ferdinande would have none of that. In her execrable French she declared with a disarming smile that in future she will speak no other language but French. “Zé né connais plous d’autre langue,” she says with a Neapolitan accent you could cut with a knife. But what matter the accent? She is just adorable. It is only the old Duc de Lévis who remembers when he was a young man hearing Marie-Antoinette say the very same thing—only

with a German accent, when she arrived as a bride in Strasbourg forty years ago.

But what of that? Sad times are things of the past. The future is rosy, as rosy as this adorable child who will bring new blood, new joys, forgotten laughter to this worn-out ancient Kingdom of France. And Caroline Ferdinande nodded her dainty head while she listened to the interminably long speech of the old buffer, all delivered in French at her desire, not a word of which did she understand. But that didn’t worry her. Her shoes were rather tight, but that didn’t matter either. She had been terribly seasick, the journey had been as interminable as the Duc de Lévis’ speech, the ship had been in quarantine ten days before she was able to land; but nothing of that mattered. She stood on the soil of France. She had come to be its Queen.

After the speech she was trotted off to the Town Hall, where there were more pompous old French gentlemen and more speeches which she did not understand. In the centre of the great hall there was a large table, half of which was covered with a Neapolitan flag, the other half with a French one. Caroline Ferdinande and her suite were stationed on one side of the table, the pompous old French gentlemen on the other. There was no question of sitting down. Caroline Ferdinande stood the whole time on her high heels, unconscious of the pain in her feet. When the final speech came at last to an end, the Prince of San Nicandro on one side and the Count de Lucchesi-Palli on the other took their princess by the hand and solemnly conducted her to the other side of the table and handed her over to the Duc d’Havré, the Duchesse de Reggio and the Count de Mesnard, the representatives of her new country.

More salvos of artillery greeted this ceremony, which proclaimed the fact that the Neapolitan Princess was now truly and irrevocably French. French ladies gathered round her, they led her to private apartments all gay with flowers, where she was stripped of every garment that hailed from Italy, down to her stockings and her chemise, and arrayed in exquisite lingerie and a beautiful dress of white satin come direct from Paris. Thus attired she came back into the hall, and across that table covered with the French flag she saw Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, her playmate. He looked pale, she thought, and not nearly so happy as he should have been, considering that this was the happiest day of her life. And she wondered why. But she couldn’t get near him to ask him what was the matter. She was monopolized by her new suite: pompous French gentlemen, and stiff, starchy ladies, not at all like the laughter-loving, happy-go-lucky Sicilians she was accustomed to. They took possession of her, piloted her out of the building before she could

have a word with her own people. This mortified her at first, but not for long. She was a future Queen now, and her personal feelings must be suppressed, just like the pain caused by her tight shoes, and that slight recurrence of seasickness which rather worried her when she had to keep on smiling.

It was really wonderful what that tender little body endured during that day in the way of physical discomfort and fatigue. After the ceremony at the Town Hall, she was conducted back to the quay, and there she embarked in a gilded sloop, all garlanded with flowers, with sails dyed a vivid blue and ornamented with yellow fleurs-de-lis. Caroline Ferdinande was afraid she would again be seasick, but fortunately the slight summer breeze dropped just then and the passage across the quay over to the Cannebière was as smooth as on a mill-pond. Caroline was not seasick. She smiled, and chattered to the pompous gentlemen and the starchy ladies, in her execrable French, which they professed was charming. But all the while she tried to catch the eye of Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, who still looked very pale and kept his gaze fixed out towards the open sea. Caroline thought that he too perhaps was afraid that he would be seasick, or else that he was so sad because he had been parted from his simpering Donna Anna.

However, before she could make up her mind as to that, it was time to disembark. A gorgeous coach awaited her, with an escort of picked men from the first regiment of the royal guard, to take her to the Cathedral of St. Martin, where a solemn Mass of Thanksgiving would be said by Monseigneur the Archbishop, and a Te Deum, specially written by the great composer Méhul for the occasion, sung by the cathedral choir. The way to the church led through the Cannebière, the most wonderful avenue in the world when it is *en fête*. All garlanded with flowers, lined with soldiers in gorgeous uniforms, the houses to right and left decorated with bunting, the balconies and windows crowded with the *élite* of Marseilles society, all in their best clothes, Caroline Ferdinande had never seen anything like it. She had seen crowds, enthusiastic crowds, in Sicily and Naples, but never anything like these on the Cannebière. In Naples there were always beggars, cripples, vagabonds and cinderwenches who pushed their way to the forefront of a throng, but here in Marseilles beggars did not seem to exist: every man, woman and child was well dressed, and the soldiers!—oh, the soldiers!—what a contrast to the ill-dressed, slovenly regiments of Sicily and Naples commanded by their decrepit old King.

Caroline Ferdinande, reclining on the velvet cushions of the *calèche*, smiled and bowed in response to the prolonged cheers that swelled to a

regular uproar all along her passage, and when she was received at the door of the cathedral by the clergy in magnificent canonicals, when the organ pealed and all the bells of the city sent their bombilation through the air, she felt that an entry into paradise could not be more satisfying or more soul-stirring than this. Kneeling on the damask-covered *prie-Dieu*, her dainty figure shrouded under a white tulle veil, her bowed head adorned with white plumes, she received Monseigneur's blessing with a heart overfilled with joy and thanksgiving. During the Te Deum her high birdlike tones were heard right through the choir. "What a lovely voice she has," the women murmured, and the men said: "She comes from the land of song."

But even after the long, tedious Mass and Monseigneur's still more tedious allocution, the ceremonies of the day were not yet ended. At the prefecture, one hundred young Marseillaise girls were waiting for the fairy princess to present her with a string of pearls, and an address enclosed in a silver casket. More speeches, more words of thanks, more smiles: smiles all the time. Then the gala performance at the theatre, with more ovations, more presentations, cheers, curtsies, bowings and scrapings and kissing of hands.

How Caroline Ferdinande ever got into bed that night she never knew. She supposed that she was put there, and she remembered, vaguely, putting her arms round Madame de La Tour's neck in an ecstasy of happiness. She wanted to kiss somebody, and the old governess who had worried over her childish pranks, and known her as the little Cinderella whom nobody wanted, was as good for the purpose as anyone. Caroline would rather have kissed Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, but he was not there for one thing, and for another he wouldn't have cared. But even if he didn't, why wasn't he there?

Caroline Ferdinande fell asleep and dreamed that Donna Anna di Mauro-Ganari had been ordered by the King of France to walk in high-heeled shoes that were too tight for her, and to kneel before the future Queen and to sing a Te Deum in tune, which she was obviously unable to do, whereupon the King ordered her to be executed on the spot.

CHAPTER VI

PARIS IS WAITING

THE towns that lie between Marseilles and Paris have each their own record of what happened during the royal progress of Caroline Ferdinande, the Neapolitan Princess, on her way to join her fiancé—her husband already by procuration—the Duc de Berri. Those records are just one long chronicle of festivities, of ceremonials, of bunting and triumphal arches, and of the enthusiasm of a people delirious with joy at the sight of their future Queen. At Toulon a number of young men took the horses out of her carriage and dragged her in it through the decorated streets, while little children dressed in white danced their quaint Provençal dances round her. The Admiral in command of the port received her with royal honours on board his flagship; a throne of carved and gilded oak had been erected on deck for her, and there she sat in a bower of lilies watching a naval sham-fight contrived for her entertainment. At Aix-en-Provence she witnessed a marvellous display of fireworks. In Orange a monster reception was given by the mayor inside the great Roman arena. The notabilities of the entire province had come from far and wide to be present at the reception, and to be presented to the princess whose fame for charm and beauty had long since preceded her arrival. At Lyon there was a grand gala performance at the Italian Opera, in the midst of which a flight of doves was let loose from the stage; the birds had each a lily tied to its neck, but so loosely that, as they flew round and round the vast auditorium, the flowers gradually became detached and fell in a sweet-scented shower on the heads of the audience, who threw them *en masse* into the princess's box.

Paris, the beautiful city to which Caroline Ferdinande's triumphal progress tended, was going at this time through a period of awakening from its successive nightmares. These had gradually been dissipated in the sunshine of Gallic good humour, and the love of pleasure, of gaiety, of pageants and galas was at last getting the upper hand over lengthened spells of pessimism and of gloom. But the great city had gone through a terrible time of depression which had lasted the best part of a year, even after King Louis XVIII was restored to the throne of his forebears by the victorious allied armies, and had made his state entry into Paris. Following the victory of Waterloo, and for some months afterwards, Paris had swarmed with foreign troops. There were Cossacks and Prussian guardsmen and English red-coats all over the place. Now, there is no nation in the world quite so insular, not to say xenophobe, as the French and, though the Parisians

realized in a way that it was thanks to these foreign armies that peace had at last come to France, they nevertheless resented the presence of these Russians and Prussians and English in their midst, and went about their business in those streets which these foreigners frequented with a sullen air of discontent, and never a smile of welcome.

Nor had matters in the higher ranks of society been any more cheerful. To begin with, the Court had seemed unable at first to settle down. With the King and his family and also with his entourage there was always the constant fear that the present state of things would not last: the fear that Bonaparte might escape from Saint Helena as he had done from Elba, that he might once again land in France and arouse in the army fresh enthusiasm for his person and his cause; and above all there was the dread of another hurried departure of the royal family from the Louvre in the dead of night and of a wearied, gouty old King being once more hoisted into his coach and hurried back to the frontier and to exile. The fear of another revolution in fact. One never knew what might happen.

The question of money also came in. The Court had none to spend on functions and entertainments. Taxes had been imposed, but not collected yet. One had to deal carefully with people greatly impoverished by wars and revolutions, and gradually consolidate one's popularity which, in spite of the acclamations that had greeted the King when he made his state entry into Paris, was still rather precarious. It was difficult to foretell which way the wind of popular enthusiasm would blow. To have to pay, pay, pay for the pomp and galas of the new régime might easily have alienated the rich bankers and manufacturers whose loyalty at best of times could not be depended on. In a way, the King was popular, and for the moment the royalist and legitimist party was decidedly in the ascendant. Bonaparte and the Empire had been all very well, but it had been a costly business. It had meant war, war all the time, glorious conquests and France the ruling nation of the world. But it had also meant pouring money out like water and, in the end, the enmity of the whole of Europe and the final abysmal catastrophe. And so the Bourbons were welcomed and everyone felt, if not love, at any rate sympathy for the poor old King who had lived the best years of his life in penury and exile, and had seen so many members of his family perish during the Revolution, and the Empire. After all said and done, as most people said, he was French of the French, the descendant of Saint Louis and Henri IV and Louis XIV, and of all those great kings who had crowned France with glory long before Corsican attorneys were even thought of. Then there was Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, the heir to the throne: he was very charming and very smiling: and a great favourite with the ladies. He

and his second son, the Duc de Berri, might be trusted to bring a little life into this moribund old monarchy. It was only the Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême—he the eldest son of Monsieur le Comte d'Artois and after him the next heir to the throne, and she the daughter of the unfortunate Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette—who cast a wet blanket over every attempt at gaiety. The Duchess was only a child when the tragedy of her parents' condemnation and death occurred, and somehow she seemed unable to shake off the obsession of those terrible events. When she drove out with her uncle the King, as she often did, and both were cheered and acclaimed, a bitterly sarcastic smile would curl round her thin lips and they seemed to murmur: "Yes! It is the same crowd who yelled with delight when my father went up the steps of the guillotine, and when they saw my mother's bleeding head held up by the executioner and her dead face struck by him in a final and abominable sacrilege." All of which was of course very true. The most fickle thing in the world is an idle crowd, and no one knew that better than this daughter of kings, but her melancholy and her austerity did not tend to make Court and fashionable society very lively.

And what had put the crown on the gloom of the city during all these months were the endless and ever-recurring mournful celebrations to commemorate by royal command some lugubrious anniversary or other. Streets on those occasions were draped in black, troops marched down the Champs Élysées and along the boulevards, with arms reversed and colours swathed in crêpe, preceded by bands of muffled drums. There was a day when by royal order the last will and testament of Louis XVI was read at every street corner by orators dressed in black from head to foot, with more muffled drums and more troops standing with arms reversed. Another day when a shrine of atonement was dedicated to the memory of the martyred King, and yet another when his body and that of Marie-Antoinette were transferred to the new Votive Chapel in the Rue d'Anjou. All very impressive but certainly not cheerful. And all this had been going on for months, nearly a year in fact. Everyone tried to make the best of things, especially the shopkeepers and manufacturers, who hoped to retrieve their fallen fortunes by a recrudescence of trade—but it was difficult.

Then, suddenly in April the forthcoming marriage of Monseigneur le Duc de Berri with the young Neapolitan Princess was officially announced, and from that moment the whole atmosphere of gloom was dissipated as if by magic. The Duc de Berri had been of very little account till then. True, that after his elder brother the Duc d'Angoulême, who was childless, he was heir-presumptive to the throne; but he had never taken any part in Court functions, such as they were, and though he was a great admirer of the fair

sex, he confined his attentions to ladies who were not “received” at Court or in society. But with the announcement of his forthcoming marriage, he became a personality. Parisians, young and old, shook themselves out of their gloom, like bears out of their winter sleep, and prophesied that the young married couple would put new life into this lethargic city and galvanize Court and society into activity. Modistes and dress-makers got going, new fashions were invented, laces and cashmere shawls of the most vivid colours took the place of sable draperies in the shop windows. New theatres came into being in every quarter of the city, fashionable baths were redecorated and reopened, vendors of cheap and showy knickknacks encumbered the boulevards with their barrows. There was dancing in the Champs Élysées every night.

Paris was awake and prepared to give the young bride a royal welcome.

CHAPTER VII

THE COMING OF THE BRIDE

On the anniversary of Waterloo, exactly one year to a day, Caroline Ferdinande first met her new family. The meeting took place in the forest of Fontainebleau, at the Carrefour de la Croix de Saint-Hérem, the very spot where eleven years previously Napoleon Bonaparte had received Pope Pius VII who had come all the way from Rome to place the Imperial crown on the head of a Corsican attorney's son. Now, as then, two tents had been erected on that clearing, famous for ever in the annals of history. One tent was arranged for the reception of the young princess, the other was for King Louis and his suite. It was a perfect summer's afternoon. The forest appeared as exquisite as a cathedral, with the lime trees and the sycamore and the oaks forming a domed roof overhead, and the straight trunks of the beeches the tall columns of a leafy aisle.

The King was in a gracious mood. He felt better in health, so he declared, than he had done for years. He had not felt one twinge of gout all day. It amused him to twit Monsieur his brother with the latter's obvious nervousness. "Are you afraid the girl will be disappointed when she sees your handsome son?" he asked with more than a thought of malice, and eyed his nephew with a sardonic grin. The Duc de Berri was certainly not an attractive personality, and it was difficult to think of him as a lover. He was twenty years older than his prospective bride and he had all the ugly traits of the Bourbons without their dignity. However, he had fascinated Madam Brown, and seemingly others too, for he had scattered illegitimate progeny all over France and beyond, so it was to be hoped that the little Neapolitan would close her eyes to his defects as those others had done, and only see in him the future King of France.

At the moment he was in as great a state of nervousness as his father, and his uncle's sarcastic remarks seemed to have a bad effect on his nerves. The least sound from a distance which might be interpreted as the rumbling of wheels caused a twitching of his face and hands, and when the sound became unmistakable, and the rumbling of a coach could be heard quite distinctly, accompanied by a fanfare of trumpets, the thud of horses' hoofs and the jingle of metal accoutrements, he very nearly had a fit of apoplexy. He had been standing for half an hour in the grilling sun outside the tent, but now he hurried back into its shelter, behind the row of gentlemen in attendance, and there he remained in the darkness with lips quivering, teeth chattering and hands fidgeting his cuffs and his lace jabot.

The coach drew up: the escort drew rein with a terrific clatter and down jumped the groom and threw open the carriage door. All eyes were fixed on that square opening which would presently frame the future Queen of France. The Comte d'Artois gave his son a shake: "*Voyons! Voyons!*" he admonished. "Courage! don't look a bigger fool than you are!"

The King himself appeared a little nervous. The next moment, however, the most engaging apparition in the world appeared at the carriage door: Caroline looked a mere child, as she stepped daintily down in her sandalled shoes, her little face framed in a bonnet of lace, her pretty shoulders bare, her skin looking fresh and rosy in a dress made up of white muslin and blue bows. She appeared as the very embodiment of youth and gaiety: her eyes were dancing with glee, her full lips, displaying a row of very uneven teeth, were parted in a smile. The gouty old King gave himself a shake, and half raised himself by the arms of his chair: a murmur that was almost a cheer went round the stately company. But before anyone could move, Caroline Ferdinande had tripped lightly from her coach to the tent and there she was, kneeling at the foot of the King's chair, holding up her little face waiting to be kissed. Louis would not have been a Bourbon had he not responded wholeheartedly to the charm that emanated from this fascinating child. He put his arms round her and kissed her: then he called the various members of his family to his side and introduced them to the little princess, each in their turn: the Duchesse d'Angoulême, his niece, as starchy as you like; her husband with a ramrod inside him instead of a spine; the Comte d'Artois with a wry smile, trying to frame a welcome, and finally the bridegroom himself.

Caroline Ferdinande opened her blue eyes very wide when first she raised them to her future lord. Of course, she had made up her mind from the very first that, whatever happened, she would do her best to like him. Cinderella was bound in honour to like the fairy prince who had dragged her out of obscurity into the most dazzling position in Europe. She had been told, over in Naples, by ladies jealous of her good fortune, by Donna Anna, for instance, that the Duc de Berri was old and ugly: but her fairy godmother when she waved her wand and changed a pumpkin into a gilded coach and a lot of mice into a team of horses, did not promise that the prince would be handsome, and, as a matter of fact, Caroline had imagined him rather plainer than he actually was. Wide-eyed she took stock of him while the Prince of San Nicandro, on one knee, presented letters from the King of Naples and the Two Sicilies to his beloved cousin the King of France. On the whole she was not disappointed. Of course there was no denying that he was neither young nor handsome; he certainly was rather fat and was not what in Italy

would have been called *una persona distinta*: his eyes were too bulgy and his legs too short, but Caroline thought that he looked kind, and there was something alive about him, something virile that appealed to her. Somehow those bulgy eyes, when they met her curious, inquiring glance, seemed to respond with a promise that she would have a good time over and above the glory of being one day Queen of France, and when she held out her small hand to him, instead of imprinting a ceremonious kiss on the tips of her fingers, he kissed her soft, warm palm and did it in such a lingering way that Caroline Ferdinande felt an agreeable tingling sensation run all down her spine.

The royal progress to Paris was just a repetition of what had gone before. There were triumphal arches and streets garlanded and beflagged: there were speeches and there were deafening cheers. Caroline Ferdinande was seated beside King Louis in a coach entirely built of glass and gilt woodwork: it seemed like a replica of the coach that Cinderella's fairy godmother once evolved out of a pumpkin. From where she sat she could see and be seen, and when she looked up she invariably met the glance of the Duc de Berri, who was riding by the side of the coach. Sometimes she wondered where her Italian suite were: where were the La Tours and Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, whether they were riding in a coach behind the royal carriage, or whether they had been left behind at Fontainebleau to come on later. But there was not much time to think of these things.

It was wonderful driving through the streets of Paris. At every corner there was something new to see, something fresh had been invented to show the welcome the great city had for the young bride. Caroline felt like a child who had been taken to the fair. Everything delighted her: the Chinese baths with the funny pagoda, a thing she had never seen; the Arc de Triomphe of course; and the many sights on the boulevards, the clowns with their performing dogs and their dancing bears, the acrobats in front of the Variété Théâtre, the vendors of old books and engravings on the quay. But she loved the monkeys best of all: the monkeys with their solemn faces and lidless eyes like little old men, dressed in tiny red coats and green breeches, walking along on a tight-rope drawn across the street or swinging on the horizontal bar. At sight of their performance Caroline, like a child, uttered little screams of excitement and clapped her small hands as she had done in the past when she watched the prowess of Hector de Lucchesi-Palli in an unequal fight.

The King was enchanted with her: he forgot his troubles, his wrangling ministers and his gout and the ever-present menace of Napoleon Bonaparte

still alive on the ocean-girt island of Saint Helena, dreaming of escape as he had done so successfully at Elba. Louis XVIII this day felt rejuvenated by contact with this girl, who seemed to him the embodiment of perpetual youth.

"You will see us dancing at her wedding," he wrote to his cousin the Prince de Condé.

Caroline slept in the Tuileries that night. She was such a young, healthy animal that even after fifteen days of constant excitement fatigue had no real hold on her. She did not lie awake, she did not dream: she just slept like a child. It was the eve of her wedding, of the greatest day in her life, but she slept for ten solid hours, and in the morning jumped out of bed as fresh as the rosebuds to which all her admirers had been comparing her.

The gorgeous Church of Notre Dame had never been more magnificent than it was to-day, all draped in blue velvet embroidered with golden fleurs-de-lis. Since early dawn the bells had been ringing, ringing gaily, voluptuously, in order to usher in this greatest of all days. Marseilles was colourful enough when it was *en fête*, but Paris contrived to beat her in this, although the northern sky could not vie with the brilliant blue of the south. At midday the guns began talking and went on talking and warning till every house in the town shivered and shook and every window rattled. The streets, the windows, the roofs were thronged with sightseers for hours before the arrival of the royal procession.

The State had voted huge credits for the wedding festivities, and a heavy marriage portion for the bridegroom. The King was determined to show the world that the days of the Roi Soleil were not yet over, and that his descendants knew how to do things in right royal style. Thirty-six coaches, each drawn by eight cream-coloured horses, formed the procession which wound its way from the Tuileries along the banks of the river to the cathedral. Slowly, quite slowly, so that the people of Paris should see all they wanted: their King, his family, the royal bride and bridegroom. The regiment of the Swiss Guard in their mediaeval uniforms lined the steps and porch of the cathedral. The Parvis Notre Dame was alive with troops, and as His Majesty's coach drew up, the guns from the Fort Valérien thundered, the bells of all the churches in Paris sent up their joyous reverberations, and the great organ of the cathedral pealed the opening bars of the Te Deum.

CHARLES FERDINAND DUC DE BERRY

Anything more wonderful than the interior of Notre Dame on this occasion could not very well be imagined. Four canons of the cathedral held a gold-embroidered canopy over the King, who looked magnificent in a blue velvet coat heavily trimmed with gold lace, and a huge diamond glistened in his hat which he held under his arm, and another in the hilt of his sword. All that was most aristocratic and most distinguished in France filled the stately building in every corner. Jewels sparkled in the flickering light of a thousand wax candles: the Abbé de Villeneuve, who said Mass at the high altar, wore

a cope worked all over with oriental pearls: the uniforms of the National Guard were almost smothered in gold lace. The Comte d'Artois, their colonel, wore a sword, the hilt of which was entirely made up of Brazilian rubies. The Duc d'Angoulême, High Admiral of France, had a priceless sapphire in his plumed hat. There were the Duchesses of Bourbon and Orléans, the Prince de Condé, the Duc de Bellune, the President of the Court of Appeal, the mayors of Paris and countless others, and in the midst of them the principal actors in this moving drama: the bridegroom in white satin mantle, embroidered in gold, and Caroline Ferdinande in her bridal dress, shrouded in a voluminous veil of silver tissue, her slender figure almost overweighted by the load of jewellery, diadem, necklaces, bracelets, crown jewels of immense value which had been lavished on her by the thrice happy King. She lived and breathed as in a dream, and through clouds of incense she seemed to see not the Cathedral of Notre Dame but that of Rheims, where the highest prelate of France—perhaps even the Pope himself—would presently set upon her head the crown worn by Marie-Antoinette. She joined in the Te Deum, she held her breath while she received His Majesty's blessing, she listened motionless to the Chief Almoner's allocution, but when it came to signing her name in the register she did it with a perfectly firm hand.

In the late afternoon, bride and bridegroom were seen on the balcony in the Tuileries Palace by a populace intoxicated with joy, whilst once again the artillery thundered and the church bells sent their rhythmic chimes right through the cheering, the hullabaloo and the trumpet blasts, right through the uproarious expressions of a delirious joy and of loyalty to the throne, as easily roused among the people to-day as were their cries of "*ça ira*," their curses and their cruel laughter when their previous King and Queen mounted at their bidding the steps of the guillotine.

The festivities lasted well into the night. At eight o'clock there was a banquet at the Tuileries. Three hundred guests sat down to a menu of fifteen courses: there were trout from the Garonne and salmon from the Rhine, langoustes from Belgium, turkeys and chickens from Bresse, as well as the finest wines from Burgundy and the Vallée du Rhône. Louis XVIII, who looked and felt twenty years younger, had the young bride on his left. He talked incessantly to her, told her stories that made her blush. The ambassadors of the great European powers, of England and Prussia, of Austria, Russia and Holland, were all presented to her—to her, the little Cinderella whom nobody had wanted.

It was a never-to-be-forgotten day: and oh! she remembered it all . . . afterwards.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAIRY PRINCE

NOR had Caroline Ferdinande seen the last of ceremonial when she and her husband were at last allowed to retire. For the first time in her life she was made to realize that the princes of this earth do not belong to themselves, but to others, and to the conventions that hem them round. And with the Restoration the old conventions, which the Revolution had swept away, were resuscitated by the Bourbon King, who desired above all to forget the immediate past, and only to remember tradition.

Caroline was looking forward to the moment when at last she could be alone with her husband. The Palais Bourbon had been placed at the disposal of the young couple as a permanent residence. It had been turned into a regular bower of flowers; the very balconies and window sills groaned under the weight of lilies and white roses. Caroline gave herself over good-humouredly to the ministrations of the starchy French ladies who were privileged to attend on the young bride. She accepted with a gracious little smile the compliments, the bowings and scrapings of the pompous gentlemen privileged to wish her good night. Coming out of her boudoir and into the bedroom she had already spied the magnificent bed under its gilded baldachin, draped with heavy curtains of blue damask; she had spied the snowy pillows, the lace-edged sheets and the blue satin quilt, and she had spied the rubicund face of Charles Ferdinand, Duc de Berri, resting on one of the snow-white pillows, looking for all the world like a Neapolitan tomato wrapped in cotton-wool.

The gentlemen and ladies filed out of the room at last and presently Caroline Ferdinande found herself under that blue-draped baldachin by the side of the future King of France. Alone with him at last. She gave that little scream of delight and gurgle of laughter which was habitual to her when she was happy or excited, when suddenly the doors of the bedroom were thrown wide open and, preceded by half a dozen flunkeys bearing tall wax candles, His Majesty the King entered the room, accompanied by Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême and the Duke, the Comte d'Artois, the Duke and Duchess of Orléans, the Prince de Condé, to mention only a few of the royal personages—members of the family—who came in accordance with etiquette to wish the bridal couple a very good night.

The King, feeling well and jolly, was in excellent form. In spite of black looks from the austere Duchesse d'Angoulême, his niece, he indulged in

various little jokes which were not altogether to the taste of the bridegroom; but Caroline, who looked adorable in a billow of lace that framed her rosy face, had her work cut out not to burst out laughing, for Charles Ferdinand looked more comic than ever with that expression of annoyance in his bulgy eyes. She clapped her small hands together as she always did when she was amused, and this so delighted the King that, forgetting all etiquette, he put his arms round her and gave her a good, fatherly hug.

CHAPTER IX

THOSE HAPPY DAYS IN PARIS

"WELL, MADAME! so long as you are happy . . ." Hector de Lucchesi-Palli said this while he performed the rather unmanly task of holding the skein of wool which Madame la Duchesse de Berri was busy winding into a ball.

"Happy?" she retorted, laughing; "of course I am happy. The Duke is so kind—so kind—and the King lets me do just what I like."

Hector said nothing for a moment or two. He kept his eyes fixed on the strands of wool and the small hands that wound them into a ball. He was at pains to avoid the glance of those blue eyes that glistened with the joy of life. At last he said stiffly:

"Your saying that, Madame, makes me happy too. I shall leave Paris content in the thought that you have everything you can possibly wish."

The strand of wool snapped. The ball rolled away on the floor. Hector de Lucchesi-Palli stooped to recapture it. Caroline Ferdinande rasped out a sharp query:

"Leave Paris? What do you mean?"

"My work here is finished," he replied. "I have received my *congé*."

"Who gave you your *congé*?"

"Actually it was M. Decazes, but it came by order of His Majesty."

"How do you know?"

"It naturally would."

"It naturally would do nothing of the sort, and you know nothing about it; but I do know that that insufferable Duchesse d'Angoulême has had a hand in this. I can't bear her."

"Perhaps she has," Hector was willing to admit, and gave a shrug which exasperated Caroline.

"Hector, I will slap you if you talk like that," she said, and snatched the ball of wool out of his hand. For the next two minutes she went on winding, and winding with feverish energy.

"Don't you care?" she asked at last.

“Madame . . .!”

“I wish you wouldn’t call me Madame,” she broke in tartly; “I used to be Caroline for you once.”

“Etiquette, Madame,” he protested.

“Oh! to the devil with etiquette,” she retorted.

And suddenly her mood changed. Her hands with the ball of wool dropped in her lap and she said quite softly:

“Don’t leave me, Hector!” and when she saw that his face hardened and that he pressed his lips tightly together as if he were afraid that words might come out through them which he would afterwards regret, she went on in the same soft tone:

“I have no real friends here, you know. The Duke is kind, very, very kind, and we have great fun together, but this awful etiquette here kills me. And the Duchesse d’Angoulême is always finding fault with everything I do. She hates me because she has no children and thinks that I am going to give a dauphin to France. Oh, I am sure that is why she hates me and because the King is fonder of me than of her. Now I ask you, how can an old man like the King care for such a starchy, hidebound, domineering creature as that? But just because she is the daughter of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette everyone gives in to her, as if having one’s parents guillotined made one superior to other people.”

Hector said nothing more just then and presently His Majesty came in with the Duc de Berri, and the Comte de Lucchesi-Palli was forced to make obeisance and to walk backwards out of the room. But while she received the loving greetings of His Majesty and of her husband, Caroline was saying to herself: “They shan’t send Hector away. That horrid Duchesse wants him to go, just because she thinks I like him too much. Which shows what a fool she is.” She also said to herself: “Or does he want to go and marry that odious Anna of his?” After which private reflections Caroline threw her arms round His Majesty’s neck and coaxed and wheedled until she got him in the right humour: in consequence of which M. Decazes, Minister of State to His Majesty the King of France, informed M. le Comte de Lucchesi-Palli that his presence in Paris was more desirable than his absence, so desirable in fact that it would be impossible to grant him the passport he was asking for. So of course Hector was unable to go away, and continued to hold skeins of wool for Madame la Duchesse de Berri to wind into balls.

Caroline Ferdinande spoke quite truthfully when she said that she was happy. Life in Paris, for a woman who was young and healthy and possessed of a husband willing to indulge her in every prank and caprice, could be extremely pleasant. Caroline Ferdinande during these first few years after her marriage tasted all the sweetness of independence, of almost universal adulation, of high position and of wealth. Though in Sicily and in Naples she was always one of the greatest ladies in the land and as a child had seldom seen her whims and wishes thwarted, these whims and wishes were nevertheless often circumscribed by the lack of money. But here in France with the handsome jointure which the State at great sacrifice had assigned to her, backed by a liberal allowance made to her husband by the King at a greater sacrifice still, she could spend as much money as she liked. She could run from shop to shop, order dresses, furs and laces, purchase perfumes from Chardin and shoes from Janssen, have her coiffures designed by Plaisir and her hats by Bastienne. When Madame stepped into a shop on the boulevards or the Place Vendôme she was received as a fairy godmother. Indeed her popularity with the Parisians transcended that of any royal personage either of the day or of the past.

Unlike most royal ladies she had always shown a discriminating taste for art. At one time, when bored to tears in Palermo after her quarrel with Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, she had studied drawing and painting quite seriously. Whether she had any talent for creative work is beside the point; certain it is that she appreciated pictures by the great masters of the past and did her best to encourage and help modern artists. She bought that beautiful picture of Madame Vigée Lebrun, *La Sybille*, as a birthday present for her husband, and herself organized exhibitions of the works of great artists such as Gérard, Carle Vernet, or Ingres. She was the first to appreciate the genius of young Delacroix, and it was she who persuaded Louis XVIII to sit to Guérin for his full-length portrait.

More to please her husband than for any other reason, she took up her music again. It was the era of duets and solos on the new pianoforte. She played duets with her husband and sang Neapolitan songs to his accompaniment. She never missed an important evening at the opera and was chiefly instrumental in introducing the works of Rossini to the French public.

Those were the more serious sides of her activities, for she was above all a creature full of life and gaiety. She loved pleasure, she loved best of all to roam about the streets of Paris arm in arm with her husband, and to forget as often as possible that she was a royal princess and that there was such a

thing as etiquette at the Court of the Bourbons. When she and Charles Ferdinand sallied forth after dark, like two young bourgeois out on a holiday, she felt really happy, really in her element. In spite of admonitions, and quite a good many black looks from the austere Duchesse d'Angoulême and her entourage, she liked to indulge in the same kind of pranks which in the old Palermo days used to scare poor Madame de La Tour stiff. She had soon enough coaxed her easy-going husband into taking her to places not usually frequented by royalty. She loved dancing, and grandmamma in Naples had never allowed her to dance, not even at Court balls, but now she persuaded Charles Ferdinand to take her one night to Franconi's on the Boulevard du Temple, where dancing went on until all hours and where she imagined that their incognito would never be pierced. And everything would have been all right except for the fact that they both forgot that there was such a thing as filthy lucre, and that keepers of restaurants and dancing halls had the unpleasant notion of desiring to be paid for the food and drink which they provided. When the bill for supper was presented, the Duc de Berri dived in vain in his pockets to find the two hundred francs demanded for *truite au bleu, perdreau à la capucine* and a bottle of Château Yquem. Caroline, smiling all over her face, produced a diminutive reticule in which, in addition to a powder-puff and a stick of rouge, there were exactly fifty centimes. The Duc's bulgy eyes nearly fell out of his head and Caroline's rippling laughter echoed from end to end of the crowded ballroom, until her greatly embarrassed husband nearly lost his temper.

What to do was becoming a serious problem, for Charles Ferdinand, confiding his name and rank in a whisper in Monsieur Franconi's ears, had the mortification of realizing that he was not believed, whereupon Caroline rose in her wrath and slapped the astonished *restaurateur* in the face. She had done that sort of thing in Palermo many a time and almost always with impunity, but Paris was not Palermo, and the *brouhaha* that ensued would have turned the whole episode to a regular tragedy, had not a party of gentlemen in the crowd recognized Monseigneur le Duc de Berri and his laughter-loving wife; but only just in time, as the outraged Monsieur Franconi was on the point of sending for the police.

Largesse and promises freely bestowed secured an undertaking from the worthy Franconi that the whole matter would be hushed up. The clients of the fashionable restaurant were for the most part members of the smart Parisian set, and sufficiently royalist in their opinions to promise silence over what might have become an unpleasant scandal. If mud was going to be slung about, some of it might even bespatter the throne, which was not to be thought of in these early days of the Restoration. But in spite of largesse and

in spite of promises the story did leak out. That was of course inevitable. There were a good many ladies present at the time, and ladies love to chatter. Those who frequented Franconi's had no opinions at all, either royalist or otherwise, and it is always amusing to fling a little mud at those who walk past one with their nose in the air. Caroline Ferdinande never did walk with her little nose in the air, but she did not belong to the "set that supped and danced at Franconi's" and it gave one tone to be able to say to less fortunate friends:

"The Duchesse de Berri was present with Monseigneur the last time I was there. One meets all the *élite* of Paris at Franconi's you know. I often have supper there with the Comte X. or the Marquis de Y. Z."

Be that as it may, the incident was soon retailed all over Paris and the story reached the ears of Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, who threatened to pass it on to His Majesty, but did nothing of the sort. She contented herself with reading a lecture to Caroline Ferdinande, who ground her uneven little teeth with rage and clenched her small fists while she listened to this sermon from a woman whom she hated worse than any other woman in the world—always excepting Donna Anna di Mauro-Ganari. For in this sermon Madame made allusion to what was a very sore subject with Caroline Ferdinande—namely, her failure to consolidate the future of the Bourbon dynasty. She had had three children up to date, her first-born, a girl, lived twenty-four hours; her second, a boy, less than one. Her third was a girl whom the Archbishop of Paris christened Louise Marie-Thérèse, but whom she called Cinderella, the little Cinderella whom nobody would want. The Orléans, who were the younger branch of the family, were jubilant. Louis Philippe, the son of Philippe Egalité Duc d'Orléans, who in his day had cast his vote in the National Convention in favour of the death sentence on his cousin Louis XVI, saw his chances of wearing the crown of France one day grow with every birth and death in the royal household, whilst Caroline Ferdinande's popularity was distinctly on the wane. The incident at Franconi's and her extravagance did not help matters.

"Your one thought is of your own selfish pleasures." Thus did the Duchesse d'Angoulême conclude her sermon, and Caroline Ferdinande was obliged to curb her temper because obviously she could not retort as she would have liked to by slapping the face of the highest lady in France.

"Why does the good God make such ugly women as your cousin," she demanded of her good-natured husband, "and then give them bad tempers into the bargain?"

Charles Ferdinand couldn’t say, nor could he account for the fact that he who had populated whole districts of France with illegitimate children had not yet an heir to the throne, a Dauphin, to his credit.

“Bah!” Caroline Ferdinande concluded with a shrug. “I am young, you are not old. We’re having a lovely time, in spite of your disagreeable relations. Let them wait. I’ll give you an heir presently.”

And she put her arms round the old King’s neck and wheedled him into paying her debts for the third time in four years. Her dressmaker’s bills, the jeweller’s, the milliner’s, and above all her somewhat indiscriminate charities, ran away with most of the fortune her own grateful country had lavished upon her. She had brought youth, gaiety, charm to this archaic Court: the heir would come too very soon: “I promise!” she whispered in the King’s ear. He tweaked hers, and kissed her full on the mouth.

“If that ass Charles Ferdinand doesn’t hurry up . . .” he said with a significant wink.

BOOK II

THE DRAMA

CHAPTER X

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

"I POSITIVELY forbid you to go out to-night."

"I positively forbid you" was the regular formula in the mouth of the Duchesse d'Angoulême whenever Caroline Ferdinande showed any desire now to enjoy life. She was forbidden to ride. She was forbidden to dance. She was forbidden to eat the things she liked best. She was only allowed a walk in the gardens, or a drive as far as the Bois, round the lake and back. She was not allowed to interview her dressmaker or her milliner, or to receive the visits of her Italian friends, except in the presence of one of the older members of the royal family, and above all she was forbidden to go out at night to parties or to the opera.

For this was February, and the long-promised, longed-for heir—for of course it would be an heir—was expected in September. Docteur Deneux was positive about that: both about the heir and about the necessity of extreme circumspection in Madame la Duchesse de Berri's mode of life. To say that Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême was jubilant over this imposed necessity would be to put it rather strongly. Women of her temperament never rejoice, they only hug themselves with a kind of grim satisfaction that has no relation whatever to jubilation. On the three former occasions when there was expectation of an heir, Caroline Ferdinande, still a young bride with unlimited influence over her weak husband and gouty father-in-law, had done very much as she pleased, twice with disastrous results. The third time . . . well: there was this girl Louise Marie-Thérèse, and what was the good of her?

But this time everything was going to be different. Backed by Docteur Deneux, Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême took the whole business of securing the life and health of the coming heir to the throne in her own capable hands. She did all the "forbidding," and in this she secured the cooperation of the King, who really had been growing rather peevish about this delay in redeeming the promise of an heir to his name. Even Charles Ferdinand gave in to his relations, and backed up the doctor and Madame his cousin in all the prohibitions they imposed on Caroline, and consoled himself for the lack of her society by seeking once more that of Madam Brown—and of others.

And poor Caroline spent most of her time either alone or in the company of women she detested. She was dull, and dullness was next to physical

cowardice, the attribute she hated most in anyone. She could not even command Hector de Lucchesi-Palli to hold the skeins of wool which she wound into balls. She did command him once, but he never came. Later she was informed that he had been given an important diplomatic post in Berlin and had desired Monsieur le Prince de Condé to present his respectful adieux to Madame la Duchesse de Berri. Caroline, raging and fuming inwardly, thought to give the whole family a wholesome fright by feigning hysterics. If, she sobbed to the accompaniment of ear-splitting screams, she was to be parted from her friends, she would sooner die, and die she certainly would, and then where would be the heir to the throne of the Bourbons? She did succeed in scaring the royal ladies nearly out of their wits. Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême was the only one who kept her head, she even insinuated rather acidly that she did not believe in the reality of those hysterics, or in the imminent danger that threatened the existence of the future King of France.

Docteur Deneux was hastily summoned; he sat on the edge of the bed where lay the young Duchesse with tears streaming down her cheeks, her scarlet lips quivering, her small hands beating convulsively on the blue silk coverlet. The worthy doctor had a good look at his patient, examined her tongue, felt her pulse, gave those small hands a gentle, fatherly pat. Then he turned to Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, who had stood by with a sarcastic smile round her thin lips.

"Nothing serious, Madame," he said; "nothing at all. A slight attack of nerves. Almost over now. I will give a soothing potion. Madame la Duchesse will sleep and wake up as fresh as a rose. Might I have a glass? Half filled with water, please."

A lady-in-waiting hastened to bring the glass half filled with water as desired, and Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, still with that look of sarcasm on her austere face, watched Docteur Deneux as he extracted a bottle of orange flower water out of his pocket, and proceeded to pour a few drops of the sedative into the glass. Caroline Ferdinande lay quite still now. Her face was still flushed, her lips still a vivid scarlet, and her brows were drawn together in a reflective scowl. And suddenly she inserted her feet beneath the coverlet under that portion of M. le Docteur's anatomy which rested somewhat precariously on the edge of the bed. The result of this unexpected move was catastrophic, for M. le Docteur completely lost his balance and fell sprawling on hands and knees at the feet of Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême; and bottle and glass were smashed, and the

soothing draught bespattered Madame's taffeta gown as well as her silk shoes.

Caroline Ferdinande lay quite still, with eyes closed and head turned sideways on the pillow. When the glass splintered and the ladies screamed, when the unfortunate doctor, overcome with shame, rattled off a string of apologies, she inquired softly:

"What has happened?"

One of the ladies hastened to explain.

"Dear Docteur Deneux!" Caroline murmured, "how unfortunate for you. How did you manage to be so clumsy?"

And then she added in a dying-away whisper:

"I am so tired. I could go to sleep now, if all this noise would only cease."

Docteur Deneux went away in a huff, though Madame la Duchesse did her best to pacify him. In the end he sent one of his colleagues to attend Madame la Duchesse de Berri. This colleague was young, and Madame did look adorable in that dainty cap made up of lace and blue bows which framed one of the prettiest faces he had ever seen.

"Docteur," Caroline said to him on one occasion, speaking very sweetly and with tears in her blue eyes: "I feel very well really, when I am not exasperated. But if anything annoys me, if I am contradicted or worried, I feel as if my head would split and all my nerves suddenly snap. And somehow I get an impression as if a terrible catastrophe was about to descend upon us all."

And she looked so appealing, just like a lovely child who is misunderstood and unhappy, that the young doctor felt tears of compassion gather in his eyes. He turned to Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, of whom he stood in great awe and murmured rather diffidently, but firmly:

"Madame la Duchesse de Berri has a very highly developed nervous system. She must be kept very quiet, and should not be contradicted more often than is absolutely imperative."

Whereupon he was summarily dismissed and voted to be nothing but a fool. Bowing to the ground before the austere lady, he walked backwards out of the room. But he had had his say: and as he was a doctor of renown he could not very well be flagrantly disobeyed. Anyway, Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême deposited a few moments later her accustomed frigid kiss on

Caroline’s forehead and glided out of the room like a ship in full sail, followed by her ladies. The last lady to leave was the Vicomtesse de Gonthaut, the one really devoted and intimate friend whom Caroline had made in France. She it was who took a last look at her future Queen who looked so fragile and lovely in the great baldachin’d bed. What she saw was Madame la Duchesse de Berri putting her thumb to her nose at the retreating figure of the highest lady in the land and thrusting out the tip of a very rosy tongue.

CHAPTER XI

THE TRAGEDY

ALL the same, the "forbidding" business went on just as it had done before. The young doctor whose exhortation in favour of his patient's nerves had offended Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême was promptly given his *congé* and Docteur Deneux was recalled. After all, though he did sprawl unnecessarily on hands and knees and broke a bottle or two, he knew what etiquette demanded of a doctor called to preside over the destiny of the Bourbon progeny.

We may take it that the good doctor took care when visiting his exalted patient not to sit again on the edge of her bed, or to cast doubt on the genuineness of her hysterics. He took the precaution of enlisting the approbation of Monseigneur le Duc de Berri before running counter to any of the irascible little lady's whims. He never used the word "forbid." All he said was, "It would be wiser . . ." and Monseigneur, genuinely anxious about his wife's health and the future of his race, fell in with all the doctor's suggestions.

Caroline Ferdinande fretted and fumed and brought out the whole vocabulary of Italian swear words to intimidate the doctor. But to no purpose. He was adamant.

"It would be wiser," he said, "if Madame gave up dancing, if she walked sedately, if she spent her evenings at home."

And when Caroline Ferdinande in an excess of rage at his admonitions, and her husband's acquiescence in them, stamped her little feet, or paced up and down the room, the worthy doctor added with solemn earnestness:

"For the sake of the Dauphin!"

That was the great point: the Dauphin! the heir to the throne! Caroline suddenly sobered down. She thrust out her tongue at Docteur Deneux, and struck his hand which he held out in order to conduct her back into an easy chair. But she sat down, and even smiled and winked at her husband, who always looked most comical when he was annoyed or anxious.

Though she loved pleasure and excitement more than anything in the world, Caroline Ferdinande, Duchesse de Berri, future Queen of France, was not going to jeopardize the life of the coming Dauphin. Her own future, her popularity, everything depended on that minute existence, to which she had not yet given life. February was a critical month. The child was expected

late in September. All over France, men and women, gentlemen of the Court and ladies of the household, had made up their minds that the child would be a boy. They called him—it was sure to be a "him"—the miracle child. The King believed in this miracle and forgot his gout and all those tiresome ministers; he even forgot Napoleon and Saint Helena in the joyful anticipation of the heir to his name. Monsieur le Comte d'Artois and the other members of the Bourbon family were positively triumphant at the thought that their race would be perpetuated—for of course it was going to be a boy. It was only the Orléans and their faction who hugged themselves with the hope that the child might after all be a girl.

Docteur Deneux fostered this idea of the "miracle child" being a boy: one doesn't quite know why, but he professed to be certain and openly spoke of the coming child as Monseigneur le Dauphin, and Caroline Ferdinande was equally convinced that she was going to have a boy and openly spoke of "my son the Dauphin." She was at great pains to explain to Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême that in the event of Charles Ferdinand being gathered to his forebears during the minority of his son, she, Caroline Ferdinande, would be Regent of France, and would take precedence of Madame la Duchesse. And she certainly was not going to jeopardize all that, even for the sake of a ball or an evening at the opera.

In the meanwhile the several royal Duchesses all supplemented Docteur Deneux's prescriptions by "forbidding" this, that and the other.

"I forbid you to go out to-night," Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême said, knowing that a shower of invitations for balls, routs and a gala night at the opera had descended on the royal couple, this being the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, and by tradition the gayest of gay evenings in Paris. Marshal Suchet, Duke d'Albuféra, was giving a ball at his sumptuous palace in the Rue St. Honoré, and there would be that wonderful performance of *Le Rossignol* at the Opera with the new tenor Lecomte of whom all Paris was raving, and the new ballet *Le Carnaval de Venise* wherein the new dancer Elie would make his debut. To think one was going to miss all that!

Docteur Deneux, however, was quite firm and refused to be coaxed into acquiescence.

"It would be wiser, Madame," he said with more decision than he had ever displayed before. "This is midwinter: February the 13th, if I am not mistaken, and it is bitterly cold outside. Madame might so easily catch cold getting in and out of her carriage."

Caroline Ferdinande was inclined to be rebellious, but the doctor had casually mentioned the date, February 13th, and Caroline was superstitious. Her first and her second born came into the world on the 13th of the month, and both went out of it a few hours later. The thirteenth was an unlucky date. Caroline Ferdinande, smothering a yawn, and making a wry face, settled down to a game of piquet by the fire with her husband. That royal gentleman also smothered a yawn. He was having a pretty dull time just now, spending evening after evening playing piquet with his wife; and to-night of all nights he had looked forward to a pleasant supper party at Franconi's with Clémence, the pretty ballerina, and a few kindred spirits. If Caroline Ferdinande had gone to the Duc d'Albuféra's ball he could have slipped away and no one would have been any the wiser.

He shuffled and dealt the cards. They played a hand or two, and suddenly Caroline threw herself back into her chair and yawned unblushingly. Charles Ferdinand did the same. They caught one another's glance, and both burst out laughing. Each had divined the other's thoughts.

"It is not nearly so cold," remarked Madame Caroline.

"It has just begun to rain," asserted Monseigneur.

"A soft, warm rain," retorted she.

"What about an act or two of *Le Rossignol*?" suggested Monseigneur.

"Madame d'Angoulême has gone to the Albuféra's ball," was Caroline's simple statement of fact.

That settled it. Prudence and superstition were scattered to the winds, burnt-offerings to high spirits and to youth. The royal coach was ordered. Caroline changed her dress, put on diamonds and pearls and a wreath of roses on her curly hair and within half an hour she was seated in the carriage beside her husband, wrapped in furs, as happy as a child who has cut school. She had Madame de Bethisy with her, and the Duke was attended by the Comte de Choiseul. Two more ladies-in-waiting followed with the Comte de Mesnard in another carriage.

The curtain was up when the young couple made their entrance in the royal box, but the news of their visit had leaked out and the performance had to be interrupted while the audience rose and cheered. The Duchesse de Berri, about to give a Dauphin to France, had recovered all her popularity. To-night she was radiant, bowed and smiled all round, waved her fan to those whom she recognized among the audience. Her glance swept quickly round the house. Everyone was there. Fortunately for the escapade, the

Duchesse d’Angoulême was absent; but several members of the royal family occupied the two proscenium boxes, among them the Duchesse d’Orléans, Marie-Amélie, who was own sister to Caroline’s father.

“I must go and pay my respects to Aunt Amélie presently,” Caroline said, and settled down to listen to the celebrated tenor singing the great aria of *Le Rossignol*.

She sat in the velvet-covered and gilded armchair surrounded by her ladies. The Duc de Berri studied the programme to see if the lovely Clémence was billed to appear.

During the interval, between the acts, Caroline rose, and attended by Madame de Bethisy she went over to the proscenium box to visit her aunt. All along her passage she was greeted with affectionate respect. The flower of the old French noblesse was there that night; they cheered her because of the great promise she had made to the nation, a promise which she was about to redeem. The Duc and Duchesse d’Orléans were no less affectionate than was the rest of the aristocratic crowd. Marie-Amélie embraced her niece tenderly, even though in her heart of hearts she must have known that her husband’s chances of being King of France one day had once more become remote.

It was strange indeed how the Fates worked out their grim will that night. Every incident, however trivial it appeared at the moment, became part of their horrible scheme tending towards and ending in the appalling tragedy. Caroline Ferdinande, after a chat with her relations, went back to the royal box. She hurried along because the bell had already been rung for the rise of the curtain on the first act of the ballet *Le Carnaval de Venise*, and in her haste as she entered the box she barged against the handle of the door and gave an involuntary little cry of pain. At once Charles Ferdinand was on his feet, and his arm round her.

“Chérie! you have hurt yourself?”

“Not I,” she retorted; “it is nothing, I tell you.”

The ladies were all in a fluster.

“You must go home at once,” Monseigneur said firmly, for he was, if not actually alarmed, at any rate very anxious.

“I shall do nothing of the sort,” Caroline declared, and settled herself down in the velvet-covered armchair. “I am perfectly well, and I want to see Elie in *Le Carnaval de Venise*. So don’t talk, or I shan’t hear the music.”

Caroline settled herself down to watch and to listen, but Charles Ferdinand was not satisfied and thought she looked pale. He exchanged significant glances with Madame de Bethisy, and when the curtain went down after the first act, he rose from his chair, and said very decisively:

"Chérie! I insist that you go home at once." And he said this so resolutely that Caroline for once thought it best to give way. Perhaps she was not feeling very well. Anyway, she rose and allowed Madame de Bethisy to put her ermine cape round her shoulders.

Monseigneur declared his intention of seeing her into her carriage. He himself, he said, would wait until the end of the evening. It wouldn't look well if he too left early. The audience might think that there was something really wrong with Madame or with the future Dauphin. As a matter of fact, with his wife's departure, he saw his way clear to that little supper party with the lovely Clémence and a few kindred spirits.

"I shall not be late," he said hypocritically, "as I shall be terribly anxious."

And he made Madame de Bethisy promise that she would send at once for Docteur Deneux.

The royal coach was quickly summoned. Caroline came down the perron steps: she had her husband on one side of her, and the Comte de Mesnard, her gentleman-in-waiting, on the other. It was still raining. A thin drizzle mixed with fog. As the royal party was not expected to leave so early, the Rue de Richelieu was quite deserted. There were no officials or uniformed lacqueys in attendance, only the one sentry who presented arms. The footmen were busy round the coach. Madame de Bethisy was at the bottom of the perron, M. de Mesnard near the carriage door. Under the portico, at the top of the steps just coming out of the vestibule, the ladies and the two gentlemen in attendance were waiting their turn to follow in the second carriage.

Charles Ferdinand was at the bottom of the perron with his wife, waiting to see her into the carriage. The Comte de Choiseul was immediately behind him. The Duke was without hat or coat, dressed in a light-coloured suit, with silk breeches and embroidered waistcoat. He put his arms round Caroline and kissed her tenderly, feeling perhaps a little contrite.

"Good night, chérie," he said; "you are sure you are not in pain?"

She laughed: a funny, impish little laugh it was.

“Of course not, you booby,” she said; “go and enjoy yourself. I am not jealous.”

“I will have you in my arms,” he declared, “in less than an hour.”

Caroline Ferdinande jumped into the carriage: Madame de Bethisy stepped in after her and sat down on her left. M. de Mesnard followed. The footman closed the carriage door and Caroline thrust her curly little head crowned with a wreath of roses against the window and blew a last kiss to her husband, who turned immediately afterwards and ran up the steps to go back into the house.

He was about half-way up when a dark figure detached itself out of the gloom. It was a man’s figure, nebulous and dim like a shadow. The sentinel didn’t see what happened because Monseigneur was passing just then between him and that ghostlike form, who in a moment had bounded to the Duke’s side, lurched up against him and appeared to be striking at him with his fist. He then ran away as mysteriously and as quickly as he had come and soon disappeared in the night and the fog.

“Clumsy lout!” the Duke exclaimed, as he stumbled and fell on the muddy steps, and the Comte de Choiseul was starting to give chase when Monseigneur gave a loud cry of agony:

“I am hurt!”

M. de Choiseul was just in time to catch his royal master in his arms before he collapsed, while the other gentlemen-in-waiting took up the chase after the miscreant and ran down the steps and along the street as fast as they could, calling to the sentry to join in.

Caroline Ferdinande had seen everything from behind the carriage window. Everything. She had seen the shadowy form lurch up against the Duke and strike at him seemingly with his fist. She, too, thought at first that it was just a drunken reveller, uncertain on his legs. But immediately afterwards she heard her husband’s agonized cry: “I am hurt!”

In an instant she was out of the carriage and running up the stone steps, gathering her silk skirts about her, her thin shoes squelching in the mud, her feet slithering at every step. She didn’t look where she was going: she only looked at her husband and saw him draw out with his own hand the murderous weapon from his breast. He gave another awful groan of agony. The weapon was a long double-edged knife such as shoemakers and saddlers use in their trade. It had a rough-looking haft of unpolished wood.

There was no one near the Duke at this moment except M. de Choiseul, who supported him in his arms. The gentlemen-in-waiting and the sentry were running after the assassin. Madame de Bethisy and the Comte de Mesnard in the carriage down below had not yet realized what had happened, and the ladies at the top of the perron under the portico were huddled together, terrified, like a lot of frightened hens. A second or two later Caroline Ferdinande, heedless of the mud and the rain, was down on her knees beside her husband.

"Caroline, my beloved," the unfortunate man cried out, "I am dying! Let me die in your arms."

She gave a loud cry of anguish and pillowed his head against her bosom.

M. de Choiseul said: "We must get Monseigneur home at once."

"Yes, at once!" Caroline murmured.

She was making a great effort to keep her wits about her. But it was difficult. She felt as if she were smothered in a thick black veil, out of the folds of which she tried, in vain, to struggle, and that the next moment she would lose consciousness. Nevertheless, she kept her husband's head pillowed against her breast, and murmured:

"Yes! Yes, mon chéri! I am here! You are in my arms and we will soon get you home."

The wounded man muttered feebly: "My wife! Caroline! don't leave me."

Madame de Bethisy and M. de Mesnard had in the meantime scrambled out of the carriage. M. de Mesnard sent the lacqueys in several directions to beat up any of the noted doctors who happened to be available. Docteur Deneux preferably, but there were others equally skilful. Madame de Bethisy was already beside her royal mistress. M. de Mesnard ran up after her.

"We must get him home," M. de Choiseul said once more.

The two men tried to lift Monseigneur, but the flow of blood from his wound was terrific. It saturated their clothes and Madame's dress.

"He might bleed to death on the way," hazarded M. de Mesnard.

They looked despairingly at one another. They both had the same desire, a desire born and bred in all those who have anything to do with courts and

princes, that of keeping an outrage of this sort a secret from the people. “Let us get him home first,” they both thought, “and then we shall see.”

Although to lift the wounded man and carry him a step or two might have been possible, yet to take him all the way down a flight of stone steps in the squelching mud, to lift him into the coach, to drive the long distance as far as the Élysée Palace and to lift him out again was obviously out of the question. As M. de Mesnard had remarked: he might bleed to death on the way.

“He cannot remain here, anyway,” M. de Choiseul decided; “let us get him as far as the vestibule. A doctor may turn up any moment now.”

Once more they tried to lift Monseigneur. The poor man was moaning pitiably: evidently he was in great pain. Caroline Ferdinande helped the two gentlemen valiantly, and between the three of them they did succeed in getting the Duke up into the Opera House, and laying him down in the vestibule on one of the damask-covered benches. M. de Choiseul called loudly for help, but his voice was drowned by the orchestra in the auditorium and the loud clapping of the audience. At last M. Roullet, the librarian of the theatre, came running out of his office. After many cries of “Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! What a catastrophe!” he summoned a couple of liveried servants.

“Monseigneur cannot stay here,” M. de Choiseul reiterated. “What do you suggest?”

“The green boudoir!” M. Roullet murmured; “there’s nowhere else.”

The green boudoir was at the back of the royal box; it was deserted at the moment. M. Roullet lighted the candelabra and the men between them took the Duke in there and stretched him out on a couple of armchairs. He looked an intensely pathetic figure in this gilded and decorated room hung all round with bright-coloured tapestries and adorned with pictures of popular singers and ballerinas in their tulle skirts and bare shoulders, with play-bills and announcements of forthcoming galas. And the orchestra was at the moment thundering out a waltz tune, the finale of *Le Carnaval de Venise*; the audience was clapping and cheering the popular dancer Elie, who bowed and scraped in front of the curtain and blew kisses to his admirers. The future King of France lay dying, while there were cheers and laughter and loud applause, and the hubbub and bustle attendant on a large audience gathering its furs and coats and preparing to file out of the house.

And all of a sudden the hubbub dwindled down into a murmur, and from the murmur to an awed hush. All sorts of wild rumours were suddenly flying around. Somehow the news that a terrible catastrophe had occurred had leaked out, though no one at present knew the exact truth. Some went so far as to say that the King had been assassinated when leaving the Albuféra Palace after the ball; others would have it that the Dauphin, "the miracle child," had been stillborn and that Madame la Duchesse de Berri was on the point of death. A few declared that it was Monseigneur le Duc de Berri who had been the victim of a murderous assault, in consequence of which M. de Choiseul had been killed. People said the wildest things. They hurried out of the auditorium eager to hear the latest news. But way had to be made for the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans, to whom M. Roullet had imparted the real, the appalling truth. They hurried to the green boudoir where the heir to the throne lay dying.

And in their wake others crowded in. With the Orléans came one or two members of the royal family who happened to have been at the opera that night; then there were their ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting, as well as some important officials belonging to the Court or the Ministry. Royal personages cannot even die in peace. They belong to other people. Their privacy, their personal feelings, their griefs and their joys are not their own, they have got to share them all with others, with officials who care so little and sycophants who care still less. Soon the small room was filled in every corner with them, until the atmosphere became unbearable.

Presently Docteur Lacroix arrived. He had been at the opera and been told the tragic news by the ubiquitous M. Roullet. Being physician-in-ordinary to Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, father of Monseigneur, he was able to exert his authority in ordering everyone, except the members of the family, to leave the room. He had already sent a theatre servant round to his consulting-room to fetch first-aid necessities, and in the meanwhile did what he could for the royal patient. It was not much, for he lacked everything—bandages, dressings, instruments—until the arrival of Docteur Deneux, who fortunately had been at home and been hauled out of bed, where he had retired with a cold in the head, by the royal servants who brought the terrible news. Docteur Joly also turned up and the chemist-in-ordinary to the royal household. After their arrival Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans persuaded her niece to drive back to the palace and get a little rest.

"You can't do anything here, Caroline," she insisted, "and you must change your dress. You cannot remain like this. You will make yourself seriously ill and you have your child to consider."

This last argument prevailed, as it always did, and Caroline allowed her aunt to take her to her carriage. She drove back to the Élysée with Madame and with Madame de Bethisy and changed her soiled dress and evening shoes for a comfortable gown and house slippers. But she insisted on going back to her husband directly she had changed.

"He needs me," she said; "I give him courage. If he sees me he will try to live for my sake."

She wanted to take her little daughter with her.

"Louise Marie-Thérèse must see her father . . . it might well be for the last time."

Louise Marie-Thérèse was only fifteen months old. With great difficulty Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans persuaded Caroline not to take the child with her.

"You will only upset her," she said sternly. "She won't understand what she sees, and she may get an epileptic fit or something from which she may never recover."

When Caroline returned to the green boudoir she found her husband surrounded by clergy, and everyone in the room on their knees. Monseigneur d'Amyclée was murmuring the prayers for the dying. He had received the Duke's confession and had administered Extreme Unction. Caroline knelt down beside her husband and as before pillowed his head on her breast.

"I am dying, Caroline," he murmured; "don't leave me."

He then felt for her hand, and holding it very tightly he said:

"Never do anything rash, chérie. Remember your promise. France expects from you her future King."

It was long past midnight now. The wounded man was in great pain—both physical and mental. Something seemed to weigh heavily on his mind.

"I have been a great sinner," he murmured after a time, still holding on to Caroline's hand; "how can I face my Maker with such a load of sin upon me?"

He whispered something to her about Madam Brown.

"I have two children," he said; "two little girls. Do not let them starve."

Caroline could neither speak nor see. Her eyes were drowned in tears, her voice was choked with sobs. She kissed the hand that held hers and

nodded once or twice by way of a promise, which, be it said, she kept religiously to the end. Monseigneur then asked about the man who had struck him. Monsieur le Comte d'Artois assured him that the miscreant had been caught.

"He was running like a madman," Monsieur said. "He tripped in the mud, and fell on his knees. We don't know who arrested him, but he will be punished all in good time."

"I don't want him punished," the Duke protested with sudden energy. "How can I hope that God will forgive me my trespasses, if I do not forgive those who have trespassed against me?"

This question of his own sinfulness and atonement through the pardoning of his enemy seemed to obsess him. He would not rest until his father had promised that the King himself should be petitioned to grant pardon to the assassin. Once again he appealed to his wife.

"Promise me, chérie," he begged, "that you will ask the King to grant my dying request. He will do anything you ask him."

His voice was very feeble, and he only spoke in gasps. Caroline put her ear close to his mouth. Once again with a nod she registered her promise. He wanted to know who the man was who had struck him.

"He was not a Frenchman, was he?" he asked.

But the miscreant was a Frenchman, a saddler named Louvel, employed in the royal stables. As far as he was concerned the crime appeared entirely motiveless. But many persons, some very high placed in the social or administrative world, were accused of having pushed him into this abominable deed: to have bribed him in fact. The Minister of State, Count Decazes, was mobbed in the streets and cries of "*Assassin*" followed him as he made his way to the Opera House. Others declared that the Duc d'Orléans was not entirely a stranger to the hideous murder.

LES DERNIERS MOMENTS DE S. A. ROYALE LE DUC DE BERRY

“It is hard,” the dying man murmured, “to die by the hand of a Frenchman.”

The great surgeon Dupuy, summoned in for consultation, arrived presently. He was the undisputed autocrat of the medical profession in France. He examined the royal patient and pronounced death to be imminent.

“His Majesty must be told at once,” he said.

It was three o’clock in the morning. Impossible to wake His Majesty now. Time enough later, when he was ready to get up.

At Dupuy’s pronouncement Caroline’s courage finally gave out. She had a violent attack of nerves and had to be forcibly dragged out of the boudoir, for her cries and tears distressed the dying man.

“Take her away,” he begged feebly, “her cries torture me.”

But she clung desperately to the arm of the chair on which her husband was lying. Docteur Deneux picked her up as if she were a baby and carried her into the adjoining opera-box. She had to be held down by two of her ladies, for she had a real attack of hysterics this time: her whole body was

shaken with convulsions and her cries and screams were so heartrending that the doctor, for the sake of the dying man's peace of mind, tied his handkerchief round her mouth.

There was nothing more to be done for the Duke now, except to alleviate his sufferings as far as the limited resources of medical science allowed. They bathed his forehead with ether and vinegar: they turned down the lights that seemed to worry his eyes. The flickering of a couple of wax candles illumined the dying moments of this descendant of kings.

At five o'clock in the morning, a certain hubbub outside and the stamping of heavy footsteps announced the arrival of His Majesty the King. Room was made for his wheeled chair, which was pushed along by his two servants. He had only been told of the tragedy half an hour ago. His servants dressed him as fast as they could, and wheeled him down to his coach. Whenever he drove out, his chair was attached to the rear of the carriage, for he was quite helpless now with awful gout in his legs and feet. When they brought him into the room where his nephew lay dying he refused at first to believe that the wound, bad as it was, would prove fatal, and when his chair had been brought to a standstill close to the dying man he said quite cheerily:

"Bear up, my nephew: you are young, we'll soon have you on your feet again."

But even before he had finished speaking, the Duke put out his hand and murmured:

"Promise me, Sire, to pardon my enemy."

It was the same obsession that tormented him. He was a sinner and desired to earn his Maker's forgiveness by pardoning the man who had compassed his death. His Majesty, however, would not commit himself.

"We'll see," he said; "we'll see! When you are well again we'll talk it over."

The dying man relapsed into silence. His eyes grew dim. He lay quite still. The old King sat in his wheeled chair, almost motionless, and gradually his face took on an expression of acute distress. The truth was beginning to dawn on him. He looked appealingly at the great surgeon.

"Doctor . . ." he murmured.

But the latter made no reply. He had at that very moment taken hold of the Duke's wrist: the pulse had ceased to beat.

“A mirror,” he demanded.

There was no hand mirror available. The King gave the doctor his snuff-box, in the lid of which there was a small mirror. Dupuy took it and held it to the Duke’s mouth, a naïve proceeding enough, but customary on these sad occasions. He then gave it back to His Majesty without a word.

A profound silence fell on the entire assembly. Those present sank slowly on their knees. The bishop intoned the prayers for the dead. The King had scarcely moved: he sat staring down vaguely at the snuff-box which he held clasped in his hands. Heavy tears were coursing down his flaccid cheeks: his lips murmured inaudibly the prayers spoken by the bishop. Suddenly an ear-piercing shriek broke through the solemn silence, and Caroline Ferdinande came rushing into the room. She looked almost like a madwoman, with dishevelled hair and wide-open eyes. She flung herself on her husband’s body, yelling and screaming out his name.

“Charles! Charles! don’t leave me! . . . I can’t . . .”

At first no one dared come near her. To Latin races, accustomed to exuberant emotions, this display of almost insane grief appeared quite natural. But it was most distressing. The poor old King put his hands up to his ears, and turned an appealing look on Docteur Deneux.

“Do, for God’s sake, get her home,” he contrived to murmur.

Deneux, with a nod, promised that he would do his best. He picked up the grief-stricken young widow, and succeeded after a time in getting her into a chair and controlling her screams and nervous convulsions. When she was a little more calm, he took her in his arms. The Comte de Choiseul opened the door for him. The vestibule was thronged with people. As soon as Docteur Deneux appeared in the doorway of the boudoir with Madame la Duchesse de Berri lying like a limp burden in his arms, there was such a rush forward by the crowd eager to see what was going on inside that the doctor was nearly swept off his feet. M. de Choiseul then came out and demanded silence. He ordered everyone there to make way for Madame la Duchesse. He himself walked in front as far as the portico and the doctor, still bearing his burden, was then able to leave the building.

The same trouble very nearly occurred outside. The perron and the street were crowded, but troops had already been called out: they formed a double line down the perron steps as far as the royal carriage and kept the crowd within bounds. Madame de Bethisy and Madame de Hautefort, who had followed Docteur Deneux, drove with their royal mistress back to the

Élysée. Here, when she was brought face to face with all the surroundings which had made her life for the past four years a record of happiness and of triumph, Caroline Ferdinande completely lost her head. She looked around her in this room brimful of memories, the baldachin'd bed, where as a young bride she had laughed over the equivocal jokes of the old King, the wide-open hearth near which only a few hours ago she had played piquet and laughed and yawned in company with her husband; every piece of furniture, every ornament reminded her of a happy, a care-free hour, and, looking round on them she felt as if her reason were tottering. To live, to go on living amidst all these ghosts of an unforgettable past was, she felt, beyond her. She gave a cry which was like the roar of a wounded lioness and, picking up her gown, she ran into the next room where slept her little daughter. She picked the child up out of her cot and held her so tightly pressed against her breast that her ladies were genuinely alarmed that she would do the child or herself a serious injury.

Fortunately Docteur Deneux, the only man who had any influence over her, had followed the royal carriage to the Élysée in his own coach and was waiting down in the hall below in case Madame la Duchesse should require his attendance. He knew her propensity to hysterics and had called at his own apartment on the way in order to collect the soothing remedies which best suited her mercurial temperament. He also held the secret of how to work on her sensibilities and with a few words calm her fever of excitement.

"Madame must think of Monseigneur le Dauphin," he said very firmly: "all this agitation will mean death or insanity for him."

His words were crude, but they had their effect. Caroline Ferdinande's nerves slowly calmed down. She took Docteur Deneux's potion, and even brought herself to say quite quietly to him:

"You are right, doctor. I must think now more than ever of the future King of France."

She watched over Louise Marie-Thérèse being put back into her cot, and stood by until the child left off crying. After which she allowed her maids to undress her and put her to bed, and here she remained for the next few hours, wide awake, watching the pale winter's dawn slowly yielding to the light of day, the light of this 14th day of February, 1820, which was the beginning of a new era in her checkered and her ever-changing life.

CHAPTER XII

THE YOUNG WIDOW

THE morning found the young widow in a distinctly calmer mood. She had all her ladies-in-waiting and all her maids around her, and the whole of her wardrobe laid out in her bedroom and in her boudoir. Her business was to select dresses and bonnets that would be suitable for mourning. Incidentally black suited her remarkably well and she had several dresses which she declared would be quite appropriate for her to wear. A solemn Requiem service had already been announced to take place at the cathedral at eleven o'clock. It was now a little after nine. Caroline Ferdinande sent Madame de Bethisy with a waiting-maid to purchase the regulation veil for her: a huge affair that would envelop her from head to foot. She then summoned her coiffeur.

Her pretty fair hair was arranged in two long plaits that rested one on each shoulder. She held the ends up in her little hands.

"You will cut off these two plaits," she said to the astounded hairdresser, who let his curling irons fall to the ground with a clatter, so amazed was he at this unexpected command.

The maids murmured an "Oh!" of protest, for Madame's hair was noted for its abundance and beauty. Madame de Bethisy actually ventured to expostulate:

"Madame la Duchesse cannot mean it . . ." she began.

But Madame la Duchesse did mean it. She was very calm this morning and very dignified and said with touching sadness:

"My dear husband loved my hair. It is right that I should sacrifice it now that he can no longer see it."

She drove to the cathedral in her father-in-law's coach. He was more than kind and sympathetic, tried in fact to subdue his own grief, so as not to add to hers. He kept hold of her hand all the way to the church, but neither of them spoke during the drive. The streets were of course thronged with people and lined with troops. The bells of all the churches in Paris were tolling. From the Place des Invalides a minute gun was booming. It was wonderful how everything had been got ready in a few hours for so solemn an occasion. There was no disturbance, no confusion of any kind. It seemed almost as if every ceremony connected with the royal progress had been rehearsed while that pale wintry sun rose over this mournful day. A few

respectful cheers came from the crowd when the King's coach drove by, and whenever Caroline Ferdinande, overcome by the heat, put her head out of the carriage window, murmurs of sympathy and of good wishes were raised by those who caught sight of her, even though they could not see her face under the thick, crêpe veil.

Caroline Ferdinande was deeply touched by these expressions of affection on the part of the people, and the tears gathered in her eyes. She was obliged to use her handkerchief to mop up those tears, and in order to do this she was forced to lift that tiresome veil. This she did just when the carriage turned into the Parvis Notre Dame, where a huge crowd had assembled. Of course she lowered her veil almost immediately as decorum and etiquette demanded, but not before the bulk of the crowd had seen her. In spite of the solemnity of the hour, a regular cheer went up for this young grief-stricken widow about to give to France her future King. Most people, who thought at all about such things, had prophesied that after such a terrible catastrophe the child would be prematurely born, and now that she was actually seen driving out, a mournful, pathetic little figure, her beautiful hair cut down as a sign of the deepest mourning, her pretty face wet with tears, the impressionable Parisians took her to their heart as they had never done before.

Even the King's descent from his coach and his entrance into the cathedral passed almost unnoticed, because all eyes were fixed on her. Everyone agreed that it was only her marvellous pluck and her indomitable will to fulfil the promise which she had made to the nation, that had kept the "miracle child" alive. There were very few dry eyes in the crowd as Caroline Ferdinande, swathed from head to foot in her black veil, stepped out of the coach, closely followed by Monsieur le Comte d'Artois; she entered the cathedral walking immediately behind His Majesty, who had Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême with him. Here also the King passed almost unnoticed, for all eyes were fixed on Caroline Ferdinande, the widowed Duchesse de Berri.

As a matter of fact, Louis XVIII did look every inch a King this morning. Everyone could see that he was not only grief-stricken but also in great physical pain, but he had refused to be carried into the church: he walked as straight as ever he could, and held his head erect, though his poor old face twitched now and again with the pain in his legs. When there were cries of "*Vive le roi*" he turned to his brother and said: "Those cries will be for you, Charles, very soon."

Caroline Ferdinande knelt on the velvet-covered *prie-Dieu*, with hands clasped and bowed head just as she had done four years ago. Now as on that wonderful day in June the exquisite cathedral was filled from end to end with all that was most distinguished, most aristocratic in France, all that was most truly loyal to this moribund monarchy. Now as then the loving, sympathetic gaze of the flower of the French noblesse rested on that small figure kneeling there beside the King: now as on that happy day she, at one time the unwanted little Cinderella, was still the hope of the nation, the procreator of a renewed and vigorous race. Caroline Ferdinande's thoughts also went back to that summer's day when her life appeared as beautiful and bright as the sunshine that streamed in through the cathedral windows. Now it appeared as dreary as that crowd of mourners around her, all dressed in black, as sombre as those sable hangings that draped the altar and hung on the pillars of the church. And she felt an immense longing for sunshine, for her Sicily, the land of song and of laughter, for the palm trees and the orange groves, and her naïve prayer went up to God something like this:

"Please God, let me get back to Sicily, turn the heart of all these people who rule over me so that they give their consent to my going back to my old home."

Later on when the service was over, and she sat once more in the coach beside her father-in-law, she put her little hand on his, and turned on him a pathetic gaze that was calculated to melt the heart of a stone.

"Let me go back to Sicily," was the burden of her prayer addressed to man this time, not to God. "I want the sunshine, I shall die if I stay under these grey skies."

Monsieur le Comte d'Artois had not a heart of stone. As a matter of fact, he was very fond of his daughter-in-law; but he could easily have paraphrased the words of the "Cid," by saying: "I would not love thee half so well, loved I not the dynasty more." He had a wonderful way with him when speaking to a woman. He took Caroline's hand in his and patted it and stroked it till she had finished speaking, or rather until she halted for lack of breath. Then only did he begin to talk. Very softly at first, hardly above a whisper. He spoke gentle, endearing words to her, for he knew very well how to deal with women when they pleaded and he was compelled to refuse. Gradually his voice rose, he spoke earnestly, seriously, of the coming Dauphin and all that she, his mother, owed to France. He knew just what words to use to rouse her pride and stir up her ambition. He was a connoisseur of women, was Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, and he had sized up this charming young daughter-in-law of his, long before any other

member of the family had done, even before his own unfortunate son had tried to understand her. He knew that pride and ambition were the ruling motives of her actions.

“You have the future King of France to think of,” he said. “My brother has not many more days to live. I too am an old man. Your son will still be a child when he is called presently to his great destiny. You will have to watch over him and to teach him how to understand and govern his people. You couldn’t do that if you lived away from them and from France.”

That settled it. Monsieur’s earnest words sent Caroline’s thoughts into a fresh channel. She would be the mother of the future King. She would have to teach him and to guide him: she would hold the reins of government, while his little hands would still be too weak to do it. She would be, if not queen, then Regent of France, and be the greatest lady in the land. She would take precedence of everybody. She would on all State occasions walk in front of Madame la Duchesse d’Angoulême.

Caroline Ferdinande said nothing more. She gave Monsieur’s hand an affectionate squeeze, and sat the rest of the way, wrapped in this new train of thought. When she was Regent of France, she thought, she would have Hector de Lucchesi-Palli as her Lord Chamberlain, and refuse Donna Anna di Mauro-Gavari permission to enter France. She hoped that she would soon be Regent of France, anyway before that hussy had inveigled Hector into marrying her.

CHAPTER XIII

THE IDOL OF THE PEOPLE

CAROLINE FERDINANDE did not go to Sicily: she spent the first few weeks of mourning with her Aunt the Duchesse d’Orléans at Saint-Cloud. But it was very quiet there and she soon became bored. If she could not go to her beloved palm trees and orange groves, then she would spend her time in Paris where the people loved her and acclaimed her whenever and wherever she appeared. Caroline Ferdinande loved acclamations. She loved being loved. Her popularity delighted her, and it was most fortunate that black was so very becoming to her frail, blond beauty.

She settled down in the Pavilion de Marsan, a wing of the Tuileries. The windows of her boudoir, where she often sat during the warm days of spring, overlooked the Rue de Rivoli. Caroline liked to sit there because the passers-by in the busy street could look up and see her doing needlework or playing with her little daughter Louise, and whenever they did see her, they set up a cheer, the men called “*Vive Madame la Duchesse!*” and the women asked God to bless her and her coming baby. She was such a pathetic little figure in her deep black, with that awful tragedy to look back on and to brood over, and she had been so wonderfully plucky through it all. Plucky she certainly was, and there was something virile about this little woman with the childish face and fair curly hair, which made a strong appeal to the chivalrous French nation, especially to the Parisians with their keen sense of what was dramatic in the history of her life. She certainly was extraordinarily beloved, and there is no doubt that Caroline Ferdinande of Naples did a great deal at this time, through her sympathetic personality, to consolidate the restoration of the monarchy.

What she liked best of all was to make her way to the large terrace which on the side of the Pavilion de Flore overlooked the river. There was an underground passage underneath the whole edifice of the Tuileries which led from the Pavilion de Marsan to this terrace, but Caroline never would go that way: “They will think I am nervous!” she said, and always walked across through the gardens, holding little Louise by the hand.

The hour at which she usually came out soon became known, and crowds of idlers lingered along the quay and on the Pont Royal in order to see her. As soon as she appeared, there was loud cheering and, leaning over the balustrade, she would wave her hands and with a pretty gesture send

kisses to those dear Parisians who loved her so. What a good thing that black was so becoming!

The rest of the day she sat demurely in her boudoir, which she had had completely redecorated to suit this first year of mourning. Black curtains embroidered in silver: a carpet specially woven at the works of Aubusson, in sombre colours, drapings of silver lace over chairs upholstered in black satin. Mournful but very, very becoming. She was universally quoted as the beau idéal of what a sorrowing young widow should be. All those who in the past had watched with ill-concealed regret or acerbity the extravagances of Madame la Duchesse de Berri, her love of pleasure and eccentricities, now spoke of her as a veritable paragon, worthy to perpetuate the memory of her murdered husband, who, dead, was far more popular than he had ever been in life. His widow was a paragon, but *he* was a saint. It was well known that even in his death agony he had made an effort to obtain pardon for the man who had struck him. There was talk of putting up a shrine to him in the Cathedral of Notre Dame; and Carle Vernet, the great artist who had painted the Duke's portrait a few years back, was actually asked to paint a halo round the martyr's head. The portrait hung in Madame's boudoir, side by side with another large picture by Gérard of the young couple. Madame had little Louise Marie-Thérèse, then a baby, in her arms, and her little dog Chicorée at her feet. Both pictures were draped in black, and in front of them there was a *prie-Dieu*, where Caroline Ferdinande knelt every morning, while her chaplain recited the prayers for the dead, and M. François-Adrien Boieldieu played a composition of his own on the harmonium, a *De profundis*, of a solemn and melancholy rhythm, quite unlike his usual style. It was all extremely edifying and very touching. Members of the royal household were free to attend the service whenever they chose, and many outsiders also had the entrée. Few of those who were present on these occasions left Madame's presence dry-eyed.

It must not be thought for a moment that in all this Caroline Ferdinande played a part. Her grief, if seemingly rather too exuberant and ostentatious, was, nevertheless, perfectly genuine. She was an Italian, very emotional, and the death of her husband had been a terrible shock to her nerves. In her state of health, the shock might easily have been fatal, and it was only her iron constitution and her firm determination that she and the coming child should live, that averted the second catastrophe. But it would have been too much to expect of a young woman, even with an iron constitution, that she should compose her nerves all in a moment. The stay at Saint-Cloud with her aunt did soothe them to a great extent, but the tension was still there, and

manifested itself in what was perhaps rather exaggerated but nevertheless genuine grief.

Anyhow, it endeared her more and more, not only to the people but also to the royal family. The old King loved her: she would talk to him by the hour of the fine boy she was going to give to France. She had all sorts of dreams about him, she said, dreams in which Saint Louis came down from heaven himself to place his crown on the head of the “miracle child.” Louis XVIII, savouring the contents of his snuff-box, would tweak her ear, and shake his head:

“Don’t get too excited, my child,” he would say; “what we want from you is a fine, healthy boy, never mind about saints just now.”

Even Madame la Duchesse d’Angoulême was less cross-grained than she used to be, and to her credit be it said that, during the time that preceded the birth of the “miracle child,” she never once reminded the family that her father and mother had perished on the guillotine. It seemed perhaps unnecessarily heartless to speak of that catastrophe in the presence of a woman whose husband had been assassinated.

CHAPTER XIV

A TRUE FRIEND

It was in the midst of these surroundings, so different to those which had compassed her life during the past four years, that Caroline Ferdinande received the visit of Hector de Lucchesi-Palli. It was one of the last days of April. He had obtained leave of absence from his mission in Berlin and had posted half across Europe with all speed to Paris, to offer his respectful sympathy to the young widow. Those at any rate were the words he used when, writing from the house of the Neapolitan Ambassador where he was staying, he begged for permission to pay his respects.

Caroline Ferdinande received him in her boudoir with tearful dignity and a background of sable window hangings.

"It is four years," she said in a tone of gentle reproach, and gave Hector her hand to kiss, "four years since you thought of me."

"Four years since I thought of you, Madame?" Hector echoed, and the look which he gave her caused her to lower her eyes. "I should have been here quickly enough, if you had wanted me."

"I always want you, Hector," Caroline rejoined fretfully: "and you are not to call me Madame. Sit down and let's be friends."

She made him sit down at one end of the sofa with his back to the two portraits; she sat at the other end. He looked very solemn and ill at ease, and so did she. But presently they caught one another's glance, and slowly, like sunshine coming through the rain, her little face lighted up in a smile, and her blue eyes danced and shone as they used to do in the olden days when she was the unwanted Cinderella and had no other playmate but good-natured, chivalrous Hector de Lucchesi-Palli. She sidled up to him, and all at once they both burst out laughing, simultaneously, like children, in the exuberance of their joy at this meeting. She gave him both her hands this time and, when he had covered them with kisses, she threw her arms round his neck and kissed him on both cheeks . . . again like a child who doesn't realize that a kiss can possibly hurt.

"Now tell me all your news," she said finally, and then added with a comical little sigh: "I have been so dull, Hector!"

He tried to interest her by telling her various things about the Court of Frederick William of Prussia, little anecdotes and bits of scandal. She was amused at first and liked to hear him talk, but soon she got bored because, as

she said, she didn't know the people. She couldn't visualize and didn't really care whether Herzogin X. ran away with Frau Gräfin Y. Z's husband, or whether the "All-Highest" King of Prussia had had an intrigue with little Mitzi Schenk. She allowed the conversation to drop presently and sat silent for a moment or two and then said abruptly, apropos of nothing at all:

"Anna di Mauro-Gavari must be well on the shelf by now. She is getting on in years, isn't she? She is two years older than me and I don't think she will wear well. Fancy Donna Anna an old maid!" she concluded with a mock sigh.

"Donna Anna is not an old maid," Hector remarked, smiling, despite himself, at this very human touch.

"Not an old maid?" Caroline queried, frowning.

"Why, no," he replied; "she married the Prince of San Severino, who is Lord Chamberlain to His Majesty your father and reputed to be immensely wealthy. I was not present at the wedding, which took place in the Chapel Royal in Naples, but I heard from those who were that the affair was wonderfully brilliant. Their Majesties were there, and all the members of the royal family. The younger princes and princesses were train-bearers to the bride, and the Papal Legate performed the marriage ceremony."

Caroline Ferdinande had listened in silence to all this, and she remained silent for a few seconds after Hector had finished speaking. Then she said casually:

"I am sorry for Donna Anna; she has made a poor match: the wife of a Lord Chamberlain at a minor Court has not much of a position in her own country, and none abroad."

She rose and went across the room to the Venetian mirror which hung on the wall. She patted her hair into position: it was an awkward length just now, and she missed her nice long plaits. Hector had made no remark about them; but then, he wouldn't. He never noticed anything, he was such a booby. From where she stood she could see his face reflected in the mirror. He was looking at her, and she was glad she had on that nice taffeta dress which was one of Virginie's masterpieces. It set off her fairylike, well-proportioned figure, and showed to advantage the delicate curve of her hips. From the back she still looked fairylike, and she remained for a long time in front of the mirror so as not to curtail the pleasure which Hector had, looking at her. Then she rang the bell.

"Give me my shawl," she said to the waiting-maid.

A beautiful shawl of black cashmere embroidered in silver was put round her shoulders, and over her fair curls. She adjusted a most becoming little bonnet of black lace.

“Ask Madame la Vicomtesse to bring Mademoiselle to me,” she commanded presently.

Hector in the meanwhile had risen. When the waiting-maid had gone, Caroline Ferdinande turned back to him.

“I have not been out on the terrace yet this afternoon, and the people expect to see me and Louise whenever the weather is fine. You must come out with me, Hector. You will see how they all love me. You would like to see that, wouldn’t you?”

Madame de Bethisy came in just then, leading the little princess by the hand. The child ran at once to her mother, who took her up in her arms. Madame de Bethisy ventured on a word of protest.

“Mademoiselle is too heavy for Madame,” she said.

“A child is never too heavy for its mother’s arms,” Caroline retorted with gentle dignity. She moved in the direction of the door. Madame de Bethisy prepared to follow, but Caroline turned to her with a sympathetic smile.

“Don’t come out, my dear Vicomtesse,” she said; “the air is so treacherous just before sundown and you have such a bad cold. Monsieur le Comte will look after me, and we won’t stay out late.”

Madame de Bethisy had no cold, but she was no fool. She stood aside while Madame la Duchesse, still carrying Louise, went out of the room closely followed by Hector de Lucchesi-Palli. Madame de Gonthaut came in after a little while and together the two ladies stood by the window and watched their royal mistress and her Italian friend walk across the garden. As soon as she appeared there was loud cheering from a small party of idlers in the Rue de Rivoli. It was late in the afternoon now, and there was not the usual traffic in the street. But when she came out on the terrace the passers-by on the quay and on the bridge soon collected and there were the usual acclamations so dear to Caroline’s heart.

She put little Louise down and leaned over the balustrade, blowing kisses and waving her hands to the people. Now and again she turned to Hector de Lucchesi-Palli with a challenging look in her eyes, as much as to say: “See! how they love me! See! how vitally important I am to the whole

of the French nation." It aggravated her to see him looking so indifferent to it all.

And once she actually did say to him:

"Why do you look so grumpy, Hector? You are positively scowling. What's the matter? One would think you weren't pleased to see me so happy."

"The greatest pleasure for me in life, my dear," he replied with what she thought was an extraordinary want of conviction, "is to see you happy."

"And beloved?" she insisted.

"And beloved, of course," he said.

She gave a funny little smile and shrug, and turned back to her crowd of admirers, who raised a fresh and prolonged cheer when she waved her hand to them.

A second later there came from the corner of the bridge a sharp sound like the detonation of a firearm. Women and children screamed, the palace guard came running out and charged into the crowd which scattered in every direction. The excitement was intense. Hector was of course on his feet in an instant; he had his arms round Caroline Ferdinande's shoulders, trying to drag her away from the balustrade. She hadn't turned a hair. All she did was to draw Louise closer to her, but she wouldn't move otherwise. Presently it turned out that the explosion was caused by a bunch of crackers placed on a corner stone of the bridge. It had a time-fuse attached to it. But who the mischiefmaker was who had set the thing alight was not known. He had succeeded in effecting his escape through the crowd.

The quays and the bridge were now deserted and there was no reason for staying out on the terrace any longer. Caroline Ferdinande, holding her little girl by the hand, went slowly, thoughtfully back to her apartments. To the ladies and gentlemen who, having heard the explosion, had come running in from every corner of the palace, she said with a reassuring smile:

"Some mischiefmakers who wanted to frighten me. But they didn't succeed."

She gave Louise into Madame de Bethisy's charge and dismissed her ladies and gentlemen. When they had gone, she turned to Hector.

"You see, Hector," she said softly, "you must not go away again. Not for long, at any rate. I am very much beloved, as you see, both by the people and by my entourage; but one cannot always guard against mischiefmakers,

and mischiefmakers sometimes turn into evildoers. There never was in the world a man more beloved than my dear husband. And yet, you see what happened. You must not leave me again, Hector," she pleaded: "not for long."

He murmured something about "duty" and "mission," and "my country and my King."

She said:

"You owe duty to me also, Hector, and to our old friendship. Am I not the daughter of your King?"

She gave him both her hands to kiss. The tears gathered in her eyes, for she was feeling very sad at thought of his going away again all the way to Berlin; so when he took hold of her hands, she drew him towards her, and murmured softly: "You may kiss me, you know."

It was as well that the lacqueys chose this very moment to knock at the door, and presently to enter with lighted candelabra which they set upon the tables. They retired immediately, but in the meanwhile the spell had been broken. Caroline's emotional mood changed to something else, and Hector de Lucchesi-Palli was able to get hold of himself and to make his adieux as formally as etiquette demanded.

CHAPTER XV

THUNDER AFAR

But side by side with the affection amounting even to enthusiasm which the bulk of the nation felt for the young widow, there was another element, quite a large one too, which cared little if anything for the Bourbon dynasty, and viewed with indifference, if not with hostility, the promised advent of the "miracle child." The restoration of the monarchy was now an established fact. The people accepted it, had acclaimed it more or less genuinely at the time: everyone was tired of perpetual wars, even of victories, but most of all of the costly expeditions which had ended in the tragedies of Moscow and of Waterloo; and Louis XVIII had earned a certain amount of popularity for himself at the outset by promising the nation various liberties and reforms to be embodied in a great Charter: electoral reforms, extension of the suffrage, freedom of the Press and so on, which had been curtailed during the autocratic rule of the Emperor Napoleon.

But kingly promises are more akin to pie-crusts than those made by humbler folk: five years had gone by and the great Charter had not yet become law. It was still being discussed, debated and opposed in the Chamber. The deputies of the Right argued that it went too far, and the liberals of the Left contended that it didn't go far enough, and time went on with nothing done. The Press was still muzzled, the suffrage still in the hands of a few, the ballot boxes still sealed and secret, while the people became restive: the young men especially, hotheads from the universities, medical students, art-students, law-students; they met at clubs and talked a lot. They also murmured and threatened. They met outside the Palais-Bourbon and demonstrated for the Charter, and against the King, against Parliament and against the ministers. They one and all hated the ministers, especially Decazes the Prime Minister, President of the Council. The King, on the other hand, loved Decazes and was completely ruled by him; whilst Decazes was equally hated by every faction in the country. The ultra-royalists, who wanted nothing less than an absolute monarchy—one King, one minister and hang the rest of the government—hated Decazes because he had liberal ideas, because he upheld the Charter and pushed the King along on the road to concessions and the promised reforms. They also hated him because he had been a Bonapartist and had served the Empire until the monarchy appeared to be firmly established, when he shamelessly turned his coat. But all the other factions hated him just because he was the king's

favourite, and because since time immemorial kings' favourites have always been hated by the people.

True, the King was sick and senile, and could not last many years longer, but things would probably be a great deal worse in the next reign. The heir to the throne, Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, was more royalist than any king had ever been. He was entirely for the archaic system of absolute monarchy, for the régime of Louis XIV, who had retorted, when appealed to in the name of the State: "*I* am the State!" No! there was not much hope for the future, when Monsieur became King, even though his first act were to be to give the unpopular minister his *congé*.

And so the spirit of unrest grew apace. For the moment it found vent in demonstrations and occasional street fighting; but, all the same, it was a smouldering fire of revolution which any untoward incident might set ablaze. Caroline Ferdinande was of course kept in ignorance of all that. All she saw of the dear Parisians was their enthusiasm when she appeared on the terrace with little Louise Marie-Thérèse; all she heard was their cheering when she kissed her pretty little hand to the passers-by. But she had a fair amount of sense in that curly head of hers and there had been something prophetic in what she said to her friend Hector de Lucchesi-Palli the night when a mischiefmaker set fire to a bundle of crackers in order to frighten her. "Mischiefmakers," she then said, "often turn to evildoers." And she was right. The explosion of that first cracker on April 28th was followed by a similar incident a few days later. This time the perpetrator was caught in the act. He turned out to be a retired army officer named Gravier who confessed to having a grievance against the present régime, and also that what he had wished to do was to upset the nerves of the expectant mother so as to destroy all hope of the continuance of the Bourbon dynasty. It was a wicked and a cruel thought. He and his accomplice, a brother officer named Bourgon, were tried by court martial and condemned to death for the attempted murder of His Royal Highness, the unborn Dauphin of France.

The next night an unruly crowd gathered outside the Palais-Bourbon. There were loud and prolonged shouts of "*Vive la charte!*" to which officers of the guard in plain clothes responded with "*Vive le roi!*" The military were called out. This angered the crowd, who grew more and more excited. Fisticuffs began it, rioting followed. The mob became threatening. The soldiers used their firearms and a young student named Lallemand was shot dead. Whereupon there were cries of: "They are murdering us. They will massacre our children! Long live the revolution! Remember '89!" Popular fury was at its height.

Yet another retired army officer of the same type as Gravier, a Colonel Duvergies, gathered the most turbulent of the hotheads together and marched them to the Bastille, where they were met by other unruly crowds from the suburbs who joined with them in singing the “Marseillaise” and shouting “Long live the Republic!” and “Remember ’89,” as well as “Down with Decazes!” and “Down with Galaor,” the latter being the nickname which the populace had bestowed on Monsieur le Comte d’Artois, because of his success with the ladies. When tempers and excitement were at their height Colonel Duvergies marched his bands along the quays to the Tuileries. Here they were met by a troop of cuirassiers who charged into them, and they were forced to disperse. But inside the palace where the royal family was assembled there was consternation, if not worse. The Duchesse d’Angoulême remembered the day when a mob not unlike this one had marched to the Tuileries, and she, then only a little girl, had seen the head of the beautiful Princesse de Lamballe, her mother’s intimate friend, carried aloft on a pike. It was impossible to keep Caroline Ferdinande in ignorance of what was going on beneath her windows. But there was no frightening her. She was not frightened of any mob, so she declared to the rest of the family, and it was with the greatest difficulty that she was kept back from going out on the terrace.

“When they see me,” she said, “they will cease booing. They will cheer me and Louise. My beloved Parisians will never harm me.”

It was only at the express command of the King that she remained in her apartments until after the hostile crowd had dispersed. So convinced was she of her popularity that she would have gone out alone at any time in the streets of Paris, quite fearlessly, and in spite of her delicate state of health. “Let me talk to them,” she pleaded invariably whenever she heard that there had been further disturbances in the city. And these occurred more and more frequently now. There was the day when the young student Lallemand was buried. Thousands of young men in full dress with tail-coats and white ties, followed his coffin to the Church of St. Denis, where a Requiem Mass was sung; an impassioned allocution was spoken by one of the city fathers at the graveside, and when the coffin was lowered into the family vault, and the priest and choir intoned the Miserere, the crowd drowned the religious chant by singing the Marseillaise.

In the meanwhile the trial of Louvel for the murder of the Duc de Berri was nearing its close. Everyone was aghast at the cynicism with which the assassin, conducting his own defence, justified his crime.

"I am a Frenchman," he declared loudly, "and I have sacrificed my innermost instincts of delicacy and of virtue in order to destroy, at any rate, one member of a dynasty who did not hesitate to take up arms against France. I stand accused of having murdered a prince, but what about those who instigated whole armies to fight against their own country, and brought alien troops to lord it over their own people?"

The High Court listened with horror to this harangue, which the murderer concluded with the proud assertion that if France allowed herself to be ruled any longer by these Bourbons, she would be dishonoured in the eyes of every civilized nation.

Louvel was condemned to death, and executed the following day, in spite of the fact that the Duchesse de Berri made it a personal matter with the King that her husband's assassin should be pardoned. "It was my Charles' dying wish," she pleaded. "He will never rest in his grave if that man is guillotined."

But for once the King would not listen to her. The family tried to keep the news of Louvel's condemnation and execution from her, but somehow the secret leaked out and this time Caroline Ferdinande's cool courage gave out and she had one of her distressing attacks of hysterical weeping which very nearly brought about a serious catastrophe. It was her brother-in-law the Duc d'Angoulême who had the good idea of diverting her thoughts by organizing a demonstration outside the Pavilion de Marsan: a demonstration well calculated to gratify Caroline Ferdinande's vanity, as well as her love of adulation. The fishwives from the Halles Centrales of Paris had at one time expressed the wish to offer to Madame la Duchesse a very beautiful cradle of carved and gilt wood, the baldachin of which represented a dove holding a branch of lilies in its beak. The moment seemed appropriate for this presentation. The women were delighted at the prospect of marching up to the palace with their sumptuous gift: a little girl aged six was taught to recite some fulsome verses written for the occasion by M. Victor Hugo, and everyone was made happy by this display of loyalty on the part of a section of the population, which had before now been conspicuous by its turbulence. Caroline Ferdinande, wreathed in smiles, received the deputation and the beautiful gift with an appropriate little speech: she kissed all the women on both cheeks, and promised that her first outing with the future King of France would be a visit to the Halles Centrales and to the dear ladies who had provided him with such a magnificent cradle. And her hysterical outburst was relegated to the past. Her time was drawing near. Louvel was dead and she forgot him, as she tried to forget everything that was gloomy

and ill-omened—the discontent of the people, the wrangling of ministers, the growing unpopularity of the royal family. She even cast her mourning aside, took to wearing bright colours, and read amusing books; she asked popular comedians to come and entertain her, encouraged the fashionable poets to write humorous verses that would make her laugh. The sable draperies in the boudoir were taken down. Lovely blue silk curtains and hangings were specially woven to her order in Lyon. Everything was done in fact that would radiate happiness and gaiety around her. And if the populace grumbled at this, that, or the other, well, let them! They would not grumble long. A few more weeks and there would be joy all over France. Let the deputies quarrel and debate, let the people down Decazes or down the King himself, a few more weeks and the whole of France would be delirious with joy. The sycophants around the throne spoke of the coming Dauphin as of a new Messiah, and Caroline Ferdinande, who was actually, and on more than one occasion, compared to the Mother of God, was ready to deify him. She knew, none better, how to gauge the temper of these emotional Parisians, who were just as ready to burst themselves with enthusiasm and loyalty as to wallow in hatred and objurgations. Let but the "miracle child" be born and a new era of peace, prosperity and joy would reign in France.

And Caroline Ferdinande herself was quite convinced that like a second Virgin Mary she would with her tiny foot crush the serpent of discontent and of revolution.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MIRACLE CHILD

CAROLINE FERDINANDE'S greatest joy at this time was to make plans for the boy. It was going to be a boy, of course. No one doubted it. Caroline Ferdinande least of all. He would, she decided, be styled Duc de Bordeaux, because the town of Bordeaux had always been faithful to the monarchy, and at the fall of Napoleon had been the first important city to decorate its streets with the royal standard. Bordeaux felt flattered at this promised distinction and sent a loyal address to Madame la Duchesse de Berri, together with a gift of valuable Château wines.

Next to Bordeaux, the part of France most in favour with the young Duchesse was the Province of Béarn. Béarn being the birthplace of Henri IV, who was one of the greatest as he was certainly the best-beloved king France ever had. Well, the coming Dauphin would be christened Henri, and in due time he would be Henri V, the greatest and most-beloved king France had ever had. Unfortunately it could not be arranged for the future Henri V to be born in Béarn, but every tradition linked up with the province was to be attendant on his birth: a bottle of the best Jurançon, a seed-pod of garlic and the ballad of *Notre-Dame-du-Bout-du-Pont* which Jeanne d'Albret, the mother of the great Henri IV, had sung all through her labour pains. The ballad was very long—seventy-two verses—and Caroline was afraid that she would not be able to manage this part of the ceremonial. Nevertheless, she had the ballad all copied out for her, and learned the seventy-two verses by heart.

"And my good Bourgeois," she said to the head nurse who attended upon her, "you must promise me that when my pains begin, you will stand by me and hear me sing the ballad of *Notre-Dame-du-Bout-du-Pont*, and that you will prompt me if I forget the words."

Caroline Ferdinande had other ideas as well. For one thing she commissioned Carle Vernet to paint her portrait. She wished to be painted, dressed all in white, standing by the tomb of her murdered husband, under the shade of a weeping willow, and with her eyes turned up to the sky wherein shone a star of great brilliance and unusual magnitude. When the picture was finished she had it hung in her boudoir by the side of the other two portraits. She next bought an expensive and highly ornate bed surmounted by a baldachin, all draped in curtains of white and gold brocade

and a coverlet of white satin embroidered in gold fleurs-de-lis. The beautiful bed was placed in the boudoir immediately facing the three portraits.

"This," she said, "is where my Henri will be born, so that the first glance of his baby eyes will rest on his heroic father."

"The King," she also said, "must be present at my bedside. He will sit there," she went on, and pointed to an armchair upholstered in blue and white brocade which was placed at the foot of the bed: "then he can be the very first to take the Dauphin in his arms."

To Docteur Deneux, her ever-faithful medical attendant, she said: "Should you have to choose between my life and that of my child, save his at any cost, and do not think of me." The old doctor was deeply touched by this artless display of heroism, which he, for one, knew to be absolutely genuine. Caroline Ferdinande throughout her life had never lacked courage; she had been quite wonderful throughout the awful tragedy of her husband's death. Docteur Deneux had been near her all the time and he had often affirmed that it was her pluck and her determination during those terrible hours of grief that saved the life of the future Dauphin. He himself had chosen the wet-nurse, a young woman from Flanders, who had brains and a certain amount of education and had in her day rendered signal services to the Bourbons when the King and royal family were in exile in Gand. Her husband was a respectable notary in practice at Armentières, and her first child, born during the month of July, was an unusually sturdy youngster, a regular Flanders colt. She had been chosen because of her perfect physique and that of her child, and also for another sentimental reason. The worthy notary's name, which he had bestowed upon his wife, was Bayart, and Bayard was the most sublime hero ever known to French history: the knight without fear and above reproach, and it was wonderful to think that the Dauphin of France, her future King, should be foster-brother to a Bayart (the difference between a "t" and a "d" at the end of the name didn't really matter: the sound of it was the same, and destiny had nothing to do with spelling).

Everything then was ready for the great event. The official witnesses to the birth had been selected by the King himself. If his gout and digestion permitted he would be there of course as well as Monsieur le Comte d'Artois and Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême. Then there would be the Prince de Coigny representing the Ministry, himself a Minister of State, and Marshal Suchet, Duke of Albuféra, an old cavalry soldier risen from the ranks and created Marshal and peer of France by Napoleon.

But events in Caroline Ferdinande's life had a way of never turning out according to plan. Everything was ready and everything had been prepared, and everything happened quite differently to what anyone had expected. The miracle child, the future King of France, made his appearance into the world at two o'clock in the morning, three days before he was expected, and did it so expeditiously that poor Madame Bourgeois, who had tumbled out of bed at the first call from her royal charge, nearly lost her wits trying to do what was right in accordance with etiquette and not knowing how to begin.

"Quick! quick! my good Bourgeois!" Madame cried distractedly, "there's not a moment to be lost. The throne of France is at stake."

That was true enough. The throne of France was at stake, if anything went wrong with this morsel of humanity about to come into the world.

"The witnesses!" Madame went on: "get old Suchet, quick! Never mind about the doctor! get a witness!—any witness!"

She knew well enough that factions and political parties were on the alert, had been so for some time. The Orléans and their crowd, the Bonapartists, the Republicans, they were all waiting for something to go wrong with this all-important birth: all of them would have seen with satisfaction the extinction of the Bourbon dynasty. If the birth could be branded as a hoax, if the child turned out to be a girl, until everything was affirmed and sworn to by official witnesses, there was always the hope that something might go wrong with the miracle child.

"Quick, Bourgeois! quick! the witnesses!"

And poor Madame Bourgeois summoned maids and ladies-in-waiting with all possible haste, and adjusted her nightgown, and straightened her night-cap and ejaculated: "Oh, mon Dieu! mon Dieu!" at regular intervals, while she hunted about for something she felt she must find.

The maids brought candelabra. The ladies came running in with all speed, some in dressing-gowns, others struggling into their petticoats, their caps awry over their tousled hair, their bare feet thrust into felt slippers. Madame de Vathaire ran to fetch the doctor. Madame Bourgeois found what she had been looking for: it was the copy of the ballad of *Notre-Dame-du-Bout-du-Pont*. Hugging it to her breast, she ran back to the bedside. There were seventy-two verses and she had promised Madame la Duchesse that she would prompt her with the words. But she couldn't see to read by the flickering light of the wax candles and she was so flustered that her hands shook and the paper made an irritating rustling noise.

“Go away!” Madame commanded tartly.

“But the ballad, Madame,” Bourgeois protested.

“To hell with the ballad,” and Madame swore lustily in her native Italian. “Fetch the witnesses.”

Poor Madame Bourgeois subsided in a huff and it was Madame Lemoine, one of the ladies of the bedchamber, who, kneeling by the bedside, was just in time to take the baby from its mother. She gazed down on it with eyes swimming in tears, and then turned to the other ladies, and murmured ecstatically: “A boy! a beautiful boy!”

A great commotion outside! The door was thrown open and Docteur Deneux appeared. A regular figure of fun. His coat half on, half off, his wig all on one side, no necktie, no stockings, his eyes blinking with sleep. The first thing he saw was Monseigneur le Dauphin, as naked as a worm and as red as a tomato, lying on the white satin coverlet. The first thing he heard were Monseigneur’s loud protests at being thus summarily brought into a cold and cruel world. And all around a crowd of tittering, giggling ladies, not one of them knowing exactly what to do, the birth of a future King of France not being like any other birth. There was etiquette, and precedent, and what not. And the principal witnesses had not yet arrived. No wonder that it took the old doctor some moments to gather his wits together. And there was Madame la Duchesse obviously agitated.

“Don’t bother about me,” she said testily as soon as Deneux approached her, and then pointed to Monseigneur, who was still protesting as loudly as his tiny lungs would allow. “Will he be all right like this till old Suchet comes?”

“Yes! yes! he’ll be all right for an hour!” the doctor reassured her: “but . . .”

“Then don’t touch me! Go away!” she insisted: “bring witnesses . . . witnesses.”

Just at the moment a lacquey threw open the door for the entry into the room of Madame la Duchesse de Gonthaut, first lady of the bedchamber to Madame la Duchesse de Berri. This large and pompous lady had spent a little more time at her toilet than the other ladies, but even so the result was not quite as satisfactory as she herself would have wished. She certainly wore a taffeta dress, had stockings on and shoes, but she hadn’t had time to wash her face or to have her hair dressed. But though etiquette demanded that no one connected with the Court should ever appear before any member

of the royal family unless suitably attired, it said nothing about being washed or having one's hair dressed. Be that as it may, Madame de Gonthaut, who had lived through many stirring episodes during her long association with the Court, both at home and in exile, took in the situation at a glance. The first thing she heard was Madame's cry, "Witnesses! Bring witnesses!" and the first thing she saw was Docteur Deneux's ludicrous expression of helplessness. She would not have been Duchesse de Gonthaut, first lady of the bedchamber, had she lost her head on this occasion. She had always prided herself on her composure through the most trying situations, and on her resourcefulness in any emergency. The exercise of these qualities was a part of her duties; so what she now did was to take two steps forward into the room, and then to announce with perfect calm:

"Here is one witness at any rate."

And she pointed to the lacquey who was still in the doorway waiting for orders to close the door.

This amazing suggestion caused poor Docteur Deneux almost to lose his balance: he didn't know what to say; all he did was to throw up his hands and to ejaculate under his breath:

"Name of a name of God! a lacquey to witness the birth of the Dauphin."

But Caroline Ferdinande did know what to say and said it to the accompaniment of a few forcible Italian swear words which she hurled hot and strong at Madame de Gonthaut, who fortunately did not understand them.

"Nonsense, Gonthaut," she went on more soberly after she had exhausted the choicest morsels of her native vocabulary, "that man is no use, he is a paid menial in my service."

And turning her back unceremoniously on the chief lady of the bedchamber, she called to her waiting-maids:

"Run," she commanded: "run, all of you! Do not dare to appear before me without proper witnesses."

The ladies, like a troop of frightened sheep, hustled and bustled, scrambled out of the room, pushing and jolting one another in their eagerness to save the throne of France for that tiny morsel of humanity. Madame de Vathaire made her way to the apartment of Monsieur le Comte d'Artois. Throwing all thoughts of etiquette to the winds, she forced her way past his lacqueys, who, tumbling hastily out of bed, vainly tried to stop her.

To their absolute horror, she pushed open the door of Monsieur's boudoir and there she stood and screamed out the news at the top of her voice, so that His Royal Highness could not fail to wake.

"A boy!" she yelled, and kept on yelling: "A boy! Madame la Duchesse has a beautiful boy!"

Whereupon the confusion around Monsieur le Comte d'Artois' august person was as complete as around that of the young mother.

Madame Lemoine and the other ladies-in-waiting, quite forgetting their very careless attire, had in the meanwhile bustled down the stairs. Witnesses? What sort of witnesses were they supposed to collect? But they had been commanded to bring witnesses and had run helter-skelter along the corridors until they came upon the sentry-men of the Garde Nationale who were there on night duty.

"Here are the witnesses!" they cried with one accord, and proceeded to business. One lady got hold of the corporal by his coat tails, another captured a young lieutenant, a third dragged a reluctant middle-aged sergeant-major by the coat sleeve.

"Come!" they all insisted. "You must come! Madame's orders! and she has got a boy. The Dauphin, you know! There must be witnesses it seems and you must come!"

They dragged the unfortunate guardsmen along as far as Madame's boudoir. The men muttered and grumbled, made wry faces, for they did not relish their role. But the door into the bedroom was wide open, and they could hear Madame inviting them to enter.

"Come in, gentlemen, come in. Please come and see for yourselves that my child is the Dauphin and your future King, and that he is really my son."

The men were terribly uncomfortable: they would far sooner have confronted the entire Prussian artillery than that royal little lady in her ribbons and laces and the future King of France as red as a tomato and as naked as a worm. The doctor tried to protest, but Caroline Ferdinande slapped his face—it was a way she had—and ordered him to hold his tongue. She threw mocking and defiant glances at Madame de Gonthaut, who had been so ready to call in a lacquey but now appeared horrified at the appearance of these soldiers, and tried in vain to order them out of the room. But the ladies pushed them in from behind: the corporal and the shy young lieutenant and in the rear the middle-aged sergeant-major, whose

moustaches bristled with excitement, all three of them as shamefaced as dogs caught in the act of stealing the family joint out of the larder.

But Madame la Duchesse was insistent.

"Come quite near," she reiterated; "don't be afraid: and damn the proprieties," she added with a final look of defiance at Madame de Gonthaut, who was ready to faint with horror at this flippancy.

Both she and the doctor threw up the sponge. As well try and stem the falls of Niagara as to restrain this wilful, imperious little lady in her pert disregard of etiquette. The three soldiers did come nearer, hardly daring to tread on the beautiful carpet, walking on the tips of their toes, and terribly conscious of their creaking boots, their perspiring faces and large red hands. They looked in vain for sympathy, in the doctor, the one man present in the midst of this terrifying crowd of ladies in short petticoats and bare legs. But the doctor had subsided in the nearest armchair, and with eyes turned up to the ceiling looked the picture of a martyr suffering in a sacred cause.

"Come quite near!" Madame reiterated.

And the men did go quite near. They looked at her and at the child. They nodded their heads. They swore as picturesquely as Madame herself had done that here indeed was the true Dauphin, the future King of France.

Everything was going on splendidly, and Caroline Ferdinande drew one deep sigh of relief after another, until Madame la Marquise de Reggio, Lady of the Household and Mistress of the Robes, made a dignified entry into the room. Dignified is perhaps not the word, for Madame de Reggio, whose figure was of Junoesque proportions, was scantily and not at all picturesquely clad in a short petticoat, with just a shawl round her shoulders and felt slippers on her bare feet. But she was, next to the royal duchesses, the principal lady of the Court, and all the other ladies, those in waiting as well as those of the bedchamber, were dumb when she spoke and trembled when she scolded. Even Madame de Gonthaut dared not raise her voice when Madame de Reggio delivered herself of some pronouncement or gave a word of command.

No sooner then had this great lady glanced round the room than she realized what had happened, the turbulent Duchess, the excited entourage, the shamefaced soldiers, and that fool of a doctor, too stupid to exercise his authority. She also realized the appalling fact that the future King of France had made his appearance into the world, that he hadn't a rag on, and that every rule of etiquette which demanded this, that, or the other procedure

under the circumstances had been shamefully flouted. These soldiers . . .! Madame de Reggio closed her eyes; presumably the sight of their red faces, their large feet and rough clothes outraged her sense of decorum.

"This is all nonsense," she said; "these men are not competent witnesses." The tone of authority with which she spoke and the finality of this pronouncement had silenced Caroline Ferdinande herself. Over half an hour of trouble, of unpleasantness and of delay, and all for nothing! She was ready to cry with vexation. Time was getting precious and the throne of France . . . my God! the throne of France, if anything should go wrong! She felt a tension on her nerves. It seemed as if already she could hear malevolent whispers all round her: "The birth was a hoax. . . . The boy is a substitute . . . not the Dauphin at all . . . the Bourbon dynasty is extinct. . . . Long live Orléans. . . . Bonaparte. . . . Long live the Republic. . . ."

It was maddening! For the first time she turned appealingly to the doctor.

"My good Deneux," she whispered to him, "will my Henri be quite all right?"

The doctor reassured her. "But," he added with a quick sigh of impatience, "I wish the competent witnesses would come."

Madame de Reggio in the meanwhile was demanding explanations: and first she turned to the Duchesse de Gonthaut.

"Where is Monsieur?" she asked testily; "where is Monseigneur le Duc d'Angoulême? and where is the Duke d'Albuféra? and why has His Majesty not been told?"

Madame de Gonthaut did her best to explain. Monsieur had been awakened and was certainly on his way. A messenger had been sent running to the Pavilion de Flore to fetch the Duke of Albuféra, and everyone was wanting to know what was the etiquette with regard to letting His Majesty know.

The Mistress of the Household soon put everybody right.

"The first thing to do," she said dryly, "is to send the sentry back to their posts. After that we must wait for the Duke d'Albuféra."

The men were only too eager to make themselves scarce, and fortunately for the future of the Bourbon dynasty the old Duke d'Albuféra did presently turn up. He arrived, still struggling into his clothes, his valet behind him helping him on with his coat. He was in full-dress uniform with sword and sabretache, he had his wig on but did not carry his hat, and in spite of his

valet's exertions he was well inside the room before he could get his left arm into his coat sleeve. The ladies made way for him and he approached the bedside. This old soldier of the Grand Army marched across the room as if he were on parade, his sword clanging against his left leg, his sabretache flapping against his thigh, and his moustache, the moustache of an old cuirassier waxed out into two points, sharp as needles. He hated this business quite as much as the sergeant and corporal of the Garde Nationale had done; but it was a duty, and, *pardi*, a soldier of the Grand Army who had received his Marshal's baton from the great Emperor knew what duty was. He came to a halt at the foot of the bed, clicked his heels and gave Madame la Duchesse de Berri a military salute. He then turned his gaze down on the future King of France, bent the knee and kissed the tiny, podgy hand that promptly fastened itself around his thumb. When he struggled back to his feet, tears were running down his furrowed cheeks. But it was with a perfectly steady voice that he made the required sworn statement:

"I solemnly declare on my oath that this child is of the male sex and is truly the son of Madame la Duchesse de Berri."

There! It was all over at last.

"Lights! Bring more lights!" Madame commanded: "bring lights and bottles of scent and fetch Madame Bayart!" After which she calmed down and put herself unreservedly into the hands of Docteur Deneux. All was well, and there was no longer any fear for the future of the Bourbon dynasty. There he was, the Dauphin, the future Henri V, King of France, in the care of the hefty Madame Bayart, washed, perfumed, wrapped in swaddling clothes, petted, crooned over by a group of adoring ladies.

"I am sorry about the ballad, my dear Bourgeois," Madame said to her head nurse; "but there really wouldn't have been time for the seventy-two verses, would there? And anyhow," she added complacently, "I did not make a fool of myself."

Madame Bourgeois was on the point of telling Madame la Duchesse that she it was who had recited *sotto voce* the seventy-two verses of the ballad of *Notre-Dame-du-Bout-du-Pont*, so that everything had actually taken place in accordance with the great tradition that had presided over the birth of Henri IV; but she thought better of it. One never knew how Madame would take this piece of information. Anyway, there was no time to speak of it now. The great moment was at hand. The King had arrived.

Surrounded by members of the royal family, Louis XVIII came to greet his great-nephew. He looked ten years younger: his old face was wreathed in

smiles. He actually got out of his wheeled chair and walked across the room to the bedside. He kissed Caroline Ferdinande on both cheeks and then and there presented her with a magnificent diamond necklace. Then he turned to the crooning ladies:

"Give me the future King of France," he said. He sat back in his chair, and took the baby in his arms. The Duke of Albuféra bent his old knee once more and taking the flask of Jurançon and the seed-pod of garlic from Madame de Gonthaut, he presented these on a tray of solid gold to the King, Louis XVIII, moistened the child's mouth with the wine, and rubbed the seed of garlic against its lips. Caroline Ferdinande watched him with a glance of absolute ecstasy.

"I only wish," she murmured feebly, "that I could have remembered . . . the seventy-two verses . . . of the ballad of *Notre-Dame* . . . *du-Bout* . . . *du* . . ."

And with a deep sigh of weariness she fell back unconscious upon the pillows, while a salvo of twenty-one guns proclaimed the great news that a future King had been born to France and to her people.

CHAPTER XVII

A WOMAN IN A MILLION

The sun rose on one of the happiest days the country had known for years. It was one of unmixed joy. Whatever doubts and fears for the future some people had harboured at the time of the Restoration, or even at the marriage of the Duc de Berri, they were all dissipated now. It did seem, even to the most sceptical, as if God had sent down a special blessing to the Bourbons and promised the perpetuation of their race.

As soon as the guns boomed for the thirteenth time (they would have ceased at the twelfth had it been a baby girl) the streets round about the Pavilion de Marsan were thronged with people. Men, women and children, workmen and great gentlemen, fishwives and aristocratic ladies pushed and jostled and craned their necks towards the windows of the Pavilion, in the hopes of getting a glimpse at the future King of France. At the first streak of light in the east, the church bells all over the city started to ring their carillons and their peals. The big bell of Notre Dame rang out the great news, the artillery thundered it forth, and it was with all these sounds in her ears that Caroline Ferdinande returned to consciousness. The windows were wide open. A subdued hum like the buzzing of millions of bees, arising from thousands of feet moving and thousands of lips murmuring, rose as an accompaniment to the booming of the guns and the clangour of the bells. The air was soft and moist, with a tang in it of wet earth and fallen leaves.

The first thing Caroline saw when she opened her eyes was the old King standing straight up and taking the baby Dauphin from the arms of Madame de Gonthaut. He carried the child to the balcony and held him up as high as he could to let the people see him. A regular storm of cheering rose from below; acclamations and shouts, expressive of great joy, and of spontaneous loyalty. All quite ephemeral, but none the less genuine at the moment.

After that, at Caroline Ferdinande's express wish, the doors of the palace were thrown open. In accordance with royalist traditions, the officers and men of His Majesty's army were admitted to pay homage to their future King. More than five hundred of them filed past the bed where lay the Dauphin in the arms of his young mother. Few of them passed by dry-eyed. Grenadiers, cuirassiers, men who had seen hard fighting under the great Emperor, looked down with tears in their eyes on the last scion of Louis XIV.

One of the Old Guard, a tough soldier, bearded and weatherbeaten, muttered a string of oaths.

“Why,” he mumbled, “am I not twenty years younger? I might have served under him yet.”

The Duchess broke into a happy little laugh. “You will, you will, my man,” she assured him. “I promise you he will start his military career very soon.”

Another thanked God that he was granted the privilege of having seen six generations of Bourbons and having served under three of their kings.

Oh, everything was wonderful! Everything! So much happiness, so much joy was almost beyond belief after the dark days only a few months ago. And everything was different. Even the King was a different man. Years younger, not a twinge of gout. He was on his feet all the time, going backwards and forwards from the bed to the balcony, holding up the child for the people to see, giving a great sigh of contentment when cheering and acclamations became almost deafening.

At half past five the Bishop of Amiens arrived accompanied by his clergy. The royal infant in the arms of Madame de Gonthaut was escorted by a detachment of guards to the chapel of the Tuileries, where the Bishop baptized him, while the Chancellor of France drew up the official birth certificate. After which ceremony the child was taken back to the Pavilion de Marsan and once more placed in the arms of His Majesty the King. Louis XVIII then gave the order to open the doors of the Pavilion to the general public.

That again was in accordance with tradition. Royal personages in the great monarchies of the Continent never did belong to themselves. Their people had the first claim on their time and their privacy. Caroline Ferdinande, knowing all that and politically as astute as any of her family, was the first to insist that the general public as well as the officers and men of His Majesty’s army should be allowed to file past her bed so that all might contemplate her son the Dauphin, the miracle child come to life. There was, with her, no question of mock modesty. She did not for the time being look upon herself as a woman like any other, with another woman’s sense of fastidiousness and prudery. She was the mother of a future king, and she belonged to his people. Therefore open wide the gates! Let them all come who wished to see him.

The King, in spite of his infirmities and striving heroically to conquer his pains, took the baby in his arms and went out into the great hall at the top of the stairs. When the van of the crowd appeared in the vestibule down below, he held the child up before them and said in a loud and firm voice:

"Friends! your happiness adds to mine a hundredfold. This child has been born to you, to me, to us all. He will be your father one day, he will care for you as I have cared. He will love you as all the Bourbons have done. We are all one family, you are my children and you will one day be his."

Wearied with so much excitement, the poor old man was now almost done in. He gave the child back to Madame de Gonthaut, and then went back to his palace and his private apartments for a rest. But there was no rest for Caroline Ferdinande. The *Moniteur* computed at fifteen thousand the number of people who passed through her room that day. How she stood the strain, the noise, the want of air with all that crowd around her is nothing short of miraculous! She was really and truly a woman in a million. Her quietude, her pluck and her unfailing good humour drew the highest possible praise from that tough old soldier the Duke of Albuféra.

"The son of such a woman," he said, "cannot fail to be a great king!"

Alas! his prophecy was destined to be unfulfilled. Among that crowd of fifteen thousand enthusiasts who looked down on that baby this day, how many were there who had a clear view of the future, of the turmoils, the quarrels, the revolutions that would impoverish France before she found rest and prosperity once more. But for the moment it did seem as if the happiness of the widowed young mother and the soft crooning of the infant would bring a promise of peace to war-ridden Europe. An immense wave of loyalty to the throne swept over the whole of France. Forgotten were the horrors of revolutions, the hatred of brother against brother, the crimes and the sacrifices of the past: forgotten were the old loyalties, the enthusiasm for strange dynasties or democratic institutions, and if France looked back at all to-day, it was on the days of Louis XIV and Henri IV and on the glory brought to her by her line of kings. The *Journal des Débats* likened the child to a star shining in the midst of political storms, like a beacon of hope guiding the shipwrecked mariner to a haven of safety. The *Moniteur* went a step further and spoke lyrically of "a holy cradle" around which all evil passions would now be stilled and the reign of friendship and goodwill be inaugurated among the nations throughout the world; whilst Lamartine and Victor Hugo bent their genius to the fashioning of sycophantic verses in praise and honour of the child whom Lamartine spoke of as "a divine marvel," and "the offspring of a heroic martyr's blood"; and Hugo as "the

glorious child, an angel sent down from heaven," and "the new flame risen from the ashes of the smouldering glories of France."

Alas, for all these dithyrambs! Less than ten years before this the *Moniteur* was equally lyrical over the birth of the King of Rome, the son of the Emperor Napoleon and of Marie-Louise. He too was likened by poets and journalists to a star and a beacon of hope, he too according to them was a miracle child and a gift of heaven, and Marie-Louise was also compared to the Mother of God whose dainty foot would crush the serpent of discord. Those same men, those stalwart soldiers who shed tears of emotion and bent the knee before the cradle of this descendant of the Bourbons, had also shed tears before the cradle of a Bonaparte, and would shed them again eighteen years hence when the Bourbons were sent into exile and their Orléans cousins proclaimed in their stead.

And the great Lamartine, the sycophantic poet, would forget presently all about the divine marvel and write equally impassioned verses to the glory of the second Republic of which he himself will have helped to lay the foundation-stone.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SON OF FRANCE

THE miracle child was christened Henri Charles Ferdinand Dieudonné. He had been born on September 29th, the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, and the loyalists as well as the superstitious declared that the date of his birth was yet another augury of happiness and prosperity for the country. The jubilation of the royalist faction knew no bounds, and loyal addresses to His Majesty and to the young mother soon came pouring in from every province and township in France. October the 1st was proclaimed a general holiday; a solemn Te Deum was sung in Notre Dame in the morning; in the afternoon the municipality gave free meals to the poor and distributed food and wine to all who chose to come and ask. There were balls and theatrical shows in the open air, and outdoor entertainments in all the suburbs. The weather fortunately was beautifully mild. In the evening the whole city was ablaze with illuminations and there was a grand display of fireworks on the Esplanade des Invalides.

On the 3rd the King received the congratulations and homage of the diplomatic corps. The Pope had sent his special blessing for the infant and the young mother through his Legate, Monsignor Machi, who was doyen and spokesman of ambassadors. Monsignor made a beautiful speech which brought tears to the eyes of His Majesty and of all those who were privileged to hear it. His allocution concluded with the words: “Sire, this child is the presage and guarantee of peace and goodwill throughout the world. He is not only the son of France but of the whole of Europe. At a gesture of his tiny hand the spirit of unrest is quelled, and the turbulence of factions is laid to rest.”

The answer of Louis XVIII was also most eloquent and touching. He recommended his great-nephew to the special prayers of His Holiness and of the whole Christian Church, as well as to the goodwill of all the European sovereigns.

From that day on, there was an uninterrupted succession of official receptions, of balls, galas and banquets, all of which delighted the Parisians, who dearly loved such pageants. They loved the Court ceremonials, the rich dresses and jewellery displayed in the shops, the handsome uniforms of the officers who stamped about the streets with clanking swords, swinging their sabretaches. It was many years since the public had seen so many soldiers on parade, so many beautiful ladies driving down the Champs Élysées in

their smart carriages, such gorgeous liveries and fine horses. They had missed all that since the brilliant days of Napoleon and the Empire.

There was no more popular personage in the whole of Europe at this time than Caroline Ferdinande Duchesse de Berri, and no one knew better how to keep herself and her child well in the public eye. She could always be seen at the open window of her boudoir in the Pavilion de Marsan, lying on the sofa with the Duc de Bordeaux in her arms. And as soon as a crowd had collected in the Tuileries Gardens she stood up and held the baby so that the public could see him, when of course there was any amount of cheering. It was her popularity that had given rise to this immense wave of loyalty for the Bourbon monarchy which was sweeping all over France. She was quoted as having been a model wife, as she now was a wonderful mother. Her virtues of kindliness and generosity were acclaimed by poets and journalists as well as by the general public. It was well known for one thing that she had pleaded successfully with the King to pardon the two ex-officers, Gravier and Bourgon, the sorry heroes of the incidents with the crackers, and all over the city there were tales of her charitable deeds, of her simplicity and her amiability with all and sundry, when she and her late husband used to roam about the streets of Paris, arm in arm, like any two young sweethearts, or spend jolly evenings together at popular restaurants!

And some of her popularity was also reflected upon the King. He, of course, was all smiles and distributed titles and decorations with a free hand. He created thirty-four new knights of the Order of the Holy Ghost, the premier order of the Kingdom, dispensed gratuities, promotions and bonuses to the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the royal guard, and ordered the liberation of all persons imprisoned for debt.

On May 1st the ceremonies in honour of the baptism of the miracle child surpassed in magnificence anything that had ever been witnessed before. The whole of Paris was a welter of garlands and bunting by day, of illuminations and fireworks by night. His Royal Highness, the Duc de Bordeaux, aged seven months, was driven to the Cathedral of Notre Dame in a magnificent gilded coach drawn by eight cream-coloured ponies. Madame la Duchesse de Gonthaut had him in her arms, next to her sat Her Royal Highness Louise Marie-Thérèse, daughter of France, who was attended by her lady-in-waiting, Madame la Marquise de Foresta. The King’s coach came immediately behind. He had Madame la Duchesse d’Angoulême next to him, whilst on the seat opposite sat Caroline Ferdinande radiantly happy and exquisitely dressed in a dress of white satin embroidered with great bunches of white lilac and silver leaves.

BAPTEME

In the cathedral porch, Monseigneur de Quélen, coadjutor to the Archbishop of Paris, awaited the arrival of the royal coaches, surrounded by the cathedral clergy in full canonicals.

And all the time the bells of the city pealed and the guns of the forts and of the Invalides thundered, while the stately procession marched up the aisle, and the old archbishop intoned the *Veni Creator*. The Marquis de Dreux-Brézé, master of ceremonies to His Majesty, marched in front, and

immediately behind him came Madame la Duchesse de Gonthaut carrying the royal infant. The King, alas! was too much troubled with gout that day to be able to walk; he was wheeled in his chair to the sanctuary rails. The Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême, representing His Majesty the King of Naples, and the Hereditary Princess of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, were sponsors for the child. The archbishop performed the ceremony at the font; he poured the water over Henri Charles Ferdinand Dieudonné from an ewer of solid gold, the work of one of the finest craftsmen in France. The archbishop was a very old man and his voice was shaky, but it could be heard distinctly in every corner of the great cathedral, while the huge congregation held its breath in order to catch the canonical words that fell from his lips.

But the great moment came when the Duchesse de Gonthaut walked up the steps of the high altar, still carrying the royal infant. She held him over the altar for a few seconds and then turned and presented him to the assembly. To everyone there this moment did appear supreme and miraculous: many of them declared that at sight of the child they felt immensely hopeful and comforted. All the turmoils and quarrels of the past seemed suddenly to vanish into the incense-laden air of the vast edifice. They seemed as if they had never been. Were it not for the fact that these same people—or most of them—felt exactly the same exultation ten years ago when the son of the Emperor Napoleon was baptized by the same old ecclesiastic in this same sacred building, one might have thought their emotion touched on the sublime, that it was a kind of fervour that lifted them up into regions of almost heavenly ecstasy. And so it was for the moment. These people were perfectly genuine on this 1st of May, 1821, just as they had been genuine on the 9th of June, 1811. The trouble was that those who now breathed this incense of adulation did not perceive how ephemeral was its character. Like incense the adulation was just vapour, stirred for the moment by the emotion of a nation whose emotions are very easily stirred, but very quickly scattered by a mere breath of conflict or dissatisfaction.

And when the royal procession of equipages and royal guard wended its way back after the ceremony, accompanied by an immense concourse of people, the coaches halted a moment in front of the statue of the great King Henri IV, at the foot of which an anonymous enthusiast had deposited a framed placard with the words:

"Sons of France, I ask you to love my descendant as I loved your fathers." And below this two names and dates: "Jeanne d'Albret, 1553," and

“Caroline, 1820.”

It is idle to recall the numberless festivities that succeeded one another, both in Paris and the provinces, during those first days of May following the baptism of the Duc de Bordeaux. Merrymaking in every form was the order of the day: frolic and laughter, sports and revelry all day and well into the night. Caroline Ferdinande had gone several times through periods such as this. She had witnessed this same unrepressed and exuberant spirit of revelry when first she landed in Marseilles. It was all new to her then, no longer so now, but none the less a joy to her heart. Never, she thought, as long as she lived would she tire of these manifestations of loyalty which had so endeared to her the people of her choice. She had witnessed them at Marseilles when she arrived, in Paris when first she drove through the city, on the occasion of her marriage and when her son was born. “I shall always love this dear French nation,” she said to herself; “and I know they will always love me and my son.” In her joy she even relegated to the back of her mind all thoughts of Sicily, her Sicily, and her nostalgia for the land of song and of laughter. Its palm trees and orange groves were soon nothing more than a memory. A memory in which Hector de Lucchesi-Palli moved as does a ghost of the past, the baseless fabric of a vision, in the midst of the realities of to-day.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ROYAL LITTLE MADCAP

FOUR years later Louis XVIII succumbed to his many ailments. Caroline Ferdinande was by his bedside to the end. She had been very fond of the old man, who was always extremely kind to her, and indulgent to her many eccentricities which were apt to shock the more straitlaced members of his family. While he lived, she remained installed in the Pavilion de Marsan and did her best to fall in with the wearisome etiquette with which Monsieur, her father-in-law, and the Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême, loved to surround themselves. But though she could not always curb her love of fun and hatred of conventionality she was always very careful not to do anything that might offend the old King. He was indulgent, extremely kind, and very fond of her, and Caroline Ferdinande knew that she could always rely on his forbearance and on his defence of her if the Duchesse d'Angoulême or one of the other royal ladies made acid remarks about her behaviour or freedom of speech—which they often did. But because of that forbearance Caroline made it a point of honour to be as sedate in her behaviour as he would have wished her to be and to restrain her exuberance of spirits, though she found this very difficult sometimes.

Frankly, she was distinctly bored during these four years that followed the birth of her son, and once she wrote a long letter to Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, the burden of which was: "I am bored to death, my dear friend. Do come and cheer me up." But he didn't come, not just then.

With the death of Louis XVIII, Caroline Ferdinande felt as if an immense load of intolerable shackles had been lifted from her shoulders. She felt that now at last she could organize her life according to her own temperament and to her own tastes. Soon after the birth of her son, the nation in the fullness of its joy and of its loyalty had acquired by public subscription, and presented to its future King as a gift, the magnificent Château of Chambord. Built by Francis I in the sixteenth century, it had been a royal residence, one where the great Louis XIV spent his days of leisure, where several of the comedies of Molière first saw the footlights, and where Maurice de Saxe, the victor of Fontenoy, spent his declining years after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. During the Revolution it became national property and fell into something very like decay. The magnificent Gobelin tapestries were torn down for the sake of the silver and gold threads that were woven into their fabric, the fine chimney-pieces and exquisite panelling were

smashed to pieces and the furniture, which was worth a fortune, was sold for a song to the small dealers of the neighbourhood.

In the days of the first Empire, Chambord was partially restored and used as the headquarters of the 15th Section of the Legion of Honour. Later, Napoleon gave the château and its dependencies, together with a yearly revenue of half a million francs, to one of his favourite marshals, Berthier, whom he created Prince of Wagram. After the collapse of the Empire, the yearly revenue was confiscated, by the State, and the widow of Marshal Berthier, unable to keep up the place, put it up for sale. It was bought by public subscription and presented to the Duc de Bordeaux. It was a royal gift, though not so royal as it appeared, for the "Alhambra of France," as Chambord had once been called, was in a terrible state of dilapidation. Its four hundred and four rooms had not been lived in for half a century, and even Marshal Berthier with his revenue of half a million had done very little towards making the château habitable. It took years to put the magnificent structure into proper repair. Caroline Ferdinande accepted the gift of it from the nation in the name of her son, but she marked time while the public, generously assisted by the King himself, set to work to turn a mass of dilapidated masonry into a sumptuous royal palace.

In the meanwhile the young Duchesse de Berri took up her residence at Bagatelle, a charming house and estate which her father-in-law, now King Charles X, placed at her disposal. Here she spent the warm months of the year. Situated just the other side of the Bois de Boulogne, it was an ideal home for this young mother and her two little children. It was near enough to the city to enable her to drive in whenever she pleased, and go to spectacles, theatres or shopping expeditions as she felt inclined, and it was sufficiently country to give her and the children relaxation from ceremonies and etiquette which she, for one, heartily abhorred. The Comte d'Artois had in his day spent a great deal of money on the place, because he too, when he was young, liked to get away from the stiffness of the Court. Like his sister-in-law, Marie-Antoinette, he wanted a Trianon of his own where he could forget the Tuileries and Versailles in the company of pretty women and congenial friends.

During the five years that followed the death of Louis XVIII, Caroline Ferdinande made Bagatelle her home. The little Duc de Bordeaux and Louise Marie-Thérèse were there always. The place had all the naïve features that had been in fashion during the previous century: mock Gothic ruins, Chinese pagodas, fountains, arbours, trellisworks and pergolas. The garden was very large and the children had a diminutive carriage drawn by

two cream-coloured ponies, and on this they made the tour of their little kingdom, delighting in the quaint statuary and the representations of animals in the lake with its swarm of goldfish and in the aviaries peopled with all sorts of exotic birds. Bagatelle was indeed a wonderful place: a place where Caroline Ferdinande felt that she could forget all about that bugbear, etiquette, and laugh at the d'Angoulêmes and their starchy ways, and all their exaggerated ideas of decorum. There was no one here to restrain her, even though the Duchesse de Reggio and Madame de Gonthaut, who was chief governess to the children, did their best to counsel prudence for the sake of prestige: but Caroline Ferdinande, with her winning smile and endearing ways, simply swept these counsels of prudence on one side. She was young, she was happy, she was independent and she just let herself go without putting any curb on her own vagaries. And these vagaries became more and more pronounced after the death of Louis XVIII. She no longer had her indulgent and pleasure-loving husband to go about with in cabarets and restaurants, so she dragged Madame de Meffray with her in her escapades. Madame de Meffray was the daughter of the Comte and Comtesse de La Tour who had accompanied Caroline Ferdinande during her triumphal progress from Marseilles to Paris. She was a young girl then and had since married the Comte de Meffray, but she remained loyally attached to Caroline Ferdinande not only during her years of prosperity but throughout her long era of misfortunes.

Madame de Meffray, a tall, dark beauty, was a wonderful foil for Caroline Ferdinande's dainty blond type, and together these two young women would drive into Paris on fine evenings and then sally forth unattended as happy as a couple of flappers cutting school: they would visit theatres and picture galleries, the panoramas of Montmartre, the circus and the dog-markets. But what Caroline Ferdinande enjoyed more than anything were the fashionable Chinese baths on the boulevards, even though these had not a very enviable reputation just then, being the haunt of unattached young beauties in search of elderly beaux with well-lined pockets, willing to provide them with a comfortable little apartment, and the means for keeping it up. But Caroline Ferdinande didn't care about that. As a matter of fact, she was very much amused by watching the various assignations which were made in the drying and cooling rooms of the establishment, through the agency of the bath attendants, who received lucrative commissions on these transactions. She kept Madame de Meffray on tenterhooks by assuming the airs and graces of an unattached beauty herself, and allowing some middle-aged beau in search of adventure to make overtures to her.

“Look at that one, Meffray dear,” she said on one occasion, and pointed to a solemn old gentleman who was a senator or a judge, but who looked intensely funny draped in a bath sheet as in a toga and with his pince-nez perched insecurely on a very red nose; “he has been ogling me for the past half-hour. I think he means to offer me a nice little flat not too far from the Bois, a one-horse coupé and an allowance of five thousand francs a month. Shall I accept it? I am sure he would be very kind . . . and so very, very amusing.”

And Madame thrust out the daintiest foot imaginable under the folds of her satin bath gown and, throwing back her curly head, roused the echoes of the elegant establishment with her rippling laughter, whilst the worthy senator, mopping his streaming forehead, summoned an obsequious bath attendant, and was soon in close and animated conversation with him.

Caroline Ferdinande was enjoying herself immensely, but Madame de Meffray was ready to faint. She was a woman of the world and loved plenty of fun, but this impropriety on the part of a royal lady did really shock her. However, whilst the senator and the bath attendant remained engaged in earnest conversation, Caroline Ferdinande slipped away into her dressing-room and the incident was closed that day. But it was one of many of an equally daring character, the result of which after a time was the gradual waning of that respect which had surrounded the Duchesse de Berri ever since the tragic death of her husband. To keep such audacious escapades entirely from public knowledge was of course impossible. It was difficult enough to cloak them from the vigilant eyes of the royal family. Madame de Meffray did her best, because she was very fond of the Duchess; Caroline Ferdinande had indeed a way of endearing herself to all those who served her, and in her household there was a regular conspiracy to keep her eccentric behaviour as secret from prying eyes as possible. Madame de Reggio and Madame de Gonthaut were often very shocked, even though they said nothing; but the maids and valets talked, and out in the streets of Paris, in cabarets and public baths, and open-air shows, there were always gossip-mongers about, only too eager to retail any scandal affecting high-placed personages, and always journalists anxious to get amusing copy for their paper.

And so Caroline Ferdinande’s reputation, which hitherto had been unimpeachable, began to suffer a little. The rank and file of society called her *la signora* and shrugged malicious shoulders when her name was mentioned. The French are like that. Love adventures are the essence of their lives, nevertheless they become very censorious when such adventures

are indulged in by someone they know, or by official personages. In spite of this, however, Caroline did remain popular with the masses and, on the top of these more or less spiteful comments on her escapades, there always came the heartfelt acknowledgment that she was “so good.” Her charities might at times be indiscriminate, but no appeal was ever made to her to which she did not respond, with the result that as her widow’s jointure was not very large, she was often and uncomfortably in debt. Dear old Uncle Louis, otherwise the late King, did on many occasions pay those debts for her when they became pressing, but that happy time was now over and His Majesty Charles X, who did not approve of his daughter-in-law’s behaviour, did nothing to help her out when she outran the constable. When the black days of adversity came, which they did very soon after this, the Duchesse de Berri was attacked on every side and by every faction for her extravagance; but as a matter of fact, the administrators of her estate, who were appointed by the new government, were forced to acknowledge that the bulk of her debts arose from her too lavish charities. Her income had been spent not so much on herself as on the poor; not altogether in dresses, jewellery and furs, but in assisting the needy, more especially artists and professional people, to whom she always extended a helping hand and encouraged, not only with empty patronage, but with money which she could not always afford.

When in Paris she still occupied the Pavilion de Marsan, and here during the season she organized fêtes and galas that astonished the archaic personnel and the uncompromising dowagers of the Court. One time it was an oriental ball, when Madame la Duchesse appeared in bloomers of rose-coloured velvet, her curly head draped in veils of silver and gold, with all her ladies dressed as beautiful houris and Monseigneur the Duc de Chartres, the son of the Duc d’Orléans, then aged sixteen, was a young and most impressive Sultan. Another time it was Bal du Moyen Age, the ladies and gentlemen evoking by their dress the great figures of the past: Catherine de’ Medici, Diane de Poitiers, Jeanne d’Albret, the Duc de Guise, the admiral de Coligny, while Caroline Ferdinande herself made a dramatic entry into the ballroom as Mary Stuart, with the young Duc de Chartres, who looked extremely engaging, as the unfortunate queen’s first husband, Francis II of France. Caroline, whom some of her greatest admirers called *une belle laide*, and whom detractors called cross-eyed, looked radiant that night in a gorgeous gown of blue velvet, bordered with superb Russian ermine, her plump shoulders looking like ripe fruit in the framing of her wide Medici collar.

Gone were the days of sorrow and widow’s weeds. And who shall blame her? She was very young and time is a great healer. She felt—genuinely felt

—that her mission in life was to please, and in the midst of the growing dissatisfaction with the monarchical system, she alone gathered enthusiasm round her; she alone roused cheers when she ran from shop to shop in Paris ordering new dresses, inventing coiffures that astonished, almost scared the conservative ladies of the Court: coiffures with plumes and curls, and combs called *à la girafe*. Cassandralike the Duchesses of Angoulême and Orléans prophesied some terrible scandal that would gather round the person of their scatterbrained relative.

"She will ruin us all in the eyes of the people," the Duc d'Angoulême said gloomily. "Another year of this folly and our prestige will be gone."

They remonstrated with her, threatened her with sequestration, but she only laughed.

"Try and shut me up in your old palace," she said with a defiant shrug; "my dear Parisians will burn it down and set me free."

When the first public vehicles were put on the streets of Paris, Caroline Ferdinande said to the King:

"If you will bet me ten thousand francs to one, father, I will go out alone to-morrow and ride in one of those new omnibuses."

"I wouldn't bet ten centimes," the poor King retorted with a weary sigh. "I know you to be capable of any folly."

But Caroline Ferdinande had other projects in mind, besides that of riding in public vehicles or upsetting the dowagers of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. As a matter of fact, she was nursing the project of a big voyage through the provinces of France; she would take her children with her, present the Duc de Bordeaux to the people and stir in them that same enthusiasm which had acclaimed her when first she had set foot on French soil.

At first Charles X was dead against the project. He hated the idea of his daughter-in-law, whose behaviour was in his opinion not always as discreet as it might be, careering about the country with no one to restrain her vagaries. But Caroline Ferdinande was both earnest and persistent, and strangely enough her request received the support and approval of the King's own ministers, so that in the end His Majesty gave way, and it was officially announced that Madame la Duchesse de Berri would visit the principal cities of France, in order to present the Duc de Bordeaux to his future subjects.

So off the little lady went, full of excitement and enthusiasm for the adventure. She had got her wish. She was going to exhibit herself and her son to the people of France, and by her appearance and his, by her charm and affability, by his good looks and youthfulness, she would consolidate the popularity of the dynasty. Needless to say, she did not inform papa-in-law of the details of her journey such as she had planned them. Had he or the rigid Duchesse d'Angoulême had any inkling of them, there is no doubt that the royal little madcap would never have been allowed to start.

But let it be said at once that the Odyssey was a great success. First she went into Auvergne where, dressed in the costume of the natives—breeches, red shirt open at the neck, felt hat and a pistol stuck in her crimson sash—she danced the *bourrée*, a kind of Irish jig, and drew weird noises out of the local bagpipes. Then off to Chambord, the gift of the nation to her son, now in full process of refurbishing and refurnishing. Here she and the royal children were welcomed by two hundred little peasants all dressed in white, each waving a laurel branch and a lily. They sang local songs and tripped their native dances to the sound of their musettes and ocarinas, which ceremony was brought to a finish by the presentation to Louise Marie-Thérèse and the Duc de Bordeaux of a tame deer and two white lambs decorated with blue ribbons and cornflowers.

But the real object of Caroline Ferdinande's journey had all along been a visit to La Vendée, the one province of France which through all the changes and vicissitudes of the past fifty years, through all the horrors and persecutions of the Revolution and of the Empire, had remained enthusiastically and consistently loyal to the monarchy and the Bourbons. Caroline Ferdinande had always longed to visit La Vendée. She felt that here she would meet such enthusiasm and such loyalty as she had never witnessed before. For thirty years the Vendéans fought against the powerful armies of the Revolution and the Republic, and against the finest commanders of Napoleon's highly disciplined hordes. Unable to stand up before these magnificently organized troops by day, the Vendéans had fought by night; unable to fight in the open, they fought under cover of darkness, of their forests or their wells or their hidden burrows. It was an epic fight, all the more wonderful as it was entirely futile. Deeds of heroism were performed during that campaign by women as well as by men that have never been equalled in history. But in the end all the heroism seemed to have been nothing but wastage. It all fizzled out, and it was the foreign armies that restored the throne of France to a dynasty for whose sake the population of a whole countryside had suffered almost to the point of extinction.

Caroline Ferdinande had long cherished the desire of visiting these people, the country which the loyalists always spoke of as the bulwark of the throne. Although she had in the past few years given herself over principally to the pursuit of pleasure, there was not much that went on in the outside world that escaped her altogether. She was shrewd rather than clever and had plenty of common sense and she could not help but perceive the heavy clouds, presage of the storm, that had begun to gather on the political horizon. And now she had the feeling that she must just hurl herself, as it were, in the midst of these people of the Vendée who had fought and suffered martyrdom, extinction almost, for the sake of the dynasty of which her son was now the representative and the heir. That is why she now sent her children under the care of Madame de Gonthaut back to Bagatelle and started on her progress through La Vendée. It was a progress different in every respect from any undertaken by a royal personage before. She did not visit La Vendée as a royal personage at all. She went there as a private individual, as a friend.

She had been warned that the country was for the most part very rough and that most of the roads were inaccessible to vehicles. She didn't care. She was a splendid horsewoman, donned riding breeches and top boots and set out on her journey in spite of warnings and remonstrances.

"In this land where women fought as bravely for their King as did the men," she said defiantly, "it is only right that the mother of a Bourbon should forget the weaknesses of her sex, and show that she has the same courage as the heroines of that epic campaign."

She arrived at Saint Florent by boat. A small crowd had gathered on the quay to greet her, but there were no triumphal arches as there had been elsewhere, no bands of music or beribboned maidens, only a handful of men, bearded, ill clothed, shaggy; a handful out of that glorious army whom famine and the guillotine, the wreckage of their homes, and the many firing parties had decimated but never brought to its knees. They had with them the tattered remnants of their flags, bits of rags worn to shreds by thirty years of constant fighting for the cause which for them was sacred. Caroline Ferdinande stepped on shore. Overcome with emotion as was usual with her southern temperament, she threw herself in the arms of an old veteran and wept on his shoulder. The younger men pressed round her, kissed her hand and her gown.

For a whole month after that she lived with these people and among them, and not only in the châteaux of the well-to-do, of the Charettes, the de Lescures or the Larochejaqueleins, but often she spent the night in a

labourer’s cottage or a wayside inn. Often she sat in the coffee-room of one of these old inns, or just by the roadside with the crowd of old soldiers grouped around her, and listened for hours to tales and anecdotes which they loved to relate of their dead comrades and their leaders. The country teemed with places made memorable by deeds of valour.

“Just over there, Madame, Monsieur de Lescure was killed.”

“Henri de Larochejaquelein stood on this very spot when he said to the men: ‘If I go forward, follow me! if I retreat, kill me! if I die, avenge me!’ My father was there. He heard him.”

“Bonchans stood up against that tree when he faced the firing party.”

Caroline Ferdinande had never been quite so happy as she was during this memorable Odyssey. At any rate, she had never been happy in the same way, for she felt that here in the midst of these intensely loyal people, so absolutely devoted to the dynasty and the throne, there would be safety, even salvation, if ever the threatened storm broke.

“Why didn’t Louis XVI take refuge here with you dear people?” she said once with a sigh; “those brutes of revolutionaries would not have dared touch him then.”

It was a triumphant progress from beginning to end. Her personality won the hearts of people as emotional as she was herself. She looked so splendid on horseback in her green riding habit with the big felt hat draped in clouds of grey veiling, or on board a steamship going down the Loire where she stood on the bridge in a brown alpaca dress with a gold chain round her neck, watching with tear-dimmed eyes the shores of the great river gliding past her like a dream. With an escort of boats around the ship, all flying the fleur-de-lis flag, she felt really a queen. “If it should ever happen,” she said, “that France forgot her loyalty to her King, I would come to La Vendée and feel safe here with my son.”

Caroline Ferdinande followed up her visit to La Vendée by a tour in Gascony. She visited Bordeaux, the rich and loyal city that had given its name to her son. She crossed the river at Blaye and threw only a cursory glance on the great citadel from the grim tower of which destiny was perhaps beckoning to her even then. She visited the Béarn, the birthplace of the great Henri IV who was to be her son’s prototype. She was shown the room in the château where the great King was born, and the cradle fashioned out of the shell of a giant turtle wherein he had lain. Standing beside it, she

prayed to God that her little Dieudonné might one day be as great as the great Henri himself, but that he be spared the same tragic fate.

CHAPTER XX

STORM CLOUDS

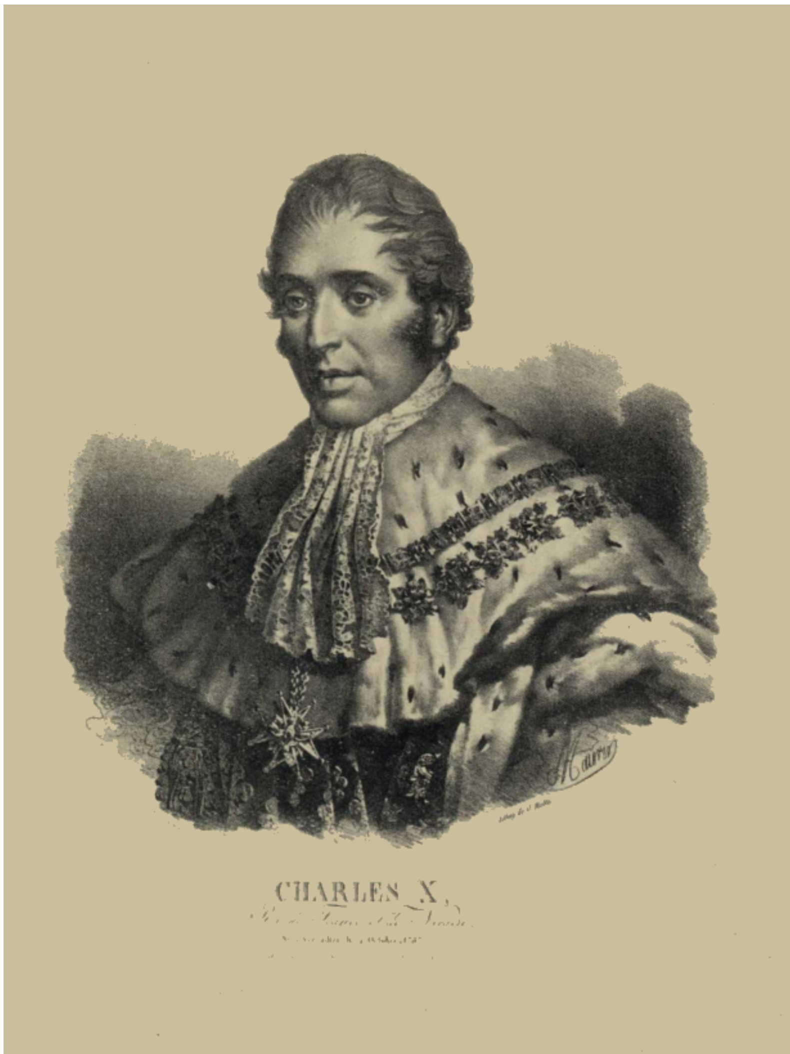
When Caroline Ferdinande returned to Paris and Bagatelle after that wonderful journey of hers, she was of course full of excitement and enthusiasm for everything she had seen and heard. There was nothing she did not know about the people of France. Her people! It was all nonsense to talk about disaffection and liberal ideas, about the unpopularity of ministers, or Orléanist intrigues. She knew all about that. Those disturbers of the peace, those arch-grumblers and disappointed place-seekers, they meant nothing. Nothing at all. They were not the people of France. Not the real people. She had seen the real people flocking round her in crowds, acclaiming her and her son and the whole Bourbon dynasty, not only with loyalty, but with genuine transports of love. It had been the same in Marseilles as in Paris, in Bordeaux or in Pau; as for La Vendée, well, there wasn't a man, woman or child who would not gladly die for the sacred cause of legitimate monarchy. She knew!

Back at the Pavilion de Marsan, and surrounded by the members of the royal family, she related her experiences at full length, dwelling on the enthusiastic reception that had met her wherever she went. It must be admitted that the narrative lost nothing in the telling, and the whole Bourbon faction from the King downwards listened enthralled and full of pride and hope to everything she said. The fact that the Orléans did not join in this enthusiasm and withdrew themselves more and more from the intimacy of this family circle did not matter in the least. Caroline Ferdinande's opinion was that this was mere petty jealousy, and she relied on their personal affection for her to bring these stray sheep back to the fold. The young Duc de Chartres was very impressionable, and very amenable to those powers of fascination which "*ma cousine Caroline*" possessed to such a high degree. He it was who when the first gun was fired at the birth of the Duc de Bordeaux in the early hours of that blessed September day had jumped out of bed and exclaimed: "Here comes into the world either my King or my wife."

So much for the Orléans: and as far as other factions were concerned . . . well! There were the Bonapartes, but what chance had they with the people of France now that the head of the house was just a miserable young consumptive, with one foot in the grave, and living his life over in Austria? And Caroline Ferdinande just tossed her curly head and laughed the idea of revolutions or change of dynasty to scorn. It was all nonsense. Didn't papa-

in-law think so too? And papa-in-law looked up from his game of whist and nodded approvingly, for he too had been on a tour in France, in the eastern provinces, in Alsace and Lorraine, and there had received a number of loyal addresses from local mayors dressed in their robes and groups of young girls in white frocks, waving branches of lilies. He had seen the streets of Strasbourg and Mulhouse beflagged with fleurs-de-lis, and had heard shouts of "*Vive le roi*" and other loud-voiced expressions of loyalty to himself and the monarchy. So, naturally, when his daughter-in-law appealed to him and asked his opinion about these so-called revolutions that were supposed to be brewing in the land, he quite agreed with her that it was all nonsense and that in any case his excellent minister the Prince de Polignac was quite capable of dealing with the minor disaffections that cropped up in every country, however well governed it might be.

Everything then appeared *couleur de rose* within the walls of the royal palace. Charles X played whist and believed in the divine right of kings, which God Himself would safeguard, and Madame la Duchesse de Berri entertained her relatives with graphic accounts of her triumphal progress through the provinces of France, and by airing her views on the political situation inside the country. Her prestige within the family circle was now undisputed even by the Duke and Duchess d'Angoulême. The Duke was now the Dauphin, the heir to the throne of France and the first gentleman in the land, and his wife, the first lady. The Duchess was the only member of the royal circle who took a less hopeful view of the situation. She was credited with having great influence with the King, but over her gloomy predictions she was voted to be a croaker and a bore, whilst Caroline Ferdinande, who was the protagonist of confidence and gaiety in this game of blindman's-buff, won all recalcitrant hearts with her jokes and her laughter. She drove in an open carriage through the streets of Paris, with her red and gold liveried servants and highmettled horses: she visited the shops, the theatres, the picture galleries, the fashionable baths as she had never done before; she introduced the new waltz from Vienna into the demure ballrooms of the Faubourg Saint-Germain: she launched eccentric fashions in hats and skirts and coiffures: she dispensed charity with the same indiscriminate lavishness and ran, still laughing and joking, in and out of debt, confident that she was so beloved by the nation that it would readily pay her debts if they became pressing.



CHARLES X.

But all the while the storm was brewing outside the walls of the archaic palace. The favourite of Louis XVIII, the Duc Decazes had been unpopular, but his unpopularity had been nothing in comparison with the opprobrium which gathered round the name of Polignac. He was the reactionary beyond compare: more royalist than the King. Decazes had held a few liberal opinions: he was all for the Charter and granting the Press as much liberty as was compatible with the prestige of the Crown. But Polignac would have none of these reforms. He was all for absolutism and the days when Louis XIV could say with impunity: "I am the State!" And Charles X, who was

now an old man, and who throughout his long life had learnt nothing and forgotten everything, fell in readily with his minister's reactionary views. When some of the gentlemen of his entourage, more far-seeing than others, put it to him that the people of France, far from desiring another revolution, would welcome a constitution on the lines of the British one, he replied coolly:

"I would sooner sweep a crossing than be a mere puppet like the King of England."

And back he went to his games of whist and to his shooting at Rambouillet, convinced that it was the will of God that he should govern France in his own way, and content to leave the rest in the hands of M. de Polignac, who, he declared, drew his inspiration direct from God himself.

But *quem deus vult perdere prius dementat*, which excellent Latin proverb translated into our own tongue tells us that: those whom the god wills to destroy, he first makes mad. For *mad* in this case we will substitute *blind*, for life in the Tuileries during these declining years of the old monarchy was just a huge and long-drawn-out game of blindman's-buff. Those who took part in the game saw nothing of what went on around them, sometimes under their very noses. Signs and portents were of no avail, since those who were rushing blindly to their doom paid no heed to them. When in March the Chamber adjourned and there followed the general elections which resulted in an overwhelming majority for the liberal opposition, the King only shrugged: "The Chamber?" he said, "the Liberals? the Opposition? what are they? There is always my army if it ever came to a question of defending me and my throne." The whole of his entourage, his family and his ministers assured him that he was right, and when one of the liberal deputies ventured to say that "most certainly the army would defend not only the throne but also the Charter," Charles X retorted acidly: "What has the army to do with charters? If my rights are questioned I will not climb into a tumbril as did my brother Louis XVI, but will call on my army to uphold my sovereignty by force of arms."

Blindman's-buff! But the game was nearing its end.

Charles X had sent a naval expedition to the Mediterranean in order to punish the Dey of Algiers for his repeated insults to France. These insults had culminated in a wordy warfare between him and the French Consul-General, M. Deval, at the end of which the Dey smacked the consul in the face with a fly-swatter. This was nothing short of a *casus belli* and the French fleet set out to administer punishment. The ships bombarded Algiers,

which finally surrendered. The Dey was deposed and the conquest of Algiers laid the foundation of French Colonial Empire in North Africa. Strangely enough, the news of this brilliant victory was received in Paris without any enthusiasm. But the King was radiant. His navy's victorious deeds made him forget those tiresome elections and the huge majority which the opponents of his absolutism now had in the Chamber. After this signal victory he felt that he was master of the political situation inside his own country. Let those who dared, attack his sovereignty now. He was ready for any opposition.

"I know," he said to the members of the diplomatic corps who had come to offer their congratulations on the surrender of Algiers, "I know that my task in life is a difficult one. The Chamber is against me. But my will is strong and I hold my right over my people direct from heaven."

And now, if anyone ventured to say anything about disaffection in Paris or in the provinces, he took a leaf out of his daughter-in-law's book, and just laughed and shrugged as she had always done, since she came back from La Vendée.

"You are quite right, my dear," he said to her, "the people themselves are loyal. The malcontents only exist in the Chamber. The people care nothing about elections, and despise those garrulous self-seekers who do nothing but rant and harangue. Our French bourgeois cares for his own material interests and he knows that these are safeguarded by the crown."

Blindman's-buff!

Those whom God wishes to destroy, He first makes mad!

In May of that fateful year—1830—the royal family of Naples came on a visit to Paris. They were on their way to Madrid for the marriage of their daughter Christine, Caroline Ferdinande's sister, to Ferdinand VII, King of Spain, and for this great event fêtes and galas were planned on the grand scale in which Caroline delighted. She revelled in the prospect of monster receptions at the Tuileries and at Versailles in honour of her family, of wonderful premières at the Opera and the House of Molière, of balls and banquets and new dresses. And, moreover, she revelled in what she considered was a diplomatic triumph for her, for it was entirely due to her own personal influence that the Orléans branch of the family came out of its shell for the occasion, and that all family dissensions and petty jealousies were by common consent relegated into the background. She wheedled her Aunt Amélie—the Duchesse d'Orléans—into giving a fête at the Palais Royal for the royal visitors, and, as a matter of fact, this fête was the most

brilliant of the season and surpassed in magnificence any that had been given at the Tuileries. The twelve gorgeous reception rooms were lit by one hundred thousand candles and the old princely residence was turned into a Palace of the Sun. The gardens, which were as usual open to the public, were illuminated with thousands of coloured lamps. Caroline Ferdinande in an exquisite gown of figured satin, with rosebuds in her hair and round her pretty shoulders, was positively radiant. She felt that this family reconciliation was in a great measure her work: with it she had, in her opinion, consolidated the throne which one day would be her son's. Delegates of all the warring factions—not only of the Orléanists but of the Bonapartists, the Liberals and the Republicans—had been invited, and it was between a double row of ladies and gentlemen representing all that was most brilliant and most distinguished in France, that Charles X, accompanied by his royal visitors and by the members of his family, passed through to the ballroom where Caroline Ferdinande, Duchesse de Berri, was dancing an Italian tarantella to music specially composed for her by Rossini, together with thirty ladies of the suite of the Queen of Naples.

Charles X, delighted with the respectful homage which greeted him from every political side, on being told that a large crowd had gathered outside, went out on the balcony that overlooked the gardens. He was certainly recognized but there were no cries of "*Vive le roi*," nor, for the matter of that, any kind of hostile demonstration, only silence. He stayed on the balcony for a moment or two looking down on the populace. He made some remark about the weather to the gentlemen who were with him, he waved his hand, said, "Good night, people!" and went back into the ballroom.

No sooner had he gone, however, than shouts were raised of "Down with Polignac!" and "Down with aristocrats!" The crowd fired the midday gun, piled the garden chairs together and set them alight. The coloured lamps were torn down and used as missiles flung against the windows of the palace, women screamed, many fainted: street orators delivered themselves of inflammatory harangues. It was all reminiscent of the early days of '89. A certain amount of panic reigned inside the gorgeously illuminated reception rooms where the hundred thousand candles flickered in the draught caused by the breaking of one or two of the windows. The Duc d'Orléans did his best to reassure his guests, whilst the Duc d'Angoulême remarked with his accustomed gloom: "This is indeed a Neapolitan fête. Just as in Naples we feast and dance over a volcano."

The only one who never lost her head for one moment was Caroline Ferdinande. She continued to dance the Italian tarantella, even while

Rossini's music was drowned by shouts of "Down with the aristocrats!" and the conflagration outside actually threatened to reach the palace. Indeed she shamed all the younger guests into following her example. At a signal from her the orchestra struck up the exhilarating bars of one of the new waltzes that had lately come from Vienna. Caroline led the dance with the young Duc de Chartres, and all but the old and elderly followed suit.

"It's nothing," she called out as she was whirled round the room in the arms of her cavalier, "the Parisians like a bit of fun, and they never mind being chivied by the police into the nearest restaurants where they will all drink to our health and shout lustily: '*Vive le roi*' and '*Vive le Duc de Bordeaux!*' "

The royal guard had intervened by now and dispersed the crowd; but there were many there—older men and women—who remembered what they had seen when Rouget de Lisle stood up on a table and recited the Marseillaise, and the crowd smashed the chairs, shouted "*A bas les aristocrates*" and pinned tricolour cockades on their hats, in these same gardens of the Palais Royal, forty years ago.

CHAPTER XXI

BLINDMAN'S-BUFF

There followed the dark days of July when the game of blindman's-buff came to a tragic end, and the storm broke in all its fury. Royalists and legitimists both of that time and of to-day have cast the entire blame for the cataclysm on the King's ministers, the Prince de Polignac and the rest. But the King had been warned and he paid no attention to those whom he called croaking birds of ill omen. He preferred to hear M. de Polignac declare airily that there was nothing to fear and that all precautions had been taken in case of street brawls that were no more dangerous than squibs let off by schoolchildren. And he continued to lead the old and supine King to his doom, vowing that the Holy Virgin had inspired him to frame certain resolutions which he presented to His Majesty for signature and which proved to be the spark that set the fire of revolution ablaze.

A Privy Council was held at Saint-Cloud, on the 25th, at which His Majesty presided. He had waited to convene this Cabinet meeting until his daughter-in-law, the Duchesse d'Angoulême, had gone to Vichy for her annual cure. She had a real influence over him, although he professed to laugh at her Cassandralike prognostications of evil: but he knew that she would not approve of the step which he now proposed to take, and for which he had summoned the Privy Council to wait on him at Saint-Cloud. The whole scheme had been propounded by the Prince de Polignac, but it had Charles's fullest approval, as well as that of his son, the Duc d'Angoulême.

It was a Sunday, and the King, accompanied by his family and by all his Ministers, attended Mass in the royal chapel. The council then met in the red library. M. de Chantelauze, Lord Privy Seal, opened the proceedings by reading out a long document which defined it clearly that, by the Charter, the monarch had reserved to himself the right to promulgate such ordinances as were necessary for the safety of the State. After which the Prime Minister placed before the Council certain ordinances which by virtue of the above royal prerogative he would now humbly ask His Majesty to sign. These ordinances were five in number and every one of them was the last word in absolutism and a direct attack on the sovereignty of the people. The first dismissed the present Chamber by order of the King, the second reduced the number of deputies permitted to put up for the next general elections, the third postponed these elections until the autumn, the fourth abrogated the liberty of the Press, while the fifth was just a list of the chief upholders of the old monarchical régime, and their promotion to the principal offices of

State. While M. de Polignac read out this amazing document, Charles X nodded approvingly from time to time. When the Minister had finished, he turned to his son, the Duc d'Angoulême, and asked him what he thought of it. The Duke gave his approval, and added: "When danger is at hand, the only thing to do is to go at it boldly. Courage alone will secure salvation."

The Council of Ministers were in complete agreement over the business, and the Prince de Polignac once again assured the King that the troops quartered in Paris were more than sufficient to deal with any emergency. Charles X then put his signature to the ordinances which the Ministers countersigned in order of precedence. The King then gave the order for the decree to be published in its entirety in the *Moniteur* the following day, but that in the meanwhile complete secrecy was to be kept over the whole business.

"We have taken extreme measures," he said finally, "and we shall have need of all our courage and determination to carry them through. But the more I think of it, the greater is my conviction that what I am doing in this is by the will of the Almighty."

The next day the weather was gorgeously fine. Blue sky, a warm sun, a perfect summer's day. Charles X went off to Rambouillet for a day's shooting, while the people of Paris read, aghast and at first incredulous, the amazing document in the *Moniteur* which threatened their liberties and attacked the nation's most cherished privileges. But the shoot was not very successful: hounds lost the trail of the stag and worried a doe. A second stag was let loose, but hounds appeared listless and the King was furious, and in the evening went back to Saint-Cloud. Caroline Ferdinande had just arrived. She had read the *Moniteur*, and at once drove over from Bagatelle with her two children: she was in one of her emotional moods, knelt down in front of the King and kissed his hand. "You are great," she said; "a true descendant of Henri IV, you did what Louis XIV did before you. You are a King indeed and my son will owe his throne to you!" The King was very much pleased with her outburst, patted her head and kissed her and his grandchildren tenderly.

Soon after dinner Marshal Marmont, Duke of Ragusa, arrived at the palace. He was in command of the troops in Paris and had driven over from the capital, obviously at great speed, for his horses were covered with lather. The King was having a game of billiards with the Duchesse de Berri. At sight of Marmont, he put down his cue and asked abruptly: "What news?"

"None too good, Sire," the marshal replied: "there is anxiety and agitation in Paris and a heavy fall of home securities on the Bourse."

"There will be a big rise to-morrow," Caroline Ferdinande broke in gaily and made a brilliant cannon off the red.

But Marmont was right. There was both anxiety and agitation in Paris. As soon as the first edition of the *Moniteur* had been launched, groups of malcontents gathered at street corners. M. Thiers, surrounded by the most prominent journalists of Paris, was already busy inditing a strong protest against the muzzling of the Press. The protest ended with a strong incitement to rebellion. "They want to rule us by force," it concluded; "obedience is no longer our duty." Groups of compositors and printers paraded the streets, carrying placards and banners inscribed with the words: "Long live the Charter! Down with the Ministry!"

On the Tuesday, the Prince de Polignac driving in the rue de Rivoli was recognized by the crowd and his carriage was pelted with stones. Nevertheless, as soon as he got home—safely enough as it happened, for the coachman had whipped up his horses and succeeded in evading the hostile crowd—he sent a letter by *courrier* to Saint-Cloud, begging the King not to be alarmed and assuring him that the situation was well under control.

"I beg your Majesty," he wrote, "not to listen to intimidating rumours, but to believe in me and to trust me. The whole thing only amounts to street brawling."

Charles X was only too glad to trust his Minister. He didn't know that already in a vital matter Polignac had been all wrong. He had reckoned that Marshal Marmont had eighteen thousand troops inside Paris, whereas there were only about seven or eight thousand: a number of the officers were absent on leave, and the men were both unprepared and undisciplined. Marmont was doing his best with them, but they were needed at so many points of the city where serious rioting had become constant, that their numbers at each of these points were always inadequate. The Chamber was not yet in open revolt, but the opposition was in a regular ferment, framing counter-ordinances and protests that were anything but loyal. As Monsieur d'Haussez, the Minister of Marine, remarked: the Chamber was like a ship, when decks are cleared for action.

At Saint-Cloud, however, perfect calm was the order of the day. The "croakers" and "alarmists" were kept out of the way, and the rigid etiquette of the Court kept His Majesty's sacred person impounded inside a "zone of

silence." No one was allowed to mention the political situation or the events in Paris in his presence.

The following day, however, which was Wednesday, matters grew worse. Rioting was now constant. Shots were fired, many were killed and a great number wounded: the insurgents demanded the resignation of the Ministry and threatened to set fire to government buildings. An ugly and determined crowd was marching on the Tuileries. Marshal Marmont, unable to leave his post, sent a very urgent message by *courrier* to the King. His Majesty was on his way to Mass when the *courrier* arrived. He threw the letter down on a table and did not open it till he came out of chapel. The letter was indeed urgent.

"It is not mere rioting, Sire," the marshal wrote, "it is red revolution. Your Majesty will have to try measures of conciliation. The prestige of the crown is in danger. To-morrow it may be too late to save it."

The King's answer to this message was to send an order to Polignac to declare Paris in a state of siege and to proclaim martial law. He sent none to Marmont.

The latter's situation, however, and that of the troops were getting desperate. The men had been fighting all night. They were still fighting at this hour under a grilling sun. They had had no food, as the insurgents had seized the headquarters of the Army Service, and they were outnumbered twenty to one by a crowd that was mad with fury and was using every kind of missile that came to its hand. The rioters had raided the shops of gun-makers, of armourers, of vendors of household tools, they had coal-hammers and pickaxes and jemmies, they pulled up the paving stones and tore down containing walls and used all these with deadly effect against the sorely harassed troops, who were giving ground in every quarter of the city.

And all the while M. le Prince de Polignac assured the King that the situation was well under control.

Perfect calm continued to be the order of the day at Saint-Cloud and the King appeared to view the situation not just with indifference but with amazing levity.

"We are told that a state of anarchy exists in Paris," he said on one occasion when again he had received an urgent communication from Marmont. "Well! anarchy will bring the Parisians down to their knees. But if they lay down their arms and sue for pardon, they may reckon on leniency from me."

Such folly or such blindness seems almost incredible, but there it was. Charles X, during those last few days which preceded the cataclysm, continued to lead his accustomed life. He drove over to Rambouillet to shoot. He played whist in the evening. He sent one of his gentlemen-in-waiting every day to the Observatory in Paris to report to him on weather conditions, for the daily temperature was very high and the heat incommoded him. And he would not allow anyone to go into his private room where a telescope had once been installed at the window, for through that telescope the tricolour flag floating on the towers of Notre Dame and on the roof of the Hôtel de Ville could be seen quite distinctly, as well as the crowd on the high buildings of the rue de Rivoli, hurling chairs, tables, statuary and picture frames down on the troops below.

The gentlemen and ladies in the King's entourage took their cue from their sovereign. They idled their time away, awaiting the good news from Paris which they believed to be inevitable, and in the intervals they wrangled over the most futile matters of etiquette. The Baron de Vitrolles, who had been Minister under Louis XVIII and, previous to that, Comptroller of the Household of Charles X when the latter was Comte d'Artois, arrived post-haste from Paris in the afternoon. He must speak with His Majesty, he declared, breathless with anxiety; he had a most urgent communication to make to him. Whereupon there was a lengthy argument between him and the King's Chamberlain, the Duc de Duras, as to whether it would be etiquette to introduce M. de Vitrolles into the presence, seeing that he was not properly dressed for an audience. And when de Vitrolles, after much wrangling, simply shook himself free from a number of outraged courtiers who were trying to stop him, and knocked at the door of the King's private room, he was severely reproved for doing this, because it was not etiquette to knock at His Majesty's door.

"What should I have done?" he retorted: "allow His Majesty to lose his throne?"

"Don't talk rubbish," the Chamberlain rejoined sternly: "the throne is not in peril. But you should not have disturbed His Majesty by knocking. Just scratch discreetly on the door."

Vitrolles did finally succeed in getting a word with the King. He knelt at His Majesty's feet and entreated him to make terms with the opposition by withdrawing the offending ordinances.

"If I did that," Charles X replied, "I would be giving up my right which I hold from God."

Vitrolles pointed out to him that Marshal Marmont’s troops could not hold out much longer against the mob, which was growing in volume and in fury hour by hour. He added a final note of warning.

“I am afraid,” he said, “that the troops are fraternizing with the insurgents.”

“Then Marmont will have to fire on the troops as well as on the mob, that’s all,” was Charles X’s cool reply.

In face of this fatuous optimism there was nothing to be done. Vitrolles went away muttering to himself: “Have we got to save that man and his dynasty in spite of themselves?”

He would have used stronger words, would loyal old Vitrolles, if he had spent the evening at Saint-Cloud. The King played dummy whist with the Duc de Duras and his daughter-in-law just as if nothing of consequence was happening over there in the great city. The Dauphin had a game of chess with M. de Peyronnet, and between the moves he indulged in violent abuse of Marshal Marmont, whom he called a traitor and a coward for his inability to defeat a handful of unarmed swinish rabble. When the evening was over, the servants closed the windows and the shutters, shutting out for the night the tumultuous city in travail of revolution. The gentlemen in attendance affected an air of indifference, but in the vestibule the valets who were on night duty heard the detonations of artillery and heard also the tocsin sounded in the early morning from every church in the city.

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL CARTOON SHOWING THE KING AND HIS MINISTERS WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE AGAINST LIBERTY.

Paris was now on the flood tide of revolution. Marmont concentrated what was left of his troops around the Tuileries and the Louvre whilst Lafayette, one of the more moderate leaders of the opposition, demanded the formation of a provisional government.

But M. le Ministre Prince de Polignac continued to assure the King that the situation was well in hand and that the Virgin Mary had again appeared to him and told him exactly what to do. And the next morning he sent a message to the King, telling him that the insurgents were short of

ammunition and that their leaders were all under arrest. The King was delighted with this news, and retailed it complacently to all his entourage. Towards midday the cadets of Saint-Cyr arrived, dragging half a dozen pieces of cannon in their rear. Charles X received them in person. Holding the little Duc de Bordeaux by the hand, he inspected the corps, and presenting his grandson to the cadets he said: “I will place this precious child under your care. Watch over him. One day he will be your King!” The boys set up an enthusiastic cry of “*Vive le roi!*”

The King now was all smiles. He chatted most affably with the Commandant of the Corps, and to him also and to his staff he retailed the marvellous news which he had received from his Minister a few hours ago.

“The holy Virgin herself,” he said unctuously, “inspires M. de Polignac, and has promised him a signal victory over all those elements which tend to disturb our beloved country. Already he tells me that the insurgents are short of ammunition, and that their leaders are all under arrest.”

Later in the day, however, his equanimity was somewhat disturbed, but only temporarily. His faithful Vitrolles arrived at Saint-Cloud. He was the bearer of certain proposals from the victorious opposition, proposals which were in the nature of an ultimatum. The Chamber demanded the immediate dissolution of the Polignac Cabinet and the formation of a liberal Ministry with the Duc de Mortemart, a well-known liberal, at its head. The King demurred. He would not have his hand forced, he declared, and anyhow he disliked Mortemart personally. By way of an immediate answer to the ultimatum, he appointed the Dauphin commander-in-chief of his army, whereupon the latter immediately gave the order that the troops under Marmont be reinforced by a contingent from the camp of Lunéville.

And in the evening the King, once more serene, played whist as usual. He chaffed the Duc de Duras for leading the wrong card, and when the detonations of artillery sounded more formidable in the distance he said lightly: “It is good to hear that. It shows that my army is dealing effectively with that much-vaunted revolution.”

CHAPTER XXII

IS EVERYTHING LOST?

Caroline Ferdinande remained throughout these days in a state of feverish excitement alternating between anxiety and confidence in the future. She was the mother of the future King! She would save his throne for him! All these people round her, the family, the ministers, the courtiers, were incompetent and senile and pigeon-hearted! Oh! why was she born a woman? She wandered up and down the château, paced the great reception rooms, beat her little hands one against the other. Why don't they do something? Why don't they? The troops are loyal; Polignac is inspired by the Virgin herself! Then what is it? What is it that threatens the dynasty and the future of her son? Why do some of them whisper together in corners? Why do others keep arriving with messages and petitions, flouting etiquette, insisting on seeing the King, for the most part in clothes covered in grime and dust, with unkempt hair and unshaven chins? Why all this agitation? Why all this secrecy? Oh! why was she born a woman? She would know what to do if she were a man. And even so . . .

Then she would pass from this state of agitation and anxiety back to her mood of exultation. She was the mother of the future King. She would save his throne. Only let her get at those Parisians. She would know how to talk to them. She had done it so often. They loved her. They would listen to her.

And, looking through the window which gave on the great courtyard, she saw a number of coaches just arriving all smothered in dirt, as if they had not been cleaned for days, the horses' flanks covered with lather, the coats of arms scratched off the panels, and around the coaches a number of men, most of whom she knew by sight. They were the Ministers of the Crown, M. le Prince de Polignac, Marshal Bourmont, M. de Peyronnet, M. La Bourdonnaie and the whole of the Privy Council. They had fled before the tidal wave of the revolution, bringing their baggage away with them. Only Caroline Ferdinande didn't know this. She did not even guess it for the moment. She only wondered why they had come and why they had brought their luggage along. The noble courtyard was filled with boxes and valises, and more boxes and valises remained piled up on the coaches. Caroline Ferdinande thought M. de Peyronnet looked very funny getting out of that dirty coach in full gala dress: white kerseymere breeches, silk stockings, coat covered in gold lace. She heard someone ask him how he could have the heart to dress himself up in that fashion, and she heard him reply: "Why not? It will all be over by to-night."

Then, thought Caroline Ferdinande, if all the trouble was going to be all over presently, why had they all come? Bag and baggage, why had they all run away from the Tuileries, where they should have remained at their post to protect the crown for their King and for her son? Why wasn't she told the truth of what went on over in Paris, seeing that next to the King himself she, in her son's name, had more at stake than anyone else?

Later in the day in the red salon where the Ministers came to present their respects to the royal family circle, Caroline Ferdinande, with her disconcerting abruptness, put a direct question to Polignac:

"Why are you all here, Monsieur le Ministre, when you should be at the Tuileries helping to keep order?"

Polignac, however, was as usual perfectly unmoved and entirely reassuring.

"We thought it best," he said, "to come in a body in order to consult with His Majesty."

But Caroline Ferdinande was far too shrewd to accept this explanation. Bag and baggage! She could not get over that, and when General Coëtlosquet arrived a few hours later and the King received him in the library where she had been playing piquet with papa-in-law, she made a false exit when ordered out of the room and hid in a recess behind a tall bookcase; she saw that the general looked nearly done in, and could hardly speak, and she heard him say: "The rebels are in possession of the Louvre and the Tuileries. Your Swiss Guard, Sire, are in full retreat. . . ." She heard the King ask him: "Is everything lost then according to you?" and heard the general's reply: "Everything, no, Sire; but Paris most decidedly."

Paris lost? Caroline Ferdinande felt as if she had received a smashing blow on the head. Paris! The Parisians! Her Parisians who loved her, who cheered her to the echoes whenever she drove through the streets and who had gone nearly mad with joy when she presented the baby Duc de Bordeaux—her baby—to them. What had they all done to alienate her Parisians from her and from her child? Fools! Pigeon-hearted fools! Oh, how she hated the lot of them! If only she were a man! If only she could have placed herself at the head of those cowardly troops, she would soon have turned those milk-sops into fighting cocks.

She did not dare make her presence known. Not just then. The King was not in a mood to listen to anything. As a matter of fact, she was quite frightened at hearing the anxious tone of his voice when he asked the

general: “Is everything lost?” All the fatuity, the indifference had gone out of it. Clearly he was getting anxious. Marmont had been here earlier in the day. Had he brought bad news too? Impossible! Impossible! Things couldn’t be as bad as that. Forty years ago there were revolutions, sacrilege, regicides even, but not to-day. Such things simply didn’t happen. They couldn’t happen.

And Caroline Ferdinande, hardly daring to breathe for fear she should be discovered and ignominiously reprimanded for eavesdropping, dug her uneven little teeth into her lower lip until it bled, and her fingernails into her palms. And suddenly she became aware that she too was frightened, that her heart was beating so fast and furiously because she too had lost some of her confidence. She didn’t know it before. She had been hypnotized by her own excitement and by her fury against those who had not the pluck or the power to defend the throne and the dynasty. But all of a sudden she did realize that she was frightened, not for herself, she had never been frightened for herself in all her life, but for the dynasty, for her son, and for his throne. The events of the afternoon stood out before her vivid as a lambent flame: those Ministers arriving post-haste with all their luggage and with their coaches made unrecognizable by dirt and by the obliteration of the royal coat of arms from the panels! And General Coëtlosquet half dead with fatigue saying that the insurgents had seized the Louvre and the Tuileries and that Paris was lost.

How she ever sat through the formal dinner that evening with all those men talking trivialities, and the King and the Dauphin looking more anxious than she had ever seen them before, she did not know. Fortunately the family circle was dismissed quite early, and she was able to escape to her room where her old friend Madame de Gonthaut was waiting for her. Madame de Gonthaut was a sensible woman. She was devoted to the royal family, and the Duc de Bordeaux had been under her special care since the day of his birth. Her affections and her common sense made her see things which mere courtiers and sycophants of both sexes did their best to keep away from the King’s knowledge. Unfortunately she too, like the Duchesse d’Angoulême, was looked upon as a Cassandra, and only laughed at when she tried to put the events in a serious light.

But to-night Caroline Ferdinande was in a mood to listen, and she found that Madame de Gonthaut’s fears were the same as her own. Was Paris really lost? Was the throne really in danger?

After a long talk with her friend, Caroline Ferdinande finally allowed her ladies to put her to bed. But she hardly slept a wink all night. She lay wide-

eyed, staring up at the ceiling, seeing visions. Visions of those days long ago in Naples when she was only a child, but a child already endowed with shrewdness and with a retentive memory: and staring up at the ceiling through the long hours she saw her mother and father fleeing from Naples, driven out by Bonaparte's army, she saw herself being thrust into coaches at dead of night in the company of nurses and governesses half mad with terror; she saw the bands of *lazzaroni* setting fire to public buildings, ransacking churches, threatening the life of their King and Queen. Were all these horrors to come again into her life after fourteen years of almost unalloyed happiness? And through these ugly visions of the past there appeared to her the face and form of one who had never failed her, on whose devotion and courage she could always count: Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, her playmate in childhood, her faithful friend in the days of her triumph, where was he now? If only she could have him near her, all her fears would vanish, for she would know that with him to protect her, no harm could ever come to her or to her son. Perhaps she might be able to send for him. And then . . .

And with uncompleted thoughts of that one ray of hope in the midst of a storm of despair Caroline Ferdinande finally dropped to sleep.

CHAPTER XXIII

DEAD MONARCHY

When the faithful Vitrolles arrived at Saint-Cloud the next morning, he found the palace all closed up; the entire household, including His Majesty and all the royal family, was still in bed. True, it was barely five o'clock in the morning, but Vitrolles' errand was urgent, more urgent than any that had brought him to Saint-Cloud before. The news he brought was disastrous. There was no longer a question of a mere change of Ministry. After three days' fighting and with victory all along the line, with the royal palaces and all public buildings in their hands, the insurgents adopted an uncompromising attitude. First and foremost the offending ordinances must be revoked and the Chamber reassembled.

Vitrolles insisted on seeing the King, and in spite of his innate respect for royalty and the etiquette which surrounded it, he forced his way into the bedchamber and, seeing that His Majesty was awake, cried out the terrible news. Open insurrection! Talk of forced abdication; the opposition headed by M. Thiers demanding the throne for Louis Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, "a good liberal and friend of the revolution."

Charles X jumped out of bed. He was in his nightshirt with bare legs, feet thrust hastily in bedroom slippers, a tasselled cotton night-cap on his head. He was still heavy with sleep and listened half dazed and blinking his eyes to what Vitrolles had to say.

"Why, yesterday they wanted that fellow Mortemart," he muttered peevishly. "I can't bear him, and I hate giving Polignac the go-by. He is inspired by the Virgin and he is loyal to our throne. Well, let them have Mortemart. I don't care, so long as they leave me in peace."

But Mortemart was not going to solve the problem as it now presented itself. The opposition didn't want him, or anybody of the King's choosing. What the leaders wanted was the repeal of the ordinances first. The Chamber then would proceed to the formation of a Cabinet of its own choosing. Vitrolles did not mention the word "abdication" nor the name of the Duc d'Orléans.

"Let us get those ordinances repealed first," he said, and presented to the King a document to this effect for his signature.

The King was overcome. He had never expected anything of the sort. But he would sign. Yes, he would sign anything that made for the restoration

of peace and the security of his throne.

“Give me a pen,” he said with a weary sigh.

There was no pen anywhere in the bedchamber. One was fetched, and Charles X, still sitting on the edge of his bed, with the tassel of his night-cap bobbing over his eyes, signed the repeal of the offending ordinances.

Vitrolles left after that, with the fateful document in his pocket. He knew, none better, that this meant virtual abdication. All he hoped for now was that the Chamber would accept the Duc de Bordeaux as Constitutional King, with the Duc d’Orléans as Regent.

Nothing much happened at Saint-Cloud the whole of that day. The entourage idled away its time talking futilities, making fatuous comments on events the importance of which it obviously failed to comprehend or offering counsels to which no one listened.

Caroline Ferdinande wandered about the park until evening, holding the Duc de Bordeaux and Louise Marie-Thérèse by the hand, trying, oh, so hard! to conquer that prescience of disaster which seemed to have turned her heart into a block of ice. It was six o’clock when, coming down the stairs, after she had seen her children put to bed, she saw Marshal Marmont, Duc de Ragusa standing in the hall. He was manifestly a beaten man and could hardly hold himself upright. She ran down to him and in her usual impulsive way seized him by the arm.

She drew him into a small room close by and made him sit down, for he seemed on the verge of collapse. She rang for a servant, and ordered wine to be brought for Monsieur le Maréchal. When he had drunk, she asked abruptly:

“What news?”

“The worst possible,” he replied. “We are hopelessly beaten.”

“But the troops?” she insisted.

“Starved . . . demoralized . . . rebellious. We can count desertions by the hundreds. The wounded and the disabled are outside these gates now, begging for food from your menials.”

Caroline Ferdinande was silent for a moment or two, a frown between her brows: her anxious eyes searched Marmont’s face, trying to find in its expression a glimmer of hope.

“What are we going to do?” she asked.

“The first thing to do,” he replied, “is to persuade the King to leave Saint-Cloud as soon as possible. The place is like a funnel wide open to attack in front and thrust into the wooded heights in the rear. We couldn’t hold it for a day even against a raw mob.”

“Where would you advise us to go?”

“Versailles,” he replied curtly.

Caroline Ferdinande reflected for a moment or two, then she said resolutely:

“You must see the King at once.”

She rose and made for the door, beckoning to Marmont to follow her. The latter demurred.

“Will His Majesty receive me?” he asked, remembering the many altercations with the royal entourage before an audience could be obtained.

But Caroline Ferdinande was long past caring for etiquette.

“I’ll see that he does,” she declared.

She led the way to the green drawing-room where she had left the King half an hour ago playing piquet with the Duc d’Angoulême. But Charles X was no longer in the room, and the Dauphin was alone looking sullen and moody. When Caroline Ferdinande was ushered in he asked curtly: “What do you want?”

Then he caught sight of Marmont. He jumped to his feet, all his resentment against the unfortunate Marshal ablaze. He fell on him like an infuriated bull, seizing him by the throat and shouting “Traitor!” and “Miserable coward!” in his face. Marmont tried to shake him off, whilst Caroline Ferdinande, scared out of her wits, sent a lacquey to fetch the guard.

“Give me your sword,” the Duke commanded, and grabbed at the marshal’s sword. In doing so he cut his finger, which started to bleed profusely, whereupon he shouted more furiously than ever: “Guard! Seize this traitor!”

Marmont made no resistance. He was put under arrest in his own private apartments and the extraordinary incident was closed for the moment. But Caroline Ferdinande did not leave it at that. The Court Physician was summoned to attend to the Dauphin’s injured hand: and when he had gone, she took it on herself to dismiss both the lacqueys and the gentlemen-in-

waiting, and as soon as she was alone with her brother-in-law she threw herself at his feet and begged and entreated him to persuade the King to leave Saint-Cloud. Never mind his quarrel with Marshal Marmont: it was no longer a question of saving the throne alone, but rather the life itself of His Majesty, and of her son the Duc de Bordeaux.

S. A. R. MGR. LE DUC D’ANGOULÊME
Né le 6 Aout 1775.

Apparently she caught the Duke in a receptive mood. He had never been as optimistic as his father and knew as much about the morale of the troops as did Marmont himself: he knew that the bulk of the army could no more be reckoned on to-day as it had been in the early days of the Revolution, and that it would sacrifice Charles X as readily as it had sacrificed Louis XVI forty years ago. And being a wise soldier he also realized the precarious strategical position of Saint-Cloud. But he too, perhaps, would have been inclined to demur, to procrastinate. Procrastination was the mortal disease from which the Bourbon dynasty was fast dying—but while Caroline Ferdinande was still at his feet, begging, persuading, entreating, there came a message brought by *courrier* from Paris, to say that an armed mob, fifteen hundred strong, was preparing to march on Saint-Cloud in the early morning. There was no longer any time for hesitation; the Dauphin ran straight to his father's apartments. It was then seven o'clock in the evening. The King was dressing for dinner when his son was announced.

"Sire," the latter said curtly, "it is imperative that we leave for Versailles immediately."

The King drew a weary sigh and said meekly:

"Very well! I will get ready."

Within five minutes the news was all over the palace. Saint-Cloud was going to be attacked. Let him save himself who can! Panic seized the entire entourage, the Ministers, the courtiers, the gentlemen-in-waiting, the officers of the guard, the staff of menials, and of course the ladies and the maids. They all ran hither and thither in the ill-lighted corridors, the men snatching weapons from the panoplies, a pistol here, a sword or lance there, everyone scrambling to hide the gold-laced uniforms, the embroidered coats and satin breeches: anything wherein to pass unperceived if one came past a hostile mob. It was a regular scramble in the semi-darkness, the panic-stricken crowd falling over one another, and tumbling over boxes, valises, packages hastily collected together, which a number of distracted lacqueys had piled up in the corridors, before loading them up on lorries.

The rats were leaving the sinking ship.

At three o'clock in the morning everything was ready for the King's departure. His Majesty entered one coach with the Duchesse de Berri and the royal children: Madame de Gonthaut was in another with the Duc de Duras. Two other coaches followed, into which the Prince de Polignac and the rest of the fallen Cabinet had bundled helter-skelter. The Duc d'Angoulême remained at Saint-Cloud to watch over the few remaining

troops that were left there. Marshal Marmont, released from durance, rode beside the King’s coach and the escort consisted of a small troupe of the mounted bodyguard and the cadets from Saint-Cyr. It was a beautiful moonlit night. The coachmen whipped up their horses and the cortège took the road at a fast trot. Soon, however, the whole procession, with its lorries piled up with luggage going full tilt and jolting on the stony road, and the cadets marching heel and toe had so obviously the appearance of a flight, that presently the order was given to slow down. After which when the cortège passed through wayside villages the inhabitants, hearing the clatter of horses’ hoofs and the jingle of harness, got out of their beds and watched the procession slowly filing past. They thought it was a funeral, and wondered who it was who was being carried to the grave at this early hour of the morning.

They did not know that what had passed before their eyes was the catafalque of a dead monarchy.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SAME THING ALL OVER AGAIN

THE royal party did not go to the palace of Versailles but to the Trianon. As His Majesty was not expected, there was nothing ready for him; the furniture was covered over with dust-sheets, the beds were not made up, and the kitchens and larders were empty, and in addition to the royal family there was that crowd of Ministers to cater for. Monsieur de Vérac, governor of the château, tried to put this matter before the King. “We can never find enough food for all these gentlemen,” he said, “at this hour of the night.”

“Well!” Charles X retorted peevishly, “what am I to do with them? I can’t turn them out into the road. The populace would murder them.”

Food, however, was hastily collected for the royal party, and beds were made up for His Majesty and for the Duchesse de Berri and her two children. The others had to make shift with what they could get. Monsieur de Polignac and his fellow Ministers wandered disconsolately about the château in search of something to eat, and in the intervals they put their heads together to devise the means of quelling the revolution. It is almost unbelievable, but even now both Polignac and the others still believed—or professed to believe—that it was only a question of street brawling which could be put a stop to with the display of energy.

“The first thing to do,” they said, “is to cut Paris off from outside communications by destroying the telegraph wires. Then we must summon the Diplomatic Corps and if necessary reassemble the Chamber.”

And they set to draw up ordinances to that effect, which they pressed the King to sign.

But the next day the Dauphin was back from Saint-Cloud: the troops were deserting *en masse*. The Swiss Guard had gone over to the revolutionaries. Even Versailles was no longer safe. The King’s life might be in danger, and a life more precious still, that of the hope of the dynasty, the life of the Duc de Bordeaux.

Caroline Ferdinande heard the Dauphin say all this to the King. No one cared about etiquette any more and she had not been ordered out of the room when the Duke was announced. She was standing in the window embrasure of the small salon, where Marie-Antoinette had spent some of the happy hours of her life. The furniture was all there, just as the unfortunate Queen had had it placed: her tiny desk, the inlaid satinwood tables, the priceless

Sèvres vases. Caroline Ferdinande hated the room. It was so full of memories, memories that were portents now; but Charles X liked to sit here where he could dream of the many lighthearted hours which he had spent in the pretty boudoir, when as Galaor, the young exquisite, he had flirted with his beautiful sister-in-law. He was old now, so old, and the news his son brought him seemed to pile up the weight of years on his shoulders. Caroline Ferdinande, standing in the window embrasure, was watching a crowd that had collected in the courtyard, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the King and of the royal family. She heard the Dauphin talk about the danger to the life of the Duc de Bordeaux and this sent her nearly crazy. Her son! the future King of France! She turned impulsively to the King, cheeks aflame, eyes sparkling, hands clasped:

"Sire!" she cried, her voice grown shrill with excitement, "if Monsieur thinks that Versailles is not safe for my son, we must go."

"Go?" he retorted querulously, "go, where?"

Caroline Ferdinande turned back to the window and threw it open. At once a clamour filled the room, coming from the crowd below: a hullabaloo, shouts, the tramping of feet, the hubbub of a mass of people in a state of excitement, and through it all a harsh, reverberating voice calling vociferously: "To La Vendée! To La Vendée!" The shouter was a priest, with thin grey hair fluttering in the breeze. He was waving his arms about, apparently in a state of frenzy. Caroline Ferdinande had been watching him, and his frantic shouts had sent the blood rushing up to her cheeks. Excitement gained on her. La Vendée. Of course. La Vendée! the loyal province where less than three years ago she had been cheered to the skies, almost worshipped and compared to the Madonna, the mother of a miracle child. La Vendée! That is where she wanted to go and make another dramatic tour through the land, with her son beside her; she would know how to recreate that enthusiasm which none of these senile, effete people over here had known how to rouse.

"Go?" she exclaimed, looking for all the world now like a stage heroine, small, fair, delicate, but vibrant with passionate ardour, and alive! So very much alive. "Go, Sire?" she went on; "why, to La Vendée of course. They are waiting for us there, for me and my Henri."

It was the type of crowd that is easily swayed by a dramatic gesture or an impassioned oration. A French crowd with an emotional Latin temperament. Already excited by the frantic cries of the priest, they looked up and saw that pretty young woman up there, who, like a modern Joan of

Arc, was prepared to lead a whole army to victory, and to revive the feats of arms that had once been the glory of France. They took up the cry, “La Vendée! La Vendée! for God and Henri V!”

Caroline Ferdinande gathered up her skirts and ran out of the room, down the staircase and out on the perron. She was received with cheers that were positively deafening. Everything a moment ago had seemed so hopeless, almost desperate: the troops starved or deserting *en masse*; Paris given over to rioting, the Chamber in open revolt. But now? With that woman to rally hearts around her and her son, why, the thing was already done. Victory was only a question of a few hours. Time for her to show herself in Brittany and Vendée and France, the real France, would be reconquered. And the crowd cheered and cheered, not quite knowing what else was expected of them, for they themselves couldn’t go to La Vendée, they wouldn’t know how to get there, and the mounted bodyguard who had escorted the royal coaches from Saint-Cloud were not the men who cheered and shouted “La Vendée!” But the cadets from Saint-Cyr did both cheer and shout. The situation for them was just the prelude of a stirring adventure in which they would soon revel. The exploits of the Vendéans had for these aspiring young soldiers become almost legendary. They had all heard stories of that epic conflict between a handful of peasants and the picked regiments of Napoleon’s army, and saw themselves carrying on the conflict, following leaders as invincible and as mysterious as Georges Cadoudal, hiding in the forests or at the bottom of wells and having altogether a great and glorious time. So they cheered and shouted, mixed with the crowd and encouraged them to shout and to cheer, while Caroline Ferdinande blew kisses to them with her pretty hands and wept copious tears of emotion.

While all this noise was going on, Charles X had remained in Marie-Antoinette’s boudoir alone at first with his son. His daughter-in-law’s violent outburst had taken away his breath. He sat there dumbfounded, staring at the spot by the open window where she had been standing, as if he half expected God knows what further atmospheric convulsion to come from there. Every time the cheering rose as in waves from below, or whenever he heard Caroline’s voice rise above the tumult he turned his eyes up at the ceiling as if to implore his Maker to guide him in this emergency. He certainly thought for the moment that he had to deal with a maniac, which was strange, considering that he must have learned something of Caroline Ferdinande’s turbulent temperament by now. Once he caught his son’s glance. The Dauphin’s thin lips were curled in a sarcastic smile. When he met his father’s look of bewilderment he only shrugged and said dryly:

“She has fits like that. It will pass off.”

He went to the window and closed it, whereupon the noise came up more muffled and subdued. Then he said:

“We shall have to see about leaving this place. Shall I send de Maillé to you? You can give him your orders.”

The King nodded. While his son was absent he remained staring in front of him, feeling very, very old and conscious that he cared little if anything now for his throne and that all he wanted was rest. Presently de Maillé entered; he was first gentleman-in-waiting. The Dauphin had already put him *au fait* of what would be required. The King’s coach, another for the Duchesse de Berri and her children, coaches for the suite and the Ministers. De Maillé knew just what to do, which was lucky, as Charles X was certainly not in a fit state to give orders. But de Maillé was not only loyal, he was also sympathetic. Aware that what his royal master required now was a mental soporific in the shape of conversation on indifferent subjects, he remained talking with the old man until the late afternoon faded into dusk.

Lacqueys came in bringing lights and de Maillé was on the point of taking his leave when a strange personage came unannounced into the room. The appearance of this individual was so extraordinary that de Maillé, scared at first, made a quick movement forward in order to throw him out. The stranger, however, did not look very formidable: he was only five foot high: he wore a frock coat of green-faced cloth with velvet collar and cuffs, immensely wide breeches, Hessian boots and a red sash in which were thrust a pair of pistols. At sight of de Maillé’s alarm he burst out laughing, swept his broad-brimmed hat off his head and displayed the curly hair and laughing face of Madame la Duchesse de Berri: the apparition was certainly astounding. She looked ravishing. Both the King and his first gentleman could only gaze on her dumbfounded. At last the King murmured feebly:

“What in the world have you dressed up like this for, my dear? And why those pistols in your belt?”

“To defend you, Sire, and to protect my children,” Caroline replied, breathless with excitement.

Her heroics, however, were getting on the old man’s nerves. He turned on her with some acerbity:

“Go and take off that masquerade,” he commanded. “One would think you fancied yourself as the heroine of a novel by Walter Scott.”

But Caroline Ferdinande's exaltation was not so easily damped. She threw herself at the King's feet, embraced his knees and turned her pretty tear-stained face up to him.

"Let me go to La Vendée, father," she implored; "let me take my son with me. I will present him to the people there. The Vendéans are the soul of loyalty: they will be a rampart for him against all his enemies."

The King pushed her back, rather roughly.

"What rubbish!" he said. "As if I would allow my grandson to be dragged into such a dangerous adventure."

"Dangerous, Sire?" she retorted; "the only danger now is inaction. Give me permission to go with my Henri. We will save your throne for you, he and I."

She had fallen back on her heels, and so she remained, kneeling at the King's feet, begging, imploring, arguing, casting aside all respect for the head of the house, calling him weak and pigeon-hearted, regardless of her own humiliating position, flouting the most elementary etiquette in this passionate prayer for freedom to act as her heart dictated, and as her reason suggested would be best for her son.

But all she got in response was a reiterated—

"Certainly not. Go away!"

Finally she was dismissed ignominiously like an importunate beggar; and crying bitterly she went out of the room as steadily as she could, so as to avoid being dragged forcibly by menials out of His Majesty's august presence.

When at last she was gone, and the sound of her footsteps as well as of her convulsive sobs had died away, Charles X with a weary sigh turned to de Maillé.

"Well, what do you think of my daughter-in-law's attitude?" he asked.

"I think it abominable, Sire," de Maillé replied fervently.

Caroline Ferdinande was in disgrace for the moment, and to make matters worse for her inside the family circle, Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême was back from Vichy. She had been several days on the way. It was at Macon that she first heard of those fatal ordinances with which the King himself, aided by Polignac, had set fire to the smouldering embers of revolution. She knew, none better, what the end of it all would be. She had

seen it all in her day, child though she was then. Charles X's actions to-day, his mistakes and his blunders were just a repetition of those perpetrated by his unfortunate brother forty years ago. Like Louis XVI, he too remained blind to the fast-gathering storm clouds, he too was surrounded by Ministers and courtiers who knew nothing about the temper of the nation, and kept him in ignorance of the most significant events: he too played fast and loose with the liberties of his people, alienating the friends who might have helped, defying those who were rising to power. Yes, Madame knew all about it! She had seen it all! It was going to be the same thing all over again! Revolution! Abdication! Exile! The scaffold too, perhaps!

She didn't say much when she arrived. She was very sorry to see her father-in-law looking so worn, so old, and so helpless. The catastrophe was not brought about altogether through his fault; he was just the victim of that hereditary taint from which the whole dynasty was suffering: belief in the divine right of kings. A disease from which it was doomed to die. Her husband suffered from it just as much as his uncles had done, as his father did now. She too, perhaps. . . . Nevertheless, when she was told of Caroline Ferdinande's proposition to go to La Vendée with the Duc de Bordeaux, she only shrugged and dismissed the project with a curt: "She is mad!"

CHAPTER XXV

THE LAST KING OF FRANCE

THE royal family went to Rambouillet after that. It was thought to be safer than Versailles, being farther away from Paris. But it was near enough for messengers to come daily and bring reports of the march of events in the capital. It was a rapid and hectic march. The liberal majority in the Chamber was demanding the abdication of the King and had put forward the candidature of Louis Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, to the throne. The Comte de Girardin, who had brought this last item of news, further said that the Duke had already assumed certain royal rights and prerogatives: he had appointed Ministers of State, convoked the Chamber to meet on the 4th and ordered the tricolour flag to take the place of the fleur-de-lis on all the public buildings.

Charles X, greatly incensed against his cousin, immediately called together an emergency council, in which his former Ministers, military commanders and other loyalists took part. His Majesty explained to these gentlemen that in an emergency like the present one (for him the revolution was still only "an emergency") the most important thing in the world was the safe-guarding of the prestige of the crown. For this, the Duc d'Orléans must be kept in his place as a member of the junior branch of the reigning dynasty and, as such, subordinate to its head: he must also be made to understand that whatever powers a temporary majority in the Chamber chose to confer on him, he could only exercise those powers by authority of the crown. Thus, His Majesty explained to his chosen council, the prestige of the throne would be upheld. The council concurred unanimously, after which it was resolved that the King should nominate the Duc d'Orléans Governor-General of the Kingdom and then himself convoke the Chamber to meet on the 3rd.

This resolution was of course as futile as had been those promulgated forty years ago in "an emergency" like the present one, by the unfortunate Louis XVI. History was just repeating itself. It does not as a rule do it quite so quickly as in this case, and it seems almost incredible that Charles X, and his successor too, be it said, both of whom had seen the many blunders and mistakes which had ultimately landed a King of France on the scaffold, should repeat every one of those blunders and mistakes now. The outcome of the council meeting was a firm and perfectly friendly refusal on the part of cousin Louis Philippe to hold the governorship of the Kingdom, or any

other appointment at the hands of the King: the Chamber, he said, had conferred on him all the necessary powers for governing the country.

This message, couched in most affectionate terms, was in the nature of a bombshell as far as Charles X was concerned. It seemed to him nothing short of sacrilege for a junior member of the family to defy the authority of its head. Hastily he convened another council meeting: but on this occasion all outsiders, however distinguished or however loyal, were excluded. The council consisted only of members of the royal family, and it was more solemn than any other that had gone before; the Duchesse d'Angoulême had brought with her an atmosphere of gloom, the Dauphin her husband one of discouragement. The King himself seemed to have given up all hope. The only one who still appeared buoyant was Caroline Ferdinande. She had already recovered from the rebuff administered to her at Versailles and she refused to be downhearted. Her energy was as great as ever, and so was her belief in herself. She defied the lugubrious dictates of the Dauphin as well as the sneers of his wife, and the morose silence of the King. This time she had laid her plans more carefully: there was no question of trying to overcome the family dismals by flamboyant speeches or dramatic appeals. Nor on this occasion did she array herself in comic-opera garments, or wave her arms while shouting "La Vendée!" Her common sense had told her that there was only one way of saving the dynasty and of saving the throne for her son, and that way was not the one of sitting in a zone of silence, hemmed in by archaic etiquette, of signing decrees that were not worth the paper they were written on, or of proclaiming the inviolability of a crown which already was lost. She knew the one way and she felt sufficient energy in herself to carry through what she wanted to do.

Holding her boy by the hand, dressed in a plain brown cashmere dress, she entered the room where the family council was already assembled. She went straight up to the King, and knelt down in front of him, the boy standing by with his big blue eyes fixed upon his grandfather.

"Sire!" Caroline Ferdinande began quite simply, while the others looked at her, mostly with disapproval: "I entreat you to allow me to go to Paris with my son. The people love him. A child can always disarm hatred and turn ill will to sympathy. At sight of him Paris would become peaceful and your throne an object once more of veneration."

The King had listened to his daughter-in-law's peroration with ill-concealed impatience. Now he just seemed to wave her aside with a weary gesture of his long, bony hand.

“You must be mad,” he said acidly. “I certainly will not allow you to drag my grandson with you in another of your silly projects. I will not have his life exposed to the danger of a stray bullet from some irresponsible hothead.”

This was received by the family with a murmur of approval. But Caroline Ferdinande, nothing daunted, went on earnestly:

“Very well, Sire,” she said: “I will not take Henri with me. I will go alone to Paris. A coach is outside all ready with postilions to take me to the city. I will show myself to the Parisians. I know them and they know me. They will listen to me because they love me. Give me leave, father,” she entreated, “to go and speak to them.”

It was no use! The King, as at Versailles, refused to listen to her.

“Certainly not,” he said curtly.

Caroline Ferdinande was obstinate. She had the whole of the family council against her, but she continued the fight, the fight for her son’s future. They laughed at her, they jeered, they abused and even insulted her. There were murmurs of “Italian peasant stock,” and of “Sicilian riffraff.” They didn’t mince their words, didn’t those great ladies and gentlemen; but Caroline Ferdinande didn’t care. She remained on her knees, pleading and entreating. She pleaded through her tears which she could no longer restrain and through sobs that shook her young shoulders and choked the words in her throat. She knew that with every minute which she spent here at the feet of this futile old monarch her chance of saving the throne of France for her son became more and more remote.

And in the end she was beaten. At six o’clock in the afternoon the horses were unharnessed, the coach put up and the postilions dismissed. The young princess, who, perhaps, with her winning smile and attractive personality, might even at this eleventh hour have soothed the perturbed spirits in the capital, was not allowed to make this one supreme effort to save an effete dynasty and a tottering throne. She may not have succeeded. Things, perhaps, had already gone too far for a woman’s intervention. But a French crowd, even in its most lawless mood, is easily swayed by a woman’s beauty; and a woman’s smile will often prove a more disarming weapon than a volley of grape-shot.

Anyway, that was the end, and the poor little duchess was not given the chance of being glorified in history as the saviour of a throne. After she left the council-room, the family continued to deliberate. As no outsiders were

present and the secret of these deliberations was enshrined in the bosom of those who were too loyal and too proud to speak, there is no record of what took place exactly. The only thing that is certain is that it was during this meeting of the family council that the abdication of the King and of the Duc d'Angoulême was decided on.

M. de Damas, one of the King's ministers, was commanded to indite the form of abdication. It was done in the shape of a letter addressed to the Duc d'Orléans. In it Charles X ordered his cousin, Louis Philippe, to proclaim to the people the accession of the Duc de Bordeaux to the throne, under the name of Henri V, and to form a suitable government during the young King's minority. Charles X read the letter through twice before he signed it. He then ordered his son the Duc d'Angoulême to sign it too.

Caroline Ferdinande was only told of this decision the next day, and then not by a member of the family but by her faithful friend, Madame de Meffray.

"I suppose we shall shift again!" was all she said.

She had no more fight left in her and was probably suffering from what we should call to-day a nervous breakdown. It was the reaction after the terrible tension of the past few days, the snapping of her energy, at any rate for the time being. At first she hoped that she would be proclaimed regent of France during the minority of her son: but this hope, slender at best, was soon enough dispelled. The whole family, including Uncle Louis Philippe, was dead against her. In their estimation she was just a madcap, an impulsive, unbalanced creature quite incapable of supervising the education of a growing boy. Then there was talk of Uncle Louis Philippe taking over the regency and the guardianship of Henri V, King of France, and Caroline Ferdinande was left to bear alone and uncomforted the agonizing fear that her boy would be taken from her. But this fear, like that other hope, was also blown on when Uncle Louis Philippe was proclaimed King of the French. There would never be a Henri V, King of France. There would never be a King of France again.

CHAPTER XXVI

ABDICATION

WHAT was Caroline Ferdinande, Duchesse de Berri, Princess of Naples, now? Only a poor little waif dragged about like a bit of superfluous luggage in the dismal cortège that wound its way along the dusty roads from Rambouillet to Dreux, from Dreux to Valognes and so on to Cherbourg and to exile.

The act of abdication was posted up in Paris on August 3rd; the new government had scored a triumph, but it was not yet satisfied. The personality of the little Duc de Bordeaux was still a menace to the establishment of an Orléanist monarchy, and it was felt that while he and his mother were in France a wave of enthusiasm might still be raised by loyalists on their behalf. In spite of many desertions, there were still a number of troops that had remained loyal, and it was pretty generally known that Marshal Marmont had assembled those at Rambouillet for the protection of the King's person and of the Duc de Bordeaux.

The Orléanist party made the most of this and put it about that Charles X was assembling an army, which would march on the capital in order to proclaim the accession of Henri V. The new Ministry, not yet quite sure of its position and fearing a reaction, urged Louis Philippe to send delegates to the ex-King that they might find out what the position was over there.

"We must guard against counter-revolution," they said, "and the only way is to frighten the King into running away."

But Louis Philippe demurred. Though he was willing enough to be borne to the throne on the crest of the revolutionary wave, he could not altogether forget the old family traditions of respect for the head of his house; and the idea of scaring the King into an ignominious flight was repugnant to him. But Lafayette, Odilon Barrot and the other leaders of his party put it to him that while Charles X was in France there would be no end to plots and intrigues, as well as bloodshed, and never any peace in the country. In the end Louis Philippe gave way to this argument and a deputation, consisting of M. de Schonen, Judge of the Supreme Court, Odilon Barrot, the celebrated advocate, and Marshal Maison, set off for Rambouillet.

Their mission was to warn the King of the grave danger to his life and that of his grandson if he persisted in remaining at the château, and to entreat him to leave immediately for the north, as a heavily armed force of insurgents had already assembled in Paris and was marching on Rambouillet

with a view to seizing the persons of His Majesty and of the Duc de Bordeaux. As a matter of fact, there was no such thing as "a heavily armed force of insurgents" marching on Rambouillet. The whole thing was staged with a view to scaring Charles X into running away, and it degenerated into something very like a farce, a tragic farce, the first act of which was played in Paris, where martial law was proclaimed, while posters were hastily printed and placarded at every street corner warning the citizens that the ex-King was planning to march on the capital at the head of an army in order to proclaim the accession of Henri V.

As had been anticipated, the turbulent elements at once got together and within a couple of hours an unruly lot of youths had assembled armed with rifles, sabres, antiquated halberds and blunderbusses, or anything they could get hold of: they commandeered every vehicle that came along—drays, omnibuses, market-carts, cabriolets—climbed into them and started off for Rambouillet shouting, "Long live the Charter!" and "Down with the tyrant!" and waving tricolour flags.

In the meanwhile the three delegates, Schonen, Barrot and Maison, had arrived at the château. It was now half past eight in the evening, and Charles X had gone to his room after supper. When the delegates were announced, he asked querulously, "What do they want now?" and added: "Why can't they leave me in peace? Everything is settled."

However, he did not refuse to receive the three men. They were ushered in, and approached him with perfect deference. Marshal Maison was the first to speak. He told the King that an army sixty thousand strong was marching on Rambouillet, determined to seize him and the Duc de Bordeaux. He spoke slowly and earnestly, weighing every word and painting the supposed danger to His Majesty's person in its blackest hue. While he spoke he could see that every vestige of colour gradually faded out of the King's face, and that his long bony hands fidgeted nervously with his cravat. At one point in the marshal's peroration, Charles closed his eyes. He had in a sudden vision of the past seen his unfortunate brother being dragged back from Varennes in the midst of a howling mob, after his attempted flight from Paris.

But if he saw in this vision a forecast of what might be awaiting him, he would not allow these three men, his avowed enemies, to see that they had succeeded in their attempt to frighten him, and when Maison had finished speaking, he said calmly and with great dignity:

"Have you then come to tell me that your people want to murder their King?"

And as the others did not reply he reiterated:

"Is that what you have come to say? Well, let your rabble come. I am a Christian as well as King of France. I am ready to die. But I will die here."

His voice did not falter, but it was easy to see that here was an old man with nerves worn down by excitement and anxiety. Odilon Barrot, the eloquent lawyer, now began to speak. He pleaded with the King not to allow any more bloodshed. His Majesty's loyal troops were insufficient to withstand the onslaught of the powerful army of insurgents: a fight could only lead to disaster and destroy for ever the chances of the Duc de Bordeaux to regain the throne. He talked so lengthily and so volubly that the old monarch was completely swept off his feet.

"But what in heaven's name do you want me to do?" he asked, bewildered and really frightened now.

"Leave this place, Sire," Barrot pleaded earnestly: "it is the only way to save the crown for your grandson."

And Marshal Maison added solemnly: "Sixty thousand armed men will be here within the hour. Resistance would be useless."

The King drew a long sigh. "Very well," he said resignedly: "we will go away."

"At once, Sire?" the Marshal argued.

"No, to-morrow morning."

Barrot threw up his arms as if in despair.

"Too late," he cried, "they will attack to-night."

"Very well," the old monarch reiterated wearily, "we will go to-night."

And he gave the order for departure, while the delegates withdrew with great sighs of relief and satisfaction.

Of course the whole thing was a monstrous lie, as disgraceful a political move as has ever tarnished the pages of history. No one knew better than those three men that the riotous mob which they had aroused in Paris had no chance whatever against the small but well-disciplined troops which, commanded by Marshal Marmont, could have held the château against any rabble and put them to rout in half an hour. But they had their way. They had scared Charles X into flight. They marched triumphantly out of the presence and into the great hall where the ex-King's courtiers, Ministers and officers of the crown were anxiously waiting for news. Barrot was once more the

spokesman; with a grandiose gesture and deep sonorous voice he said solemnly:

“Gentlemen, save the King! save his august person! The entire city is on the march. Eighty thousand armed men will be here within an hour.”

A regular panic ensued. It was a repetition of that day at Saint-Cloud. These pompous gentlemen, these elegant ladies snatched up hats and cloaks and valises and the remaining rats left the sinking ship.

In the general scramble, the only one who remained undismayed was Caroline Ferdinande. She would not acknowledge defeat even now. She tackled them all in turn, the King, the Duc d’Angoulême, even the Duchesse, also Marshal Marmont. Her project of going to Paris on her own and haranguing the people was still stirring in her mind. The ignominy of this midnight flight appalled her. But no one listened to her, not even Marmont, who had a great deal of respect for her energy. He admitted to her that in his opinion there could not be an army of eighty thousand marching on Rambouillet.

“It is an exaggeration,” he said; “but even so we have less than ten thousand troops here, and we are not very sure of them.”

On the whole he strongly advised immediate departure. He himself would remain behind with the troops for a couple of hours and then follow on. Caroline Ferdinande uttered a loud cry of revolt.

“Our troops running away before a rabble,” she exclaimed.

“There is nothing else for it,” Marmont assured her.

“Yes, there is,” she retorted: “let me lead the troops to Paris. I promise you that the rabble will fly before us like sand before the wind.”

She saw herself as Joan of Arc, in shiny armour, waving the fleur-de-lis, entering Paris at the head of an army, the populace acclaiming her as the saviour of France. But what was the good of pleading when nobody listened, and her impassioned tirades only raised derisive smiles?

The royal cortège left Rambouillet at ten o’clock. It was a very dark night and progress would necessarily be slow: but the King, once he had given the order for departure, would not go back on it. Leaning on the arm of M. Frayssinoux, Sous-préfet of the Department, he entered his coach, followed by Caroline Ferdinande and her two children who were in charge of Madame de Gonthaut. The three delegates who had engineered this flight followed next, and after them came the gentlemen and ladies of the

household, then the Duc and Duchesse d’Angoulême with their suites, and after them the coaches bearing the few faithful friends who had remained loyal to the House of Bourbon; and finally there was a long, long train of carts and wagons with all the luggage and other paraphernalia.

The procession passed between a double line of troops, who presented arms and then fell in to form the escort. There were cries of “*Vive le roi!*” and “*Vive le Duc de Bordeaux!*” on hearing which Caroline Ferdinande burst into tears.

“If you had only listened to me,” she cried, “you would be on your way to Paris now!”

Instead of which the cortège made its way through the Gate of Guéville and along the route to Maintenon which Napoleon Bonaparte himself had followed fifteen years ago on his way to exile.

BOOK III

TRAGEDY AND COMEDY

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ROAD TO EXILE

What a terrible contrast was this journey north from Rambouillet to that triumphal progress when as a young bride Caroline Ferdinande was greeted all the way from Marseilles to Paris by crowds of enthusiasts and received with acclamations and loyal addresses of welcome. Then she travelled in a gilded coach, lilies and roses were strewn in her path, she was escorted by a *corps d'élite* of the royal bodyguard: she was looking forward to a life of gaiety and of splendour, she, the little Cinderella changed into a fairy princess. But now! long, wearisome stages in antiquated coaches from the panels of which every vestige of gilding and decoration had been roughly obliterated: halts at obscure hostelries, where food was scanty and ill cooked: discomforts of every sort and many sordid details. The departure from Rambouillet had been so precipitate that no one had thought much of money. M. de Duras had collected what he could of loose cash in the King's private coffer: the Duc d'Angoulême had a little, so had Caroline Ferdinande, but even when these resources were pooled there was hardly enough for necessities, let alone luxury. So expensive hotels had to be avoided, and shift made with those where beds and meals were cheap.

At first the loyal troops numbering about eight thousand formed an escort to the cortège; they looked imposing and well disciplined, but gradually, long before Maintenon was reached, they broke ranks, the troopers galloped on ahead, the infantry straggled on, weary and footsore, the pieces of artillery were abandoned by the roadside, and what had at first the appearance of a royal progress soon looked like the remnants of an army in retreat after a disaster. A few remained loyal, but very, very few, and their number went on diminishing hour by hour. Odilon Barrot, the lawyer, remarked dryly: "The royal family looks like a crowd that has fallen to the ground out of a fifth-floor window; they are so dazed by their fall that they don't know what to say or do." The old Duc de Luxembourg, one of the friends of the fallen monarchy, retorted hotly:

"I am an old man and I never was a great soldier, but if I had had my way our troops would have given your rabble a warm time!"

The ex-King appeared completely broken. The first stage of the journey at dead of night in the jolting coach made him feel ill and very, very tired. Madame de Gonthaut, the ever-faithful friend sitting opposite to him, had an arm round each of the royal children, who slept soundly with their little

heads pillowed against her bosom. Caroline Ferdinande, even in this dark hour, did her best to comfort her father-in-law. She talked of La Vendée.

"If only you had let me go," she sighed, "when I wanted to. You have no idea how they enthused over me and my little Henri. And that was only three years ago. They have not changed. They have been loyal for forty years. They will remain loyal always."

But the old King only shook his head. No! he would not split France up into factions. He would have no more bloodshed. If the country didn't want him or the Dauphin, well, they would go away. They were going away, and leaving the field open for the future of Henri V when he was a man.

At Maintenon he revived a little. The Duc de Noailles welcomed his King as if these were still the days of Louis XIV, and as if the dispossessed Charles X was still a *Grand Monarque*. It was two o'clock in the morning: but an advance guard had been sent ahead to announce the King's arrival. The park was brilliantly illuminated: the state apartments were ready to receive the royal guests. A magnificent banquet was prepared for them. Charles X mounted the grand staircase between a double line of his bodyguard. The Duc de Noailles put one knee to the ground to welcome him, and kissed his hand and the podgy little hand of the Duc de Bordeaux who was still asleep in the arms of Madame de Gonthaut.

Caroline Ferdinande's mercurial temperament rose to the occasion. This glimpse of regal splendour after those awful dark days of family conflicts and dismal prophecies of worse to come reawakened not only her spirits and her energy, but her hopes of the future. Everything, she was sure, was going to be all right. "My uncle, Louis Philippe," she said to the Duc with a shrug, "cannot be sure from day to day if his head will remain on his shoulders. His father fawned on the Revolution; he was a traitor to Louis XVI, nevertheless he perished on the guillotine. History does have a way of repeating itself, and one never knows."

But Maintenon was only a flash in the pan. The three delegates spent the rest of the night mapping out for the old monarch and his family the road to exile, Dreux, Argenton, Valognes, Cherbourg. Nothing short of exile would satisfy the new government. And England was the place it had chosen for this purpose. England had got rid of Bonaparte so comfortably and so effectually to the satisfaction of the whole of Europe: Well! she must rid France of these Bourbons also, root and branch. She could not of course be expected—being a royalist government—to deal harshly with the ex-King, but she could, if she was willing, keep him well out of harm's way. So a

letter was indited to the King of England which Charles X was made to sign, asking that English hospitality be extended to him in his misfortune. It was dispatched to Cherbourg by special *courrier*, who then embarked for England on the French cutter *Le Rôdeur*.

The next day the royal cortège made a fresh start on the way which had been mapped out for it. The itinerary had been cleverly chosen by the three delegates. Dreux, the first important halt, where the night was to be spent, was the great stronghold of the Orléanist party. It was an ancient fief of the family, and at the moment the town was giving employment to hundreds of workmen for the laying out of an extensive necropolis and the erection in the middle of it of a gorgeous monument to the memory of departed Orléans princes. The Comte de Geslin, who had been dispatched ahead in order to make arrangements for the entry of His Majesty into the city, returned with the news that Dreux refused the ex-King permission to enter its gates and, if he insisted on so doing, the municipal authorities would not be responsible for his safety. There was terrible consternation at this news, both among the family and the various suites, and great satisfaction among the delegates. Their clever manoeuvre was indeed an object-lesson to the fallen monarch: the attitude of this important city of France brought it home to him, as nothing else could have done, that gone was the respect and veneration for the crown which he believed was his by right divine, and that even his person was no longer inviolate.

Odilon Barrot once more constituted himself the spokesman of the new government. He and his two colleagues drove on ahead, interviewed the municipal authorities and harangued the people, with the result that the royal cortège was allowed to spend the night in the city. But the incident at Dreux was only one of many. The new government had done its propaganda work well, and the revolution had spread its tentacles wide over this part of France. There was hardly a township or even a village where the tricolour flag did not float over the *mairie* or the parish church. On the whole there were no overt acts of hostility against the King or the rest of the royal party; for the most part the population received them in silence: but obviously it was a silence of commiseration rather than of respect. When a crowd assembled anywhere to watch the procession drive past, Charles X would lean back in the coach against the cushions and order the blinds to be drawn, so that he should not be seen. Faith in the veneration aroused by his presence amongst the people had received a severe shock and Caroline Ferdinande's incurable optimism only irritated him.

But, in spite of all his misfortunes and after the many rebuffs which a little while ago would have seemed to him impossible, the one thing that this descendant of a royal race never forgot was the fetish which had perhaps done more to bring about his downfall than anything else. That fetish was etiquette. In the third-rate hostelries where he was often forced to take his meals or where he spent the night, the gentlemen of the bedchamber, those who had remained faithful to him and were accompanying him into exile, performed their duties about his person just as they had done at Versailles. The lacqueys in attendance wore their regulation liveries, and no one was admitted into the presence without authorization from the captain of the bodyguard. At Laigle, a small township which was the next halt after Dreux, an incident occurred which would be unbelievable but for the fact that it is told by Madame de Gonthaut herself. The château, such as it was, had been placed by its owner at the disposition of the King for the night. It was not a luxurious house, and none too lavishly furnished. When dinner time came it was found that the only table on which the meal could be served was a round one, and a round table presupposes that all those sitting at it are of equal rank. This in the opinion of the gentlemen in attendance was unthinkable: it would anger His Majesty beyond measure. Only a square table could provide for his preeminence during dinner. So the curves of the round table were quickly sawn off: the table transformed into a square one and the goddess etiquette was satisfied.

But on the morning of the departure from Laigle a rude shock to his dignity awaited the ex-King. His escort was radically cut down by an order which was supposed to have come by *courrier* from Paris. It seems that the new government over there was getting restive. The slow progress of the royal cortège across the north of France, as well as the important military escort attendant upon it, were looked on with suspicion. Rabid Orléanists declared that a concentration of troops was taking place in Brittany ready to join up with the loyalist army, before Charles X had reached Cherbourg. It was argued that the presence of troops, all of whom refused to wear the tricolour badge or to salute the tricolour flag, aroused resentment in the populace. Be that as it may, the order did arrive, and the bulk of the old King's escort was dismissed. Charles was greatly incensed at this direct attack made on his royal prerogative, but the delegates put it to him that his own person and those of his family would be safer if guarded by government troops in addition to a smaller number of his own bodyguard. He was of course forced to acquiesce, because as a matter of fact he had no money and no means to pay or feed his own army however radically curtailed it might be.

The leave-taking from the loyalist regiments was pathetic. The men were lined up as if on parade; the ex-King passed along the line and spoke a word of thanks to the officers for their loyalty to the throne. He made a noble effort to control his emotion and to preserve a last vestige of royal dignity. But the Duchesse d'Angoulême could not keep back her tears. When General Chamas, who was in command of the bodyguard, kissed her hand in farewell, she threw her arms round his neck and wept bitterly.

"Believe me," she said, looking round at the men, "believe me, my dear friends, that none of this is my fault."

Caroline Ferdinande, as usual, kept a stiff upper lip. She passed down the line holding her son by the hand.

"Here is your King," she said to the men; "if you value your eternal salvation, be loyal to him and to the dynasty."

There were loud cries of "*Vive le roi!*" after which the troops rode away in the direction of Chartres. Soon the dust of the road closed behind them like a curtain and it seemed as if the last hope of the fallen monarchy vanished with them in that cloud of dust.

CHAPTER XXVIII

LOUIS PHILIPPE, KING OF THE FRENCH

On the 9th, news came through that the Duc d'Orléans had been proclaimed King of the French under the title of Louis Philippe I. It was said that his accession to the throne was received throughout France not only with general satisfaction but with loud cheering. Paris was covered with bunting, and the same spirit of festivity reigned in the capital as it had done ten years ago at the birth of the Duc de Bordeaux. The ex-King and his cortège were at Carenton on that day. The town was definitely Orléanist and consequently hostile. Crowds assembled all morning outside the château which the royal family and their suite occupied, hoping to catch a glimpse of the dispossessed monarch or of some of the members of his family. But Charles remained indoors behind closed shutters. To his entourage he seemed like a very old man, resigned at last to his fate. When he signed the act of abdication he had still kept the hope that the dynasty with all its divine rights would carry on the great traditions of the Bourbon monarchy in the person of the Duc de Bordeaux. But to-day, after hearing the news from Paris that his own cousin had forsworn allegiance to the head of the house, he realized that the star of his destiny had definitely set: that never again would he see the splendours of Versailles, never again would he receive the homage of his people or hear the acclamations of an enthusiastic populace. To see the crowd outside the château standing there in silence, full of pity perhaps for his misfortune, but avowedly disloyal, would have been torture to him.

LE ROI CITOYEN.
LOUIS PHILIPPE KING OF THE FRENCH.

On the other hand, the two children, the Duc de Bordeaux and Louise Marie-Thérèse, lighthearted and excited by seeing the crowd, leaned their little heads out of the window. And the crowd, seeing them, murmured compassionate words, called them “Poor innocents!” and waved their hands to them. One woman at sight of the Duc de Bordeaux broke into a cheer of “*Vive* our little King!” The cry was taken up by the crowd, and it was followed by others, uttered for the most part by women: “Come back to us soon, pretty one.”

Hearing which, Caroline Ferdinande ran into the next room where her father-in-law was sitting, alone and in the dark. She told him what was happening, and went on excitedly:

"You see how they love my Henri. All he has to do is to show his pretty face and they cheer him and forget all about Uncle Louis Philippe. If only we could go to La Vendée!" she sighed.

But there was no question of going to La Vendée or anywhere else now, except along the way which had been mapped out by the delegates of King Louis Philippe, and that was to the north, always to the north, until Cherbourg was reached. Every other road was actually and quite visibly guarded by government troops, and heavily barred against the royal progress should the ex-King make any attempt to deviate from the prescribed route.

At Cherbourg an American ship had already been chartered to convey Charles X, his family and a reduced suite to England. No answer had yet been received from that country, but there was no doubt in anyone's mind that the English would extend hospitality to the fallen monarch now, as they had done to him and to his family in the past.

Valognes was the last stage of the progress to Cherbourg. Unlike Carenton, the population was avowedly legitimist, and there was only one tricolour flag to be seen in the whole of the town, and that was the one over the *mairie*. Valognes was and still is the stronghold of the Monarchical party in France and the houses are for the most part in the occupation of families belonging to the old French noblesse. One of these houses had been placed at the disposition of the ex-King and his suite. Charles X found it restful and, in a measure, comforting. An atmosphere of old-world tranquillity pervaded the place. In the old garden, under the lime trees in full bloom, myriads of bees hummed and buzzed: the sound of them was soothing to the old man's nerves. Ceremonial was by common consent here put aside, and a more simple life became the order of the day. During the day the King played with the children, while the royal princesses joined their ladies in the very necessary occupation of darning their clothes, which had become very dilapidated during the long journey. In the evening there were family prayers, the ladies and gentlemen of the suite all kneeling round their "little King, Henri V."

The delegates had arranged that the cortège should spend two days at Valognes, and then go straight on to Cherbourg, where no halt was to be made, embarkation taking place immediately on arrival, so as to avoid any possible demonstrations, hostile or otherwise, on the part of the populace.

One of those two days was the 15th of August, the national holy day of France since the great occasion when Louis XIII had solemnly dedicated his country to the Virgin Mary. Since then the Kings of France had always gone in state to hear High Mass at Notre Dame, and in the afternoon there was the trooping of the colours on the Esplanade des Invalides.

To-day then, in the old house at Valognes, the officers and men of the bodyguard in full uniform and carrying their colours assembled in the great salon, where the King received them, dressed in a plain dark-blue suit, and wearing no decorations. He held his little grandson by the hand. The royal family and the ladies and gentlemen were grouped behind him. For the first few moments after His Majesty's entry, not a sound broke the solemn silence of this vast hall. It almost seemed as if Time stood still waiting for something unknown, unexpected, to happen. Then suddenly there rose a murmur among all these men, and the murmur broke into a great sob. The men broke ranks, rushed forward and fell on their knees before their King and the royal princesses, and weeping like children they kissed the royal hands and the hems of the royal ladies' garments. Emotion, such as is only known to those possessed of the Latin temperament, led to wild confusion which almost degenerated into frenzy, until the King himself put a stop to it by saying with his accustomed dignity:

"Gentlemen! My dear, dear friends! Do, I pray you, calm yourselves! Must I be the one to comfort you?"

His words had the desired effect. Ranks were reformed and one by one the squadron commanders bent the knee before the King and presented him with their colours. The King fingered the white silk lovingly for a second or two, then he said:

"Gentlemen, I take these standards from you now. You have known how to keep the fleur-de-lis spotless before the world. We hope that one day my grandson will have the felicity of handing these colours back to you."

The ceremony was at an end. The men and officers dispersed and for the next hour and more the old house hummed with murmurs of protest, with expressions of rage, with imprecations even. Hardened soldiers wept, it is said, with wrathful indignation, shook their fists at those traitors over in Paris, and prayed in the heat of their passion to the God of Vengeance. It is a fact that two men of the bodyguard more impressionable perhaps than others committed suicide that night. The gentlemen of the King's suite, on the other hand, were content to put their heads together, and to throw the blame for all this humiliation and misfortune first on one cause, then on another. They

cursed alternately those whom they held responsible for the catastrophe: "That fool Polignac who thought he knew everything and foresaw nothing; that inept Duc de Duras who denied responsible persons access to His Majesty's presence; that traitor Marmont who had betrayed his King, as he had betrayed his Emperor before." They cursed England, who might have saved the monarchy, and they cursed the foreign ambassadors who had never once tried to see the King at Saint-Cloud.

The next morning at ten o'clock the cortège started on the last stage of its journey. Only twenty-five troopers of the bodyguard were allowed to escort the ex-King as far as Cherbourg. The much-diminished procession did not go through the city but made its way round it to the port. There was a crowd on the quay, which set up the cry: "Long live the Charter!" and "Down with the white cockade!" Charles paid no heed to them. His bodyguard, which, when Cherbourg was reached, had finally been reduced to a dozen men, was aligned facing the sea. Two American liners were in the harbour, one of them was the *Great Britain* on which the ex-King and his family were to cross over to England. Two ships of the French navy were to escort her: the bum-boat *Seine* and the cutter *Le Rôdeur*. The commander of the *Great Britain* had orders to hoist a red flag if any kind of violence was attempted by the ex-King's party with a view to forcing him to alter his prescribed course. But Charles X knew nothing about these measures of precaution, all he demanded was that the tricolour cockade should not be worn on board in his presence. This demand was conceded.

Legitimist papers and memoir writers have tried to throw a glamour of poetry over this departure of the last King of France from the land over which his family had reigned for centuries. As a matter of fact, it was all very dismal and very prosy, and it was an odd enough party that stepped on board the *Great Britain* that afternoon on the way to lifelong exile. First the ex-King in a plain dark-blue suit, with a rather worn round hat on his head. Then the little Duc de Bordeaux in the arms of his tutor the Duc de Damas; Mademoiselle Louise Marie-Thérèse, his sister, who looked very sweet and girlish in her dainty frock of blue and rose striped muslin; and Caroline Ferdinande in her favourite riding kit, breeches and boots and with a hard hat shoved on one side of her curly head. The Duchesse d'Angoulême came next with the Dauphin, who was dressed in deep black with Russian boots and a white hat; and finally Marshal Marmont in his uniform from which he had stripped off most of its gold lace.

During the crossing the King spent most of his time playing with his grandchildren. The sea was rather rough and Caroline Ferdinande felt

seasick; but, as usual with her, she would have endured any torment rather than own to such prosy weakness. She rather fancied herself for a time as Mary Stuart looking for the last time on the fading shore of France, but as she felt very queer she couldn't keep this romantic pose up very long. So she sat on deck and made pretence of knitting garters for the children. Once or twice when the commander passed by she asked him if the sea was likely to remain rough all the way, and when he admitted that he was afraid it would, she said: "You wouldn't like me as a passenger on a long journey, would you?"

"You are so plucky, Madame," he replied, "you would conquer any discomfort, even seasickness."

"I have heard tell," she concluded, "that most admirals in our navy have suffered from it."

The crew soon took her to their hearts. She had a smile for every man, and when she felt well enough to sit on deck with her knitting she sang to them some of the poetic and plaintive songs of her beloved Sicily. One man, overcome with sympathy for her, whispered in her ear: "Say the word and we'll throw the officers overboard. And we'll steer in whichever direction you wish to go."

Had this little incident occurred a few hours before there is no knowing what answer the adventurous little Duchess would have given to the proposition. But it came too late: the *Great Britain* had rounded the Needles and soon came to anchor in the Cowes roads. No answer had come yet from the King of England, so the ex-King of France was not allowed to land. Boats laden with provisions and goods of all sorts crowded round the liner, and Caroline Ferdinande had a rare time in making purchases. She bought shawls and slippers, potatoes and Cheshire cheese. She and the children went on shore once or twice while Charles remained on board, sitting on deck, gazing with incurious eyes on the coastline of that England which had sheltered him and his family in the dark days before the Restoration. Once more it meant the land of exile for him, of perpetual exile this time, for he was so old, so very old: he had no hope of ever seeing France again.

CHAPTER XXIX

PLANS AND PROJECTS

A FEW days later permission was granted to the ex-King of France to land in England. He and his family and suite crossed over to Weymouth and took up temporary residence at Lulworth in Dorsetshire, which had been kindly placed at His Majesty's disposal by Sir Joseph Weld. Later on, William IV offered Holyrood to the ex-King as a permanent residence, and this offer was gratefully accepted.

It is easy to imagine the feelings of Caroline Ferdinande when she found herself installed in the stately if somewhat gloomy Scottish palace. At first she had rather liked the idea of it. Mary Queen of Scots had always been her favourite heroine in history, and her romantic turn of mind dwelt lovingly during the journey north on the unfortunate Queen's amorous adventures. But once settled down between those grim grey walls, romance soon yielded to ennui and the excitable little Duchess was quickly bored to tears. There was very little for her to do save to play games with her children and whist with her father-in-law: and the rigid etiquette of the Tuileries kept up in this home of exile was more irksome to her than it had ever been in the past. It seemed more utterly futile than ever before, now that it had no longer its corollaries in the way of regal splendour and lavish entertainments. After a month of ceremonial, of etiquette and daily rubber of whist, Caroline Ferdinande had enough, and more than enough of them: and her active brain once more set to work on the great problem that engrossed her, viz., how to regain the throne of France for her son. Of course there was only one way to do this—of this she was quite sure—and that was by rousing La Vendée into activity for the Bourbon cause. When three years ago she had made her triumphal progress through the province, and there witnessed the enthusiasm aroused by the mere sight of the little Duc de Bordeaux, she had made a solemn declaration before the Vendéans and their leaders in words that she recalled to-day:

"My friends, if the storm-clouds of revolution were to gather again over our beloved France, I would seek refuge here amongst you all, and ask your help to save the crown for my son."

When the storm-clouds did begin to gather last July, she, Caroline Ferdinande, was not allowed to put that purpose into execution. Could she have gone to La Vendée then and there with her son, Uncle Louis Philippe and his disloyal faction would never have had a chance. The Vendéans knew

how to fight for their rightful king. They had proved it in the past, and were ready to do it again. Of this, also, Caroline Ferdinande was quite sure.

However, nothing yet was irretrievably lost. The Vendéans were unswerving in their loyalty, and all she, Caroline Ferdinande, the mother of their future King, needed to do was to go to them, and she would soon find the right words wherewith to rekindle their ardour for the dynasty. Of course she would not be allowed to take her son with her, but she had a tremendous belief in herself and a passionate faith in the sacredness of her cause.

During his stay at Lulworth Charles X had renewed his act of abdication and sent this document by special *courrier* to "his Cousin Louis Philippe d'Orléans, Governor-General of the Kingdom." In this act he again renounced the crown in his own name and that of his son the Duc d'Angoulême in favour of his grandson Henri V. He decreed that the latter should attain his majority on his fourteenth birthday, and that until that day Madame la Duchesse de Berri, his mother, be his official guardian and Regent of France.

It was with the greatest difficulty that Caroline Ferdinande finally succeeded in persuading her father-in-law to insert this last clause in the new act, and when he had done it she insisted that her new status as the guardian of her son and Regent of France be notified through diplomatic channels to the Courts of Europe. This was eventually done in spite of strenuous opposition on the part of the Angoulêmes, who had never ceased to look upon their sister-in-law as a turbulent and irresponsible element in their ordered lives. But as Louis Philippe d'Orléans had proved himself to be a traitor of the deepest dye, there was no one more qualified to be appointed guardian to the little Duke than his own mother. Anyway, Caroline Ferdinande was jubilant. She had always dreamed—ever since the death of her husband in fact—that she would one day be Regent of France, and it would be as Regent of France that she would go to La Vendée and start her campaign for the proclamation of her son.

Everything then was prepared in the mind of the young Duchess: all her plans were laid, and she now embarked on a correspondence with the great Vendéan and Breton families, laying these plans before them, and asking for their support whenever the time would be ripe for beginning the campaign. In the meanwhile, as she really was not only bored to tears, but also suffered not a little from the bleakness of the northern climate, Caroline Ferdinande consulted an eminent Scottish physician about some severe rheumatic pains that were troubling her. As this learned gentleman appeared to be both impressionable and sympathetic, she soon persuaded him into declaring

emphatically that for anyone suffering from rheumatism Holyrood was a veritable death trap and that Madame must at once go to a curative place if she desired to regain her normal health. As for spending the winter so far north, for anyone of Madame's nationality, accustomed to warmth and sunshine, the issue would almost certainly be fatal.

The matter was then put before His Majesty, who could not very well refuse to give his consent to the project, and he gave permission for his beloved daughter-in-law to leave at once for any spa which the physician might think advisable for the benefit of her health. Within a week Caroline Ferdinande was off to Bath. She travelled incognito under the name of Comtesse de Rosny and was only attended by two maids and one lady-in-waiting, the Comtesse de Bouillé. Her old friend the Comte de Mesnard accompanied her, but Madame de Meffray was not well enough to start just then. She hoped to join the party later on in the autumn.

Caroline Ferdinande stayed away the whole winter. From Bath she went on to Malvern, to Cheltenham, to Bristol and Birmingham. She felt restless and easily bored if she stayed too long in one place. Frankly, these English spas were not very amusing for a young woman like Caroline, for whom excitement and entertainment were as the breath of life. Gossip-mongers, as well as her personal enemies, had a great deal to say on the subject of her continued absence from Holyrood. But no one who knew the Duchesse de Berri intimately could cast serious aspersions on her character, and even the Angoulêmes, who had no love for her, refused to listen to any scandal. Whatever her faults might be—she certainly was inordinately fond of pleasure, she was madly impulsive and therefore irresponsible—she never forgot that she was a descendant of kings, one of the last of the great ruling families of Europe who still clung to the belief that they held their rights and prerogatives from God Himself. And Caroline Ferdinande had no use whatever for vulgar intrigues. She had made up her mind that she would reconquer those rights and prerogatives for her son. No sooner then had she turned her back on the archaic *milieu* of Holyrood than she started on this great purpose. She knew nothing of the tortuous ways of diplomacy, but went straight ahead in the way that her heart and her impulsive temperament suggested. She wrote personal letters—in execrable French and with faulty spelling—to the great monarchs of Europe asking their help for her great campaign. She wrote to the Emperor of Austria, to the Pope, to the King of Portugal and to the King of Holland. The King of Sardinia sent her one hundred thousand francs, the Dutch government made her solemn promises of support. She wrote to the heads of every royalist and legitimist organization in Europe and stirred them to enthusiasm by her vitality and her

energy. They approved of what she did, they helped her with counsel if not always with money, they encouraged her, they flattered her. Soon she became the centre of an immense world agitation in favour of the restoration of absolutism. She, a delicate little woman, daughter of an effete monarch, astonished the whole of Europe by her determination never to give in, to push on and on and never to give the hydra-headed revolutionary movement a chance of establishing itself firmly in any civilized country. And that, she considered, was her mission in life.

Pope Gregory XVI wrote to her: "You want to go too fast, my daughter; remember our proverb, 'Chi va piano va sano!' "

And she wrote back to His Holiness: "I have changed that proverb and I say with conviction: 'Chi va piano, no fa niente!' "

Of course the royal party at Holyrood strongly disapproved of her activities. She had never told the family anything about her plans: had never consulted any of them, and they wanted her back in Scotland, in their midst, tied to their apron-strings. Not one of them, neither the ex-King who knew her better perhaps than anybody else, nor the Angoulêmes who genuinely disliked her, believed for a moment that any scandal could be attached to her name, but it was against the most elementary rules of etiquette that His Majesty's own daughter-in-law should enter into political activity without special direction from the head of the house. Peremptory letters were written to Caroline Ferdinande demanding her immediate return to Holyrood. The winter was now over and there was no longer any excuse for absence. Her long separation from her children was also severely commented on, and it certainly does seem remarkable that Caroline, who was passionately fond of her children, should have wilfully stayed away from them for so long. It just shows how strong was her determination to see her son crowned King of France, and how passionate her desire to be the one to bring that great eventuality about. Later on in life, when she took to jotting down scrappy memories of the past, she said that there was a time during that winter when she was positively afraid to go back to Holyrood.

"I would," she wrote, "have been sucked in by the family. All that I had accomplished would have gone into smoke: my individuality would have been merged in theirs, and I should have resembled a useless tool in the hands of an incompetent workman."

But there came a time when Charles X wrote to her in his own hand, ordering her to return. This order she could obviously not disobey, without

open revolt against His Majesty's authority, thus putting herself outside the pale as far as the family and even the royalist party was concerned.

"Besides which," she said, trying to justify herself to herself over this apparent weakness, "something drew me to that hateful old place just then. And it drew me with a strength that was irresistible. I could not explain it, but I felt that at any cost and any risk I must go back to Holyrood. It was not the fear of hopelessly antagonizing the family. I should have got over that, and the success of my campaign would soon have brought them all fawning around me. It was something magnetic, something strong which drew me to the north, as the needle is drawn to the Pole. At first I thought it must be something to do with my Henri. Perhaps it was he who had need of me. Or was it Louise Marie-Thérèse? Looking back now on that time, I realize how powerful was the lodestar that made me cast everything aside in order to follow its guidance."

Caroline Ferdinande went back to Holyrood in April. She found that fresh arrangements had been made in the organization of the household during her absence. The ex-King still occupied the palace with his suite, and other state apartments had been assigned, some to the little Duc de Bordeaux and others to Louise Marie-Thérèse. The Duc de Bordeaux had now a household of his own, with the Duc de Blacas, his tutor, as Comptroller, and various gentlemen-in-waiting and gentlemen of the bedchamber in attendance. His mother could not possibly have any objection to these arrangements, which were framed for the due recognition of her son's position; what she did however object to was that, though her status as future Regent of France was in no way questioned—it had in fact been officially notified to every Court in Europe—the Duc de Blacas had been appointed not only Comptroller of the Duc de Bordeaux's household, but also Comptroller of the Regency. And Caroline Ferdinande detested the Duc de Blacas. Another matter which greeted her when she arrived at Holyrood, and to which she also objected very strongly, was that in this reorganization of the royal household she and her suite were relegated to a house in Canongate, as, with the new increased entourage of the Duc de Bordeaux, there was thought to be insufficient room in the palace to house Madame la Duchesse de Berri and her ladies-in-waiting. Caroline Ferdinande saw in this new arrangement an attempt made under the influence of the Angoulêmes to separate her more and more from her children, but it was difficult for her, in view of her prolonged absence from them, to raise any serious objections on that score.

However, she soon forgot all these petty annoyances when she discovered what the lodestar was that had drawn her incontinently back to Holyrood. She found that while she was away letters had come for her which no one had thought of forwarding. Madame de Gonthaut had had charge of them and gave them to Caroline the day after her arrival. Two of these letters were from the Count de Lucchesi-Palli.

CHAPTER XXX

VISIONS AND DREAMS

HECTOR de Lucchesi-Palli wrote from Genoa.

> I am here [he said in his letter] for family affairs. Knowing that you are in Scotland, I feel that I am nearer to you here than in Sicily, and the grey skies of Piedmont are more in tune with my mood than the perpetual sunshine of the south. I have only one thought now and that is how I can best serve you, for you are no longer the great lady who for me had become unapproachable, but just the little girl I used to run about with among the orange trees of Palermo and who gave me the privilege of being her playmate.

The second letter was dated a month later. It was in the same strain.

> I am looking after some family property in the district [he wrote]. There is a little house here on the Bocca di Magra which belonged to my mother, and where she actually died. I like it, not because of its gorgeous background of marble-streaked Carraras, not because of its woods, carpeted just now with the snow of early narcissi, not because of those glimpses of blue sea which I get through the grey-green veils of time-honoured olives, but because when I am up in the loggia I can see the marble ships coming from Carrara and sailing off for some distant land, and I fancy that they are going to Edinburgh, and that you will see them too. And when you see them, you will perhaps remember that if in the days of your adversity you ever feel lonely or in need of a friend, you have only to say the one little word "Come" and I shall be ready to accomplish any task you may set me to do, proud to be of service to you now, as I was shy of approaching you when you had so many around you to do your bidding.

With this letter Hector de Lucchesi-Palli had enclosed a little water-colour sketch he had made of his late mother's house on the Bocca di Magra. It stood high above the river and the distant sea, in the midst of olive woods through which a rough footpath led down to the shore. At the back were the stately snow-clad Apennines, with the marble-bearing rocks streaked with white, like lines of glistening snow. The sketch was quite roughly and unskilfully done, but to Caroline Ferdinande it evoked visions

of Italy, her Italy, her home: visions which the past fourteen years, with their turbulent activities, their glory and their cataclysm, had almost obliterated from her mind.

"You have only to say the one little word 'Come!' and I shall be ready," she murmured, reiterating the one phrase in Hector de Lucchesi-Palli's letter which she now knew was the magnet that had dragged her back to Holyrood. And to herself she added: "I will not say 'Come,' Hector, I will say 'Wait.' "

With her usual quickness of decision she had already made up her mind. What was the use of hanging about up here in the north, when it was the south that called? Her home was Italy as well as France. It was from Italy that she must start her campaign to reconquer her son's heritage, as she had started a young bride fourteen years ago to conquer France with her smiles. She would go to Italy, see her friends and relatives, make personal appeal to them and, when she had received their promise of support, she would take a rest from her labours and spend a few days at Massa to be near the friend who was ready to do all and dare all for her sake, and who would make her cause his own. From there she would continue to correspond with the heads of the great Vendéan and Breton families who controlled the royalist organizations. When the hour was ripe for action she would set sail for France and she would disembark at Marseilles—as she had done fourteen years ago. There she would start her campaign to rally the south and the west to the old fleurs-de-lis, and then make for La Vendée, gathering together in her triumphant progress an army of a hundred and fifty thousand loyalists and marching at their head on Paris.

Paris! She would enter Paris at the head of her army on the first anniversary of that fateful day when Charles X fled ignominiously from Rambouillet. She had not quite made up her mind whether she would allow her father-in-law to abrogate the act of abdication and to resume his throne, or whether she would at once proclaim the accession of her son, and take up her position as Regent of France. On the whole she thought that the latter course would be the best, as otherwise, if the act of abdication was abrogated, the Duc d'Angoulême and not the Duc de Bordeaux would be the next heir to the throne.

Caroline Ferdinande had been so excited over these plans which the letters of Hector de Lucchesi-Palli had evoked in her fertile brain, that it was not until the following morning that she remembered the other letters which Madame de Gonthaut had given her. There were three or four, but only one was of any importance. It was from the poet Alfred de Vigny, to whose

romantic temperament the turbulent little Duchess had always made a strong appeal, while she had always been one of the most fervent and consistent admirers of his genius as well as his most generous patron. He had written to her before, during the first few weeks of her stay at Holyrood, and now he wrote again. It was a chatty letter, in which the writer tried to cheer up Madame by retailing some of the local gossip, social and literary, which might interest her. But he also struck a more serious note by referring to the political situation. "The position of Louis Philippe," he wrote, "is very precarious. He owes his throne neither to the will of the people, nor to the divine right of legitimate kings. It seems that a new Restoration is not altogether ruled out."

To Caroline Ferdinande this letter, coming on the top of the plans which had matured in her brain during the night, was nothing less than the finger of God pointing the way which she must follow. From that hour she never ceased for a moment to work for the execution of her plan. It meant badgering her father-in-law into giving her his official permission to go to Italy. She would travel incognito, she would see her uncle the Duke of Modena, who was a frantic legitimist and would help her with money and promise of military support; she would see the King of Sardinia, who had already granted her substantial subsidy; she would see the Emperor of Austria, and she would see the Pope. She would in fact do all the work that could only end one way: triumphal entry into Paris and "Fifi"—as she disrespectfully called her Uncle Louis Philippe—sent to the right about. She talked and she talked: she entreated and she argued as she had done that evening at Saint-Cloud when she begged for permission to go to La Vendée and was refused. As was only to be expected, Charles X was at first just as obdurate as he had been then. Prompted by the Angoulêmes, he raised every possible objection to Caroline's projects, which he termed senseless, ill considered and undignified. He would not have his daughter-in-law roam about Europe, hat in hand, begging for money and support. And what's more, she would not be allowed to do it: the police of the great continental countries would quickly put an end to her wanderings. But none of these arguments had any weight with Caroline Ferdinande. She had given way at Saint-Cloud because in those days she still believed that God Himself would intervene in the cause of His elect. But now when she realized that He would do no such thing, and that, as a matter of fact, the cause looked very like being finally lost, unless something desperate was done to uphold it, she finally declared that if she was not given the official permission to start on her campaign, she would go without it.

Whether, on the principle that a constant drip of water will wear away a stone, or whether she did in the end bring the old King round to her views, it is difficult to say. Certain it is that Caroline Ferdinande did start for Italy in June of that year. She travelled incognito under the name of Comtesse de Sagana, a name which she afterwards changed to Madame Giuseppa Saccone, and was accompanied by Madame Lubeschu, her personal maid, and by her faithful old friend the Comte de Mesnard, who had been equerry to the Duc de Berri, and who loved the eccentric little Duchess as if she were his own daughter. Caroline Ferdinande went from Edinburgh to Rotterdam, thence through Bavaria, Switzerland and the north of Italy to Sestri in Piedmont, where she hoped to meet her generous supporter the King of Sardinia. But here she came on the first disappointment of her adventurous career. She failed to meet the King, for he had already gone south. Somehow it seemed as if this initial mishap was the forerunner of many others, and as if the wheel of Fortune had wantonly taken a backward turn. Contrary to what Caroline had expected, she was not well received by her royal and ducal relations. They were sick of her and her appeals and thought her a bore. They referred her to the foreign chancelleries in their capitals, who, in their turn, looked upon her as a nuisance and met her earnest appeals for support with a polite refusal.

Her uncle the Duke of Modena was the only one who received her kindly. But he was an old maniac whose faith in the divine right of kings and rulers went to the length of drafting ordinances for the suppression of earthquakes in his dominions. All these rebuffs, however, had not the power to discourage the energetic little Duchess. If she had no support from the continent of Europe she would do without it. France was enough for her, and there were enough loyalists in the south and the west to give her the support she needed. But for the moment she was tired out. She had been on the go for a whole month without rest or respite, and longed for quietude and the soothing companionship of a friend. She could find both at Massa, that delightful little town situated about a mile from the sea, in the dominion of the kind old Duke of Modena, who declared himself more than ready to make her welcome. He owned a beautiful palace in the city, and this he placed at the disposal of Madame la Duchesse, his niece.

Caroline Ferdinande accepted the offer gladly, and as soon as she was settled there she let all the legitimist organizations in France know where she was. If she wanted quietude she certainly didn’t get it after that, for immediately a number of enthusiasts betook themselves to Massa, all too eager to see her start her campaign for the restoration of her son. Among these enthusiasts were several officers of the old Vendéan armies who had

fought in the cause of the Bourbon dynasty during the revolution and the Empire, also many ladies belonging to the old legitimist aristocracy. These ladies and gentlemen formed a regular Court round the person of Caroline Ferdinande. They were treated with utmost consideration by the Duke of Modena, who even detailed a small guard of honour to remain in attendance on the Regent of France, and the little party formed a regular nest of militant royalists, who dined regularly at the table d'hôte of Monsieur François, the French proprietor of the only reputable hostelry of Massa.

Over the nuts and wine plans of campaign were discussed which were submitted to Madame the next day. Everyone was eager to see her land in France, so that she could show herself to the population of the south and the west, loyalists who were only waiting for her leadership in order to march immediately on Paris and dethrone the usurper Louis Philippe, self-styled King of the French. Marshal de Bourmont was all for prompt action, the Kergorlays vouched for the loyalty of the Vendée, and the Sabatiers for that of Brittany. They assured the Duchess that the time was now most propitious for starting her campaign. Even as lately as a week ago, things might not have been ready, but now they were, and the whole nation would acclaim the mother of its future King. Some went so far as to declare that the regiments home from their conquest of Algiers and now quartered at different points between Marseilles and Montauban, were simply waiting to join her standard. There were, they said, generals and marshals, ardent legitimists or merely army men with a grievance, who would take command of the army whilst the whole of La Vendée was prepared to take up arms, as it always had done, for the royal cause.

Let her come at once, they urged, and the whole of France would be at her feet. But on one pretext or another, Caroline Ferdinande kept putting off her journey to an indefinite date, indeed she did not respond to her friends' urgent appeals as enthusiastically as they had hoped and desired. She listened to them, she talked with them, she planned and she argued, and when pushed into a corner urged that for the moment there had crept a religious controversy into the opposing parties: the Protestant element in France siding with Louis Philippe and democracy, and the Catholic with her. There was nothing, she declared, more terrible for any country than religious warfare.

This, of course, was nonsense, as they all knew. The Protestant faction had never been dominant in France since the days of St. Bartholomew. Civil war was one thing and in this case could not be avoided, but there was no question of religion being mixed up with it. The Pope was appealed to, to

settle the point, and His Holiness sent a letter to Madame on the subject, assuring her also of God’s blessing on her enterprise. He sent this letter to Massa in the care of a French ecclesiastic who was on his way to Spain. This little incident is only important because the Pope’s messenger was accompanied by a man named Deutz, a converted Jew who was destined later on to play such a sinister role in the life of the Duchesse de Berri.

Caroline Ferdinande took a great dislike to this Deutz, but on being told that the two men were practically destitute she provided them both with money which she could ill afford. She indited a letter of thanks to His Holiness and sent loving messages to the King of Spain, but still she made no arrangements for her voyage to France, and men like de Bourmont, Kergorlay and Larochejaquelein saw the propitious time go by, and many an ardour cool off over in La Vendée and Brittany in this weary waiting for the little lady who didn’t come. In fact, her dilatoriness became so marked that even up at Holyrood the ex-King and the family felt quite disturbed about it. After so much impetuosity and feverish agitation it seemed strange that Caroline should be content to let things drift, while she spent her time on the terrace of her uncle’s palace at Massa, gazing out on the blue waters of the Mediterranean and dreaming of romantic adventures which apparently she was no longer in a hurry to embark on.

The Angoulêmes suggested that since she was doing nothing useful over there, Caroline Ferdinande had better come back to Holyrood. Charles X agreed with them and wrote a personal letter to his daughter-in-law telling her that it was his wish that she should return at once. He sent this letter by special messenger with orders not to linger on the way, and to deliver it into Her Royal Highness’s own hands. But when the messenger arrived at Massa he was told by the Comte de Mesnard that Caroline Ferdinande had gone to Rome to pay her respects to His Holiness, who had been very gracious to her. The Count did not know exactly when Madame would return, probably in a week or two. The messenger who had received no orders as to what he should do under these unexpected circumstances left the letter and went back to Holyrood.

The ex-King, much vexed, then decided that the Duc de Blacas, as representing him, and Monsieur de Brissac, should go to Italy with strict orders to bring the vagrant Duchess back to the family fold. The choice of M. de Blacas for this errand was an unfortunate one. Caroline Ferdinande detested him and, as she said herself on one occasion, would sooner have walked to limbo with Satan than to heaven with Blacas.

The two men arrived at Massa in the early days of October. They had driven over from San Stefano. Leaving M. de Brissac in the carriage, Blacas, on hearing that Madame la Duchesse de Berri was back from Rome, asked permission to pay his respects. Caroline Ferdinande refused to receive him. He insisted and, in the end, terrorized the Italian bodyguard into admitting him. He was shown into the lady's boudoir. Caroline Ferdinande sailed past him out of the room. There was nothing to be done that day. But Blacas, nothing daunted, tried his luck again the next. He succeeded in waylaying her when she was walking in the garden. She did not avoid him this time, but met him with such a torrent of abuse, and such Italo-French vituperation, that he was forced to beat a hasty retreat. He drove back to San Stefano and subsequently returned to Scotland. But M. de Brissac elected to remain. He had always liked this fascinating stormy petrel, he believed in her, quite apart from the justice of her cause, and in his turn had also been so utterly bored at Holyrood that he was thankful for any excuse to avoid the danger of dying there of ennui.

Blacas went away discomfited and de Brissac remained. He joined the little coterie round the table d'hôte of Monsieur François. He joined in their discussions and listened to their plans. He also heard what they had to say on the subject of Madame's strange attitude, her apparent apathy; but, more clear-sighted than they, de Brissac soon realized that it was not just the love of *dolce far niente* that kept Madame la Duchesse de Berri so firmly fixed in Massa. It was something far more serious than that: the presence, namely, in the neighbourhood of the city of Monsieur le Comte Hector de Lucchesi-Palli.

Monsieur de Brissac had never before now seen or even heard of that cultured and extremely good-looking gentleman, but he had not been in Massa forty-eight hours before he saw what an important role the young Count played in the life of the Duchesse de Berri. He had, it seems, been her playmate in the olden days at Palermo. They were children together. Had laughed and cried together. Had quarrelled and had kissed. Now he was the companion who with reminiscences of those past care-free days helped the weary, disturbed young soul to forget not only its present vicissitudes but even the glories of yesterday. The others saw nothing of this. Vaguely they had heard of the Comte de Lucchesi-Palli who owned property in the neighbourhood: some of them had actually met him and liked him for his erudition, his command of the French language and general air of distinction. But de Brissac, who had his apartments in the palace, saw what was going on. Hector de Lucchesi-Palli had a boat which he sailed out in the Mediterranean, and Caroline Ferdinande loved to go for a sail when the sea

was calm. She would lie on cushions in the prow of the vessel, silent, dreaming and . . . forgetting.

Or the two young people would wander out along the river bank, where wild iris and meadowsweet grew in profusion, and where the gentle lapping of the sluggish water was the only sound that disturbed their reverie. And in the evening they would stroll back when the setting sun tinged the marble-streaked mountains with rose and gold, and the fishing boats with their gaily-decorated yellow sails slowly made their way two by two up the mouth of the Magra.

And de Brissac, seeing all this, pondered as to what he should do. He was an oldish man, but he had not forgotten that he had been young once, and there was for him a charming element of romance in this association of two young people whom prosperity had kept apart and adversity brought together again. It was an idyll which in the nature of things could never come to anything. The Comte de Lucchesi-Palli could never be more than a respectful friend to Madame la Duchesse de Berri, Regent of France. What de Brissac did do was first of all to enlist the cooperation of M. de Mesnard, who apparently saw nothing of what went on under his very nose, and then use all the influence he possessed to persuade Caroline Ferdinande either to continue the campaign which she had embarked on so valiantly, or to acknowledge defeat and return to her children. The present position, he urged, was untenable and would greatly endanger the future of her son. This final argument, as far as Caroline Ferdinande was concerned, was always a conclusive one, and de Brissac knew how to harp on the one string that caused her heart to respond. The autumn was now drawing to a close. It had been unusually beautiful. Right away till Christmas the roses in the hedgerows had been in bloom. But at the turn of the year the weather became cold and damp and the sea squally. Sailing in Hector de Lucchesi-Palli's little ship was now out of the question, and the walks along the river bank had lost the charm of sweet-scented flowers and glowing sunsets. Caroline Ferdinande was more ready under these circumstances to lend an ear to her friends' urgent appeals, and to turn her attention to "Fifi" and his doings up in Paris.

The little coterie was allowed to gather more closely round her and, on winter evenings sitting around the fire, Cabinet councils were held, and plans for immediate action were discussed and formulated. Caroline Ferdinande, now all initiative and energy, decided that the first thing to do was to indite a decree proclaiming "the dethronement of the usurper Louis Philippe I, self-styled King of the French."

“We will send,” she said to this assembly of the faithful, “copies of this decree to every Court in Europe. We will have some distributed and posted up in every quarter of Paris and in every departmental town.”

She also jotted down the names of the men whom she desired to nominate as Ministers of State under her Regency: the Duc de Bellune, Monsieur de Kergorlay, and René de Chateaubriand, the poet whose eloquent pen would in itself have the power to re-establish the throne.

All her ardour and determination seemed to have revived. Surrounded by these fanatics, who never greeted her save on bended knees, and never left her presence without renewed protestations of loyalty, Caroline Ferdinande felt her blood stirred once more by the old glow of enthusiasm for “the cause.”

“We are about to erase from our escutcheon,” she said proudly, “the stain of Rambouillet.”

She was quite ready now to sail for France as soon as arrangements were complete for her departure. She would land at Marseilles, as she had done sixteen years ago. She was convinced now that everything would turn out according to plan. The south and the west would rush to arms. A well-equipped army of one hundred and fifty thousand loyalists would march on Paris. “Fifi” would have to fly for his life and Henri V would be installed in the Tuileries less than two years after his grandfather had quitted it. Oh! Caroline Ferdinande, Duchesse de Berri, was quite sure of all that. She had had visions of her murdered heroic husband who told her that it would all come out in accordance with God’s own decree.

Frankly, there were only a very few wiseacres among the crowd who counselled prudence and discretion. All those ardent royalists who were sure that God was on the side of legitimate kings, urged action and promptitude. Caroline Ferdinande drank of the heady potion of flattery and of ambition. Her impulsive temperament reasserted itself. She was so certain of success.

CHAPTER XXXI

CHECK

THE date of embarkation was fixed for April the 24th. Everything was ready. The schooner *Carlo Alberto* had been chartered for a supposed voyage to Barcelona. This was done in order to throw dust in the eyes of the Italian police, who nevertheless saw very clearly what was happening, but apparently didn't care. Anyway, the *Carlo Alberto*, all decorated with fleurs-de-lis, lay at anchor in the roads outside Massa. The faithful few were already on board, waiting to receive the Duchesse de Berri. It was a very dark night and pouring with rain—this being the feast of Saint Polycarp in the Roman calendar, a festival on which, according to tradition, it invariably pours with rain in Piedmont. At nine o'clock in the evening Caroline Ferdinande left the palace and, leaning on the arm of M. de Brissac, she walked down to the shore, which was distant about a mile. Madame Lubeschu her maid and M. le Comte de Mesnard accompanied her. It was dark and very hard going on the wet sand, with a head wind and driving rain. There was a disused customs shed on the strand. Madame and her companions went in there for a rest. At three o'clock in the morning a boat put in close by and took the party aboard the *Carlo Alberto*.

Caroline Ferdinande had felt rather down in the dumps on leaving Massa, and she had cried like a child when she said "good-bye" to Hector de Lucchesi-Palli. Walking down to the shore, she got very tired, very wet and very cold; she had had no rest in the draughty customs shed and had felt, as usual, rather seasick in the open boat. But when she stepped on board the *Carlo Alberto* and was greeted with cheers by her friends who were waiting for her on deck, when they all ran to her and went down on their knees and kissed her hands and her very wet gown, her mercurial spirits rose again at once. She was no longer cold, she was not seasick, she didn't care how hard it rained. This wave of enthusiasm which she had created by her mere presence swept every thought of bodily discomfort aside. They were such wonderful people, these loyalists! Such heroes! There they were, in the cold and the wet and with this horrible ship rocking for all it was worth, vowing that they would die for her and for their King.

"And if our children are orphaned," one of them said, "at least we shall have bequeathed to them the honour of recording their name in the pages of history."

“No! No!” Caroline Ferdinande retorted excitedly, “you must not think of your children as orphans, but as sons and daughters of heroes. Success is already ours. In forty hours or less we shall be in France. God is, as ever, on our side.”

And of this she was convinced. She didn’t sleep a wink that night or the next, chiefly because she wasn’t very comfortable, but also because her brain refused to rest: it dwelt all the time on recollections of the past, on that day sixteen years ago when she landed in Marseilles, and on that other triumphal progress of hers through La Vendée when every town and village was gay with bunting, and when she sat by the roadside with bearded veterans around her who had given up home, riches, everything in order to serve their King. Well! She had done her best, and had accomplished much. She had defied her father-in-law and flouted the rest of the family. Success would justify her deeds. Here she was now, like Napoleon Bonaparte, quitting her Elba and bound for France. But with her it would not be a matter of a mere hundred days. With all these heroes, ready to die for their King, there was not likely to be any Waterloo for her.

The journey across was extremely unpleasant, and the party on board the *Carlo Alberto* got a severe tossing. Most of the ladies were seasick and everyone shivered, for it was very cold. Caroline Ferdinande did her best to keep up the spirits of the rest of the party, but even she found it difficult to keep smiling. What upset her more than anything was the enforced delay. The wind had been adverse, and the schooner had been forced to put in to Nice to replenish her store of provisions.

It was only on the evening of the 28th that at last Marseilles hove in sight. A fishing boat was hailed, and hired to convey the Duchess to Carry-le-Rouet, distant a few kilometres from the city. Here she would spend the night in the farm known as La Folie—an unfortunate name—for her first resting place on the soil of France. A few of her friends accompanied her on shore. The weather had not improved. It was very cold and raining again. The strand was lonely. The little party moving along in the direction of the farm looked like ghosts in the enveloping mist. Caroline Ferdinande, however, had recovered all her gaiety and high spirits.

“I am sure it will be fine to-morrow,” she declared; “such a glorious day it will be.”

And she proceeded to tell them all just what would happen on the morrow.

“Our fleur-de-lis will float on the cathedral tower,” she said. “We’ll then proclaim martial law, and march with two thousand loyal Marseilleis on the Town Hall with the cry: ‘Long live Henri V.’ ”

Monsieur de Kergorlay, more optimistic than most, went on with the same heartening prophecy. “The garrison,” he said, “will turn out and join us, and we will all come marching to La Folie and carry Madame in triumph to the city.”

All this was received with cheers, and Madame then said with a smile to Maréchal de Bourmont:

“We have burned our boats effectively now, haven’t we, Monsieur le Maréchal?”

She went to bed happy that evening and slept all night like a top.

The catastrophe came in the morning.

Before midday the Duc d’Escars, whom Caroline Ferdinande had appointed “Governor-General of Provence,” arrived in hot haste at La Folie with the terrible news. Less than sixty so-called loyalists had joined in the march on the Town Hall, where they were met by a detachment of the 13th regiment of the line, officered by a young lieutenant. There was a short but decisive skirmish. Monsieur Sachaud and one or two other leaders of the loyalists were arrested, whilst the *Carlo Alberto*, closely pursued by the government frigate *Le Sphinx*, was rapidly disappearing beyond the horizon line. What was to be done now? A gathering of the faithful took place at La Folie later in the day. Some proposed one thing, some another. Optimism in them had turned to acute dejection. What about going back to Italy by land? Wouldn’t it be best to wait till more definite news came from other parts of the country, and in the meanwhile find a hiding place safe from the prying eyes of Louis Philippe’s police? And so on, the whole gamut of depression.

But Caroline Ferdinande would have none of it. She was not going to acknowledge failure quite so quickly, if at all. Adversity had always the effect of spurring her on to fresh efforts.

“This is not the moment to give in,” she said resolutely; “and I am not going to disappoint a whole countryside which has shown such wonderful loyalty towards my son and me. As we cannot count on the south, we’ll go immediately to La Vendée.”

CHAPTER XXXII

TO LA VENDÉE

"LA VENDÉE!" became a kind of battle-cry among the faithful. The goal to which all their aspirations and hopes now tended.

Some of her supporters might be discouraged, but Caroline Ferdinande certainly was not. This 30th of May might seem to the fainthearted as dire and as fatal as the 30th of July had been two years ago—was it as long ago as that?—but to this intrepid little woman the disloyalty or pusillanimity of the south was only an incident in her great adventure. She believed in La Vendée. She had always declared that if trouble came she would go to the Vendéans for shelter and for aid. Now was the time! She would go to La Vendée.

She spent the next two days in a house belonging to her friend Madame de Bouillé. The first night she slept for eighteen hours straight on end. She would need, she said, all the energy she possessed for the journey which she was determined to undertake, and unless she had a good rest in a good, comfortable bed she might not be able to stand the fatigues which certainly would fall to her lot. The next day she sent a message to Monsieur le Marquis de Villeneuve who had a château in the neighbourhood of Aix-en-Provence. M. de Villeneuve had at one time been préfet of the department. He had had the honour of welcoming Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, when, as a young bride, she passed through Aix on her way from Marseilles to Paris. He had now retired into private life, but still remained the ardent legitimist which he had always been, and when summoned by Madame la Duchesse de Berri, Regent of France, he came over post-haste to hear her commands. When he had kissed her hand, she made him sit down beside her. Without any preamble she went straight to the point.

"Listen to me, my good Villeneuve," she began. "I will tell you first what my plans are, and then what I want you to do."

She told him of her determination to go at once to La Vendée, passing through Nîmes, Toulouse and Blaye.

"You must remember," she said earnestly, "that with our disappointment here in the south" (she would not call it "failure"), "there are only two courses open to us; either ignominious flight back to Italy, as some pessimists have dared to counsel; or to go straight to La Vendée, and this I am determined to do."

Monsieur de Villeneuve, somewhat taken aback and knowing perhaps the folly of this enterprise, tried a mild protest at first. But Caroline Ferdinande would not let him speak. She went on airily:

"We shall want a coach and four stout horses to begin with. You and my dear old Mesnard will travel with us, and of course my faithful Lubeschu. The others will have to follow as best they can. We shall want passports under any false names that may occur to you, and I believe one needs travelling permits in these days of liberty from every local authority as one passes through. All that will be easy for you. You have been a local authority yourself in your day, haven't you? So you know the ropes."

She said all this, sitting close beside him and holding his hand. She looked the most adorable, the most bewitching creature the poor man had ever been called upon to displease. For displease her he must. He knew well enough that she had set her heart on this voyage to La Vendée. Friends had already told him that "En Vendée!" had become her battle-cry, but all the while he knew in his heart of hearts that the adventure was not only terribly risky, but also that it would prove a ghastly mistake. And this he must tell her, even at the risk not only of offending her but of wounding her to the quick, and hearing her call him disloyal and poor-spirited, perhaps even a coward. But he did it. Holding on to her little hand, and looking straight into her eyes, he told her what he knew to be the truth. That France was sick to death of revolutions and changes of government; that she had in Louis Philippe the ruler that suited her present democratic spirit; the people, he said, liked to see their King walking about the streets of Paris, unattended, with his umbrella under his arm, his hat at the back of his head.

Caroline Ferdinande hated to hear him talk like this. Though she was quite shrewd enough to realize that what Villeneuve said about the political situation was perfectly true, she not only believed in the divine right of kings, but believed also that this divine right was actually vested in the Bourbons and that any man who dared assume the title of King of France, or King of the French, she cared not which, was committing a sacrilege by defying God Himself. How then could she give up what God had bestowed upon her son? She wouldn't give up, and what's more, she knew that her faithful Vendéans would not wish her to give up.

"They will fight for their rightful King to the last," she declared firmly, "and God will be on the side of the elect."

"The Vendéans, Madame," Villeneuve rejoined sadly, "are no more ready to take up arms than the Provençals have been. They have put their

blunderbusses away. They have made money. They have bought land. They don't want to fight, believe me."

But this she would not believe for one moment. She knew better than that. The people of the west must not be judged by the same standard as those of the south. The Provençal temperament was very like that of her own people the Sicilians, easily roused to enthusiasm and easily discouraged. The Vendéans and the Bretons were very, very different. She knew. She had seen the old bearded veterans of La Vendée come out of their forests and their hidden lairs in order to see her and retail to her the acts of heroism accomplished in the royalist cause, and in order to swear to her that their sons were as ready to die for Henri V as they had been for Louis XVI.

Villeneuve listened in silence and in sadness. What could a man do in face of such virile determination and such sublime faith? He had worried a lot about it all ever since he heard of Madame's insane project; but now he felt that he was making no headway with his arguments. It was of course useless to talk of dangers and discomforts to this valiant young Amazon. Indeed, when he did touch on this aspect of the plan, Caroline Ferdinande burst out laughing.

"My good old friend," she said gaily, "you don't seem to realize that now I am a soldier, and that I can endure everything just as a soldier should. I sleep like a top when I am sleepy, wherever I may be, under a hedge, in a hay cart or in a cow byre. I can exist on bread and water for a week or longer. I am never ill. I tell you I am a soldier and can lead a soldier's life."

As a matter of fact, Caroline Ferdinande was actually looking forward to the coming adventure. It was going to be tremendously exciting, and to her excitement was the very breath of life. She knew what dullness meant up in Holyrood, working cross-stitch embroidery, listening to the Angoulêmes' dreary jeremiads, and playing whist with her father-in-law, and the immediate future was like a vision of paradise, full of excitement and gaiety.

"Life in a garden of Eden, my dear Villeneuve," she declared; "that is what my expedition to La Vendée will be for me."

The simile was not a happy one, for it gave her old friend the chance of retorting:

"Soon barred for you, Madame, by the flaming sword of disappointment and failure."

She said nothing for a moment or two, and presently rose and went to the window and in silence looked out on the desolate landscape of Provence.

She was getting impatient with all this talk which she knew was futile, because it would never shake her in her determination; she felt that de Villeneuve meant well, but he exasperated her. As she still remained silent and turned a very obstinate and uncompromising back on him, he said with renewed earnestness:

"Why not bide your time for a little while? The present régime cannot possibly last. Louis Philippe is not a clever politician. He may go about with his umbrella under his arm, but he really knows nothing of the temper of the people. The young hotheads in parliament are constantly badgering and browbeating him. Sooner or later he will come in direct conflict with them. And that will be your opportunity. A restoration will then appear as the only possible means of salvation, and all your adherents will witness with joy the accession of their rightful King, Henri V."

He paused a moment and finally added with a pathetic tone of appeal:

"Let me take you back to Italy. I can make all arrangements, and in two days you would be safe . . ."

But at mention of Italy and going back there, Caroline Ferdinande lost control over her temper. She swung round on the old man like a little fury, cheeks aflame and eyes blazing:

"You forget," she cried, "that the Vendéans are waiting for me. Would you have me leave them in the lurch as the Bourbons have always done before now? Am I going to let them fight for my Henri without as much as sharing their dangers and their sufferings? I tell you I won't do it. I won't. En Vendée is my motto. Let those who are afraid to come with me stay behind if they like. You too, Villeneuve. . . ."

But already Villeneuve was on his feet and half across the room. He knelt down before her, took both her hands and kissed them:

"I will follow you, Madame," he said quietly, "to the end of the world."

He had capitulated as any brave man would before a plucky woman. He talked no more of disappointment or failure, of risks or discomforts. He took his orders from his liege lady and trusted in God to guard her.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE CALL TO ARMS

Two days later a start was made. Monsieur de Villeneuve had seen to everything, provided everything, coach and horses, provisions for the journey, relays at various halts, passports and permits. The coach, driven by a friend, started from Aix after sundown one evening early in May and at midnight met Madame and a few of her faithful friends at an agreed spot on the road. It had been put to Caroline Ferdinande that after the aborted coup at Marseilles the police were probably on the lookout for her, and that if a coach and post-horses were seen to drive up to the door of the house where she was staying, and she stepped into it, there was every fear that she might be stopped and even arrested. Whereupon she gaily declared that she would walk and meet the coach at the first crossroads outside Aix. And walk she did: it was a matter of thirty miles over stony bridlepaths up and down rocky inclines, with no shelter save a broken-down wooden hut, where she slept one night for a few hours, on the rough ground, wrapped in her mantle while a local shepherd who had undertaken to act as guide to the party went in search of a landmark or signpost, for he had frankly lost his way. The men of the party were dead-beat. Fortunately the Comte de Mesnard, who was old and could not have stood the fatigue at all, was not among them. He had started from Aix with Monsieur de Villeneuve. But Madame Lubeschu, the Duchess's maid, was there. She had sore feet and was in tears. Caroline Ferdinande alone kept up her spirits and those of her friends by her incurable optimism, and entertained them with glowing accounts of all that would happen the moment she arrived in La Vendée, and of the galas and festivities she would organize in Paris and Versailles to celebrate the accession of her son Henri V to the throne of France.

Luckily the guide was able to secure in a neighbouring village a ramshackle vehicle for the last half-dozen miles of the way. Under cover of an exceptionally dark night Madame and her small party were thus able to drive as far as the crossroads where the coach picked them up. Caroline Ferdinande did not appear either despondent or tired. She made great fun of her passport, which was made out in the name of the Marquise de Villeneuve travelling with her husband to Normandy to visit a sick relation.

"I may have to change husbands," she declared gaily, "and more than once, before we arrive at our destination."

“Uncle Fifi’s police haven’t found me yet,” she also said with a chuckle, as she settled herself down comfortably on the cushions of the coach.

But Monsieur de Villeneuve was not quite so sanguine about this as Madame was; as a matter of fact, throughout the first part of the journey both he and his friend who was driving the coach had from time to time, chiefly at twilight and during the night, perceived a man in a cocked hat—obviously a gendarme—who seemed to be keeping the carriage in sight. He warned Caroline Ferdinande of this, and begged her at the halts when meals were taken, or the horses changed, to make herself as little conspicuous as possible, but she only laughed and refused to be scared. The gentleman in the cocked hat, she said, only added extra spice to her adventure. As soon as daylight began to fade, she asked if he had appeared again and, when told that he had, she turned over contentedly on the cushions and went to sleep. By the time the coach reached the out-skirts of Toulouse, however, the gendarme was no longer to be seen. Here a halt was called at a wayside hostelry: it was early morning; relays had been bespoken and breakfast prepared in the public coffee-room. The halt only lasted half an hour, but when everything was ready for departure, Madame Lubeschu, the maid, was nowhere to be found. There was great consternation among the small party. Everyone’s thoughts flew to the mysterious individual in the cocked hat. Obviously the police had all along been on the alert and poor Madame Lubeschu was the first to fall into a well-laid trap. The arrest of Madame herself would surely follow, and the only way to avoid the terrible eventuality was by immediate flight. By dashing along at full speed it might be possible to evade pursuit. But Caroline Ferdinande refused to leave her faithful maid in the lurch. God knows what might be done to her in this town, the sympathies of which were avowedly Orléanist.

While the matter was being discussed, a number of road-menders on their way to work strolled into the public room, and sitting down to their breakfast they talked of a certain piece of news that was going the round of the town. That mad woman, the Duchesse de Berri, they said, who was trying to stir up civil war in France, had entered Toulouse that morning, but fortunately she had been spotted by the police and was now under arrest.

Caroline Ferdinande, delighted at this news, nearly betrayed herself by a burst of laughter.

“Won’t Fifi be furious with his dear Toulousians,” she said, “when his clever police find out their mistake?”

But she agreed with her friends that the best thing to do was to make an immediate start: M. de Villeneuve undertook to remain behind and look after Madame Lubeschu, who would naturally be set at liberty as soon as her identity was established. He would then hire a *calèche* and overtake the coach at the next halt. And this he eventually did, but not till more than three weeks had gone by. But Caroline Ferdinande continued to chuckle over the whole incident. She refused to look upon it as anything but an amusing farce acted under the noses of uncle "Fifi's" police.

The party continued its way north and west along the valley of the Garonne. They crossed the river by the bridge at Moissac and then, abandoning all idea of passing through Bordeaux, took the road via Bergerac, Libourne and Blaye. They were never worried by the police. The authorities at Toulouse were satisfied apparently that they had the Duchess under lock and key, whilst those of Bordeaux gave credence to the rumour that Madame, after her reverse at Marseilles, had crossed the frontier and gone back to Italy. All through her progress Caroline Ferdinande had made no attempt at disguise. She declared that the best way to pass unnoticed in a crowd or in a city was to show oneself quite openly and make no attempt to conceal one's movements. Be that as it may, she was certainly very lucky in evading the attention of the authorities, and also extraordinarily well served by her friends.

Once only was she very near to being recognized. The end of the long journey was in sight. The last halt was to be made at Plassac, where Caroline Ferdinande intended to remain a few days in the château belonging to the Marquis de Dampierre, an ardent legitimist who had placed his house, his estate and his servants at the disposal of Madame la Duchesse. Word was sent round to him and to Madame la Marquise his wife that Her Royal Highness would arrive at the château that very night. Great was the consternation of Monsieur and Madame de Dampierre at this news, as they were not expecting Madame quite so soon and at the moment there were in the house twenty guests whose political opinions were of a doubtful quality: some of them might possibly be loyal, but they could not vouch for all of them, and these, if they were so inclined, might go so far as to betray Her Highness to the police. They sent their young son with a message to Her Royal Highness, begging her with a thousand apologies and regrets to postpone her visit for, say, twenty-four hours. But Caroline Ferdinande had made up her mind days and days ago that she would spend this night at Plassac, and once she had made up her mind to anything, nothing in the world could deter her from her purpose. She dearly loved an obstacle for the mere pleasure of overcoming it. All she did then, in this emergency, was to

ask young Dampierre if by any chance his parents had a relation who lived at some distance from Plassac. The boy reflected for a moment and then said that as a matter of fact they had a cousin, Madame de la Myre-Morri, who had a house at Agen, distant from here about eighteen kilometres.

"That is just perfect," Caroline Ferdinande declared with her usual lightheartedness. "Tell your parents, my dear young friend, that their cousin, Madame de la Myre-Morri, has come to pay them a visit on her way north, together with her husband, Monsieur de la Myre-Morri, who will be none other than my dear and faithful friend Monsieur le Comte de Mesnard."

Young Dampierre went back to his parents with this message: boylike, he was looking forward to the prospect of an exciting adventure, and so were Monsieur and Madame de Dampierre, though not quite so pleasurably.

Caroline Ferdinande coaxed kind old Mesnard into joining her in the dangerous comedy. Poor old man! He was used to the little lady's vagaries and knew that acquiescence in her caprice was the only way to peace. The false Monsieur and Madame de la Myre-Morri duly arrived at the château, where fortunately most of the guests were provincial folk who had never been much in Paris and did not know Her Royal Highness by sight. Caroline Ferdinande enjoyed herself hugely that evening, by keeping poor old Mesnard on tenterhooks, by covert allusions to matrimonial affairs, allusions that she fired at him unawares and then laughed to hear him stammer retorts that were often crooked and drew on him the astonished or reproving looks of his fellow-guests.

"My husband has suffered recently from the heat," Caroline Ferdinande said quite seriously, indicating that perhaps her lord and master had not all his wits about him: "haven't you, my love?" she added, and ogled her pseudo-husband with such a mischievous air that the poor man felt the blood rush up to his old cheeks as he caught the sympathetic glances of his neighbours. Monsieur and Madame de Dampierre had at first looked down their noses, strongly disapproving of Madame's levity—as much as one dared disapprove of the conduct of so exalted a lady—but Caroline's gaiety was so infectious that after a time they saw the humour of the situation, especially when at the end of the evening the naughty little lady bade M. de Mesnard a wifely good night, kissed him tenderly as any good wife should, and said to the accompaniment of a knowing glance:

"Don't be too late, my love. I'll be waiting for you."

When her back was turned and all the ladies had gone, the men declared that the cousin from Agen was adorable. They punched poor old Mesnard in

the ribs and called him a lucky dog—the French equivalent, that is, of what is known in England as a lucky dog.

Everything then went off quite well until the next morning when the *curé* of the parish came in for *déjeuner*. The moment he set eyes on the supposed cousin from Agen he gave a start which Caroline Ferdinande did not fail to note. Obviously the good priest had recognized her. As a matter of fact, he had at one time held a curacy in one of the Paris churches and had often seen Madame la Duchesse de Berri driving in an open carriage through the streets. For Caroline Ferdinande then, there was only one question to be solved: was the man a friend or an enemy? If a friend, then all was well; if an enemy and likely to betray her, then he must be reduced to impotence. And no one understood the art of subjugating a man, even a priest, better than did Caroline Ferdinande, Duchesse de Berri. And she set to work to do it, using as her weapons her blue eyes and their fascinating cast, and that bewitching smile of hers, with its display of tiny uneven teeth, as white and as sharp as those of a puppy. The man was as pulp in her little hands. He was young: he was heart-whole: and he was simpleminded. If he had at any time harboured sympathies for the democratic rule of Louis Philippe, he soon shed them when those blue eyes veiled in tears were turned on him, and the most adorable lips in the world murmured things about legitimate monarchs being deprived of their throne to the defiance of God and disobedience of His will, and about a mother’s duty to suffer martyrdom for the sake of her son and for his rights.

By the time *déjeuner* was over the worthy *curé* was quite convinced that it would be a mortal sin to thwart this devoted mother in the magnificent fight she was putting up for the rightful King of France. Thus the little incident passed off without mishap, and the next day M. de Dampierre’s guests had all happily departed.

Caroline Ferdinande had now come very near to the end of her journey. Only a hundred and fifty kilometres lay between Plassac and La Vendée. For close on a month this intrepid little woman had endured fatigues that had almost knocked over the men of her party, and discomforts that women of her station and upbringing had never even dreamed of. She remained nine days in the house of her friends the Dampierres. She had all along intended to make the place her headquarters until such time as she could go farther up country, and Monsieur de Dampierre was one of those rare enthusiasts who was only too ready to put everything he possessed at the disposition of the Duchesse de Berri. The moment Caroline Ferdinande had settled down she sent messages to the leaders of her party in the west, telling them where she

was and commanding them to assemble all the loyalist elements in their respective districts so as to start the campaign without delay.

"Let my lawyers be prepared," she wrote, using such language as would puzzle the police should her messages fall into wrong hands: "my commands are that pleadings in the Courts begin at once."

The first to arrive at Plassac was one Achille Guibourg, one of her most enthusiastic adherents, whom she at once appointed her Privy Seal. He helped her to indite the proclamation which was a call to arms addressed to the Bretons, the Vendéans and all the people of the west.

"Here I am," she declared proudly in it, "among a nation of heroes. Open wide your doors to the future glory of France. Henri V calls to you; his mother will fight with you. One day Henri V will be your brother-in-arms if alien enemies attack our beloved land.

"Frenchmen and women! For forty years you have been deceived by traitors. France has beckoned to me and I have come. You will find me at the head of your army. Look for me where dangers are thickest."

Caroline Ferdinande, Duchesse de Berri and Regent of France, had reached her goal. She felt that now at last she was the leader of an army that would follow her to the death. She had no thought of disappointment, much less of failure. The justice, the sacredness of her cause would, she was positive, command success.

"God," she reiterated fervently, "will always be on the side of His elect."

CHAPTER XXXIV

PETIT-PIERRE

But disappointments did come. And they came thick and fast.

It was the third week in May and nothing had been done. No movement on the part of the leaders. No concentration of troops. Nothing ready, no preparation for a serious campaign. News reached the Duchess from Fontenay and Montaigu that she had not been expected quite so soon, and that this was the reason why preparations for the campaign were not yet complete. Caroline Ferdinande felt that Plassac was too far away from the centre of operations. "En Vendée!" She must get right into the heart of La Vendée. She ordered coach and horses to be got ready for the journey up country. The leaders, she argued, were supine and the people slow to arouse only because they had not yet seen the mother of their King. Let her but show herself to them and the enthusiasm of four years ago would soon be revived again, and hordes of combatants arise to defeat the powers of evil and of Uncle "Fifi." But by this time there was little doubt that Louis Philippe's police, not to mention the troops quartered in different parts of the country, were on the alert. Though there had not yet been any open insurrection, it was pretty well known that the Duchesse de Berri had not gone back to Italy but had come to La Vendée in order to foment one. The coach would certainly be spotted and there was grave danger of Her Royal Highness being recognized and arrested.

Well! That danger was not likely to deter Caroline Ferdinande from her project. "En Vendée!" was her battle-cry and to La Vendée she would go, unsuspected and unrecognized. Here was a chance of enacting one more farce under the noses of "Fifi's" police. She put on the costume of the local peasantry: green coat with brass buttons, yellow waistcoat, and short blue cotton trousers: she hid her fair curls under a dark tousled wig, darkened her eyebrows with shoe-black and her hands with fruit juice. Thus attired she became Petit-Pierre, a romantic figure which to-day is almost legendary in Vendée. Petit-Pierre the frail and small prop of a fallen monarchy, an intrepid little fellow roaming through the thicket, in search of ardour that was dead, and enthusiasm that had long ceased to glow. Petit-Pierre, who slept under the hedgerows or in cow byres, as she once said she would, hiding in copses or in the bottom of wells while government patrols in search of Madame la Duchesse de Berri passed by within ten yards of her hiding place; Petit-Pierre, who knew neither fatigue nor discouragement,

and refused to believe to the last that these people from whom she had expected so much were really forsaking her.

She had her headquarters at Mesliers. Here she arrived from Plassac full of sanguine expectations. Here she met the leaders of her party to whom she had sent her proud and bellicose proclamation. She talked to Charette and Berryer and de Bourmont and to all her supporters whom she believed to be most confident of success, only to hear from them what de Villeneuve had already told her: that France was sick to death of conflicts and that the Vendéans of to-day were no longer the intrepid fighters of forty years ago, that they had bought land and made money, and preferred to handle a plough rather than a gun. They talked to her of flight and of giving up a struggle which was doomed to failure.

She would have none of that. Failure was a word that had never held a place in Caroline Ferdinande’s vocabulary. She had arrived in La Vendée as Petit-Pierre, and as Petit-Pierre she would continue her campaign, defying the lot of them. Her supporters might grumble and dispraise. Up in Paris they might laugh and shrug. Uncle Fifi and Aunt Marie-Amélie might pity her, and speak of her as that “poor Caroline” as if she were childish or demented, she didn’t care. For three weeks she wandered through the thickets of the Lake of Grandlieu, because the police was hard on her heels: she fell into the water, and France would have known Petit-Pierre no more but that a couple of labourers going by heard her cries and fished her out. She spent that night under cover of a grove of bamboo, naked, wrapped in her mantle, while she put her clothes out to dry.

But the campaign had certainly begun badly. There was a total lack of organization in the party, orders and counter-orders, both equally futile, followed one another in hopeless confusion; minor isolated risings in different parts of the country were very quickly suppressed by government troops. A number of important papers relating to the plan of campaign were seized by the police. This would have been a knock-out blow to most organizers of a far-reaching campaign. Not to Caroline Ferdinande. Her retort to this shattering piece of news was a fresh call to arms which she sent broadcast to the leaders.

“I call to every man of honour,” she wrote, “to help me save our beloved country!”

She gave the order for a concentration of troops on the night of the 3rd and 4th of June in the neighbourhood of Saint-Étienne. Still in the disguise of Petit-Pierre, she spent the night in a lonely house close by. Waiting.

Waiting to hear the bugle-call, the roll of drums, the clash of arms. Waiting for hours, either at the window or out in the open, while not a sound broke the silence of the night. It seemed as if the whole of La Vendée was dead. In the early dawn a few distant sounds came to the ears of the anxious watcher: gunfire, shouts, a song. What song? One of victory, of course. But where? She knew soon enough. Evil news has a wonderful way of travelling very fast. And the news was distinctly evil. Columns of royalists had marched through the villages in different parts of the province, waving their banners of fleurs-de-lis and shouting "For France and Henri V," but the villages had not responded, and isolated columns had come in contact with government troops and been forced to retreat. In some cases retreat had meant disorganized flight: in one or two instances, however, the royalist troops were able to fall back in moderate order, and were then marched to La Brosse, the house where Madame la Duchesse was waiting to hear news of an overwhelming victory. There were some five or six hundred of them, the pick of the insurgents, under the command of Monsieur de Charette. Their position around the house, though not impregnable, was well guarded by a narrow stream and thick undergrowth. But two companies of the 44th regiment of the line were hard on their heels. Caroline Ferdinande, crouching in a ditch, watched the unequal fight. It was never for a moment in doubt. There were deeds of heroism accomplished, of course. It could not be a Vendéan fight without conspicuous acts of bravery, but deeds and heroic deaths were of no avail against well-drilled and well-equipped government troops.

At first everything seemed to go well. There were plenty of enthusiastic shouts of "*Vive Henri V*," and the Vendéans swept down into the valley waving their fleurs-de-lis standards, pushing the enemy before them helter-skelter as far as the stream, forcing him seemingly to effect a disorderly retreat. Caroline Ferdinande became frantic with excitement. She cried "Victory" at the top of her voice, and ran out of her hiding place into the open. She was still the funny Petit-Pierre in yellow vest and blue cotton shorts, and she wanted to throw herself into the middle of the fight to cheer and encourage that brave Charette and his heroic Vendéans, till they had inflicted an irreparable defeat on "Fifi's" troops. Fortunately that wonderful friend de Mesnard, old and faithful and prudent, was there with her. He too had spent the night waiting for news in the lonely house, and the morning in hiding in the ditch watching over the turbulent little Duchess. He was just in time to seize her by her shirt-sleeve and to drag her back into the thicket. A fresh detachment of government troops were in possession of Chêne, a village on the farther bank of the stream. And that detachment was a very

strong one. Mesnard dragged Caroline Ferdinande away. Flight had become imperative. At first she refused to budge. Mesnard entreated and argued. If she were taken, what then? The last hope of her party would vanish, whilst at the moment the situation was not really desperate. Charette would hold out. With luck he might capture Chêne, and then retreat in order to Saint-Étienne, where Madame would be awaiting him.

Caroline Ferdinande would perhaps have given way to her friend's argument. Saint-Étienne might be all right, and if Charette brought his troops there victory might be pushed home. But just as she was starting to scramble through the undergrowth she heard heavy firing behind her. The Vendéans were attacking Chêne. Caroline Ferdinande must wait to see the fight. "Bravo, my valiant Charette! Bravo, my heroic Vendéans!" she cried, and clapped her little hands with excitement, as she used to do in her childhood's days when Hector de Lucchesi-Palli fought and won an unequal fight. This too was an unequal fight, and a disastrous one. Soon it turned into a regular rout, with nothing for Charette and his brave men but a heroic death.

"Let me go," Madame cried in a frenzy, trying to wrench her arm free from the firm grip of Monsieur de Mesnard; "let me go! I want to fight with them, to die with them. If I am killed my Vendéans will know how to avenge me."

But though Mesnard was an old man he was still vigorous. In spite of Madame's struggles he picked her up in his arms and carried her like a baby, still kicking and pounding at him with her fists, back to the lonely house at La Brosse. She was safe here for the moment. The government troops did not push their victory home at this point. They marched on to La Penissière, a fortified château close to Clisson, where sixty Vendéans were defying three hundred picked men of Louis Philippe's army. Thus reinforced, the latter continued a regular siege of the château for three days, while the number of the garrison inside was reduced to forty, to twenty, and finally to eight. After three days the government troops succeeded in setting fire to the château and in the conflagration the last of the sixty heroes perished, buried under the ruins. The siege of La Penissière is one of the epics of this civil war. Some of its incidents have been immortalized by Balzac in his *Comédie humaine*.

There was after this disaster little else to hope for. Petit-Pierre had been deceived in her fondest beliefs. She had trusted in her Vendéans, had pinned her faith on their loyalty, and with the exception of a handful of heroes they had been supine, unprepared and unwilling. What was there for her now but

an ignominious return to exile? Holyrood or Italy? The very thought of either sent her into a frenzy: the royalist committees up in Paris sent Monsieur Berryer, the lawyer, and Chateaubriand, the poet, to beg her to give in. “The enterprise is a tragic failure,” they argued; “best to give in now, and hope for better opportunities later on.”

But Caroline Ferdinande had never been so obstinate as she was now. It was the obstinacy of despair.

“I will not give in,” she reiterated: “I will not. Here I am and here I will remain. And,” she added simply, “here I will die among my own people, the few who love me still.”

“It is not a case of dying, Madame,” Berryer put in with some impatience: “think of the position we should all be in if you were taken prisoner.”

Taken prisoner? She? The born adventurer, the arch-wanderer, the intrepid vagabond? The thought seemed to turn her blood to ice.

“It was you,” she said to Berryer, “who at Massa kept urging me to come.”

“You came too late, Madame,” he retorted dryly.

Was that true? Caroline Ferdinande, sitting in this miserable, ill-furnished room, between these two men who talked glibly of prison and arrest, closed her eyes for a moment, because at Berryer’s curt reminder she had suddenly seen a vision of those exquisite autumn days at Massa, of the river banks fragrant with meadowsweet, and of the little sailing ship, where she had lain on a pile of cushions dreaming and forgetting.

“Very well,” she said at last, as if this swift vision had also reminded her of things that she could not now forget: “I will go away from here. But I am not going to trail into exile,” she added stubbornly: “I will go to Nantes. The south have failed me, so have the Vendéans, though they were heroes. It is to the Bretons that I look now.”

CHAPTER XXXV

INVETERATE OPTIMISM

Caroline Ferdinande went to Nantes. What she expected to find there she did not quite know, but four years ago when she had sailed down the Loire and arrived in Nantes she had found the city beflagged and heard expressions of devotion which still rang in her ears. She gave up the disguise and role of Petit-Pierre for the occasion, and she and her companion, Mademoiselle de Kergorlay, as intrepid a young campaigner as herself, dressed up in peasant's clothes, short skirts, corslet bodices, white winged caps, and started on their way on foot. It was a matter of twenty odd miles. Caroline Ferdinande, severely hampered by heavy shoes and coarse stockings, walked barefoot the whole of the way. Even now the Comte de Mesnard did not fail her. He donned the ragged clothes of a labourer and marched to Nantes in the wake of the two Amazons. It was market day when the three stalwarts arrived in the city. In their rough clothes and in among the crowd of farmers and cattle dealers they passed unnoticed through the streets. Caroline Ferdinande, with her shoes and stockings slung over one shoulder, her dainty little feet thick with the grime of the road, carried a basket full of eggs on one arm. In this basket, underneath the eggs, she had stowed a number of important papers relating to her future plan of campaign, also a list of the names and addresses of legitimist families in Brittany with whom she had been advised to communicate: all very highly compromising, not only to herself but to others, if these papers should fall into the hands of the authorities. But Caroline Ferdinande, who was happier in this adventure than she had been for weeks, cared nothing for risks of that sort. In spite of poor old Mesnard's earnest admonitions, she came to a halt at every street corner where administrative placards had been posted up warning the citizens of Nantes of the presence of Madame la Duchesse de Berri in the province, and proclaiming her outside the law. Caroline Ferdinande would read these proclamations out loud in the intervals of biting lustily into a red apple.

At the octroi, a customs officer, ogling her basket, asked her if she had anything to declare.

"Only my firm conviction," she said, laughing and showing her row of tiny, uneven teeth like those of a puppy, "that you are the handsomest officer I have yet seen in Nantes."

She took hold of one end of his moustache and twirled it up, and pinched his cheek between her finger and thumb. The Comte de Mesnard was ready to faint, but Caroline Ferdinande had passed through the octroi without any trouble. But the valiant little woman's high spirits were soon brought down to a lower level. With the authorities throughout the province on the alert, there was no question, at any rate for the moment, of wandering about the country even in disguise. Concealment—strict concealment—was imperative. This was put to Caroline Ferdinande by the patient and fond Mesnard.

"It is the only way," he said with more than usual earnestness, "to avert a catastrophe which would compromise hopelessly not only your cause, but the future of your son."

The future of the Duc de Bordeaux was always a safe card to play, and Mesnard played it with good effect. Caroline Ferdinande gave in and agreed to take refuge at first in a house that gave on the cathedral vestry. However, the archdeacon, who was an old man and a lover of quietude, took fright when he discovered the identity of his new neighbour, and begged her to go away before he found himself gravely compromised and perhaps in conflict with the authorities. Caroline Ferdinande then found shelter in a house in the rue Haute-du-Château, belonging to two maiden ladies, fervent royalists, Mesdemoiselles Duguiny. It was not a cheerful abode, less cheerful in fact than Holyrood had been. The outlook in front was on the narrow street, with the houses opposite in a state of disrepair, shutters that creaked and were sadly in need of paint, and the plaster peeling off the dank walls. At the back the outlook was even more dismal, for the windows gave on a small inner courtyard, with an insalubrious well in the centre of it, which appeared to be the playground of innumerable rats, and of every cat in the neighbourhood.

Here the turbulent little Duchess, the intrepid Petit-Pierre and tireless campaigner, spent the summer months in hiding. At first M. de Mesnard and Mlle. de Kergorlay were her only companions. Presently they were joined by Caroline's maid, Madame Lubeschu, released at last from the clutches of Louis Philippe's police, who believed that they had actually captured the Duchesse de Berri. She had been kept in Toulouse in durance for over three weeks and was on the point of being dispatched under escort to Holyrood, when it became known that Madame la Duchesse was at large and that the prisoner was only her maid. M. de Villeneuve, who had remained at Toulouse, then brought her back to her royal mistress in Nantes. But in the meanwhile all sorts of wild rumours about Madame herself were afloat. The police, having committed the one egregious blunder, were fearful of being

once more led by the nose by the mischief-loving little lady. They did not know which rumour to credit: one had it that the Duchess had gone to Barcelona, another that she had returned to Italy, and a third that she had died of cholera which was then raging in the province.

It was not till the end of September that it was definitely known that she was in Nantes. But where? Her secret up to this time had been well kept. No one except a very few, very faithful friends, knew her exact whereabouts, and even they did not know definitely whether she ever went outside the doors of No. 3 rue Haute-du-Château. The Baron de Charette, one of her most trusted adherents, declared that she never did; and the Comtesse de Larochejaquelein, who by name and tradition was one of her most loyal friends, was once heard to lament that when she was ill, Her Royal Highness never came to visit her. All the same, there were some in Nantes who whispered that a young valet in livery, carrying a lantern, had been seen accompanying a lady and gentleman in their evening walk, and on Sunday mornings early had gone with them to Mass.

One wonders indeed how such an active woman as Caroline Ferdinande could have endured this voluntary captivity for so long. The reason why she did endure it is because even now, when all her fondest hopes lay in ruins about her, when to all intents and purposes she had been deserted by those whom she trusted most, she still kept her incurable optimism, and had no thought of giving in.

"They wouldn't have me as a soldier," she said to Charette on one occasion. "They shall have me as a politician."

And it was as a politician and a diplomatist that she continued the fight for the restoration of her son to the throne that was his by divine right. She embarked on a campaign of letter-writing which, if collected together, would fill many volumes. With the cooperation of faithful friends outside who acted as secret messengers and dispatch bearers, she corresponded here, there and everywhere with foreign chancelleries, with the European monarchs who might be friendly to her, as well as with her supporters in France on whom she thought she could still rely. Her passionate love of the spectacular and the dramatic caused her to fancy herself as the elusive princess who from her hiding place directed the destinies of France, and of Europe too perhaps, while the police vainly beat up the countryside in search of her. She used, in writing her letters, ciphers of her own invention, and invisible ink. She sent her more influential friends scouring the country. The Maréchal de Bourmont, whom she had at Massa appointed Minister of War, was received personally by the Czar, who promised support "as soon as

Madame la Duchesse can show the slightest chance of success.” The King of Portugal promised money and the supply of war material. The King of Holland did the same on condition that Belgium be restored to the crown of Holland when Henri V came to the throne.

Strangely enough (or perhaps naturally enough) Caroline’s own relations were less willing to help. The King of Sardinia called her a lunatic and the Emperor of Austria said that he had no faith in her insane enterprise. But either way, during those summer months, all that Caroline Ferdinande received in response to her voluminous correspondence were promises and advice. Those who loved her disinterestedly, men like Mesnard or Charette, continued to counsel prudence and the advisability of leaving France and marking time for awhile. At the end of August she had a letter from her father-in-law.

> My dear child [wrote the ex-King], I am bound to tell you how strongly I disapprove of your futile, though, I admit, plucky, obstinacy in an enterprise in which you have already signally failed, and which has now become exceedingly dangerous for you and, I might say, fatal to the sacred cause which we all have at heart. Your proper course now is to come back to us and to the bosom of your family as quickly as possible.

And de Bourmont, back from Russia with nothing in his pocket save the Czar’s empty promises, grumbled audibly: “It is all going to be disastrous to the monarchy. Better go back to Holyrood and wait for better times.”

Go back to Holyrood? After the excitement of the past few months? After the drama of Massa and the *Carlo Alberto*? After the tragedies of La Brosse and Chêne and the tramp to Nantes, spend dreary interminable days in that grim old palace, doing tapestry work, quarrelling with Blacas whom she detested worse than ever, and playing whist with her father-in-law who bored her to tears? Not she. She was not going to give up: nor betray those brave adherents who still believed in her. The Bourbons had always been noted for their ingratitude. They had never tried to do anything for the Vendéans who had sacrificed everything for them: but she, Caroline Ferdinande, Duchesse de Berri and Regent of France, would show them that she at any rate would not be ungrateful. She would not forsake those who had fought for her. Her son would soon be King of France and La Vendée would then become the most favoured province in the kingdom.

Give up? Go back to Holyrood? Not she! A thousand times no! If she could not lead an army in the field she would hatch a conspiracy in her lair.

And so the house in the rue Haute-du-Château became thereafter the meeting-place of mysterious individuals, whose identity can be guessed at, but whom Caroline Ferdinande liked to call by fanciful names, such as Hare-Lip and Fear-Nought and Dare-Death; names that were famous in the early days of the Chouannerie, nicknames that had caused some of the great Napoleon's generals either to tremble or to curse. Actually most of them were young enthusiasts, men like Guibourg the lawyer, Caroline's trusted friend and secretary, and others who had known Petit-Pierre and had fought at La Brosse. But there were also some older men, such as Mesnard and de Bourmont, and largehearted women such as Madame de Kergorlay and Mademoiselle Stylite de Kersabiec. And more than once during the summer and early autumn Hector de Lucchesi-Palli came over to Nantes to visit Her Royal Highness. He held an important diplomatic post at The Hague and was the bearer of letters from His Majesty the King of Holland. Caroline Ferdinande never seemed so happy as she was during these brief visits of her old playmate. She not only appeared gayer, but prettier, more fascinating. She told her friends that she had every hope of substantial support from the King of Holland. It was for the moment only a matter of diplomacy which the Count de Lucchesi-Palli was conducting with devotion and ability.

Then, towards the end of October, there came to the Duguiny house a man from Cologne, a converted Jew who had been in Massa at one time, the bearer of messages from Pope Gregory XVI to certain religious communities in Spain. At Massa he had been introduced to Madame la Duchesse de Berri by His Holiness as Simon Deutz, but here in Nantes he styled himself Baron de Gonzague.

CHAPTER XXXVI

A SECOND JUDAS

It was getting well into the autumn then, the days were drawing in, and on dark evenings when the sea fog had crept up the narrow thoroughfares of the city, furtive footsteps would be heard wending their way down the rue Haute-du-Château; forms that looked ghostlike in the mist would pause at the door of No. 3, give a knock, and a password when the door was cautiously opened. They entered almost soundlessly and made their way up the rickety stairs to a third-floor attic where the Regent of France was waiting for them. Here they talked and they planned till late into the night. They discussed the news that had come by messenger or letter, and indited replies where these were needed.

Caroline Ferdinande revelled in this atmosphere of mystery and conspiracy. She loved these confabulations carried on in whispers, with one ear strained to catch any sound that came from the street below. She was entirely in her element in this world of romance, reminiscent of the Middle Ages, of Venice and the Doges or the days of the Borgias; all complete with the secret hiding place, a recess hollowed out in the vast chimney of the monumental hearth.

"Where they used to smoke their herrings and their hams," she explained, laughing. And after she had played the role of mock showman of this bare and dismal abode she proceeded to expound her idea which had come to her one night, she said, of a new Constitution, to take effect on the accession of Henri V. She had already put it all down on paper. There were provisions for the levy of taxes, for rural and municipal administration, for parliamentary procedure and individual suffrage. Like the first Napoleon she did nothing by halves: she was even planning the revision of the entire Code Civil.

Nothing gave her greater pleasure than the message which she received one day from her Uncle Louis Philippe. She called him "Poulot" now, a better name, she said, for him than "Fifi."

"Such a poor old Poulot!" she said with a chuckle: "he would so like to send me out of France. He said so to Madame de Berryer, hoping that she would pass the message on to me. Well! she did. Poulot told her to let me know that an American ship is ready to take me wherever I choose to go. I have only to say the word."

This was all very true. Louis Philippe would gladly have seen this turbulent niece of his out of the country. He had not the least idea where she was, and his much-vaunted police seemed unable to ferret it out either. Both were now the butt of every pamphleteer and every caricaturist in Paris, and "Where is the Duchess?" became the popular slogan in the city. Public opinion either derided the government for its ineptitude where only a woman was concerned or boldly accused some of the Ministers of favouring a Bourbon restoration.

There certainly were a few unpleasant clouds on the political horizon. An armed conflict with Holland over the freedom of Belgium appeared imminent, and there were many who wondered whether war abroad would not mean revolution at home or a fresh insurrection in favour of the old dynasty. Parliament had decided to meet some time in November. It seemed absolutely imperative for the safety of the crown and the stability of the government that the Duchesse de Berri should be under lock and key before then.

The King called together a new Ministry entirely made up of men of energy and determination who could be trusted to carry this delicate matter through. Foremost among these was M. Thiers, who was given the portfolio of Minister of the Interior and told that the immediate arrest of the Duchess was the business of his department and that the sooner he set about taking measures to effect it, the better it would be for him. M. Thiers was young. He was ambitious. He had few, if any, scruples. He declared boldly before his colleagues that long before the meeting of Parliament the stormy petrel would see her wings effectually clipped.

He set to work to find a man of mettle to replace the supine prefect at Nantes, and found him in the person of a friend of his, Maurice Duval. Duval also was young, ambitious and unscrupulous. The fact that the stormy petrel was a woman did not hinder him in the least. She was the enemy of the régime on which Duval depended for promotion, so she must be put out of the way of doing further harm. He began operations by organizing a kind of military encirclement of the province, which was then to be scoured from end to end. But Destiny took the matter now in her own hands. Towards the end of October, just when Maurice Duval began to fear that his military encirclement would not be of any use, Monsieur Thiers received an anonymous letter inviting him to go to a certain crossroads of the Champs Élysées the next evening at eight o'clock: an important secret which was of vital concern to him would there be revealed by the writer. Though warned of the likelihood of a murderous ambush, Thiers did not hesitate: besides

being ambitious he was also entirely fearless. He drove to the appointed place alone, and on getting out of his carriage he saw a man slouching along under the trees, with back bent and hands buried in his trousers pockets. Thiers went boldly up to him and seized him by the arm: “Get into my carriage,” he commanded. “I have half a dozen men with me, resistance would be useless.”

“I am not trying to resist,” the man stammered plaintively: “I can tell you everything now.”

But Thiers dragged him to the carriage and made him get in. He ordered the coachman to drive to the Ministry. A few minutes later he was sitting at his desk in his private room, and opposite to him stood the mysterious stranger of the Champs Élysées, a youngish man, almost swarthy in complexion, with crisp dark hair, loose-lipped and shifty of eye. At the moment he seemed on the verge of collapse, his knees were shaking under him and the expression on his face was one of abject terror. The Minister waited for some time with as much patience as he could muster. His delicate, white hands toyed with a paper-knife: its tap-tap against the desk appeared to irritate the man’s nerves to the point of frenzy.

However, he recovered himself after a time and with much circumlocution stated his purpose. He offered to find out the whereabouts of Madame la Duchesse de Berri and to give her up to the police for a consideration. She was in Nantes at the moment, he didn’t know exactly where, but he could easily find out through her friends. As a matter of fact, he had visited Madame at Massa, when he was passing through there with a friend on his way to Spain. He had been specially recommended to Madame at the time by Pope Gregory XVI and she had entrusted him with letters and messages to her brother-in-law the King of Spain and to Dom Miguel of Portugal. She would not refuse to see him because she and her friends had known him in Massa and knew that he was a trusted servant of the Vatican and therefore above suspicion.

A bargain was struck between the politician and this miserable Judas. Thiers felt no hesitation: for him questions of policy must override those of chivalry. He sent the man to his friend, Maurice Duval, in Nantes, with strict orders that the police must not lose sight of him for one moment. Lodgings were found for him in the Hôtel de France and he had orders to report every day at the prefecture. As the days went on the miserable wretch became more and more a prey to abject terror and to shame. At one time he offered to betray the Maréchal de Bourmont instead of the Duchesse. But that was not the essence of the bargain, and his offer was rejected. He had already got

in touch with several of the leading legitimists in the district. Some of them had known him at Massa when he was the bearer of letters and messages from the Pope, so there was no question of suspecting him: a servant of His Holiness was also bound to be a servant of the legitimate dynasty. He gave it out that his real name was Baron de Gonzague, Simon Deutz being an assumed one, which served his purpose as he was a member of the Secret Service at the Vatican. He also explained that he was on his way back to Rome from Spain where he had been sent on a special mission by His Holiness. In Madrid and in Lisbon, so he said, he had interviewed not only the respective sovereigns but many influential people, who had assured him that support for the Bourbon cause would come from many parts of the Peninsula. He would have liked, he said, to impart this excellent news to Madame la Duchesse de Berri: he was so sure that it would please her.

Madame de la Ferronay, who had known the man at Massa and who was a fervent Catholic for whom the Pope was the unerring judge of all men, took this Baron de Gonzague at his word and suggested introducing him to Madame.

“He might have some important facts to relate,” she said: “who knows? Success even might depend on the news he brings. What do you say, Mesnard?”

The old Count was of the opinion that an interview with the Baron de Gonzague would probably have a salutary effect on Madame’s spirits. Guibourg and the other friends concurred, and Madame de la Ferronay arranged with Her Royal Highness that the Baron de Gonzague should be received in audience the very next evening, which would be the 30th of October. Deutz was given the half of a card—by the irony of chance it happened to be the Knave of Spades, a most appropriate symbol—and he was told that he must follow whosoever presented the other half to him. Monsieur Duguiny, the brother of the two ladies who owned the house in the rue Haute-du-Château, went to the Hôtel de France at eight o’clock on the appointed evening. He saw Deutz and showed him the other half of the card, which exactly fitted the half held by Deutz. The two men then got into a hired carriage together. Unbeknown to Duguiny the carriage was kept in sight by the police commissary Joly and a posse of men. It was a very dark night and raining heavily. A traffic-block at the corner of the rue des États caused the driver of the police vehicle to lose sight of the hired carriage in front, which then proceeded to the rue Haute-du-Château.

It fell to the lot of faithful old Mesnard to introduce the traitor into Madame’s presence. He took the man up to the third-floor attic, where she

received him. Her shoes and the hem of her gown were muddy as if she had been for a walk in the rain or come from a long way. At once she recognized Deutz, remembering that she had seen him at Massa. She also remembered how strong a dislike she had taken to him then. But he appeared different this time: more humble and deferential. When first she came into the room he fell on his knees and kissed her muddy skirt. He burst into tears, as if overcome by emotion. Madame thought that he was ill, and spoke to him with great kindness and sympathy. He reminded her that he had faithfully accomplished the mission with which she had entrusted him in the spring, and that since then it had been the dream of his life to serve her again. The interview lasted more than an hour. Madame appeared deeply impressed with everything that this Baron de Gonzague told her. His exposé of the political situation both in France and in several other countries was extraordinarily convincing, and the promises of support which he declared were only awaiting a word from Madame to materialize filled her with joy. She herself expressed the desire to see him again, and a second interview was arranged for, to take place on November 6th.

A couple of hours later, police commissary Joly and a couple of men who were still patrolling the streets in search of Deutz came across him by chance in the rue Neuve. He was staggering about as if he were drunk, throwing out his arms and muttering to himself like one demented.

> He had a satanic expression in his eyes [Joly said in his report]. I had traced the hired carriage in which he and Monsieur Duguiny had driven from the Hôtel de France and ascertained that they came to a halt in the rue Haute-du-Château and went into No. 3. I asked Deutz if this was the house where Madame la Duchesse de Berri was staying, but he said, No, he didn't think so. She seemed to have come a long way as her shoes were very muddy.

On the 6th of November Deutz had the second interview with Madame. It took place as before in the attic room on the third floor, but in the afternoon this time. On coming down the stairs after the interview, Deutz going past an open door peeped in and saw a table spread for a meal. There were seven places laid, and on the table a quantity of silver and sprays of artificial lilies. He met Joly in the street below and said to him: "The Duchesse de Berri will be having her dinner in this house presently. It is up to you to do what you like."

It was then five o'clock in the afternoon. Caroline Ferdinande sat down to dinner with the three Duguinys, and with Mesnard, Guibourg and

Mademoiselle de Kersabiec. An hour later a posse of soldiers, twelve hundred strong, commanded by General Dermoncourt, encircled the block of houses of which No. 3 rue Haute-du-Château formed a part. Guibourg, hearing the tramp of heavy feet outside, looked out of the window. The moon was almost at its full and very bright. The silvery light glinted on the soldiers' bayonets. Guibourg gave the alarm, and led the way up the stairs to the attic room, closely followed by Caroline Ferdinande, de Mesnard and Stylite de Kersabiec. The three Duguinys remained at the table pretending to go on with their dinner.

In the attic room the iron plate in the hearth was up, revealing the wide chimney into the secret recess of which they then crept—one by one. Mesnard first because he was the tallest, then Guibourg, and finally the two ladies, with Caroline Ferdinande last of all. "When effecting a strategical retreat," she said with her usual gaiety, "the Commandant always goes last." She pushed down the iron plate and there they were in the narrow recess inside the chimney, the four of them, with the vault of heaven above, but with hardly the possibility down below of moving hand or foot.

In the meanwhile police commissary Joly had knocked at the door; receiving no reply he pounded at it with his foot and loudly threatened to break it in if it was not opened immediately, whereupon Marie Bossi, the Duguinys' cook, did open and with a blank stare inquired what all the row was about. Joly pushed past her and entered the house with a dozen of his men. He proceeded to interrogate Bossi and the *femme de chambre*, Charlotte Moreau. The two women professed complete ignorance. They didn't know Madame la Duchesse de Berri, and didn't think they had ever set eyes on her. Even the promise of a reward did not extract any information out of them. In the dining-room on the first floor the ladies Duguiny and their brother calmly went on with their dinner, while Joly ordered their house to be searched from attic to cellar. And it was with much pounding of walls and ceilings and cupboards, and much destruction of wainscoting and even of furniture, that this was done. One or two recesses that looked as if they might be hiding places were reduced to matchwood, but there was no sign of Madame la Duchesse de Berri.

Up in the attic room the stowaways from behind the iron plate heard Joly and his gendarmes stamping about on the wooden floor. "This was the audience chamber, it seems," Joly said with a light laugh. This remark was the first intimation which Caroline Ferdinande had that it was Simon Deutz who had betrayed her. Later on when there was no longer any doubt about it, all she said was: "And to think that I gave him money when he was

destitute." But for the moment she said nothing. The four of them had all their work cut out in making no sound while the gendarmes were in the room. They heard Joly say presently: "I will leave a military guard inside the house for a week or more if necessary." A week! Perhaps two! The prospect was worse than dismal, but Stylite de Kersabiec, who stood quite close to Caroline Ferdinande, said afterwards that Madame actually chuckled when she heard Joly say this. They could hear men tramping on the roof and the sound of a pickaxe pounding away on the chimney-stack. A shower of plaster descended on them with a loud clatter, through which Guibourg heard Caroline say quite gaily: "My poor children! Are those brutes going to bury us in débris?"

After a time, the work of destruction having been carried far enough, silence descended upon the battered house. Time went on. The stowaways in their very uncomfortable prison were not only getting sorely cramped but also very hungry. They had hardly begun their dinner when first Joly knocked at the door. But there was no question of leaving their hiding place while certain sounds in the attic room proved that two if not three men had been left there on the watch. It is almost impossible to imagine what those four must have suffered, not only in discomfort but in every kind of horror during the long hours of the night, inside that prison which was just over five foot square. For one thing, it was bitterly cold, and cold and hungry they could see through the interstices of the broken chimney the wintry day slowly chasing away the darkness. Of the four, Caroline Ferdinande remained the most valiant. Mademoiselle de Kersabiec was hardly conscious and poor old Mesnard was near to despair. Guibourg, being young and enthusiastic, was kept up by the thought that he was suffering martyrdom for a sacred cause.

It was just on daylight when they heard a gruff voice complaining loudly of the cold. Within the next few minutes the unexpected, the secretly dreaded, had happened. One of the soldiers found a clod of peat in a corner of the attic, threw it into the hearth, and set it alight: as the fire didn't catch on at once, he collected a bundle of old newspapers that were also lying by. The flames leapt up. The iron plate became red-hot: the smoke found its way up the chimney and the prisoners were faced with the horrible alternative of being either asphyxiated by smoke or burned alive. For the first time in her life Caroline Ferdinande was obliged to give in. She was beaten. What neither disappointment, nor failure, nor hardships had succeeded in doing, treachery had accomplished. The valiant little woman, the intrepid Amazon, was beaten at last. She was forced to give in. Tears of rage were coursing down her cheeks. Guibourg with a vigorous kick sent the iron plate

clattering down amongst the flames. The gendarmes, startled almost out of their wits, cried, “Who goes there?” and heard a woman’s voice reply quite firmly:

“We surrender to you. Call your commanding officer. But tell him to come alone.”

And wide-eyed as if they were beholding a supernatural apparition they saw a haggard and dishevelled woman crawl out of the chimney on hands and knees, and after her another woman and two men. The four of them could hardly stand, their teeth were chattering with the cold, their heads and clothes were covered with débris of lath and plaster. Caroline Ferdinande, seeing the door of a cupboard open, ran behind it to escape being stared at by the soldiers. However, a minute or two later Guibourg knocked at the cupboard door and begged her to come out: General Dermoncourt had just arrived. Caroline Ferdinande rushed to him and almost fell into his arms.

“General,” she said, “I surrender to you.”

She looked like a poor little snared rabbit: her curly hair all tousled: her dress and shoes scorched: her face smeared with soot. She looked altogether so strange, and her eyes had such a queer expression in them, that the general thought she had lost her wits. Joly brought her a glass of water which she drank down eagerly, and then said in a steady voice: “What I have done, I did for my son, to reconquer the throne which is rightly his.”

Seeing that she was a little more calm, the general asked her if she could walk with him as far as the Château. Mesnard and Guibourg protested. It would not be seemly for Her Royal Highness to be seen walking through the streets of Nantes in her present condition. But Dermoncourt insisted: the Château, he said, was quite close, and a coach would be very difficult to drive through the narrow streets. If Her Royal Highness didn’t mind. . . .

“I don’t,” Caroline Ferdinande broke in curtly: “all I want is a hat, and a mantle to hide my burnt clothes.”

Stylite de Kersabiec went in search of both. She brought back a mantle and three hats, a choice of which Mademoiselle Duguiny offered to Madame. Caroline Ferdinande chose a black one, put it on, and then said to the general, pointing to the open iron plate of the chimney:

“If you hadn’t tried to roast us like Saint Laurent on a gridiron, I shouldn’t be walking with you now.”

She wrapped the mantle round her and marched out with head erect. The soldiers, those who had fought under the great Napoleon and who had seen

many acts of bravery in their day, said with unconcealed admiration:

“She is as fine as our Emperor!”

As for Deutz, a second Judas, he was like his prototype, half crazy with remorse. He wandered through the streets of Nantes staggering like a drunken man, gesticulating wildly and begging every passer-by to lend him a pistol wherewith he could blow out his brains.

> *Note.* There is some doubt as to what became of Deutz in the end. Some say that he went to England and died there, others that he was killed in Paris during the rioting that followed the *coup d’état* in 1851.

CHAPTER XXXVII

CAPTIVITY

Caroline Ferdinande, leaning on the arm of General Dermoncourt, walked, quietly and apparently unmoved, as far as the Château, where she would be kept until such time as her destination and the date of her departure were decided on. Crowds gathered in the streets to stare at her, but there were no demonstrations. Men and women looked with indifference, but not with hostility, on this little woman who had stirred hardened soldiers into admiration for her valour, and who went by with head erect and a smile on her lips. It seemed as if she was actually smiling at defeat.

Rooms had been got ready for her on the second floor of the governor’s house. They were situated in the main building of the Château and were shut off by heavy doors from the right and left wings. Sentinels were posted at these doors as well as in the yard beneath the windows. Every precaution had in fact been taken against any possible attempt on the part of Madame’s adherents to effect her escape.

Indoors a wide passage ran the whole length of the main building parallel with the frontage. It gave access to the rooms which had been allotted to the Duchess. The first of these was occupied day and night by a staff-officer whose duty it was to prevent all outside communications from reaching the prisoners. Beyond this room the passage was barred by a door of solid oak which had a small wicket let into it. This wicket was never closed and the staff-officer had the key of the door. He had orders not to give up this key to anyone except to the governor himself or by his written command. Past the oak door the whole length of the passage was in sight: it was lined all down one side with cupboards which had been made ready to hold Madame’s clothes, her bed and table linen, and also for stowing away the sacred vessels destined for the use of the priest who would come and say Mass every morning in one of the rooms conveniently arranged for the purpose.

The staff of servants had their meals in the passage behind a tall screen. At the other end a staircase led down to the floor below. At the foot of the stairs there was a room grandiloquently termed *salle de bains*. It contained *deux baignoires*, one for the use of Her Royal Highness, and the other for members of her suite!!! Beyond the *salle de bains* the main building was again cut off from the rest of the house.

Only one door gave access to the Duchess's apartments from the passage. It faced the row of cupboards and opened on a salon through which the other rooms could alone be reached. The salon was fairly comfortably furnished in the heavy and inartistic style peculiar to the period. It was here that Caroline Ferdinande, Duchesse de Berri, Regent of France, now prisoner of State, spent her days during her brief sojourn in the Château of Nantes. Here she was left to ponder over the errors of the past. What a number she had committed! For the first time in her life she reviled herself for her obstinacy. If only she had listened to counsels of prudence! If only she had bided her time! If only she had gone back to Italy as Villeneuve had begged her to do when she found that nothing was ready for her campaign, she would be free now and able to formulate new plans, to rally her adherents round her, and to reawaken enthusiasm that had so unexpectedly cooled down.

But whatever she felt, however bitterly she regretted those errors, she was not going to allow her enemies to see that she was in any way cast down. She pretended to take a keen interest in her installation and in the disposition of the furniture, both in the salon and in her bedroom, as well as in the housing of her pets, her two parakeets and her dogs Lala and Fluffy. The greatest deference was shown her by the personnel and all her wishes were, whenever possible, acceded to. The governor, Colonel Raindre, presented himself before her in full uniform and, clicking his heels, asked stiffly if there was anything he could do to ensure the comfort of Her Royal Highness.

"Yes!" she said lightly, "there is. I am terribly hungry. You must remember that your people never gave me time to eat my dinner when they forced their way into my friends' house. And that was thirty-six hours ago."

"Your Royal Highness shall be served immediately," the governor assured her, once more clicking his heels; and after a stiff military salute he went to give the necessary orders. Stewards were sent post-haste to the best caterers in the town and in little more than half an hour a meal which resembled a royal banquet was served before Madame la Duchesse. She sat down to table with the Comte de Mesnard and Mademoiselle de Kersabiec, ate with a hearty appetite, and enjoyed a glass or two of excellent Vouvray which the governor had sent in for her gracious acceptance from his own cellar.

The next thing Caroline Ferdinande needed was her wardrobe. She was still wearing the soiled and charred clothes in which she had emerged from the smoke-filled chimney. She sent to the commissariat of police,

demanding to see commandant Joly. The weather had by now turned very nasty. Rain and sleet were beating against the windows and the wind was howling down the chimneys. A perfectly horrible day. Caroline Ferdinande, who couldn't bear Joly, delighted in the prospect of making him turn out in full uniform to battle against the storm. She hoped that he would catch cold. Of course he came. She could see him through the window crossing the yard, with head bent against the wind and sleet, and clinging to his képi. The sight made her as happy as a child. But he appeared a few moments later, seemingly quite unruffled by wind and weather.

He clicked his heels when he presented himself before Her Royal Highness. This deference as before a reigning princess was evidently the order of the day.

What, he asked, had procured him the honour of this summons?

Caroline Ferdinande with a lighthearted laugh pointed to her dilapidated dress.

"My clothes are all packed in a box," she said, "and the box is still in the house of Mademoiselle Duguiny. Will you please send for it?"

It was very obviously on the tip of his tongue to say that this demand could have been transmitted to him through her servants without dragging him out in this abominable weather, but Caroline Ferdinande anticipated him by saying with mock affability:

"I am sorry you have had to come out in this bad weather, but I naturally had the desire to see you."

Joly clicked his heels and marched out of the room, hating her as much as she hated him. It was foolish on Caroline's part, of course, to rile a man who could, without in any way contravening orders, make things unpleasant for her. But that was her way. She never could resist the temptation of teasing and mortifying even those whom she loved, let alone those whom she disliked. Anyway, in this instance, Joly did send for Madame's box, but backed by orders which he had received from higher quarters not to allow the august prisoner to hold any communication with the outside, he insisted on its being unpacked in his presence. The box was deposited in the salon and Stylite de Kersabiec proceeded on her knees with the unpacking of it, while Caroline Ferdinande pranced round the room like a child, clapping her little hands together and laughing at Joly's countenance which grew more and more perplexed as garment after garment, of the most heterogeneous kind, was displayed before his eyes. He was one of those men who mistrust

everything they cannot understand, and here certainly was enough to arouse the suspicions of any self-respecting *Commissaire de Police*. Corduroy breeches, yellow vest, thick woollen stockings, striped kirtles: it all looked more like the wardrobe of a travelling circus performer than that of a royal princess. He turned some of the things over, hoping to find something that would justify his suspicions: and every time he held up a pair of breeches or a hobnailed boot Caroline Ferdinande laughed till the tears ran down her cheeks, for indeed there was nothing to find, save perhaps at the bottom of the box, where there was a bundle of letters on which Joly pounced, as a terrier would on a rabbit. But even this little contretemps did not ruffle Caroline's gaiety, and this was because Stylite de Kersabiec had been quick enough to extract from the bundle one paper which she feared might prove compromising, and unseen by the commissary had thrown it into the fire.

When the box was quite empty, Caroline Ferdinande became serious. She clasped her small hands together and turned her bewitching blue eyes on the unfortunate Joly, who was already feeling somewhat of a fool.

"What a wonderful soldier you are, Monsieur le Commissaire," she said with a little sigh of mock admiration: "if you had been in my service you would be a marshal now instead of a simple commandant."

But Joly by this time was at the end of his tether. Deference to royalty in misfortune was one thing, but what could any man do in face of such an imp of mischief. He was thankful enough to make good his escape with as much dignity as he could still muster, and glad to go back to the more congenial occupation of talking things over with the governor, leaving General Dermoncourt to dance attendance on the provoking little princess. This suited Caroline Ferdinande's book exactly. She liked General Dermoncourt. He was a typical French officer in that he was chivalrous and very amenable to the blandishments of a pretty woman. In her mind she had already appointed him her unofficial protector. It was to him that she had surrendered when she crawled out of her hiding place: weary, hungry, humiliated, she had gone straight to him because she felt that he was an officer and a gentleman and would reverence her for her misfortune and because of her helplessness. Nor was she mistaken in her estimate of his character. He was the enemy of her cause, but not her personal enemy: he desired to see her beaten as the leader of a party that was subversive to the cause which he served, but as a woman, and a brave one at that, he was intensely sorry for her, and was ready to do anything in his power to mitigate the dreariness of her captivity. She wanted something to read: he brought her pamphlets and newspapers and M. de Balzac's latest novel. She

liked sweets, he brought her boxes of chocolate. There was no doubt that he felt a soldier's admiration for this valiant woman who knew how to smile even in the face of such an overwhelming catastrophe. It was only when they separated her from her friends, Mesnard and Guibourg, that she let fly in her old Sicilian style. She turned on the general as she would have done on anyone who had roused her indignation and she hurled some of her choicest Italian epithets at his innocent head. He waited quite patiently till the flood tide of her wrath had subsided. Then he explained that Monsieur le Comte de Mesnard was not at all well: he himself had helped to get him into a bed where he now lay fast asleep.

"But Guibourg?" she insisted.

Well! It seems that Guibourg had tried to make a bolt of it, but had been recaptured and was in the hands of the police until such time as it was decided what was to be done with him. After which explanation Madame turned tearful blue eyes on the general, who promptly assured her that when she left Nantes he would see to it that her friend Guibourg was allowed to accompany her.

When she left Nantes? She hadn't thought of that. What, as a matter of fact, would happen when she left Nantes? Where would they send her to? What would they do with her?

Caroline Ferdinande was quite shrewd enough to guess in what a quandary her Uncle Louis Philippe and his government had placed themselves by arresting her. What could they do with her? A captive royal prince is apt to be more troublesome than an active one: then how much more so if the captive is a princess. The Emperor Napoleon had had experience of such troubles when by his orders the young Duc d'Enghien, son of the Prince de Condé, was dragged out of Germany where he had taken refuge, brought to France and summarily shot at Vincennes on suspicion of having fomented a conspiracy against the Empire. The death of that young prince, cousin of the Bourbon kings, remained a hideous blot on the career of the great Emperor, and brought odium on his name, which no amount of military glory or spectacular victories ever did wipe out. Oh, no, no! Caroline Ferdinande was not afraid of being summarily dealt with in that fashion. But what was old Poulot going to do with her?

Up in Paris Louis Philippe and his government had the same hard nut to crack. What to do with Marie Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, widowed Duchesse de Berri, daughter-in-law of the ex-King of France? Her arrest was already a pretty tough proposition in view of the general unrest in

the country and the impending war with Holland. But her execution! Heavens above! Louis Philippe's throne was not so secure that he could afford to rouse the whole of Europe to indignation at such barbarism practised against a woman. Then what? Send her back to Holyrood? or Italy? She would start all over again. Moreover, the west was, from all accounts, far from being altogether pacified. The legitimist elements were still quite strong both in La Vendée and Brittany. Then what?

Queen Marie-Amélie did nothing but weep and lament over the fate of her niece whom she loved, and Louis Philippe was not only harassed by his wife's tears but worried by the different factions in Parliament, some pulling one way, some another. Strangely enough, perhaps, M. Thiers was all for leniency. He actually destroyed with his own hands most of the documents seized in the Duguiny house by the police, which incriminated the principal leaders of the rebellion, men like Charette and de Bourmont. He showed these documents to Berryer, the distinguished advocate, member of Parliament, noted for his legitimist activities, who was actually known to have visited Madame in Massa and La Vendée, and before his eyes threw all the incriminating papers into the fire. But, nevertheless, he agreed with the rest of the Cabinet that as Madame had raised the standard of revolt, and plunged the country into civil war, thereby causing the death of hundreds of French patriots, it would be against all justice if she was left to go unpunished.

And punished she must be. But how?

Caroline Ferdinande too, while she sat in the window of that second-floor room in the gloomy house of the governor, pondered over this question which concerned her so closely. What were they going to do with her? She gazed out on the dismal view over the stone walls and grim crenellated towers of the old Château, over trees denuded of foliage, and leaden, wind-swept skies, and asked herself the same question over and over again. What were they going to do with her? They were guarding her closely enough. Colonel Raindre, the governor, had two hundred men with him inside the Château. The government was taking no risks. Given the indomitable spirit of the little Duchess and the master passion of her adherents, what more easy than the planning of an escape for her? A plan which, if it met with success, would cover the whole administration with ridicule. And Caroline Ferdinande, sitting by the window, saw the guard marching past, could count the number of men who were set to watch over her, and knew that for the moment at any rate the authorities were taking no risks. They were not going to let their prisoner run away.

Then what were they going to do with her?

The answer came soon enough. On the 8th the Cabinet issued a royal decree promising that the whole question concerning the Duchesse de Berri would shortly be put before Parliament, and that in the meanwhile Her Royal Highness would be incarcerated in the fortress of Blaye pending the decision of the Chamber. Thus the matter was temporarily shelved, and King Louis Philippe, who was all for procrastination, was so relieved at this decree that he and Queen Marie-Amélie went gaily to the Opera that night and enjoyed themselves and the performance thoroughly.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE FORTRESS OF BLAYE

One of the darkest pages in the history of the turbulent little Duchess is certainly the one which records the period of her incarceration at Blaye. Not that she was there subjected to great bodily discomfort and certainly not to privations. Except for the fact that she was very closely guarded, and in the nature of things was deprived of the outdoor amusements and exercise to which she had been accustomed all her life, she was treated by the governor and personnel of the citadel with all the deference due to her rank and to her status as prisoner of State. It was the attitude of the government up in Paris that was so abominable; and its action towards a woman, a royal princess, own niece to its elected sovereign, is one of the ugliest blots on the history of that short reign which had its beginning in one revolution and its *dénouement* in another. As for Louis Philippe himself, his conduct towards his wife's niece, his close relative who had always been his friend, and to whom he owed most of his fortune, would almost pass belief, if one did not remember that he was the son of a man who from sheer cowardice gave his vote in favour of the death sentence on his own cousin, the unfortunate Louis XVI.

And now for the facts.

On the 9th of November at three o'clock in the morning, the Duchess was roused from sleep by order of police commissary Joly—the man she detested above everyone else on earth—and asked to make ready to start as quickly as possible for the new quarters which had been assigned to her. Hastily, Mademoiselle de Kersabiec, valiantly aided by Madame herself, packed up their belongings. The box was small and there were a good many things to pack: the lid would not come down far enough, and again Joly was called in to sit on the box and to fasten it down. A hired carriage stood waiting on the farther side of the drawbridge, together with a detachment from the gendarmerie, who presented arms when Madame appeared. She got into the carriage with the Comte de Mesnard and Stylite de Kersabiec and was driven to the Quai de la Fosse, where they were to pick up a steamer that would take them to Saint-Nazaire. It was a raw, cold, damp morning, just before break of day. In the roads of Saint-Nazaire lay the corvette *La Capricieuse* which would convey the royal prisoner and her friends to Blaye.

Caroline Ferdinande had hardly spoken since she had been hauled out of her bed in the middle of the night. She felt cold and, for the first time perhaps in her life, low-spirited. Here she was driven and chivied about, surrounded by men whom she abominated, officials and representatives of a government which she hated and despised. In addition to Joly, there was the Lord-Lieutenant of the province, the Comte d'Erlon, there was Maurice Duval, the prefect of Nantes and friend of her most bitter enemy Thiers, the mayors of Saint-Nazaire and Nantes, the sous-préfet and a number of other officials, and there was the Colonel commanding the gendarmerie whose obvious duty it was to see that there was no attempt at escape on Madame's side or of rescue on the part of some of her friends. The one man among all these officials whom Madame had always liked, General Dermoncourt, had been sent off to some other post of duty.

The only protest that Caroline Ferdinande did make was when she was told that her faithful companion and Lord Privy Seal, Guibourg, was not after all to accompany her.

"But," she insisted, "General Dermoncourt promised me faithfully that Monsieur Guibourg would come with me."

She was assured, however, that the general had left Nantes without leaving any orders to that effect.

Caroline Ferdinande then turned to the mayor of Nantes, who was quite a pleasant little man, and said with a note of bitterness in her voice:

"You are all of you determined," she said, "to make me not only a captive, but an unhappy one."

As soon as she arrived on the quay the municipal and departmental officials took formal leave of her. She acknowledged their salutes with a curt nod, glad to be rid of some of this escort, entirely composed of servants of a government which she abominated, men who were her bitter enemies.

She then boarded the steamer and at once went below and sat down on a bench, resting her head against the woodwork. She looked very pathetic just then: so small and frail, so dejected and so helpless. There was nothing of the once brilliant and popular princess who had queened it in the salons of Versailles and the Tuileries in this melancholy little woman who was trying very valiantly to swallow her tears; the role of Mary Stuart gazing for the last time on the receding shores of France would have suited her better to-day than it had done when she acted it so bravely on board the *Great Britain* a couple of years ago. At the moment she did not know whither she was

being taken, and she was too proud to ask. Was it, perhaps, to Holyrood? She almost shuddered at the thought of facing once more the coldly contemptuous attitude of her father-in-law and the ironical glances of the Angoulêmes.

At nine o'clock Saint-Nazaire was reached: a boat came alongside to take the prisoners on board the schooner *La Capricieuse*, and Caroline Ferdinande noted without regret that the bulk of the military escort, who had come with her so far, remained on board the steamer. Only Colonel Chousserie, a kind and amiable officer, commanding the military police, the inevitable Joly whom she would gladly have spared, and a nice young lieutenant whose name by a strange coincidence was Petitpierre, got into the boat and boarded *La Capricieuse* with her. Half an hour later, the schooner weighed anchor and began slowly to move. Caroline Ferdinande remained on deck this time. She wore a brown woollen béret over her fair curls and round her shoulders was a mantle of green merino patterned with black flowers. She looked like a small wraith, silhouetted against the sky; her mantle was wrapped round her, dwarfing her slender figure. Already the mist had blurred the shores of France, thus hiding from her gaze the land which she loved so passionately, the country over which she would never queen it again. And suddenly, while she looked landward with tear-dimmed eyes, she became aware of a barque that was slowly moving closer and closer to *La Capricieuse*, and she heard a voice calling through a speaking-trumpet . . . calling to her.

"I have been led to hope, Madame," the voice said, "that I should have the honour of effecting your rescue. I would have thanked God on my knees every day of my life if I could have done it. I would far sooner see you on board my ship than on that schooner. But do not lose heart. . . . All is not lost yet. . . ."

Caroline Ferdinande strained her ears to listen. Was this all really true? Was that a man, a Frenchman, a Vendéan perhaps, speaking words of encouragement and of hope? Or was it all a dream, from which she would presently wake to find herself once more a captive, a disappointed, disillusioned leader of a forlorn cause? Well, if it was a dream, the awakening came quickly enough. Captain Molier in command of *La Capricieuse* ordered the swivel-guns to be turned on the barque. The voice was silenced and the barque soon disappeared in the mist. So ended the dream.

The schooner, escorted by two government brigs and a steamship, tried to reach the open. But heavy seas forced her to go back to the roads, where

she remained for twenty-four hours, tossed about by the gale and with huge waves sweeping right over her decks. Caroline Ferdinande, though tired and ill, refused to go down below: it seemed as if the forces of Nature joined issue with her in her passionate desire not to be torn from her beloved Vendée, the land on which she had built the edifice of her fondest and most ambitious hopes. Vainly did her aching eyes try to pierce the mist in search of the barque that had promised rescue: vainly indeed, for Captain Molier had compelled every other ship to keep her distance, by hoisting the yellow flag on *La Capricieuse*.

At last there was a break in the clouds, and the captain decided to try making a fresh start. The harbour tug towed the schooner past the lighthouse and out into the ocean. There was a strong wind blowing from the shore and *La Capricieuse* justified her name by giving her unfortunate passengers a very unpleasant time. Caroline Ferdinande had at last been compelled to take refuge in the captain's cabin, which he had placed at her disposal. Stylite de Kersabiec was with her, but both the ladies were so ill that neither could help or even comfort the other, whilst poor old Mesnard, more dead than alive, was tossed about like a bale of goods on a thin mattress stretched on the floor. The small cabin with those three sick people in it became, during the four days that the voyage lasted, the nearest approach to Dante's Inferno that human imagination could conceive. Stylite and Mesnard were soon completely prostrate, and even Caroline Ferdinande's valour was no longer proof against the horror of this journey, the worst she had ever endured. She still had no idea whither *La Capricieuse* was bound, and from time to time she made an almost superhuman effort to stagger up on deck alone, hoping that a word or a mere hint dropped by one of the men would enlighten her. But every time she came to the top of the companion-ladder she found her *bête noire* Joly apparently waiting for her. At first she would not condescend to speak to him, but soon curiosity got the better of her pride, and one day when the wind had gone down a little and she was feeling better, she put an indirect question to him.

"Tell me, Monsieur Joly," she asked, "if stress of weather compels our captain to put in somewhere on the Portuguese coast, what do you think that my cousin the King of Portugal would say to you all when he saw me here as your prisoner?"

But all the answer which she got from the police commissary was:

"Madame, if such a thing happened, which is not very likely, we would simply ask you to intercede with His Majesty on our behalf, for we would be certain then of seeing justice meted out to us."

Nor had Caroline Ferdinande better success either with Colonel Chousserie, or with young Lieutenant Petitpierre. They evidently had orders to keep secret the destination of *La Capricieuse*. But on the 14th, the fifth day after the start, *La Capricieuse* rounded Cordouan at the mouth of the Gironde. This she accomplished, but not before a false manoeuvre nearly caused her to run aground on the reefs. It was the middle of the night, and a dark night at that, and the westerly wind was having its game with the schooner. Twice she dragged her anchor and finally Captain Molier sent out a long-boat into Bordeaux for assistance. A steamer came along the following morning, but the gale was then at its height, and towing was impossible. It meant getting into the boat and boarding the steamer, which for the unfortunate prisoners was about as unpleasant a business as could possibly be devised. The boat was almost swamped by huge waves which washed right over her, and the steamer appeared to be receding from rather than approaching her. Mademoiselle de Kersabiec got into a panic and screamed with terror; and Madame had her work cut out trying to calm her. As usual she kept her head and showed no fear. She said to Colonel Chousserie, who was squatting close to her:

"If the whole miserable business came to an end at the bottom of the sea, wouldn't the government in Paris and my Uncle Louis Philippe be pleased!"

She boarded the steamer with something of her usual agility, and after this the journey up the river did not incommode her very much. All day she sat on deck in spite of the cold and the rain, wrapped in her green mantle, and with Mesnard and Stylite, both of them still very shaky and ill, beside her. She knew this country well; twice had she visited it: in 1828 during her triumphal tour through the west and again, seven months ago, on her way to La Vendée, after her initial disappointment in the south. Every bend of the river, every turn of the road on its banks, brought back memories and aroused bitter regrets. In this wayside house she had halted in order to indite her call to arms; in that other she had launched her proclamations destined to rally the whole countryside to her standard: there again she had crossed the river on her way to the Dampierres, her first headquarters before she started on her campaign.

When the shades of evening began to draw in she saw towering above the water's brink the fortress of Blaye. It was pouring with rain. The steamer drew up alongside the mole.

Was this the end of her journey? Caroline Ferdinande gave a mental shrug. Well! Why not? This place or any other: it was all the same to her, convinced as she was that Poulot's government would never dare do

anything serious to her. She didn’t just then mind the thought of remaining here for a short while. Though she wouldn’t admit it, she felt ill and tired and needed peace and rest. She had gone through so much, and been always on the go: for months now, ever since she left Massa where she had enjoyed such perfect quietude. Well! Well!

She jumped lightly into the boat and was rowed across the harbour. A carriage was waiting for her there, watched over by a battalion of the 48th regiment of infantry. All along the quay complete quiet reigned. There was no crowd, and there were no demonstrations. The Duchess stepped into the carriage with Mesnard and Stylite de Kersabiec. Colonel Chousserie, Lieutenant Petitpierre and police commissary Joly followed in another. Both vehicles came to a halt at the Porte Dauphine, three-quarters of the way up the rocky height. Here everyone got out and continued the rest of the way on foot. There was an alley to traverse, flanked by high walls, a bridge to cross, an archway and another bridge. Caroline Ferdinande gave a little shudder. She felt cold, and in the darkness and the pouring rain the citadel appeared more forbidding than it had done from below. Somehow the archway, the two bridges and presently the wicket-gate at which she was made to halt, brought to her mind memories of certain grim pages in the history of the Bourbons: the man with the iron mask, for instance. But she was not given much time in which to think just then. There was a rattle of keys and the wicket-gate was opened. Caroline Ferdinande passed through. Ahead of her she caught sight of a glint of bayonets and heard the sound of grounding arms. Then nothing more. The wicket-gate had closed behind her.

CHAPTER XXXIX

A DANGEROUS PRISONER

Blaye in the summer might not be quite so dreary, for it stands in the heart of the wine country, and the view over hundreds of acres of vineyards is colourful, especially after the leaves have been sprayed and there is a blue film over them that glistens like myriads and myriads of tiny diamonds in the sun. Then there is the river, not turbulent or sparkling perhaps like a mountain stream, but with a stately and deliberate flow of its own to its wide estuary and on to the ocean beyond. In the summer, too, there is some life on the river: steamers, barges, sailing boats, fishing boats ply up and down the stream: some even put into the little port of Blaye, for there is an inn in the village where excellent *vin du pays* can be had, or that delicious must, which is new wine pressed from the grape and not yet fermented.

But in the winter the place is anything but cheerful; the vines are bare and the Gironde muddy. The port is nearly always deserted, save by a few barges laden with empty casks that rock lazily to and fro on the dreggy water, and the gaunt elms in the garden round the citadel stretch out their naked branches like the arms of a wizened old man in the act of yawning. Blaye, too, in the autumn and in the winter, is the butt of all the winds of heaven. Inky clouds sweep across the sky and bring persistent torrential rain. At night the winds howl down the chimneys with a moaning and a groaning suggestive of lost souls writhing in torment.

A dreary and dismal place to which M. Thiers and the government of Louis Philippe had chosen to relegate this child of a land of sunshine and of song, hoping to smother through her incarceration the smouldering ashes of civil war.

The house outside was hideous enough, one-storied, whitewashed, with a flat roof, and in front a row of dwarf elms that enhanced rather than concealed its ugliness. And all round the house a number of barrack-like buildings, officers’ quarters, mess-rooms, rows of doors, each with a number painted on in black. Caroline Ferdinande had shuddered when first she saw the house. Here she would have to live. For how long? She didn’t know. Here in this *milieu*, which in one way recalled Bonapartist victories—there was the Cour Jena and the Cour Austerlitz—and in another kept constantly before her eyes the present Orléanist régime by displays of the tricolour flag,

she would have to bear her turbulent soul in patience until such time as up in Paris they would decide what was to be done with her.

She wondered who the governor of the place would be, for on him and his attitude towards her would depend a great deal of her bodily comfort. Immediately on arrival, however, she learned that Colonel Chousserie had received a telegram from the Minister giving him the appointment. This pleased Caroline Ferdinande, for, ever since her departure from Nantes, she had learned to appreciate this simpleminded, upright, sympathetic soldier. She congratulated him on his appointment and, as she felt distinctly relieved on that score, she proceeded with a lighter heart to inspect her new abode.

The house had the inevitable wide corridor with the double doors of the salon opening on it. On the right of the salon was Madame's bedroom and a small one for her maid; on the left a room for Mademoiselle de Kersabiec and another for Monsieur de Mesnard. The furniture all through was of the period, heavy, and with no attempt at elegance. The drawing-room curtains were of striped yellow and white cretonne. There was a bureau and a work-table, another table in the middle of the room, a sofa and half a dozen chairs, upholstered in yellow Utrecht velvet, also an armchair furnished with big down cushions. The carpet had large coloured flowers on a brown background. Over the mantelpiece there was the inevitable pier-glass and on the shelf a marble and ormolu clock, two vases containing artificial flowers under a glass bell and a couple of brass lamps; in front of the hearth stood a screen with panel worked in tapestry, and on the opposite wall there was another large mirror. Scattered about the room or standing against the walls there were first a large bookcase with a trellis-work of brass over a green silk curtain, then a card-table, an embroidery frame and a gilt console with imitation marble top. It was a setting that was quite comfortable, quite clean, entirely pleasing and orderly, and with it all most incongruous to its occupant. One would think that the little Duchess would perish with ennui and inactivity in this commonplace bourgeois *milieu*. But not a bit of it: hers was such a magnetic personality that very soon the inanimate things around her appeared transfigured, as if animated by some mysterious germ of life. Within twenty-four hours the rigid, cut-and-dried salon was turned topsyturvy, and revitalized by the introduction of a quantity of ill-assorted objects: hanks of wool, canvases and colour-boxes, boxes of coloured note-paper and sealing-wax: loose sheets of music, a dog-basket, work half begun and thrown aside for another, paperweights, books, candlesticks and sconces. And in the equally inartistic bedroom there soon appeared lace mats and silk cushions, frilled pillow-slips and pale pink bedspread, and an exquisite pair of white satin slippers embroidered with a device of two

hearts worked in crimson silk and surmounted with a silver lily and an anchor of hope. And all these multifarious objects were just tributes from her friends and admirers, all eager to show their unswerving love for her, and their desire to alleviate in a small measure the dreariness of her captivity. Gifts from these kind, faithful friends poured into the citadel. There came a huge case of books one day for Madame, sent by the proprietor of the *librairie* Bossange, works by Voltaire and Rousseau and Monsieur de Balzac, and translations of the romances of Walter Scott. Then a butler, once in service at the Bourbon Court and now settled in business, sent the Duchess a consignment of some special wine that he knew she used to drink in the olden days in the Tuileries, and Charlotte Moreau, who had in the past been one of Madame's most devoted maids, sent her a footstool worked by her own hands. It portrayed in coloured wools a little dog, holding between its paws a basket of pansies and everlastings, and beneath the little dog there was this inscription worked in blue wool: "He is faithful to H.R.H. Madame."

And in addition to all these gifts from friends, many things were procured for the comfort of the royal lady through the intervention of Queen Marie-Amélie on behalf of her niece. General Dermoncourt had written to Her Majesty telling her how Madame la Duchesse de Berri had earned the admiration of all those who came in contact with her, through her marvellous pluck and her dignified acceptance of her unfortunate fate. At the same time the general put it to both the King and Queen that Madame la Duchesse was entirely deprived of every little luxury to which she had always been accustomed. As a matter of fact, she had not a penny in the world. At the time of her arrest she possessed twenty-four thousand francs, but this had been confiscated by the police and never returned to her.

Even Louis Philippe's well-known parsimony was not proof against this appeal, and this much must be said in his favour, that he allocated quite a considerable sum from his privy purse to the purchase of any articles of luxury or otherwise that Madame la Duchesse de Berri might require.

When after a time it transpired that Madame la Duchesse de Berri was actually short of clothes, the ladies of the old aristocracy formed themselves into a committee, and opened a subscription to provide Her Royal Highness with a suitable wardrobe. They couldn't bear, they said, to think that the usurpers of her son's throne should have the privilege of dressing her. And through the loyalty of these ladies Caroline Ferdinande was able to appear before the governor and his staff when they came to pay their respects to her in clothes befitting her rank. She wore a dress of pearl-grey silk, and a tiny

apron of green foulard, scalloped round and worked with coloured silks, white cotton stockings, black prunella boots and yellow gloves! On her head she had a small bonnet of lace trimmed with green sarcenet ribbons. In addition to this her small person was hung all over with gold and silver jewellery of every shape and size: a gold watch, a heavy chain to which were attached a silver perfume-box, several gold lockets and a number of medals, the latter inscribed with religious mottoes such as: “God of love preserve me from cholera!” and “Saint-Roch pray for me!” On her fingers she had two gold rings each inscribed also with a religious text. These ornaments made her look like one of those images that on festival and holy days are carried round at the head of a procession in the streets of Naples.

Colonel Chousserie, who was all for trying to make things as pleasant as possible for the royal prisoner, made no objections to all these gifts being brought into the citadel: all he did was to insist that Lieutenant Petitpierre should be present when boxes and cases were unpacked. His amiability went even a step further. He enlisted the cooperation of Monsieur le préfet of the department in the purchase of a pair of love-birds to replace those which had been left behind at Nantes. Their incessant chatter did effectually break the silence that had so depressed Madame. And he also presented her with a beautiful white spaniel puppy, whose name was Bewis, and whom Caroline Ferdinande at once took to her heart.

It is a fact that within one week of her detention at Blaye, the governor and his entire staff were her devoted slaves, and when orders came down from Paris to tighten up regulations so as to preclude any possibility of evasion or attempt at rescue, poor Chousserie was in a terrible way. He dreaded being the harbinger of unpleasant news, and, frankly, he also had a wholesome terror of the little lady’s outbursts of temper when, if anything annoyed her, she would stamp her feet, scream, and hurl at him and at anyone who happened to be there, a torrent of invective in her choicest Neapolitan patois. So Chousserie usually deputed his unfortunate chief of staff, Lieutenant Petitpierre, to convey the worst of the Paris news to Madame la Duchesse.

Undoubtedly this little woman who, from the moment of her arrival in France had conquered the hearts of its people, had the power of stirring up the spirit of chivalry and devotion in all those with whom she came, directly or indirectly, in contact. Many little things had been said about her while she roamed through the country disguised as Petit-Pierre, trying to kindle the torch of civil war; but now, as the captive of a King, who was also a near relative, persecuted because she fought for the rights of her son to his

throne, she inspired nothing but sympathy. And the knowledge was conveyed to her in innumerable ways which the simpleminded governor of Blaye never suspected. A priest from the village came every morning to the citadel to say Mass, and letters addressed to Madame were smuggled in under the cover of sacred vessels. And gradually Caroline Ferdinande’s inveterate optimism got the better of her depression and soothed her wounded pride. She knew well enough that Poulot and his government could do nothing to her. What could they do? Bring her to trial? On what charge? And what judge or jury would dare to pronounce sentence upon her? If they did, would not all the ancient monarchies of Europe rise up, indignant, in her defence? Then what could they do, save take her back to the bosom of her family, either to her brother in Naples, or to Austria where her father-in-law, the ex-King, had recently taken up his abode, together with the Angoulêmes and with his grandchildren, the Duc de Bordeaux, now aged thirteen, and Louise Marie-Thérèse, who was getting to a marriageable age. Well, if they did send her to either of these places, she would be free to start a fresh campaign, and to reconquer the throne of France for her son.

Louis Philippe and his government were well aware of all this. The King, in consultation with his Ministers, openly expressed his disquiet at the unpleasant situation.

“There is not a man or woman in France,” he declared, “who wishes to see the Duchess brought to trial, and in my opinion she is far more dangerous as a prisoner than she ever was when she was free.”

“We have got to tie the hands of that turbulent woman somehow,” was Thiers’ comment on this declaration of his sovereign.

CHAPTER XL

AN INFAMOUS CONSPIRACY

THEREUPON there was hatched in that year 1833 a conspiracy which for downright infamy has hardly an equal in the history of the civilized world, for it was directed with absolute brutality and a total disregard of the most elementary dictates of chivalry and of decency against a defenceless woman, who was a royal princess, and was allied to the dynasty to whom France owed the greatness and the glory of her past. And this was done with the knowledge and consent of her relative, the husband of her mother's own sister, Louis Philippe, King of the French.

One of the principal figures in this abominable plot was police commissary Joly, Caroline Ferdinande's inveterate enemy, who set the whole machinery of it going. He it was who first had an inkling of the incipient tragedy, and who, when rumours reached him from Paris that the government was thinking of sending the Duchess back to her family, sent a telegram to the Minister of the Interior with the one word: "Wait."

Subsequently he sent up a detailed account of certain facts which had recently come under his observation. Madame la Duchesse, he said, had obviously not been very well for some time: she tired quickly: unlike her usual active temperament she now spent her days mostly indoors, buried in an armchair, toying with a bit of embroidery or a book. Now Joly had his own ideas about that. He was a family man. What did M. le Ministre think of it, supposing that his, Joly's, suspicions turned out to be facts? What if the impeccable Duchesse de Berri, the pride and hope of the legitimist party, was proved to be anything but a chaste Diana.

What did the Minister think of it? Why, everything. If such a thing was indeed true there would be an end not only to the activities of the turbulent lady herself but to those of the entire Bourbon faction, who would after such an event be smothered in ridicule. So delighted was M. Thiers at the idea, that he leaned back in his chair and indulged in a prolonged burst of laughter, which greatly astonished his austere secretary.

Pondering then over Joly's suggestion, the Minister fell to weighing the possibilities and the difficulties of the position—always supposing that such a position did exist. To begin with, he decided, the Duchess must be isolated from those of her friends who were likely to aid and abet her in any fraud or deception she might contemplate. Foremost among these were of course the Comte de Mesnard, who would at any time be prepared to perjure his soul

for the sake of his beloved Duchess, and Mademoiselle de Kersabiec, an equally devoted and shrewd friend. Well! those two must be got away on some plausible pretext, and M. Thiers then started the sorry business by ordering the courts of Montbrison and of Nantes to take up again the original charges against the Comte de Mesnard and Mademoiselle de Kersabiec for participation in the recent rising of La Vendée, and to summon them to attend before the magistrates on an early date.

The order was transmitted through the governor of Blaye, and thus the unpleasant task of informing Madame that her two most devoted friends would have to leave her immediately fell to the lot of kind old Colonel Chousserie. He acquitted himself of it as gently as he could, but Caroline Ferdinande at once flew into one of her towering rages.

"That scrubby lot of Ministers," she cried at the height of her fury: "they behave like pigs."

Joly, who was present at the stormy interview, watched her nervous excitement with keen, malevolent eyes, while Chousserie, trying to pour oil on the troubled waters, begged Madame to express her wish with regard to the lady and the gentleman whom she would wish to take the place of her absent friends.

"Monsieur le Comte and Mademoiselle will only be away a little while," he assured Her Royal Highness, "and if Madame would accept Monsieur le Comte de Brissac as her gentleman in attendance . . ."

"I don't care about him one way or the other," she said dryly.

As a matter of fact, she rather liked M. de Brissac, and she knew that he had always liked her and admired her for her energy and her pluck, and he had been wonderfully kind and helpful to her during those wonderful days at Massa, and her journey in the *Carlo Alberto*. No, she certainly wouldn't mind Monsieur de Brissac one way or the other. But what she did want and asked for was to have an old friend of hers, Madame de Castéja, as a substitute for Stylite de Kersabiec. Unfortunately, she was told, that that was impossible. His Majesty had already sanctioned the appointment of Madame la Comtesse d'Hautefort for the post.

This contradiction brought Caroline Ferdinande's rage almost to frenzy, and she poured a torrent of her choicest invectives, both Italian and French, on the head of the unfortunate bearer of evil tidings.

"I owe this indignity to that abominable Thiers," she cried hotly. "He hates me, I know, but I have friends who will take the matter up. The Press

shall hear of it. These perpetual pinpricks have got to cease. I insist on being brought to trial, and then we shall see."

It all ended in Madame having a *crise de nerfs*. Chousserie was terribly distressed, and on the advice of police commissary Joly he sent to Bordeaux for Doctor Gintrac.

The next day, which was the 7th of December, the Comte de Mesnard and Mademoiselle de Kersabiec were surreptitiously whisked out of Blaye. They were not even allowed to pay their final respects to Madame.

"An affecting farewell," commissary Joly said to them unctuously, "would only bring on another attack of nerves like last night, and this second attack might have serious results."

"That danger will still be present," the Comte de Mesnard retorted dryly, "when Her Royal Highness is told that we were not allowed to see her. Besides which, has she not always shown to the entire world how brave she can be in face of every disappointment and every sorrow?"

Caroline Ferdinande did, as a matter of fact, show on this occasion as on so many others how bravely she could bear not only disappointments but the sorrow of being parted from those she cared for without as much as a farewell. Not wishing to let her enemies see how much she cared, she received the news of the departure with outward calm. Her first outburst of rage was over, and she felt decidedly ill, prostrate after a sleepless night following the violent emotions of the day before. She made no demur when she heard that Doctor Gintrac was coming to see her. She found him both deferential and amiable when he was introduced into her presence: he was a tall, fair, good-looking, youngish man with the most approved bedside manner and the partly guttural, partly affected burr of a native of Bordeaux. The interview between the doctor and his royal patient lasted over half an hour, during which time police commissary Joly caused the grey hairs on Colonel Chousserie's head to rise in horror by his insinuations as to the real cause of Her Royal Highness's delicate state of health.

When he had deposited his poison dart in the mind of the guileless old soldier, Joly made himself scarce, leaving the perplexed governor to tackle Doctor Gintrac alone—another unpleasant task which fell to the lot of the gallant Colonel, but fortunately Her Royal Highness was not there to crumble him to dust with her words.

"Is it your opinion, doctor," Chousserie asked the elegant young practitioner after a lengthy preamble, "your considered opinion, I mean, that

. . . er . . . that Her Royal Highness is . . . well? . . . you know what I mean."

"I do not," Gintrac replied stiffly.

"That—er—in fact . . ." stammered the poor man, "that Her Royal Highness is in an interesting condition?"

Gintrac smiled a superior smile and twirled the cord of his monocle round and round his fingers.

"What the devil are you talking about, Colonel?" he inquired loftily. "Madame is certainly not very well—but in an interesting condition?—Why, you must be mad."

But Chousserie was not altogether reassured. The man's superior airs had riled him. He consulted with Joly, who, nothing loath, advised him to get a second opinion, which he did. He sent for Doctor Barthès, whose ears were soundly boxed by Madame as soon as he presented himself before her. But Joly in the meanwhile, scenting that promotion for him was in the offing, continued to send long reports up to Paris. He was working for the removal of Colonel Chousserie, whose attitude towards Her Royal Highness he felt to be inimical to his own advancement. And in this work he presently succeeded. Thiers, who had been instrumental in introducing the traitor Deutz into Caroline Ferdinande's life, now sent a certain General Bugeaud de la Piconnerie to supersede as governor of Blaye the too amiable and too sympathetic Colonel Chousserie. This Bugeaud was, as Thiers well knew, a bitter enemy of all the Bourbons. During their régime, when Colonel of artillery, he had seen his military career come to an inglorious end through his secret activities on behalf of the Orléanist cause. After the revolution of 1830 and on the accession of Louis Philippe, he came back into his own, was promoted to the rank of general, and now was only too ready to take up a position which would give him the opportunity of making himself unpleasant to one of the Bourbon faction. By Bugeaud's nomination to the governorship of Blaye, Thiers hoped that he had put an efficient spoke in the wheel of Madame's projects, whatever they were. The general's eyes, sharpened by hatred, would see all there was to see, and guess what there was not.

CHAPTER XLI

THE TRAGIC FARCE

But this appointment was not the only vexation imposed upon the royal prisoner: and inside the citadel of Blaye the curtain was now rung up on the first act of that ignoble and tragic farce that has for ever sullied the reputation of the brief Orléanist régime.

By order of the Comte d'Argout, who had succeeded Thiers as Minister of the Interior, the royal prisoner was, after this, bullied and badgered and outraged by a whole procession of medical practitioners, sent down expressly from Paris for the purpose of wringing an avowal from her as to her condition.

Inside the citadel no one was any longer in doubt as to the cause of Her Royal Highness's state of health, nor that she was moving heaven and earth to obtain her release before the interesting event was due. That she managed to keep in touch with friends outside was unquestionable, and General Bugeaud's most important duty was to find out how she did this, and how best to put a stop to it. The avowal, he hoped, would then come more readily, when all communication between the Duchess and her adherents had ceased.

At first Caroline Ferdinande, knowing that she had a bitter enemy to deal with, absolutely refused to receive the new governor.

"Those swinish Ministers," she wrote to one of her friends, "will have to explain to the whole of the civilized world how it came to pass that a descendant of Kings and of Emperors suffered and died in prison because she refused to submit to their tyranny."

She had every excuse just then for keeping indoors, because the weather was atrocious. Gales and torrential rains made it difficult to get any fresh air even by opening the windows. But Bugeaud de la Piconnerie was both persistent and thick-skinned. He was not afraid of being snubbed, and prided himself in what he fatuously called his knowledge of the royal lady's charming sex. See her he must, and on the pretext that his duties as governor demanded that he should be familiar with the disposition of the prisoner's apartments, he sent word one day to Her Royal Highness to ask her when it would be convenient for him to go through her private rooms. He got no reply from Caroline Ferdinande. Nevertheless, he presented himself at her front door the next morning and was duly admitted. While he was marching along the corridor, Madame happened to come out of her salon. He made her

an obsequious bow, and stood aside so as to allow her to pass. She looked him up and down with a supercilious glance and said dryly:

“You may proceed with your visitation, so long as you leave me alone.”

She was on the point of sailing past him, when Bugeaud, with a respectful gesture of the hand, dared to address her again.

“Madame,” he said suavely, “I beg you to believe that I am not as black as your fancy has painted. I am only too ready to spare you the annoyance of my presence, since it is distasteful to you. But His Majesty the King has given me certain messages which he desired me to transmit to Your Royal Highness personally. I would like to acquit myself of this duty, whenever you will deign to receive me.”

“I have no desire to receive you,” Caroline Ferdinande retorted coldly; “you can transmit Monsieur le Duc d’Orléans’ messages to me in writing.”

“I am sorry, I cannot do that, Madame,” Bugeaud said, still with the deepest respect; “my orders are to transmit those messages verbally to you.”

But Caroline Ferdinande turned her back on him without another word, and went back into her salon. Bugeaud heard her hammering away at her piano, practising her scales with furious energy. He did not proceed with his visitation that day, but went back to his own quarters to think over the situation. Madame, he thought, was for a prisoner kept in close confinement extraordinarily self-possessed, not to say arrogant. She must, he continued his reasoning to himself, feel pretty sure that help would come to her from outside. The Comte de Mesnard and Mademoiselle de Kersabiec had not been searched when they left the citadel: that fool Chousserie had been too lenient in such matters, and they probably carried letters from Madame to the leaders of her party. These no doubt set going a whole conspiracy for an eventual rescue of the royal captive, whilst Madame herself was undoubtedly receiving letters from outside the whole time.

Well! that must be put a stop to right away, and he, Bugeaud de la Piconnerie, was the man to do it. He began by posting an officer of the guard outside the front door of the prisoner’s apartments, and posted another in a room on the ground floor immediately beneath the one occupied by Madame; and, further, he had the ceiling of that room pierced so that the officer on duty could be aware of the slightest sound coming from above. He doubled the number of the sentry outside, and of the citadel guard. The roads were patrolled for miles around, passports had to undergo minute examination: even fishing boats were not immune from exhaustive

searching, and the schooner *La Capricieuse* was anchored just below the citadel to keep watch over the river.

Caroline Ferdinande got to know of all these measures taken for her complete isolation from the outside world. But she could afford to laugh at them. Love such as she inspired in her adherents laughed at locksmiths and guardsmen, and she had her own sources of information in spite of all Bugeaud's precautions. She was able to carry on a steady correspondence with her friends through the intermediation of the *curé* of Blaye, the Abbé Descrampes, who came to say Mass every morning in her apartments. His server, who was an ardent legitimist, brought the letters from outside concealed among the sacred vessels, and in the same manner he carried away Madame's correspondence, which he found secreted in the pyx. In this way Caroline Ferdinande kept in touch with the outside world, the world of her adherents, and of those who remained loyal to her son and the legitimate monarchy.

But after a little while she began to think that perhaps on the whole it would be better to propitiate the powers that be, otherwise General Bugeaud. She had a firm belief in her powers of fascination: she had tested them often enough and never found them fail her. There was no doubt that her situation was getting desperate. Time was flying with unconscionable rapidity, and no one knew better than she did herself how near she was now to the catastrophe which would inevitably put an end to all her hopes of ever working for her son's cause again. She did try to conciliate Bugeaud, and in a measure she succeeded. She sent him word that she would be pleased to see him, and when he came she was all smiles, and he full of respectful attentions. But it only amounted to this, that he left her presence that day in some doubt as to whether after all Joly's insinuations had been all wrong, and the royal prisoner only suffering from want of fresh air and exercise. What he did do, however, was to telegraph to Paris asking for the attendance of one or two more specialists of established reputation, and of a professional midwife whom he could introduce as a seamstress into the Duchess's household.

Medical skill was not of a very high order as yet, and no fewer than eight different men of science were called in in consultation over Madame's condition. They only worried and humiliated her with their examinations and in the end were unable to make a definite pronouncement. So the shameless farce went on. The fact of the matter was that General Bugeaud at Blaye and the Ministers in Paris were still afraid that by some means or other Madame's numerous and devoted friends would, in spite of every

precaution, succeed in concealing the birth and smuggling the infant out of the citadel; and they could think of no other means of guarding against that contingency save that of subjecting the royal lady to constant odious mortifying surveillance. They had almost given up hope of wringing an avowal out of her, and were in a fume over their disappointment.

An avowal would have simplified the situation to the government's entire satisfaction. If only there was an absolute certainty that the widow of the Duc de Berri was no longer faithful to the memory of her murdered husband, the Orléans branch of the family would at once gain in prestige and the throne of Louis Philippe be rendered more secure. The Duchess would be discredited, she would lose caste and fall from her high estate, not only in the eyes of the austere legitimist aristocracy who looked up to her now as the "Angel of the Monarchy," but also in those of the more democratic elements that were the main support of the Orléans faction. Strange that this should be so in a country where love-making and love-intrigues have always played their part in the history of its kings and queens, but since the Restoration the whole tone of society had radically changed. The easy tolerance that prevailed in the days of the Grand Monarque had given place to the censoriousness, if not to the rigid virtues, that had come floating over the seas from puritanic England and America, and the various political parties kept a rod in pickle wherewith to chastise such of their prominent leaders as transgressed against the proprieties and then got found out.

The Duchesse de Berri, the mother of Henri V, the hope of the Bourbon faction, a woman of easy virtue! What an asset to the opposing party! And the opposing party not feeling yet very secure on its throne did not hesitate to use the most abominable means to bring about the lasting ruin of a woman.

Towards the end of February, General Bugeaud, acting on instructions, had an interview with Madame's new lady-in-waiting, Madame la Comtesse d'Hautefort. He did not know, of course, what view the lady took of the whole situation, how much or how little she knew, but he put it to her that the present state of things had become intolerable. He himself, he said, knew for a certainty how matters stood, and in Her Royal Highness's own interests he begged the Countess to speak seriously with her. A frank avowal of her condition would at once put an end to all those humiliating medical examinations, as well as to the restrictions that were now put on her movements, and on her correspondence with her friends. He even hinted at the possibility that after such an avowal Her Royal Highness could look forward to her immediate release.

He was very earnest, very persuasive and very insistent, and it is to be assumed that Madame d'Hautefort when she put the matter before Her Royal Highness was equally earnest and equally insistent. And what's more, both continued to be earnest and insistent, and after this Madame d'Hautefort, who, presumably, was heartily sick of Blaye by now, became the intermediary of General Bugeaud, urging the Duchess to admit her condition, and promising that if she made a frank avowal she would immediately be set at liberty. She did in fact harass her royal mistress on the subject to such an extent that she drove her into a state of exasperation.

"I don't believe in their promises," Caroline Ferdinande declared: "they are all liars and pigs."

"But, Madame," the lady-in-waiting contended eagerly, "what will happen if they keep you here until . . . until . . ."

She dared not say more because Madame invariably flew into a rage whenever the coming event was actually mentioned. Although the whole thing now was an open secret, the Duchess's entourage tacitly pretended to ignore it.

Time went on and Bugeaud was getting desperate. He sent Her Royal Highness one written undertaking after another, that she would at once be released if she made the avowal required of her, and using the same argument that Madame d'Hautefort had hinted at. "The matter could not be denied anyhow, if Her Royal Highness remained in Blaye much longer, so why not confess?"

And Caroline Ferdinande, driven nearly out of her wits by this constant badgering, did in the end give way. Perhaps her common sense told her that concealment would anyhow be impossible in the long run, and if really she could be free . . .! Anyhow, this prospect was more attractive than the present situation, and she, poor soul, was so tired, so tired and ill, and had very little fight left in her.

She sent for General Bugeaud one morning, and he answered post-haste to the summons. Caroline Ferdinande was almost in a state of collapse. All the pinpricks, the vexations, the humiliations had at last got the better of her vitality. She received Bugeaud with tears in her eyes. Why couldn't she be left alone? she asked: and what did they want her to say? The truth about her condition? Well! what about it?

And the henchman of Louis Philippe, working on her mood and taking advantage of her present weakness, put on the airs of a benevolent friend. He

renewed his promises of a speedy release, and even went so far as to promise secrecy over the whole affair if only she would tell him the truth. He made these promises, well knowing that the government up in Paris had no intention of endorsing them. But his manner was so bland and his tone so persuasive that the poor woman's nerves reacted to this atmosphere of kindliness. She held out both her little hands to him with an almost childlike gesture of confidence, and murmured out the truth through her tears.

At this pathetic avowal General Bugeaud nearly lost control over his own nerves. He felt so triumphant that he wanted to shout and to wave his arms. He had reached his goal, no matter by what means, but he had reached it: promotion, wealth, universal regard, a marshal's baton, these now were all at his command. By his persistence, his tact, his diplomacy, he had done more to consolidate the prestige of the Orléans party and to render the throne of Louis Philippe secure than any Thiers or Guizot or d'Argout had ever done. Inwardly he registered an immense: "Hurrah!"

But Bugeaud de la Piconnerie was not the man to leave so important a matter at the whim of a little lady, whose caprices were as numerous as grains of sand on the seashore; she had been driven into this avowal by weariness and enervation, and perhaps to-morrow, who knows, she might deny the whole thing again. Bugeaud made up his mind that he must get a written avowal from her, otherwise his report would be met first with incredulity and subsequently with scorn; and then good-bye to promotion and to glory.

And so vexations, arguments, promises, pinpricks were resumed, in face of Caroline Ferdinande's determination not to put anything down in writing. She knew well enough that such a written declaration published in the *Moniteur*, as it undoubtedly would be, would mean her complete and irretrievable ruin. And so she fought and fought on with that energy and mettle which had characterized her all through life. She fought and fought till she could battle no longer against all those vexations and humiliations which she had endured so pluckily for over three months, and with which she was threatened again if she persisted in her obstinacy.

It was not till that infamous Bugeaud informed her with cool brutality that yet another noted gynæcologist had been sent for from Paris to examine her, that at last the valiant little woman gave way.

At Bugeaud's dictation she wrote:

GENERAL,—

Pressed by circumstances and by measures ordered by the government, and although I had the gravest motives for keeping my marriage a secret, I feel it a duty to myself and to my children to declare that I was secretly married during my stay in Italy.

Marie Caroline Ferdinande Louise.

In the citadel of Blaye, this 22nd of February, 1833.

CHAPTER XLII

THE SECRET MARRIAGE

THE publication in the *Moniteur* of that momentous declaration did not create the sensation which General Bugeaud had expected. It was received with what he had dreaded all along: incredulity. No one believed in it. The legitimists laughed it to scorn, and loudly accused the government of fraud, or alternatively of intimidation. Either, they argued, the declaration was a forgery, or Her Royal Highness had been bullied, perhaps even tortured, into making it. The government party, on the other hand, merely looked on the whole thing as a manoeuvre on the part of the Duchess to gain her release. Anyway, the responsible Ministers of the crown, men like d'Argout, Soult and Thiers, were quite dumbfounded. What in the world was the truth behind that ridiculous declaration of a secret marriage, in which no sane man could believe; or was it likely that a shrewd woman of the world like Madame la Duchesse de Berri would be fool enough to get herself embroiled in such a ridiculous situation? No, no! the gentlemen up in Paris much preferred to suspect some dark intrigue which would end in Madame obtaining her freedom, which she would use for rekindling the torch of civil war in Vendée or elsewhere.

And a fresh batch of orders, no less discreditable than the previous ones, were dispatched by the government of Louis Philippe to General Bugeaud de la Piconnerie. Madame la Duchesse was to be kept under the strictest surveillance night and day: an officer of the guard must sleep in the room next to hers, with the communicating door left open: another must be posted in the room below, where every sound from above could be heard through the aperture in the ceiling. And one specialist, if not two, must be in constant attendance on Her Royal Highness.

Caroline Ferdinande could still afford to laugh at these measures. They meant nothing to her now. She no longer cared. No one knew better than she did herself that as far as her activities on behalf of her son were concerned, she was politically finished. Dead. She had dreamed of adding one glorious chapter to the history of her adopted country, but now she knew that the word "Finis" had already been written at the foot of the last page, and that after this her name would be vilified by many, and erased from the memory of those who would most have benefited by her sacrifices and her heroism.

To Mesnard, the faithful and devoted friend of the past seventeen years, the man who had cherished her and cared for her as something more than a

father and less than a lover, she wrote on the day following her momentous declaration:

> After I have told you what I must, I think that I shall die of grief. If I am kept here any longer I shall die of ennui. With my whole soul I have striven after glory for my son and for France, and I did it because I felt in myself sufficient energy to reach my goal. But now happiness has fled from me, even in the wake of glory . . .

The noblehearted old man was wounded to the quick. He could not conceive how this woman whom he had almost venerated could have deceived him so cruelly. His answer to her was couched in respectful but quite frigid terms. Caroline Ferdinande, on reading it, burst into tears. She wrote again, and by the next post, sent to her faithful Mesnard an urgent and pathetic appeal:

> You don't know how deeply you have hurt me! I implore you not to desert me. I am finished, I know, but what will become of me if my old friends turn against me. My son is a great personage now, and I am nothing but a humble mater-familias, with no greater wish than to live at peace surrounded by the love of my children.

But Mesnard never quite forgave her. He felt sore at being made to look a fool. Malignant tongues levelled abominable gibes at him, which the government party took up and disseminated. Good old Mesnard! they said. What about those nights spent in the lonely house in Vendée in the company of Petit-Pierre?

Caroline Ferdinande mourned over the loss of her friend, the best and truest she ever had. Neither Brissac nor Madame d'Hautefort compensated her for the absence of Mesnard and Stylite de Kersabiec, though both were at great pains to cheer her and take her out of herself. They got her books to read: Chateaubriand, her illustrious admirer, Walter Scott whose romances she loved, Victor Hugo's dramas and novels, and the poems of Lamartine and Alfred de Musset. But she couldn't read all day, and her eyes were getting too feeble for fine embroidery. Anyway, she could no longer gratify her passion for political activity. She was no longer Regent of France. She could no longer appeal to European sovereigns, for she belonged no longer now to the inner circle of hereditary sovereigns; she could not even indulge

in invectives against "Poulot" and his Ministers: her voice had lost its potency, her personality its charm.

The social circle over which she presided in the evenings grew more and more dull day by day. Lieutenant Saint-Arnaud, who had succeeded Petitpierre as aide-de-camp to the governor, did his best to organize parlour-games, to invent conjuring tricks which by their very artlessness made Madame la Duchesse smile, and he warbled sentimental ballads to his own accompaniment on the guitar. Madame d'Hautefort, who had a fine voice, sang arias from recent operas, *La Gazza Ladra*, or *Sonnambula*, and even Madame Hansler the maid was requisitioned to entertain Her Royal Highness because she was proficient in the art of fortune-telling by cards or the interpretation of dreams. But Her Royal Highness was not easy to entertain, and it was she who invented a new form of amusement, which consisted in sticking a blackheaded pin into a wax candle every time a member of the social circle was caught out yawning.

When the days grew longer, M. de Brissac and Madame d'Hautefort persuaded her to take a walk now and then on the terrace of the citadel, but Caroline Ferdinande's usual robustness appeared to be very much on the wane these days. She tired quickly, and spent a great deal of her time in the big bed, whose white cretonne curtains framed her pathetic little face in its lace-edged cap with blue ribbons tied under the chin.

Bugeaud now grew restive again. Time was getting on and he wanted to have everything ready so that there could be no mistake, no evasion and no deception. An altogether new procession of learned medicos filed past the illustrious prisoner, talked with her, examined her, consulted with their colleagues and went away again. Caroline Ferdinande hated the whole crowd of them, but submitted to their ministrations with exemplary patience. The only man she actively objected to was Dubois, an old man now close on eighty years of age, who had attended the unfortunate Duc de Berri in the opera-box after Louvel's murderous assault.

"If that man comes again into my room," she declared excitedly, "I will throw the candlesticks at his head. Hideous old man! I remember him on that awful night, the 13th of February, the most fatal day of my life. I can see him now with a black skull-cap on his bald head, his spectacles at the end of his nose, warming his hands that looked like a vulture's claws, in front of the fire while my poor husband was dying. You can write and tell those swinish Ministers up in Paris that if Dubois comes near me, I will have a miscarriage."

She hadn't learned to mince her words, hadn't this warm-blooded Neapolitan princess, even in her misfortune. And Dubois was sent back to Paris, thankful to escape from this very unpleasant job.

On the other hand, Caroline Ferdinande quite liked Prosper Ménière, a young doctor who was both sensible and sympathetic. When the governor questioned him about the Royal patient, all he said was: "Poor little Italian song-bird. She should be sent home. What she needs is not physic but sunshine."

And he sent a report to Paris to that effect. But the Ministers of the crown did not agree with him. What they wanted was disgrace for this woman who had fought and vilified them, her confinement before witnesses, indisputable proof, in fact, of her unworthiness, which the legitimist faction could not deny.

Caroline Ferdinande made quite a different kind of scene when another practitioner came to see her. This was none other than Deneux, the doctor who had attended her on the birth of the Duc de Bordeaux. When she heard that he was coming she burst out laughing.

"Papa Deneux," she exclaimed: "what in the world is he coming for? I didn't send for him. And he will catch his death of cold posting all the way from Paris at his time of life."

Papa Deneux too was over seventy but, in spite of her protests, Caroline Ferdinande did not refuse to receive him. And when he entered the room, it seemed as if with him there came to her bedside whole visions of her past life. She held out her little hand for him to kiss. He fell on his knees and burst into tears, and she smiled, thinking of him as she had seen him that night when the "miracle child" was born, struggling into his breeches, his bare feet thrust into carpet slippers. There was not much medical talk between doctor and patient that day. They talked mostly of the past, and of people, friends, foes, some of them dead, others who had just faded out of their lives.

After that first interview Deneux was specially commanded to remain in attendance on Her Royal Highness.

She liked the old man. He told her naughty stories which made her laugh, and he was such an excellent butt for the childish pranks she always loved to play, and did still, even now. One morning, very early, she dispatched Madame Hansler, her maid, to fetch him. He must come at once, so ran the message, the child might be born at any moment. And Poor

Deneux arrived post-haste, just as he had done when the Duc de Bordeaux made his appearance into the world, running along, down the corridor, struggling into his coat, buttoning his breeches, his wig awry, his bare feet in carpet slippers. He found Madame la Duchesse lying in bed hugging a small bundle, wrapped in a shawl, against her breast.

“Ah, doctor,” she sighed in a weak, tired voice, “you are just too late. See, my darling baby! Such a beautiful boy!”

The old man was so covered with confusion that his hands shook and his knees gave way under him; he fumbled for his spectacles, and then dropped them on the floor. At last he succeeded in hitching them on his nose, and came to his royal patient’s bedside. She held out the bundle to him, and out of the folds of the shawl there appeared the little black nose and furry ears of Bewis, the spaniel puppy, who, not at all pleased with his situation, barked furiously at poor Deneux, whilst Caroline Ferdinande burst into a regular ripple of laughter.

All that, of course, was very well in its way, but it did not please General Bugeaud. He was still devoured with anxiety as to what would happen if the child made its appearance before official witnesses could be brought together. The legitimist party would at once protest that Madame had been grossly maligned, that the child was not hers at all, and that the declaration of her secret marriage had been wrung from her by threats or false promises. And he, General Bugeaud de la Piconnerie, would be overwhelmed with ridicule and hopelessly discredited.

The day came when he felt it incumbent upon him to sleep on a trestle bed in the corridor outside Madame’s room, whilst Docteur Ménière and old Deneux were commanded to sleep in the adjoining salon. The communicating door between the corridor and the landing outside was left open day and night, and an officer of the guard was posted on the landing, to be relieved at intervals of eight hours. Above the trestle bed there was a bell which the general proposed to ring the moment suspicious sounds reached his ears, whereupon the officer of the guard was to give the signal to the fort for a salvo of three guns to be fired immediately, so as to summon the official witnesses—the mayor of Blaye, the president of the tribunal, and the local magistrate—who already had their orders to answer the summons as quickly as possible.

And Bugeaud took good care to let Madame know of all these measures he was taking to defeat any plot she might be hatching in her fertile brain. But the poor woman was far from hatching plots now. She was ill, miserable

and completely broken-spirited. One day she wrote to the Duchesse d’Angoulême a pathetic little letter in which she said:

“My life is ended. I have sacrificed it for my son and for you all. I can do no more. Let others continue the work now.”

BOOK IV

THE END OF IT ALL

CHAPTER XLIII

A POOR LITTLE ATOM

THE tragedy came to its melancholy end in the night of May the 10th, when a baby girl was born in the citadel of Blaye to Madame Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, Duchesse de Berri. The first words the mother said when she was told that the baby was a girl, were:

"How pleased he will be! He always longed for a girl!"

He? General Bugeaud and the official witnesses—all excepting him somewhat ashamed of their inglorious role—were at last to know the truth of the mysterious affair.

What a difference from that other eventful day thirteen years ago, when all the church bells of Paris were ringing, when a crowd, frantic with excitement and delirious with joy, acclaimed the arrival of the "miracle child" and a salvo of twenty-one guns proclaimed the fact that a future King had been born to France. Now a small gathering of local officials were grouped around the bed, all looking shamefaced and sorry for themselves. Monsieur Pastoureau, president of the tribunal of the province, stood in the forefront and in a solemn voice put the regulation questions to Madame.

"Have I the honour," he asked, "of addressing Her Royal Highness, Madame la Duchesse de Berri?"

Madame replied: "You have."

And he went on:

"Is this new-born child yours?"

"Yes, Monsieur. It is mine."

"Of which sex is it?"

"The child is of the female sex," Madame said: "and I have already instructed Docteur Deneux to make the necessary declarations."

Someone went to fetch Docteur Deneux, who in the meanwhile had washed and dressed himself properly and prepared the document which he was now about to read. He came forward, and stood beside the bed. In a firm voice he read aloud the contents of the document which he had in his hand.

"I declare that the child born this night in my presence is the legitimate issue of Madame la Duchesse de Berri, here present, and of her legal spouse,

Count Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, of the princely house of Campo-Franco, chamberlain to the King of the Two Sicilies, domiciled in Palermo. The child is of the female sex, and her names are Anne Marie Rosalie."

Those assembled round the bed looked at one another in complete surprise, whilst General Bugeaud ran into the salon for paper, pen and ink and drew up the official report of the proceedings. He called on M. de Brissac and Madame d'Hautefort to sign it, but they refused, so he dragged the mayor of Blaye and the deputy-mayor by the sleeve into the salon; as the three men disappeared through the communicating door, Caroline Ferdinande called gaily to them:

"Good night, messieurs, the pleasant company!"

Then she turned over and went to sleep.

And so the curtain was rung down on the last act of the shameful drama. It was left to Chateaubriand to set the final mark of perpetual disgrace on the abominable business, which he did in his *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, by stigmatizing those who had engineered the ruin of a woman—that woman their closest relative, and the mother of the fatherless boy whose throne they had usurped.

"I have searched in vain," he says in conclusion, "through the annals of felony and of crime, for records of an outrage equal to this infamy."

CHAPTER XLIV

BACK TO THE LAND OF SUNSHINE

THE legitimist party, however, still refused to believe either in the marriage or in the birth of Anne Marie. Its leaders proclaimed the whole affair to be nothing but a vile imposture perpetrated in order to tarnish for ever the reputation of "the Angel of the Monarchy," yet another malefaction, in fact, of the Orléans usurper.

Caroline Ferdinande was sick of it all. She called those well-meaning adherents of hers a set of irresponsible fanatics, only fit for a madhouse.

"What's the good of my writing personal letters to them," she retorted when urged to do so, "they would still refuse to believe. They won't believe in my marriage. They deny that Anne Marie was ever born. They'll declare presently that I am not a woman at all."

Only to Chateaubriand, the illustrious man of letters, her enthusiastic and unswerving supporter, did she reveal the true workings of her embittered soul. It was to him that she appealed when she was tortured by the desire to see the light of publicity thrown on the odious machinations of which she had been the victim.

"I beg of you," she wrote on one occasion, "to make public the atrocious measures taken against a defenceless woman by a government at the head of which stands one of her closest relatives."

She wrote this on the day when she realized the truth of the old saying that rats will always leave a sinking ship. Monsieur de Brissac and Madame d'Hautefort had begged to be relieved of their functions: their farewell was deferential but none too cordial. One or two other aristocratic ladies and gentlemen, when asked to take up the respective positions thus made vacant, found ready excuses for refusing the honour. In the end, faithful old Mesnard was appealed to, and he came. But he didn't like it. He still felt something of a fool, and as in his eyes the woman whom he still worshipped could do no real wrong, he fell to blaming himself for having been so blind. How was it, he asked himself, that he had never noticed anything that apparently had gone on under his very nose? The courting at Massa, the love-making, the marriage in Rome, the reunion at Nantes! No wonder that he was jeered at by the party, or suspected of complicity in the intrigue. But Mesnard was essentially the man who might in all truth have spoken the Irish poet's sublime words—lines which embody the supreme test of love:

I know not, I ask not if guilt's in thy heart.
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

He returned to Blaye and to his post as gentleman-in-waiting to Madame la Duchesse de Berri, a little older, and a good deal wiser. And presently he could be seen again on the terrace of the citadel, walking slowly up and down with Madame on his arm. When he arrived she had said to him:

"They have deserted me, my good Mesnard. All of them. Well! Can you wonder! I can do nothing for any of them now. I shall have to lead a lonely life after this. But I don't mind that. It will be a change from wearing myself out in trying to do things for people who obviously never did care for me."

Now that the new régime had got what it wanted, now that it had cut the claws of the lioness and vilified the name of its heroic enemy, it was willing enough to let her go free. Caroline Ferdinande was asked where she would wish to go and she replied unhesitatingly: "To Palermo."

Sicily! Her Sicily! Her very soul craved for the land of sunshine and of song, for the palm trees and orange groves that had framed the happy days of her childhood. It was in Sicily that she longed to settle down, for in her heart of hearts she dreaded the inevitable meeting with the family, the icy reproofs of her father-in-law and the cruel taunts of the Angoulêmes. In Sicily her own family would understand her: they would not look with cold disapproval on her love-romance, and she would spend her days petted and adulated by her husband and playmate, Hector de Lucchesi-Palli. That is why when General Bugeaud de la Piconnerie asked her whither she would like a French ship to convey her, she had replied unhesitatingly: "To Palermo."

Her departure was fixed for the 8th of June. To the very last Bugeaud did his best to make this departure as mortifying for her as he could. Although the Ministry had exhausted every means at its disposal for the utter humiliation of this royal lady, they had sent special orders to the "gallant general" to heap Pelion upon Ossa and make her feel as acutely as possible how complete was her fall from her high estate. These orders Bugeaud carried out to the letter. He and the local officials collected together a crowd made up from the dregs of the population of Blaye and the neighbourhood, and posted them all along the route which Madame would have to follow from the citadel to the port. At half past nine she appeared, walking between the Comte de Mesnard and General Bugeaud, the latter nearly bursting with the pride of his ignoble victory. The Duchess looked pale, but otherwise self-possessed. She had grown a little stouter since the birth of Anne Marie,

and her step was less brisk than it used to be. Nothing in the expression of her face betrayed what she thought or felt when the gibes of the organized mob reached her ears. Now and again she turned with a smile to the nurse who walked close behind, with Anne Marie in her arms. In the rear of the small procession came old Deneux and Docteur Ménière, who would accompany Madame to Palermo, and also the Prince and Princess Beauffremont and the two maids, Madame Hansler and Madame Lubeschu.

The brig *La Croisière* was in the harbour waiting to take Madame la Duchesse and her suite on board. The embarkation took place in sight of the hostile crowd, who jeered and shouted mock "Hurrahs!" Caroline Ferdinande paid no attention to them. This time she knew for a certainty that she was looking her last on the shores of France. Dry-eyed she looked her last on that grim fortress where lay buried her dearest and most ambitious hopes. Just over a year ago she had come to this country full of the joy of living, of determination to reconquer for her son the throne that was rightly his. Now when the brig left her moorings she had not even a sigh left wherewith to mourn her lost illusions.

But once in mid ocean, on board the *Agathe*, to which ship she had been transferred, she brightened up considerably. It was four o'clock in the afternoon and the rugged outline of the citadel and the shores of the Gironde were soon veiled in vaporous mist. Blaye, with its crowd of beggarly officials and raffish mudlarks, was already a thing of the past: a nightmare from which the dreamer was now waking.

Commandant Turpin had received Madame on board his ship with marks of the deepest respect. Caroline Ferdinande's heart warmed to the genial sailor and her spirits reacted to this new atmosphere of deference and kindliness. She had in addition the immense satisfaction of snubbing General Bugeaud to her heart's content. He had insisted on accompanying her as far as Palermo, but he had no more power over her now, and no one knew better than Caroline Ferdinande how to put a man in his place. While chaffing him with seeming good nature, she contrived to make him look ridiculous when any of the ship's officers were about, and the more furious her teasing made him, the louder she laughed.

"General," she called to him once on a windy day, "do hang on to your cap. If it was picked up and brought to Madame Bugeaud, she would mourn for you, thinking that you were drowned."

"Oh, no, Madame," he retorted roughly; "if my wife thought that I was dead, she would do as other widows have done, find a second husband who

would soon make her forget the first.”

In this one instance Bugeaud certainly had the last word, and as the wind did not abate, and the sea was distinctly rough, his fair tormentor was forced to leave him in peace.

The ship’s company were all at her feet, for Madame la Comtesse de Lucchesi-Palli—that is what she now was—was as fascinating as Madame la Duchesse de Berri had been. At the deference shown her, her entire nature had expanded as a flower does in sunshine. She might be the wife of a commoner, but by birth she was still the royal princess to whom homage and respect was due. Indeed, she was at great pains to explain her position both to her suite and to the ship’s officers, and she did it, too, in the hearing of Bugeaud.

“A marriage,” she declared didactically, “cannot deprive a royal princess of her titles. There was the mother of the King of Sardinia who kept her rank and precedence although she married Monsieur Montlear, the son of a postmaster. He was created Prince de Montlear and that was all there was to it. The present King speaks of him as his brother-in-law. And what about Marie-Louise? She is still Her Imperial Highness even though she married the Comte de Neipperg.”

But poor Caroline Ferdinande had not much chance of airing her views on this or other subjects, or of making Bugeaud feel the full weight of her scorn, for the weather continued to be rough until after the *Agathe* had rounded Gibraltar, and she like the other ladies was forced to spend most of her time in her narrow and extremely uncomfortable cabin. It was not till the 21st of July, a month and a half after the departure from Blaye, that the outline of Palermo with its terraces and belfries rose golden and glittering above the horizon. The sun was shining in all its glory, gilding with a mystic aureole the crests of Falcone and Griffon.

Sicily! This was Sicily at last! The land of orange groves and palm trees, of blue seas and cloudless sky, the land where the intoxicating datura trails its tender shoots and perfumed blossom over terraces and arbours, the land of laughter and of song, which this frail little homing bird should never have quitted for lands richer in glory but so much poorer in joy. She was coming home now! Let the *Agathe* proclaim it with a thundering salute, and up in the forts let the cannons roar. Home! She was coming home, and Sicily, her Sicily, was giving her a royal welcome. The ship’s company hastened to don dress uniform. Old Mesnard struggled into his smartest coat, and Anne

Marie was decked out in ribbons and laces, for her mother was bringing her home, and her father was waiting for her there.

There was some delay after the salvos of artillery, while, in the golden city, state apparel was being hastily got ready and donned for the reception of the royal lady. Caroline Ferdinande, standing on the bridge, scanned the shore through her lorgnette. She wondered who would be the first to greet her, and what message would be brought to her from her stepbrother the Count of Syracuse, Governor-General of Sicily, for on his goodwill would depend the possibility of making Palermo her home for the future. But she need not have worried. Just before midday a boat put off from the shore and brought a number of highly decorative gentlemen along, who wore plumed hats and immense epaulettes. They presented themselves before Madame with every possible mark of respect and correct ceremonial. The Duke de San Martino, Minister of State, was their spokesman. He was the bearer of an affectionate message from His Royal Highness the Count of Syracuse, Governor-General of Sicily, to "his beloved sister." The Comtesse de Lucchesi-Palli, said the message, would be made welcome in Palermo by her loving brother, and could take up her residence there for as long as she desired.

So far so good. The next event of importance to the company on the *Agathe* was the arrival of Count Hector de Lucchesi-Palli. It had been looked forward to with eager curiosity, until three o'clock in the afternoon, when he came on board to meet his wife. The general consensus of opinion was that the Count was extremely good-looking, very distinguished, but not at all Italian in his manner. Indeed, his ways, it was agreed, were more those of an English milord than of a Sicilian prince, but he was none the less liked for that. Though the English as a nation were very unpopular in the kingdom of Naples and the Two Sicilies, "English phlegm," as it was called, was aped by all the aristocracy. It was only old Mesnard who, for obvious reasons, detested Madame's husband cordially, and it was all the more hard on him that it was his duty as gentleman-in-waiting to introduce the Count into Madame's presence.

The young couple met in Caroline Ferdinande's cabin and, after Mesnard had left them to themselves, they remained in private talk for half an hour, after which they came up on deck. Everyone agreed that they were, physically, a strangely ill-assorted pair. Madame was so frail, so fair and so gay. She looked like a young girl in her simple dress of brown merino, her fair curls fluttered by the breeze, escaping from under the broad brim of a straw hat wreathed in pink roses, which cascaded down to her shoulder.

Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, on the other hand, looked like a giant beside his dainty little wife. He was as dark as she was fair, with bronzed skin and a brown moustache and beard. To the Italians who were on board, and who had not seen him before, he appeared very reserved, and the fact that he took no notice of his little daughter, who was asleep in her nurse's arms, was very much commented upon.

Now the boat was ready to take the young couple on shore. Caroline Ferdinande took a gracious farewell of the ship's company: she said a few nice words to Captain Turpin and the officers, thanking them for their kindness in ministering to her comfort during the voyage. She gave the Captain her little hand to kiss, also to Lieutenant Arnaud; but when General Bugeaud approached her she all but turned her back on him. He, however, was too thick-skinned to be ruffled by a snub; he made a deep obeisance before the royal lady and said with mock deference:

"I know, Madame, that you have no liking for me, but at least, allow me to hope that I have earned your esteem."

"That is as it may be, General," Madame retorted coldly; "but I cannot help wondering how a soldier, presumably a gentleman, could have played such an abject role as you have done at Blaye."

"I did it," Bugeaud rejoined proudly, "from motives of patriotism. I am the servant of my King, Louis Philippe, and look upon his enemies as mine."

"And has Monsieur le Duc d'Orléans," Caroline Ferdinande put in pointedly, "many such servants as General Bugeaud de la Piconnerie?"

"I hope so, Madame," he replied curtly.

She gave him a last, withering look, and although he was by his position entitled to kiss her hand, she did not allow him to do so. Thank God, the scurvy knave had no longer the power to mortify her. Anyhow, he was straightaway returning to France on the *Agathe*.

It was now four o'clock in the afternoon. The *Agathe* and one or two French vessels anchored in the roads fired a last salute and hoisted their tricolour flags. The forts replied with a final and thundering salvo of artillery. Caroline Ferdinande stepped into the boat, guided by her impassive husband. The nurse with Anne Marie would follow later with doctors Deneux and Ménière. She settled herself down on cushions in the stern of the boat with her husband by her side.

The sea was alive with craft of every sort, shape and size; every vessel filled to the danger point with a loudly shrieking, excited crowd, who pelted

Caroline Ferdinande, their own princess, with flowers as her boat glided by. She was in raptures. Her eyes were full of tears. Here she was at last among her own people, with everything around her reminiscent of the happy days of her childhood. She jumped lightly on shore. She would, if she could, have embraced every one of that picturesque, odoriferous crowd, the beggars, the twangers of guitars, the fisherfolk, the market-women, the naked children. She loved them all. They were her own. She knew them. She understood them. She heard their shrill cries, their shouts, their snatches of song. Sicily! Her Sicily! Here she was at last.

She did nothing but laugh and clap her hands when, all the way to the palace, the royal coach in which she and her husband were being driven bumped about on the rough road. It was all reminiscent of her youth. Every bit of it. The dirt, the dust, the smells, the squalor. Oh, how happy she was going to be now, with everything that had darkened her life left behind and soon forgotten: the disappointments, the disloyalties, the humiliations, the discomforts! Nantes with its smoke-filled chimney, Blaye and its procession of doctors, Holyrood and the interminable rubbers of whist.

She was received at the palace by her stepbrother in person, and with all the honours usually accorded to Royal Highnesses. The Count of Syracuse was very young, only just twenty, but even the Comte de Mesnard, who had become a regular old curmudgeon and had all a French aristocrat's contempt for the ways and manners of the nobility of other nations, even he admitted grudgingly that "Prince Leopold, Governor-General of Sicily, was possessed of all the solid virtues, and was of a gay and debonair disposition that made him beloved by all those who knew him."

The prince placed his house, his servants, his horses and carriages entirely at the disposal of his beloved sister. The whole of Palermo was *en fête*, not only because of Madame's arrival, but because on the 11th of July would be the feast of Ste. Rosalie, the patron saint of the golden city, and the streets were already decorated with religious as well as royal emblems. After the ceremonies of welcome and innumerable presentations, Caroline Ferdinande retired to the magnificent apartments which had been allotted to her. She was very tired after her long and very uncomfortable voyage. Next to her own suite of rooms there was another for her husband, and close by yet others for Anne Marie, her nurse and the several members of Madame's household.

The next day, Caroline Ferdinande, feeling well and refreshed, went for a drive in an open carriage on the fashionable promenade La Marina. She excited a great deal of attention, and also admiration, for she was looking

radiantly happy. Her carriage could hardly get along, owing to the crowd. Men and women of all ranks pressed right up to the footboard, and threw bunches of flowers into her lap. Hector de Lucchesi-Palli sat opposite to her, but no one took much notice of him. As a matter of fact, the bulk of that crowd had not yet realized that their royal princess had made a morganatic marriage and had stepped down from her high estate. The weather at the start of the drive had been gorgeous, but suddenly there came down a regular cloud-burst, torrential rain accompanied by deafening thunder and vivid lightning which terrified the horses, dispersed the crowd and incidentally drenched those who sat in the open carriage to the skin. This unexpected storm appeared like the symbol of this turbulent little woman's destiny. She too had seen the morning of her life bright and radiant as a cloudless sky, and then, deaf and blind to the gathering storm, she had seen the clouds burst over her head and had been drenched in the torrent of revolutions and of civil war.

CHAPTER XLV

THE MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

After they had spent a few days with the governor-general in his palace at Palermo, the young couple moved to the country mansion of Prince Butera, which was distant about a mile and a half from the city. The Duchesse de Monteleone, sister of Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, had a house close by. But Caroline Ferdinande made several journeys to Palermo in order to receive in audience those members of the Sicilian and Neapolitan aristocracy who desired to pay their respects, and also in order to be present at several banquets and galas which the Count of Syracuse was giving in her honour. Here too she took leave of Doctor Ménière, who was very sorry indeed to go, but was obliged for professional and family reasons to return to France. Caroline Ferdinande had always liked Ménière; he had been more than kind and considerate to her during those very trying times at Blaye. This she never forgot, and after she had offended her faithful old friend Mesnard by her want of confidence in him, it was to the young doctor that she had often turned for comfort and advice. Many a time had she confessed to him how she dreaded the inevitable meeting with her father-in-law and the Angoulêmes. She longed to see her children of course. Anne Marie would never mean as much to her as they did, but she was terrified at the prospect of the frigid if not hostile reception which the ex-King and his son, not to mention the Duchesse d'Angoulême, had undoubtedly in reserve for her. And now, when Ménière was going away she again spoke to him of her fears.

"And yet," she said with a pathetic note of appeal in her voice, "I have always done my best for them, haven't I? All I wanted to do was to restore to my son the crown which is rightly his. Where I was wrong was when I listened to those who persuaded me that France was only waiting for me to come and proclaim my Henri as her King. I came, I was deceived, I was betrayed, sold, imprisoned, humiliated. If only I had been a man!!" she concluded with a sigh.

Ménière did his best to comfort her.

"You only want a little patience, Madame," he said: "just an unpleasant moment to live through. The meeting with your august relatives might be a little painful, but you will soon get over the slight vexation, after which there will be nothing but quietude and happiness to look forward to. I am hoping for your sake that you will presently settle down permanently in

Palermo. It is so lovely here and the climate will do you a world of good, and greatly benefit the health of your dear little Anne Marie. You must be longing for a quiet life, away from all political intrigues and family feuds. Am I not right?"

Right? Of course he was not right. He thought he understood his patient, but he did not. During that awful time at Blaye he had grown very fond of this plucky little woman; he admired her for her great qualities of endurance and self-sacrifice, but he did not understand her. No man and very few women ever did. His argument was that which any novice in psychology would have used: here, he thought, is a woman who has gone through trials and ordeals that would have broken the spirit of any human being on earth. By great good luck she has found a welcome in the bosom of her own family, a devoted husband, and a haven of peace where she could rest and spend the rest of her life in quietude and connubial bliss. How thankful she must be to leave all her sorrows, her disappointments and humiliations behind her, to start life anew and to forget!

To start life anew and to forget? To forget was the very last thing that Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, wished to do. Anyone would have thought that she had had enough of intrigues, and of adventure. Not she! Her turbulent soul did not crave for peace. What it wanted was war, war all the time, a fight for her rights as well as for those of her son. In her own estimation she had not forfeited her right to be Regent of France and the sole responsible guardian of Henri V, King of France. And those two facts she certainly did not wish to forget, nor that she had fought for those rights, and had only failed because she had been betrayed.

Already she saw in her mind's eye a whole array of reasons why war against the usurpers of her son's throne should not immediately be declared. There was every excuse for renewing the fight, and every chance of success. To begin with, it was a fact that certain dissensions had arisen in the very heart of the legitimist party. Caroline Ferdinande had already heard rumours of these while she was at Blaye. The ex-King and his son the Dauphin, Duc d'Angoulême, had taken up the stand that their abdication having been wrung from them under duress, it was not binding upon them; and in this attitude they had the support of a number of their older partisans. For them Charles was still the King, and the Duc d'Angoulême still the Dauphin. But the younger members of the party, who were tired of the conservative policy of aloofness and inaction practised by the old monarch and his entourage, had turned with renewed hope to the boy who at any rate had youth on his side and in his veins the blood of his heroic and energetic mother. For them

that boy was Henri V, the one and only King of France, by virtue of the abdication of Charles X and of his son, which, be it remembered, had been ratified by them when first they landed in England.

By the laws of France, her kings attained their majority at the age of thirteen, and on this twenty-ninth day of September, 1833, Henri would be thirteen years of age. The legitimist party, that is the younger and more resolute side of it, wished to make of this event the occasion for a great demonstration of loyalty, and regular pilgrimages were organized by a large body of enthusiasts for the purpose of offering homage and expressions of unswerving allegiance to the young King.

The royal family was now permanently settled in Bohemia, in the beautiful château of Hradschin just outside Prague, which had been put at the ex-King's disposal by the Emperor Francis, and it was there that some hundreds of young legitimists had arranged to meet. Rich or poor, aristocrat or commoner, they were all coming for the express purpose of bending the knee before their King, and they had put their money together so that none, not even the poorest, should be kept back for lack of means to undertake the long journey. Caroline Ferdinande very soon got to know of this project, and that the ex-King disapproved of it so strongly that he was for sending young Henri off to Carlsbad with the Duchesse d'Angoulême, ostensibly to take the waters, but in reality in order to keep him out of the way of his hot-headed partisans. Whereupon, nothing would do but she must hurry on her visit to Prague in order to be present at the festivities in connection with her son's coming of age, and moreover to insist, by virtue of her status as Regent of France, that these festivities should take place. The very fact that there was dissension in the legitimist party and that Charles and the d'Angoulêmes were trying to deprive her son of his crown, roused the dormant lioness. War! If there was going to be war, she must be in the thick of it.

The visit to Prague had of course been looming ahead for some time, but Caroline Ferdinande had so dreaded the meeting with the family that she kept putting off her journey from day to day. But now of course everything was different; go she must and at once. But, as she was still doubtful of the reception which would be accorded her at Hradschin, she wrote an urgent letter to Monsieur de Chateaubriand begging him to go at once to Prague and prepare her father-in-law for her arrival, and above all to try and arrange that she should be well received. The great man, illustrious statesman, author, poet, had, as she well knew, the ear of the King, and he had always been one of her staunchest adherents and a great admirer of her romantic and

vivid personality. She, Caroline, would be sure of a welcome, so she thought, if the way was paved for her by Chateaubriand. He, however, on hearing from her, tried his best to dissuade her from going to meet the ex-King just at the moment when Charles was in an irritated mood over things in general and the proposed demonstrations in particular. He had a strong suspicion that Madame la Comtesse de Lucchesi-Palli would not be received with royal honours, and that if any festivities did take place in connection with her son's coming of age, she would certainly be relegated, in the name of the goddess Etiquette and all her rules, into the background along with her Sicilian husband.

Monsieur de Chateaubriand also thought it very doubtful whether Madame la Comtesse would obtain a permit to travel to Austria at all. The Emperor had certainly extended hospitality to the ex-King of France, as he couldn't very well do otherwise, seeing that ties of kindred bound the two monarchs together; but he was also on terms of friendship with Louis Philippe and might not care to allow the turbulent Duchess to resume her life of adventure, not to mention political intrigues, in his dominions.

As usual, Caroline Ferdinande overruled every objection and refused to listen to counsels of prudence. She had made up her mind to go to Prague and that was all there was to it. It was for her friends to make the way easy for her. Preparations for the journey were quickly made and on the 8th of August, accompanied by her husband, she embarked on the steamer *Francesco Primo*, en route for Naples. She had little Anne Marie and the nurse with her, also the Princess de Beauffremont and the Comte de Mesnard and her two maids, Madame Lubeschu and Madame Hansler. The day was grillingly hot, the sea was like a lake and Caroline Ferdinande thought the voyage the nearest approach to heaven she had ever encountered. Life, such as she understood it, had begun again for her. No more disappointments, no more rebuffs. She had completely regained her health, as well as her unconquerable hope, and she had no doubt whatever of the welcome that awaited her at the different stages of her journey.

She certainly was not disappointed in Naples, where the King her brother received her with all the honours due to a princess of the royal house, and her stepmother, the dowager-queen, came all the way from Sorrente on purpose to see her. The palace of the princes of Chiatamone was placed at her disposal, and the King supplied her with every luxury she desired to command: horses and carriages for herself and her suite, as well as a large staff of servants and produce from the royal gardens and farms. So far so good, and Caroline Ferdinande spent a few very happy days in her

native city, and chose to look on this reception accorded to her by her family as a good augury of the welcome that awaited her in Hradschin. Nor did her second halt which she made in Rome disappoint her either. Here, again, the Pope received her in the throne-room with royal honours. It was the same at Florence where her brother-in-law, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, greeted her in person with every mark of deference and cordiality.

After every royal welcome which she received, Caroline Ferdinande sent a letter to Monsieur de Chateaubriand asking him to recount her triumphs to her father-in-law and the d'Angoulêmes.

"Let them know," she urged, "that all the Courts of Europe are ready to do me homage as Regent of France and the mother of her King."

But Monsieur de Chateaubriand did not have a very easy time over in Prague. He had found the ex-King just as he anticipated, in an irritable mood. The whole of his entourage professed to disbelieve in Madame's second marriage, and everyone was indignant that she should have the audacity to present herself before His Majesty. Monseigneur le Dauphin, Duc d'Angoulême, loudly declared that he would leave Hradschin if that woman was allowed to enter its doors.

The ex-King took the matter more calmly but with no less determination. Strongly urged by M. de Chateaubriand, whom he did not care to offend, he declared that he was ready to receive Madame, but only on condition that she showed him indubitable proof that her marriage to the Count de Lucchesi-Palli had really and truly taken place. He would not admit it, even to himself, that as a matter of fact he was terrified that Caroline Ferdinande would suddenly appear before him one day, arrayed in one of those clownish costumes which she affected, or else indulge in one of those wild escapades of hers which set everyone by the ears; and so he sent M. de Chateaubriand and a special mission to meet Madame in Florence, there to delay her voyage north as long as possible—in any case till after the 29th, and in the meanwhile to explain to her the necessity of furnishing the royal family with proof positive that she was the lawful wife of Hector, Count de Lucchesi-Palli, of the ducal house of Della Grazzia, without which His Majesty would not see her.

Caroline Ferdinande received the deputation and listened to everything these gentlemen had to say. When they had finished, she only shrugged her pretty shoulders. She had already made up her mind that this so-called "mission" was a sign of weakness. They didn't want her at Hradschin, she knew that, but didn't know how to set about it to keep her away. She had a

perfect right to go and see her children, and there was no mission or embassy or anything else that would deter her from that purpose. She refused to discuss the question of her journey either with M. de Chateaubriand, who meant well, or with the other gentlemen who did not. What she did do was to write a letter to His Majesty, which she hoped and believed would have the desired effect of bringing him to a better frame of mind and frustrating the machinations of the d'Angoulêmes, who she quite believed were at the bottom of all these intrigues hatched against her.

> MY DEAR FATHER [she wrote],—
>
> My Henri's welfare, which is also that of France, has always been the object for which I have striven. I have, I think, demonstrated to the entire world that for its sake I was ready to face every danger and to accomplish every sacrifice. You and he will find that I am always the same. My dearest wish on earth is to see you and my beloved children again. . . .

And so on in the same strain, affectionate but firm. Charles sent her an equally affectionate reply, but it was an equally firm one. He stuck to his point. He would not see her or the Count de Lucchesi-Palli unless he was shown an authentic certificate of their marriage. The demand appeared futile to Caroline Ferdinande: as a matter of fact, it was only made in order to delay her journey, but in itself it was so reasonable that after a little quiet reflection and a serious talk with her husband, she saw that obstinacy on that score could only lead to loss of dignity, and in the end the Comte de Montbel went to Rome to fetch the required certificate, a copy of which was then placed in his hand by Cardinal Zurlo. The marriage had taken place secretly in Rome on the 14th of December, 1831, and been solemnized by the Jesuit priest Jean-Louis de Rozaven.

Everything being in order, the ex-King's emissaries now declared that this copy authenticated by Cardinal Zurlo would certainly satisfy His Majesty, and that they saw no reason why an interview between the royal family and Madame should not take place quite soon. In the meanwhile, however, a great deal of time had been allowed to slip by, and the twenty-ninth day of September had come and gone. The coming of age of Henri V was a failure as far as the expectations of the young legitimists were concerned. He had been whisked away from Hradschin by his grandfather, to escape the demonstrations that had been prepared in his honour. Charles, with characteristic obstinacy, still insisting that in spite of an abdication under duress, he and only he was the legitimate King of France, the Duc

d’Angoulême the one and only Dauphin, and young Henri just the Duc de Bordeaux.

CHAPTER XLVI

COUNTESS DE LUCCHESI-PALLI

Early in October the royal family and suite went back to Hradschin. The ex-King's emissaries had in the meanwhile returned from their mission in Florence. They brought with them the indubitable proof of Caroline Ferdinande's second marriage, and Charles could do no less than consent to see her. For him, astride on his dignity as head of the house of Bourbon, his daughter-in-law was nothing more now than the Countess de Lucchesi-Palli, the wife of a Sicilian aristocrat, without any rights over her son, or any right of admittance into the inner royal circle. He certainly did not refuse to see her, but he would not receive her at Hradschin. The interview, he decided, must take place on neutral ground, and chose Léoben in Styria for the purpose. This decision amounted to a slap in the face for Caroline Ferdinande. Why couldn't she be received at Hradschin where the ex-King and the family held their Court? What was the object of this fresh humiliation put upon her? When she received the letter telling her of her father-in-law's resolve to shut her out of the royal circle, she had one of her violent attacks of rage, which it took all Hector's gentleness and tact to subdue. However, there was nothing for it, and twenty-four hours later she was made to understand that Charles, with his daughter-in-law and his two grandchildren, were temporarily installed at Léoben in the Hôtel de l'Europe, which had sheltered the victorious General Bonaparte thirty-six years ago when he signed the peace treaty of Campo Formio with the Archduke Charles of Austria, and that the family were now only waiting for her to arrive as soon as possible.

Caroline Ferdinande, however, could not start immediately because the Austrian authorities still refused her a permit to go to Styria. Leaving little Anne Marie with her nurse in the care of friends in Florence, she went with her husband as far as Venice, and there, to her great surprise and delight, she had a most enthusiastic reception organized by the young legitimists who had drifted down here after their abortive expedition to Hradschin. Needless to say that nothing could have pleased the little lady better than to find herself so unexpectedly the centre of a crowd of enthusiasts who simply swept aside the whole question of her second marriage and turned to her once more as the hope of the Bourbon monarchy and the mother of their King. They were furious with Charles for attempting to abrogate his abdication and trying to relegate Henri V into the background: and Caroline Ferdinande, who was, of course, of the same opinion, was entirely in her

element amongst them all. It seemed as if the glorious days of Massa and of Nantes had come again, with plots and counter-plots, with intrigues and the many excitements that were as the breath of life to this doughty little Amazon. She saw herself once more at the head of loyal troops, waving the fleur-de-lis and shouting themselves hoarse with their "*Vive le roi*." She saw herself back in the thickets of La Vendée, dressed as one of them, sharing their rough encampments and hiding with them in hedges and in wells. Indeed, her visions of possibilities went further than that and embraced Paris and the Tuileries, and she was so happy and so hopeful over it all that in spite of her real desire to see her children she would have stayed on indefinitely in this congenial *milieu* had she still been the mistress of her own destiny.

But she was no longer that: she had become a wanderer on the face of the earth. The government of Louis Philippe came to know of her presence in Venice, together with a crowd of irresponsible youths who stalked about on the Piazza loudly proclaiming the coming restoration of the Bourbons to the throne of France, and the French ambassador was instructed to request the Republic of Venice to withdraw from Madame la Comtesse de Lucchesi-Palli and all her French friends the permission which had been granted to them to remain in the city. This was done and Caroline Ferdinande was politely requested to leave. She crossed over to Trieste with her husband and a diminished suite, hoping to carry on there as she had done in Venice, but two days later she received a letter from her father-in-law reminding her that he was still waiting for her at Léoben with her children and the Duchesse d'Angoulême, and that unless she came immediately, he would for reasons of health be obliged to return to Hradschin without seeing her, as the climate of Styria did not agree with him.

It was not until the 13th that Caroline Ferdinande was at last allowed by the Austrian authorities to proceed to Léoben, which she did. She arrived the following morning at the Hôtel de l'Europe. The interview with the royal family was fixed for three o'clock in the afternoon. Caroline Ferdinande felt unaccountably nervous. She longed to see her children, but she dreaded meeting her father-in-law and the d'Angoulêmes. She hoped that the Dauphin would not be present at the first interview, for she knew that he hated her now more than he had ever done before. Caroline had in her mind rehearsed the various episodes of her first meeting with the family. Her Italian temperament got the better of her in this, for her idea was to enact one of those emotional scenes in which she was past-master, and which usually served her so well. She was dressed very simply in grey cashmere, with a belt round her slim waist and a demure little bonnet that made her

look like a schoolgirl, and when the door of the salon was opened and she saw her father-in-law sitting in a high-backed chair with the two children, one each side of him, she was on the point of running forward with arms outstretched and throwing herself at the old monarch's feet, drenching his hands with her tears. But the haughty and distant expression of his face, the obvious shyness of the children and the forbidding aspect of the Duchesse d'Angoulême who was in deep black, acted like a shower of cold water on her emotion. Fortunately for the sake of her own dignity, her husband had already checked her by seizing hold of her elbow. Strangely abashed and silent she made a deep curtsy, and then remained standing by the door, while the Duchesse d'Angoulême, taking each child by the hand, came forward to greet her with a frigid "Welcome, my sister!" and kissed her coolly, French fashion, on both cheeks. She then pushed the children towards their mother. They were obviously very constrained and timid. Poor Caroline Ferdinande was on the verge of tears. She gathered the children in her arms, kissed them, hugged them, called them her "precious darlings," but they remained unresponsive in the arms of this mother who was a stranger to them, and whom they had never been taught to love.

It was a painful scene, quite different from what Caroline Ferdinande, with her optimistic temperament, had expected. An uncomfortable silence ensued, which was broken by the voice of the ex-King saying coldly:

"Will you not present to us, my dear, the Count de Lucchesi-Palli, your husband?"

The presentation was made in the approved formal fashion, and, as a matter of fact, Hector was very well received both by Charles himself and by the Duchess. His manly attitude, his good looks and perfect manners impressed the ex-King very favourably. His Majesty was exceedingly gracious, and himself presented the young Count to his daughter-in-law and subsequently to his son and to the ladies and gentlemen of his Court.

Later in the day Caroline Ferdinande had a private interview with the ex-King. The Dauphin and the Duchesse d'Angoulême were present, but no one else. Conversation between His Majesty and his former daughter-in-law began on a fairly quiet note. Caroline Ferdinande began by putting forward her claims and her point of view. She was quite clever enough to realize by now that it would be no good at this stage to ask too much. Charles's attitude was so obviously uncompromising, not to say hostile, that the poor little woman felt at once that in submission, and in as much humility as she could muster, lay her one chance of conciliating him. Also she hoped that in a day or two she would have the old monarch to herself, and could plead with him,

and appeal to his kinder nature, without those spiteful d’Angoulêmes to vent their irony and malevolence on her.

She was willing, she said, to renounce her claim to being Regent of France, her claim to the guardianship of her children, her right to have them to live with her in Sicily. All she asked, or rather demanded, was the right to go to Hradschin and be received there, as before, as one of the family.

But Charles remained obstinate over that.

“You must understand,” he explained to her, “that your position now is very different to what it was. We could not possibly confer on the Count de Lucchesi-Palli the honours which once belonged to the Duc de Berri, nor could we ask our son and daughter-in-law to accept him as a brother.”

And the Duc d’Angoulême muttered: “Of course not,” in his beard.

“Nor could we,” the ex-King continued icily, “lower the prestige of our grandchildren by allowing them to be brought up with the children of Count Lucchesi.”

But at this taunt, Caroline’s anger, which she had kept in check all this time, burst suddenly loose, and turned to fury.

“You are determined to disgrace me!” she cried.

“Disgrace you?” Charles retorted. “Why should you say that?”

“Can’t you see that if I am ostracized like that I shall be disgraced before every Court in Europe?”

And unable to control her nerves, she burst into tears.

The ex-King, gently enough, for he felt genuinely sorry for her, tried to make her understand that she was now a Sicilian by nationality, and that her proper dwelling place was Sicily and not Bohemia. She should never have left Sicily, he said. Why did she?

“Because,” she replied, her voice shaken with sobs, “I couldn’t bear being parted from my children any longer. Let me go back to Hradschin with you now,” she implored.

“That is out of the question,” His Majesty replied with absolute finality. “Our son the Dauphin has declared that he will never remain under the same roof with you.”

Caroline Ferdinande turned with flashing eyes on the d’Angoulêmes.

“You!” she gasped, her voice choked with indignation. “I might have guessed that you were at the bottom of all this. You have been good to my children, and for that I thank you, but you have acted like devils towards me. Why don’t you want me to come to Hradschin? Who has been poisoning your mind against me? What lies have they all been telling? Blacas and Damas, and . . .”

“Silence!” commanded His Majesty: “we won’t hear another word.

“Take it from us once and for all, my dear,” he added more gently but very emphatically, “you will never be received as a member of the family at Hradschin.”

He rose and stalked solemnly out of the room, followed by his son and daughter-in-law; the latter murmured as she went through the door:

“Surely Caroline did not imagine that His Majesty would favour her, and sacrifice us to M. de Lucchesi-Palli.”

The three of them went, leaving Caroline Ferdinande alone in the middle of this banal hotel room, tearful, humiliated, longing to pour out the full bitterness of her heart in the ear of someone who would really understand. But not one of them did that. Not even Hector who loved her so disinterestedly. Even he could not understand that terrific urge she had to be in the midst of things, to be up and doing, and above all to reconquer those rights of position and precedence which she should never have given up. Not that she regretted her marriage. She loved Hector with that one side of her character which was sweet and childlike and clinging; but that other side of her, the wayward, the turbulent, the heroic, resented her present position of inferiority, in the wake of those fourteen years following her first marriage, when she was the one and only Duchess that counted, the wife of one future King of France and the mother of another, the popular and idolized royal princess in honour of whom the people cheered, the bands played, the streets were gay with flowers and bunting when she went by. And now all that was over, and there was nothing in prospect for her but a life of obscurity and idleness, and the certainty that her son would never be crowned King of France, since there was no one now who would fight for him as she had done.

She spent a miserable evening in the company of that family whom she looked upon as her deadly enemies. She and her husband were asked to dine with His Majesty and the d’Angoulêmes. The children had gone to bed, but there were several ladies and gentlemen in attendance at the dinner whom Caroline Ferdinande hardly knew. She was far too proud to let any of them

see how wretched and mortified she was, and though she groaned inwardly under the burden of that archaic etiquette which still prevailed even in this commonplace hotel, and though her poor heart was full to bursting with grief and humiliation, she did her best to appear lighthearted, to talk and to laugh. The crowning torture came when she was summoned to play whist with the family, and the evening dragged on in mortal ennui for her until His Majesty had retired and she and Hector were permitted to do the same.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY

THE next day Caroline Ferdinande sought another interview with the ex-King. She begged him to see her quite alone. He didn't mind that, because he felt perfectly firm in his resolution not to receive her as anything but the wife of a foreign aristocrat. As a matter of fact, the d'Angoulêmes had nothing much to do with his decision; he had made it entirely on his own, and it was absolutely in accordance with his ideas of what was due to the prestige of the House of Bourbon.

To put it bluntly, Caroline in the course of this interview reverted to the wild. She was Italian and nothing but Italian, emotional, dramatic, uncontrolled. She wept and she sobbed, she knelt at Charles's feet, she protested her obedience to his will and her loyalty to the cause. She brought forward to her aid all the feminine wiles and all the artifices of which she had the secret. Perhaps she felt that this was her last chance of regaining lost ground and that if she did not succeed this time in softening the heart of this once impressionable man, she would surely never be able to appeal to him again. But it was all in vain. At the close of this extremely painful scene Charles X rose and said icily:

"I will say good-bye to you now, for I shall not see you again. I am leaving for Hradschin to-morrow."

"I will go with you," Caroline Ferdinande declared firmly.

"I am sorry," the ex-King rejoined; "but that is out of the question for the moment. We'll see later."

And so this was the end. The poor woman must in her heart of hearts have known that this time she was really beaten, irrevocably beaten. For the first time in her life she found nothing more to say; she had exhausted a whole vocabulary of passionate and appealing words. The "old judge" as she had taken to calling her former father-in-law would not yield an inch. Now that she appeared more self-possessed, he stayed with her a few moments longer, in order to reason with her, and she listened to his admonitions with eyes downcast and lips tightly pressed together. The fortress of prejudice could not obviously be taken by storm, and while remaining silent and apparently submissive, the valiant little Amazon who knew how to fight so bravely was in her mind calculating the chances of reducing the citadel by a long and patient siege.

Calculating, planning, scheming, always scheming, never ready to give in, never willing to acknowledge defeat: that was Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, all over. It was the keynote of her character. But there was no getting away from the fact that she was finally beaten this time, and, as a matter of fact, this last interview with the irascible "old judge" was virtually the end of her career. It was the final ending to a life of romance and of adventure unparalleled in the history of women throughout the world. From the hour when her secret marriage became known to the royal family and to the continent of Europe, she ceased to have any political significance. She was no longer Madame la Duchesse de Berri, Regent of France, she was just plain Madame la Comtesse de Lucchesi-Palli. She had nothing more to do with the Tuileries or Versailles, nothing to do with the Court even in exile: even the children of her murdered husband no longer belonged to her, nor did the legitimist party recognize her now as the mother of their King. In fact she had come down lower in the social scale than she had been when she was Princess of Naples, for she was just the wife of a penniless Sicilian aristocrat, who certainly was a distinguished diplomat as well as a charming and accomplished gentleman, but who had no place within the inner sanctuary of the royal house of France.

The next day Charles X and the family left for Hradschin, and Caroline Ferdinande was left to ponder over her own immediate future. What would that be? she wondered. Nothing would induce her to return to Italy without her children: to this she had fully made up her mind, nor would she give up her rights over them, the most important of which was what she considered her legal right to preside over and supervise their education, especially that of the Duc de Bordeaux. The question of money did not worry her in the least. Her original jointure when she married the Duc de Berri had been 1,500,000 francs, which Louis XVIII supplemented by an annual rental of 100,000 francs. True, she had always been very extravagant, and had spent money freely while it came rolling in. She had also been consistently charitable and had year after year outrun the constable and run into debt in order to satisfy the countless demands that were made upon her privy purse. Since the revolution and the flight to England, she had spent money freely in the various expeditions, campaigns, intrigues and what not which she had organized and carried through in the legitimist cause. But she had still a good deal left and her estate of Rosny, which she had purchased in the days of her prosperity, brought her in a rent-roll of 130,000 francs. She had also filled the Élysée-Bourbon, where she and her husband had resided when they were first married, with valuable pictures and countless works of art, and at this present moment the always-faithful Comte de Mesnard was

actually in England negotiating for the sale of some of the pictures and a few pieces of her personal jewellery.

And so Caroline Ferdinande, with her usual optimism, brushed aside the question of finance. But as nothing had been settled about her future during those two momentous interviews with the family, and she certainly had no wish to stay on at Léoben, she betook herself together with her husband to Gratz, the picturesque little capital of Styria, leaving M. de Chateaubriand and some of her more ardent partisans to effect, as far as possible, a reconciliation between her and the ex-King.

It was while she was at Gratz that she had news of the death of little Anne Marie. It had occurred so suddenly, and there were so many difficulties put in the way, that Caroline Ferdinande was unable to go to Italy to see her child before she died. There was surely something immeasurably pathetic in the brief existence of this little creature, whose advent into the world proved to be nothing short of a cataclysm not only for her mother but for the whole of the legitimist cause, as well as an event that probably altered the entire course of contemporary history.

It was not till the spring of the following year that some sort of agreement was entered into between Caroline Ferdinande, Comtesse de Lucchesi-Palli, and the ex-King Charles X of France. He still refused to receive his former daughter-in-law in the intimacy of his family circle, but consented that she should settle down in the château of Brandeis, which the Emperor had offered to her as a place of residence. Brandeis was not a very beautiful nor very luxurious palace, but it was not far from Prague, and Caroline Ferdinande, happy at the thought of being somewhere near her children, decided to accept the offer, and made arrangements to go there immediately.

Her way lay via Vienna, where she arrived towards the end of April. Her husband was with her, as well as her friends the Marquis and Marquise de Podenas and the Vicomte de Saint-Priest. The Emperor received her quite cordially but without any ceremony or royal honours, and that first night she and her husband were invited to dine with the Imperial family. The next day she would have liked to go for a drive in the Prater, or to the opera in the evening, because she was quite sure that if she showed herself in public she would be received with cheers by the people of Vienna, who were for the most part anti-democratic and anti-Orléanist, and would certainly acclaim her as the representative of the legitimate monarchical party all over the

world. But it was intimated to her that her appearance in public would be contrary to the wishes of His Majesty the Emperor, and poor Caroline Ferdinande was left to spend a quiet evening in the hotel with her husband and her friends.

Yet another disappointment! But she was getting used to them.

Once settled at Brandeis, she was able to see her children from time to time. She would pay a flying visit to Prague and they would be brought over by the Duchesse d'Angoulême to see their mother. But that was just it. The Duchesse was always there, and two or three ladies and gentlemen of the entourage, and so no intimacy could ever grow between Caroline Ferdinande and her son. She had done so much for him, endured so much, striven so gallantly, and she could not even make sure that the boy knew anything of the many sacrifices she had made for his sake. And anyhow, the present state of things was very humiliating. It seemed as if she, Caroline Ferdinande, the mother of the King of France, was just a beggar at the gate, waiting for the pittance of an occasional interview with her children.

Monsieur de Chateaubriand, who had never wavered in his admiration of her and in his allegiance, resented this stigma that was put upon her, and did his best to persuade her to leave Brandeis.

"If you cannot have your royal children with you, Madame," he wrote to her, "your position here becomes all wrong, and your remaining in Austria under those conditions seems to me nothing short of a calamity."

But Caroline Ferdinande was obstinate as usual. She had made up her mind to lay siege to the family citadel into which she desired to enter, and she thought that by remaining at Brandeis, and bombarding the ex-King with her demands, she would weary him into capitulating in the end. She stood firmly on her rights over the education of her children, and declared her firm intention to stay where she was until proper guarantee had been given her that those rights would be respected. When Charles X and the family still remained obdurate she made appeal to the Emperor, and begged that she might be allowed to come to Vienna and plead her cause in person before him. But the Emperor, who was at the time on friendly terms with the existing French government, preferred not to get mixed up in what he termed the private quarrels of the Bourbon family.

In the end, Caroline Ferdinande was compelled to own herself defeated. She had gained nothing by remaining at Brandeis all this time, and though she did see her children from time to time, her advice over their education and upbringing was never once listened to. After a time the ex-King and the

royal family were obliged to leave Hradschin. The château had only been lent to them by the Emperor of Austria, who now wished to take up his residence there during the festivals of his coronation as King of Bohemia. Charles X was very sorry to leave. The castle was sumptuous, befitting in every way a descendant of the *Grand Monarque*: also he had been very much liked by the local people, who organized a regular demonstration to bid their royal guest farewell. But there was nothing for it. The elder branch of the great Bourbon house had, like Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, also become wanderers on the face of the earth. The ex-King and his family went first to one place, then to another. Toeplitz, Carlsbad, Budweiss, Kirchberg, Goritz: all these places saw them in turn, and not once during these wanderings was Caroline Ferdinande given an opportunity of seeing her children, not even when at Budweiss, the small Bohemian city situated on the Moldau, in an obscure little hostelry where the royal party lodged, the Duc de Bordeaux had a serious attack of meningitis. The Duchesse d'Angoulême nursed him most devotedly, but Caroline Ferdinande was not allowed to come to her son's bedside. Her ostracism from the family circle was now complete, and nothing that she did or said softened the heart of the old monarch towards her.

Finally the royal family took up residence at Goritz, where Charles X celebrated his seventy-ninth birthday. Caroline Ferdinande, once her children had gone from the neighbourhood, turned her back on that ugly old barrack of a palace, Brandeis, and went back to Gratz. Here she settled down for the winter, loving the place for its beauty and its associations. The Duc de Berri, her first husband, had at one time stayed four years in Gratz, and the wife of the Comte d'Artois, afterwards Charles X, was buried in the cathedral there, as well as other members of the Bourbon family. Caroline Ferdinande rented a beautiful palace belonging to Count Herbestein. Here she held what almost amounted to a Court, with her ladies-in-waiting and gentlemen controllers of the household. She gave dinner parties, receptions and routs, to which the notabilities of the province were invited. Night and day there were sentries at her gate, belonging to the Austrian army. Apparently orders had come from Vienna that she must be honoured as a royal princess. In the cathedral she and her husband sat in the Imperial tribune, and at the opera they occupied the Imperial box. She drove out in a magnificent landau with superb horses and men in gorgeous liveries, and when she passed by, the military posts called "Attention!" and presented arms.

She chose Brünnsee for her summer residence and there continued her life of luxury and pleasure, beloved by all who came in contact with her, for

she was immensely generous and charitable, and adored by her husband, who was one of the most accomplished, as he was the most popular, member of his wife's entourage. It was at Gratz that her children were born, three daughters and a son. As lately as 1890, the château of Brünnsee belonged to Adinolphe de Lucchesi-Palli, son of Caroline Ferdinande, Princess of Naples, at one time Duchesse de Berri, then Regent of France, and finally just Countess de Lucchesi-Palli. Gratz and Brünnsee were the pale reflections of those other luxurious days at the Élysée-Bourbon and the Tuileries. She filled those two palatial residences with priceless works of art, some of which came from Bagatelle and Rosny, whilst others she purchased in Austria, adding to her collection from time to time while the money lasted.

While the money lasted! Caroline Ferdinande never gave a thought to money. She was no fool and must have known that it could not last for ever at the rate she was going: but whenever her controller of the household gave her a serious word of warning, she brushed it aside, and received his advice with a careless shrug, and galas and routs and banquets went on as merrily and as expensively as ever. It almost seemed as if this highmettled Amazon, this intrepid warrior, now relegated into the background of politics and to the rear of the fight, was bent on drowning in the whirlpool of pleasure the grim spectre of disappointment that haunted her.

A year after the royal family had settled down at Goritz, Charles X, ex-King of France, died there of cholera. And once more family complications arose, and dissensions in the legitimist party were revived. A few held that the Duc d'Angoulême was now His Majesty Louis XIX, while others, by far the greater number, insisted that it was Henri V who was the only legitimate King of France. The contention centred around the act of abdication which Charles X and his son had signed at Rambouillet and ratified at Lulworth: and the argument was that whereas a crowned king was always a king and could not by French law legally abdicate, this could not apply equally to one who at the time was only the heir to the throne. Be that as it may, the Duc d'Angoulême, king or no king, was certainly his father's legitimate heir and, as such, the head of the family: and no one had a greater right than he had to supervise and control the education of his nephew who was then only sixteen years of age. He himself never insisted on his right to be called "Sire" or "Your Majesty," but by a strange paradox he would not allow his nephew to bear those titles either, and the little prince, whom the bulk of the legitimist party now openly acclaimed as their King, was at his uncle's Court only looked upon as the Duc de Bordeaux and treated as such—never as His Majesty the King of France.

Caroline Ferdinande was at Gratz when the news of the ex-King's death reached her. She immediately set to work to put forward her claim to be admitted into the family circle as mother of the young King and to have a controlling voice in his education. She felt that with her most obdurate and most powerful adversary gone, she stood a better chance of success. But the son of Charles X proved as uncompromising as his father had been. He refused to concede to his former sister-in-law any rights over his nephew. Though he could not prevent her from seeing her children if they chose to go and see her, he could not allow her to take up her residence either at Goritz or any other place where they also happened to be.

He certainly could not prevent Caroline Ferdinande from seeing her children. The Duc de Bordeaux was man enough now to go and see his mother as often as he desired. She had obtained permission to go to Rome to spend a few days with her aunt the dowager Queen of Sardinia, and also with her youngest brother who was at a Jesuit school there. To her great surprise and delight her son appeared quite unexpectedly. He had come incognito from Goritz, wishing to pay his respects to the Pope as well as to his mother. This double visit of mother and son in the Eternal City caused quite a flutter in the various chancelleries of Rome, Naples and Vienna, and secretaries of French embassies were kept busy writing letters of protest to those governments who had accorded hospitality to that stormy petrel of politics, the Duchesse de Berri, and to the "Pretender" her son. As a matter of fact, Caroline Ferdinande had ceased to be the stormy petrel of politics. She was enjoying life, she was happy in a way. She felt that she had done all she could for her son and his cause. The monarchy as represented by the last remnants of the old Bourbon family was moribund, and Caroline Ferdinande was shrewd enough to realize that nothing that she could now do would ever bring it to vitality again. She might have done it at one time, but had been defeated by prejudice, disloyalty and treachery. Now it would take a complete revolution of the wheel of destiny if France was ever to go back to the old conditions that had contributed to her prosperity and to her glory throughout the centuries. And that eventuality, the vanquished Amazon knew, would never occur again.

After a few happy days spent in Rome with her son, Caroline Ferdinande returned to Gratz by way of Vienna, where she was received as before with great cordiality, if not with royal honours, by the Emperor of Austria. She and her husband had their apartments in the Burg. They were present at several galas and pageants in the company of the Emperor and of the

Archdukes, and their wives. Hector de Lucchesi-Palli was always received on an equality with his wife: they both dined at the Imperial table, and were on all occasions admitted into the intimacy of the Imperial family circle. It was while she was in Vienna that Caroline Ferdinande heard of a serious accident that had happened to the Duc de Bordeaux while out riding. This time she was allowed to come to Kirchberg where the accident had occurred, and allowed to remain nine days with her son. At one time his condition was thought to be very grave; his horse had shied at an ox-cart in a narrow lane, and rolled over with him and then on the top of him. His left thigh was crushed and broken, and his collar-bone splintered. It was due to this accident that the Duc de Bordeaux, or Comte de Chambord as he came after this time to be universally called, retained a slight limp for the rest of his life.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE DOWNFALL OF LOUIS PHILIPPE

THE next few years saw many changes in the family circle of both Bourbons and Orléanists, and one or two serious gaps within their ranks. The first to go was King Louis Philippe's eldest son, Ferdinand Philippe, Duc d'Orléans. Then, a couple of years later, the Duc d'Angoulême (or Louis XIX as some had always preferred to call him) died at Goritz in his seventieth year. After his death the Comte de Chambord (Duc de Bordeaux) begged the widow to take up her position as head of the house, assuring her of his loyalty and profound respect. He insisted that she should always be referred to as "the Queen" and spoken to as "Your Majesty," while he himself remained for everyone just "Monseigneur the Comte de Chambord."

But after the death of her husband and her father, "Her Majesty" found Goritz intolerable as a place of residence. It was too full of sad memories: in the end she purchased from the Duc de Blacas the château of Frohsdorf, close to the borders of Hungary, and there she settled down with her niece and nephew.

Frohsdorf, the "village of joy," soon justified its name. Within a year of the royal family's installation there, Louise of France, daughter of the late Duc de Berri and of Caroline Ferdinande, was married to the hereditary Prince of Lucca, afterwards Duke of Parma. The family had paid Caroline Ferdinande the compliment of asking her consent to her daughter's marriage, and she was present at the wedding which was solemnized with great splendour in the private chapel of the château. The Emperor and Empress of Austria were there and there was a magnificent array of Archdukes and Archduchesses, and high dignitaries with ribbons and Grand Crosses: there was military music and salvos of artillery. Caroline Ferdinande was radiant. She had had a wonderful dream, she said, the night before, when she saw St. Louis covering her two children with his mantle and holding over their heads the crown of happiness. Alas! the dream did not prove prophetic, for the young Princess of Lucca had a life that was in many ways as tragic and certainly as eventful as that of her mother. Less than three years after her marriage, she witnessed the flight and abdication of her father-in-law, the Duke of Parma. Her husband, however, with the cooperation of the Austrian army, recovered the title and sovereignty of Parma, but six years later he was murdered in the streets of Parma in the selfsame way as the young Duchess's father, the Duc de Berri, had been on

the steps of the Opera House in Paris. Like her mother too, Louise, subsequently Regent of Parma during the minority of her son, fought a brave fight for that son's rights, but was defeated in the end by the founder of Italian unity, Victor Emmanuel II.

But this is by the way.

In the interval there was a second wedding in the family, which caused as much joy to Caroline Ferdinande as the first had done: it was that of the Comte de Chambord to Marie Thérèse d'Este, eldest sister of the Duke of Modena. This marriage, when first it was mooted, caused another storm in the tea-cups of continental chancelleries. The government in Paris took great exception to it for several reasons: to begin with, the bride was extremely wealthy, and her dowry would go to swell very considerably the coffers of the legitimist party. Then again, her father, the late Duke of Modena, was one of the few reigning sovereigns of Europe who had consistently refused to recognize Louis Philippe and the Orléanist régime, and he had given substantial financial aid to Caroline Ferdinande when she was at Massa, planning her campaign for the rising in La Vendée in favour of her son. Because of all this, the French ambassadors in Vienna, in Florence and in Rome were instructed to enter a vigorous protest against the marriage taking place, declaring that by countenancing this alliance the Emperor of Austria, His Holiness the Pope and the King of Sardinia were actually guilty of an act of unfriendliness towards the French government and His Majesty the King.

However, this flutter in the ambassadorial dovecotes did not have any serious consequences, because the marriage did take place, not at Frohsdorf, however, nor with pomp, but very quietly at Bruck in Styria; the reason for this being that the Emperor of Austria wanted an excuse for not gracing the ceremony with his presence. He did not wish to offend either the Bourbon and Modena factions or the government of France, and Bruck was ostensibly too far from Vienna for the Imperial family to undertake the journey. Anyway, the arrangement served as an excuse, the diplomatic storm was confined to respective tea-cups, and everyone was happy: but no one more so than Caroline Ferdinande, Comtesse de Lucchesi-Palli. With the death of her former brother-in-law, the last living barrier between herself and her son was removed. Her Henri was now so incontestably both the leader of the legitimist party and his own master, that she, on her side, was only too willing to withdraw from active participation in politics.

She purchased the Vendramin palace in Venice and here she spent the winters with her husband and her Italian family. The Comte and Comtesse

de Chambord had also taken up their winter quarters in Venice in the Cavalli palace, together with “Her Majesty,” whilst during the summer there was constant friendly intercourse between Brünnsee and Frohsdorf. Never in fact since those far-off days at Holyrood had Caroline Ferdinande enjoyed her son’s company to such an extent, and never before had there been such real friendship and concord between all the members of the royal family.

Both in Venice and at Brünnsee Caroline Ferdinande continued to live in regal style. Whether she had found complete happiness is perhaps a little doubtful: complete resignation would be a better description of her actual state of mind at this period of her life. It seemed as if she had at last found the philosopher’s stone, and after having played on the world’s stage one of the most prominent parts it has ever been the lot of woman to enact, she appeared—outwardly at any rate—quite content to see herself relegated to the minor role of a rich and aristocratic lady with plenty of friends, a great desire to enjoy life, and a wonderful talent for organizing fêtes that were soon the talk of Venice. As she once said to one of her greatest friends: “I have done all that was ever asked of me, and everything that I could possibly do. I have failed in my purpose but not through my own fault. It was the will of God, and I am content.”

And besides being content she certainly was happy in her family life, for Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, now Duke della Grazzia in succession to his father, was not only a perfect lover and husband but also a perfect gentleman and a delightful companion. He was extraordinarily tactful, and filled his somewhat difficult position with wonderful dignity and self-respect. He was very accomplished: spoke French, English and German fluently, was an expert fencer and pistol shot and a splendid horseman. The Comte de Chambord had a great deal of respect as well as affection for his stepfather.

The royal family of Bourbon was in Venice when the news came of the revolution in France, the dethronement of Louis Philippe and the final and lasting downfall of the monarchic régime in France. The King of the French went into exile as his cousin the King of France had gone. When he left the Tuileries he was heard to murmur: “Just like Charles! Just like Charles!” His daughter-in-law, the widowed Duchesse d’Orléans, like Caroline Ferdinande, Duchesse de Berri, strove to reconquer the crown for her son, but she had not Caroline’s personality, nor her charm, nor her energy. She failed as Caroline had failed, as gallantly, if not so romantically. Her boy, the Comte de Paris, was nine years old when the revolution of 1848 sent his grandfather into exile, and the Duc de Bordeaux was nine years old too when Charles X left France never to return.

Three years later “Her Majesty,” the daughter of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, died at Frohsdorf in her seventy-third year. With the exception of her brother, the little Dauphin, known to legitimists as Louis XVII, she was perhaps the most pathetic figure in contemporary history. As a child she had spent three and a half years in prison, and as a woman forty years in exile; she had seen her father, her mother and her aunt guillotined, her brother-in-law murdered, her father-in-law dethroned, her nephew stripped of his heritage. No wonder that her attitude to life became austere and often harsh, that gaiety and love of pleasure in others jarred on her melancholy view of life. Her character softened considerably, however, during the last few years of her life, especially towards Caroline Ferdinande, whom she had never understood and therefore cordially detested. The one real love of her life was the Comte de Chambord, her nephew, and he reciprocated her affection in full. She had presided over his education and formed his character, and all through her life she had a great deal of influence over him. By her will she left everything she possessed to “her nephew Henri, Comte de Chambord,” her sole legatee.

Yet another three years, and Caroline Ferdinande saw her daughter widowed, under the same tragic circumstances as she herself had lived through, but she also saw that daughter as valiant as herself, holding, as Regent of Parma, the sovereignty for her son. She saw the downfall of the smaller sovereignties of Italy to the victorious arms of Victor Emmanuel: Parma, Modena, Tuscany, the Two Sicilies, proud Venice and eternal Rome. She saw her nephew, Francis of Naples, dispossessed, her daughter driven into exile with her children. Everywhere ancient monarchies were crumbling, archaic kingdoms falling before all-conquering democracies. Many a time when Caroline Ferdinande was alone with her thoughts did she pace up and down the splendid rooms of her palace like some caged tigress, who, bereft of her claws, could no longer fight. Many a time did her restless brain restart scheming, planning, plotting for her dispossessed daughter and her dispossessed son. She would petition the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor Napoleon, the King of Prussia, His Holiness the Pope. She would see Victor Emmanuel, Cavour, Garibaldi. She would rouse the clergy, the Savoyards, the Piedmontese! Anything! Anything to renew the fight! Oh, for the power to fight again! to fight! to reawaken loyalties and enthusiasms! to lead a forlorn cause! to shout and to cheer and to relive those wonderful days in La Vendée, when weary, footsore, hungry, drenched to the skin, she had felt so very much alive! My God, to be alive again!

And sometimes her Italian temperament would get the better of her, and she would scream and sob and adjure the God of War to put back into her hands the sword of rebellion and grant her the power to relight the torch of civil war. My God, let me live and fight again! Then, perhaps, when this paroxysm of impotent rage was at its height, Hector de Lucchesi-Palli would come in and gather his little wife in his arms and soothe her with tender words and gentle caresses until, wearied like a child, she would sob herself to sleep on his breast.

CHAPTER XLIX

CAROLINA VECCHIA

THE end of all things came in 1864, when Caroline Ferdinande lost first her daughter early in February, and, two months later, her husband, whom she had learned to idolize, died at Brünnsee in his seventieth year. He had worshipped her in those golden days of sunny Sicily, when he was her plaything rather than her playmate, and he had striven to win her admiration by boyish pranks and deeds of valour. He had worshipped her when she shed her grey mantle of little Cinderella and went forth, garlanded with flowers, to meet and wed her fairy prince. He had worshipped her in the hour of her triumph and in that of her humiliation: near or far, at Massa, and at Nantes, in Palermo or Gratz or Venice. He had loved her with the passionate ardour of a lover and the tender affection of an elder brother. He was her slave and her counsellor; he had knelt at her feet as an adoring husband, and as a prince consort before his queen.

And now he was gone and the world for Caroline Ferdinande had become desolate indeed. So desolate in fact that she hardly felt those other blows which Fate dealt her about this time with a cruelly lavish hand. These were in the nature of hopeless financial entanglements. Quite apart from personal extravagance she had always been charitable to a fault. She never had any idea of the value of money and it had run through her generous fingers like water. She had undoubtedly an inordinate love of luxury and of pleasure; her household in the various palatial residences which she had occupied in the past thirty years had always been carried on with such magnificence that the expenditure gradually wore out her resources. She had been warned over and over again by her controller, but she would not listen to him. She didn't care. What was money, anyway? If one wanted any, and had none to spare, one borrowed it from those who had it and were willing to lend. That was Caroline Ferdinande's financial philosophy, and it naturally led to disaster. But those who were willing to lend also desired to be paid back. Well! What about it? There were pictures to be sold, works of art that were worth a lot of money, precious manuscripts, diamonds, pearls, what not? Let them be sold, and for heaven's sake don't let us hear any more about it. Hector della Grazzia did no doubt foresee the approaching catastrophe; with infinite tact he joined forces with the controller, and advised, warned, did what he could, but his position as the comparatively poor husband of a wealthy wife was a difficult one, which his love for her rendered more difficult still. He died before the final crash came, when

everything had been sold and creditors were still clamouring. The Vendramini palace had long ago been given up, after it had been stripped of all its valuable contents: the house in Gratz followed suit and now there was only Brünnsee, and the usurers, from whom Caroline Ferdinande had been borrowing when all other sources for raising money had dried up, were now threatening to sell up all its contents. The Comte de Chambord intervened and paid out six million francs to avert the scandal, and then settled an annuity of a hundred thousand francs on his mother, on condition that she effected substantial economies in the management of her household.

Caroline Ferdinande lived another six years after that, in the old château of Brünnsee, far from the son for whom she had sacrificed the best years of her life, and all that she possessed of energy, enthusiasm and vitality, and for ever exiled from the two countries, Italy and France, which she loved. She spent summer and winter at Brünnsee, for she could no longer travel with comfort; she was crippled with rheumatism and her sight was rapidly failing. Only twice a year did she drive out as far as Gratz to meet the Comte and Comtesse de Chambord on their way to and from Goritz and Frohsdorf. They would all stay at the Hôtel de l'Eléphant, and Caroline Ferdinande would spend a few very happy days with the son whom she idolized and her daughter-in-law who was very sweet to her.

But her life was completely finished. It ended on the day when little Anne Marie was born in the fortress of Blaye, and the Duchesse de Berri changed her title of royal princess of France for that of Sicilian aristocrat. From that hour she ceased to have any political significance, her most devoted admirers and most ardent adherents ceased to take counsel with her, her name was never mentioned again in the Press and the general public hardly knew whether she was alive or dead. Complete indifference had followed in the wake of a popularity that had almost amounted to worship at the time of her first widowhood and the birth of the "miracle child." She spent those last six years of her life in that old Bohemian château, and peopled it with memories: memories of mad adventures, of wild excitements, of intense joys and immense sorrow. Sitting by the window in a big armchair and gazing out on the gloomy, pine-covered heights, Caroline Ferdinande evoked the ghosts of the past, the shadows of her early dreams. She was *Carolina vecchia* now: "old Caroline," and all that was left of those dreams of long ago were blighted hopes, loneliness and a big heartache. She who had lavished the treasures of her love on all those who ever knew her, and above all on those who belonged to her by ties of blood, was left to spend those last few years in solitude. One or two faithful friends, like Madame de Meffray, Madame d'Hautefort, the Duchesse de Reggio, came

to see her from time to time, and now and then her Italian children and grandchildren would invade the old château and with their irresponsible gaiety, their noise and their laughter, drive away for a time the ghosts that haunted it. But the others, the children and grandchildren of her first marriage, did not trouble themselves about *Carolina vecchia* now, and Henri, the "miracle child," for whom she had fought so gallantly, for whose sake she had sacrificed so much, endured so much, suffered as much as any mother could possibly suffer for her son, was not even with her when she died.

She was in her seventy-second year when on the Saturday in Holy Week in the year 1870 she breathed her last in the arms of her devoted friend Suzette de Meffray. She was buried at Museck beside her husband, Hector de Lucchesi-Palli, Duke della Grazzia. The Comte de Chambord was present at his mother's funeral. There was a great crowd, come chiefly in order to gaze on the tall, handsome, slightly lame man who for many enthusiasts was really and truly King Henri V of France, the last descendant of that glorious house which gave France her culture, her renown, her prestige among the nations.

And so she was laid to rest, this fascinating, enchanting, almost legendary little princess, whom God had endowed with all the attributes that make for happiness and for joy; she was made to love and to be loved, to smile, to sing and to laugh, but she came too late into a world which had no use for romance or for poetry; she was laughed at, rejected, misunderstood, and finally vanquished. She began life as a fairy princess and ended it as "poor old Caroline."

She had her faults. They were great and they were many: her extravagance, her love of pleasure and of ostentation, her obstinacy and perpetual thirst for excitement, were, according to her detractors, responsible for her downfall quite as much as adverse destiny. Well, that may be, but with all her faults she was that one supreme, adorable creation of God, the incarnation of Youth, Gaiety and Romance.

THE END

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

It is interesting to note the difference in the spelling of "Berry" as some historians have it, and "Berri" as *Nettement* and *de Reiset* prefer it. Rightly or wrongly, I have chosen the latter (older French) spelling.

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Page reference errors occurring in the Index have not been corrected. Some page numbers do not exist in the text and have not been linked. Some index items were out of alphabetical order and have been relocated to the correct sequence.

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