LANG ANDREW, MRS. LANG

THE BOOK OF PRINCES AND PRINCESSES

Lang

Andrew Lang

The Book of Princes and Princesses

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=25228756
The Book of Princes and Princesses:

Содержание

Mrs. Lang
The Book of Princes and Princesses

PREFACE

All the stories about Princes and Princesses in this book are true stories, and were written by Mrs. Lang, out of old books of history. There are some children who make life difficult by saying, first that stories about fairies are true, and that they like fairies; and next that they do not like true stories about real people, who lived long ago. I am quite ready to grant that there really are such things as fairies, because, though I never saw a fairy, any more than I have seen the little animals which lecturers call *molecules* and *ions*, still I have seen people who have seen fairies – truthful people. Now I never knew a lecturer who ventured to say that he had seen an ion or a molecule. It is well known, and written in a true book, that the godmother of Joan of Arc had seen fairies, and nobody can suppose that such a good woman would tell her godchild what was not true – for example, that the squire of the parish was in love with a fairy and used to meet her in the moonlight beneath a beautiful tree. In fact, if we did not believe in fairy stories, who would care to read them? Yet

only too many children dislike to read true stories, because the people in them were real, and the things actually happened. Is not this very strange? And grown-ups are not much wiser. They would rather read a novel than Professor Mommsen's 'History of Rome'!

How are we to explain this reluctance to read true stories? Is it because children are *obliged*, whether they like it or not, to learn lessons which, to be sure, are often dry and disagreeable, and history books are among their lessons. Now Nature, for some wise purpose probably, made most children very greatly dislike lesson books. When I was about eight years old I was always reading a book of true stories called 'The Tales of a Grandfather': no book could be more pleasant. It was in little dumpy volumes that one could carry in his pocket. But when I was sent to school they used this book as a school book, in one large ugly volume, and at school I never read it at all, and could not answer questions in it, but made guesses, which were not often right. The truth seems to be that we hate doing what we *must* do; and Sir Walter Scott himself, who wrote the book, particularly detested reading or writing what he was obliged to read or write, and always wanted to be doing something else.

This book about Princes and Princesses is not one which a child is *obliged* to read. Indeed the stories are not put in order, beginning with the princes who lived longest ago and coming down gradually to people who lived nearest our own time. The book opens with the great Napoleon Bonaparte, who died when

some very old people still living were alive. Napoleon was not born a prince, far from it; his father was only a poor gentleman on a wild rough little island. But he made himself not merely a king, but the greatest of all emperors and generals in war. He is not held up as a person whom every boy should try to imitate, but it is a truth that Napoleon always remained a boy in his heart. He liked to make up stories of himself, doing wonderful things which even he was unable to do. When he was a boy he played at being a general, making snow fortresses and besieging them, just as many boys do. And when he was a man he dreamed of conquering all the East, Asia, and India, and Australia; and he tried to do all that, but it was too much even for him.

He used to think that he would write a new religious book, like Mahomet, and ride on a dromedary to conquer India, with his own book in his hand. Can anything be more like a boy's fancy? He even set out in the direction of India, but he stopped to besiege a little weak ruinous town called Acre, in the Holy Land, and the Turks and English, under Sir Sidney Smith, defeated him, and made him turn back, so that, later, he never came nearer India than Moscow, whence he was driven back to France by the snow and frost and the Russian army. After that he never had much luck, though he had won so many battles, and made himself an Emperor, and married an Emperor's daughter, like a poor young man in a fairy tale. I am sure that no fairy prince ever did such extraordinary things of all sorts as Napoleon; but another story shows how his only son was very unfortunate, and

had a very short and unhappy life, always longing to be like his famous father. No doubt he might have been happy and fortunate if Napoleon – like the great boy he was – had not tried to do more than was possible even for himself. It was like a great boy to take no trouble to learn difficult languages, and to write such a bad hand that his marshals and generals could not read his notes written on the battlefield, and could not be certain what he wanted them to do. Now the Duke of Wellington, though not so wonderful a general as Napoleon, wrote a very good hand, when shot and shell were falling all round him, and there could be no mistake as to what he meant.

In fairy stories the princes and princesses are not always fortunate and happy, though they are always brave, good, beautiful, and deserving. If they were always happy and fortunate, nobody would care to read about them; the stories would be very dull. For example, Prince Meritorio was the eldest son of Meritorio III., King of Pacifica. He was born healthy, brave, and clever. At the age of twenty-one years, all of them spent serenely in learning his lessons, including fencing and fortification, Prince Meritorio married the eldest daughter of King Benevolo, of the happy island of Crete. The two kingdoms were always at peace; on the death of Meritorio III. and Benevolo II. Prince Meritorio came to the throne of both countries. He had eleven sons, who used to play the Eleven of the island of Crete and beat them; and when Prince Meritorio died, at a great age, beloved by all his subjects, he was succeeded by his eldest son,

Prince Sereno.

No doubt Prince Meritorio was happy and fortunate, but as he never had any troubles or sorrows, as he married his first and only love with the full consent of the dear and royal parents of both, never was changed into a rabbit by a wicked magician, never had to fight a dragon or giant, never was a starving, banished man, but continually had his regular meals, why, the Life of Prince Meritorio is not worth reading. Nobody cares a penny about him, any more than they care about George II., who was a brave man, and as fortunate as a king can be, and yet we prefer to read about Prince Charlie, who was nearly as unfortunate as King George was lucky.

Even Napoleon himself, with all his wonderful victories, is more interesting because he was defeated at last, and died like an imprisoned eagle, a captive on a little island, than he would be if he had been constantly fortunate and enormously fat.

It cannot be said that the princes and princesses in this book were too happy. The Princess Jeanne was perhaps the luckiest, and she had troubles enough while still a little girl, with being nearly forced to marry a prince whom she did not want. Indeed all young princesses and princes were much to be pitied, when they were being vexed with marrying before they were out of the nursery or the school room. They were obliged to marry first, and fall in love afterwards if they could, which is quite the wrong arrangement. Think of King Hacon's mother, too, who was obliged to prove that she was good by carrying a red-hot

iron in her hands without being burned. The best little girl now alive will be wise not to try this experiment, if she is accused of breaking anything which she did not break. Then poor Marie Louise was obliged to marry a king who was little better than an idiot; and no amount of diamonds, nor all the gold of Peru, could console her for living such a strange life as hers was in a foreign country with such a very foolish king. However, he was fond of her, at least, whereas Henry VIII. was not fond of his many wives for more than a very short time, and then he cut their heads off, or sent them away. It was a wise princess who said, when he asked her to marry him, that if she had two heads he would be welcome to one of them, but as she had only one she would prefer some other monarch. The Princess Henriette, too, after all her wanderings, when she was as poor as a goose girl in a fairy tale, found a very unsatisfactory prince to marry her at last, and perhaps was not sorry to die young. Truly they all had strange adventures enough; even Henry VII., though, when once he was king, he took good care to have no more adventures.

The story of Mary, Queen of Scots, who had so much unhappiness, is not told here, because very little is known of her childhood. But there are two tales of her childhood worth remembering. When she was a very little girl in Scotland, the Governor of the country was Cardinal Beaton. He was a Catholic, and Henry VIII., being a Protestant, was always at war with Scotland, and often tried to seize Mary when she was a little child. Now she had been told a fairy tale about the Red Etin

of Ireland, a kind of red ogre, who stole a king's daughter, 'the flower of fair Scotland,' and beat her every day. So when Mary, being about three years old, first saw Cardinal Beaton in all his scarlet clothes, she thought that *he* was the Red Etin of Ireland, and was terribly frightened, crying, 'Kill Red Etin! Kill Red Etin!' They *did* kill him, presently, but not because of her command.

The other story is merely that when she was about ten years old, or not so much, she was taken across the sea with her four little friends, the four Maries, to France, to marry the king's son. They had a very stormy voyage, and she was the only one of the company who was not sea-sick. So she was very merry at the expense of all the others. No doubt a saintly little princess would have been sorry for their sufferings; still, perhaps many little girls would have laughed. Many princes have had disagreeable uncles, like Crookedback Richard; indeed one might think, like a little girl who had read history books, that 'all uncles are *villains*.' But perhaps no prince ever had such a terrible ogre of a father as Prince Frederick of Prussia, who became the great king and general. Though his father was very particular about making Frederick clean and neat, we do not find that he ever had a bath, or did more than wash his hands and face. Indeed Frederick's father was a horrible ogre in every way, though perhaps it was not unnatural that he did not like the prince to be perpetually playing the flute, even when out hunting!

After all, when a child thinks of his own father and mother,

and his excellent uncles and aunts, he may be glad that he was not born to be a prince, and be hidden from his enemies in a bundle of hay, like Duke Richard, or dressed as a little boy, when she is a little girl; or locked up for a year in a cold sanctuary; or be smothered in the Tower; or run all the many uncomfortable risks of all these poor royal children. The greater a man or woman is, the more terrible are the falls from greatness, as in the case of the most unhappy of all queens, Marie Antoinette. To be a good king a man must be far better and wiser than other men, far more clever too; if he is not, he does more mischief, and probably has to bear more misfortunes, like Richard II., than any ordinary person. When we read about kings like Charles II., who only lived to amuse himself; or Charles VII. of France, who was little better – and not nearly so amusing – and think how many people far fitter to be kings died for these unworthy princes, we begin to wonder at kingship, at making a man king merely because he is his father's son. However, to consider thus is to consider too curiously, and certainly the lives of princes and princesses have been full of great adventures, and are rather more interesting to read about than the lives of the sons and daughters of the Presidents of Republics. Nobody tries to run away with them; they have not to be dressed up as beggar boys, or hidden in bundles of hay, and their fathers never burn their books, break their flutes, shut them up in prison, and threaten to cut their heads off.

Thus we learn that there is a good side to everything, if we

know where to look for it, which is a very comforting reflection. But only a truly sagacious person knows where to look for it, if the misfortune happens to himself.

Meanwhile let British children remember that their forefathers were loyal even to kings not of the best – "at least, as far as they were able" – and that we have in our time been blessed with the best Queen who ever lived. So, as the old song says:

> Here's a health unto his Majesty!
> And he who will not drink his health,
> We wish him neither wit nor wealth,
> But only a rope to hang himself!

NAPOLEON

If you look out of your window in a clear dawn on the French Riviera you may, if you are fortunate, see, far away to the south, a faint mountain range hanging on the sea, and if you *do* see it, it is a sight so beautiful that you will never forget it. The mountain range belongs to Corsica, and under its shadow was born the most wonderful man the world has ever seen – Napoleon.

In the year 1769 two babies were born in widely distant places, both destined to spend the best years of their lives in a life and death struggle with each other. The birthday of Arthur Wellesley, afterwards Duke of Wellington, was on May 1, and his home was an Irish castle; while Napoleon Buonaparte saw the light in a small house in the little town of Ajaccio, in Corsica. Napoleon's ancestors came over from Tuscany early in the sixteenth century, and found in the island a large number of colonists like themselves, some Italian and some Greek, but all of them seeking refuge from the foreign armies which for fifty years had been trying to parcel out Italy among themselves. Though distant only a few hours' sail from its coasts, the inhabitants of the island were as different from those of the mainland as if the whole world lay between them. In Italy men were lazy, yet impulsive, lovers of beauty, of art, of literature, and of luxury; in Corsica they were gloomy, silent, watchful, living hardly, careless of everything which had not to do with their daily lives.

Their hatreds were not only deep and strong, but lasting. As in old Rome, it was the rule that he 'who slew the slayer' should himself be slain, and these blood feuds never died out. No wonder that a traveller was struck with the sight of nearly the whole population wearing mourning. Almost everyone was related to the rest, and in almost every family one of its members had recently fallen a victim to a *vendetta*– what we call a 'blood feud.' Periods of mourning were long, too, often lasting for ten years, sometimes for life. So the country was dismal to look at, with the high bare mountains shadowing all. While in Italy things moved fast, and new customs seemed best, in Corsica they seldom altered. The father was in some ways as absolute over his wife and children as in ancient Rome. He gave his orders and they were obeyed, no matter how hard they might be or how much disliked. His wife was not expected or wished to be a companion to her husband or a teacher to her children. Even if a lady by birth, like the mother of Napoleon, she worked as hard as any servant, for there was little money in Corsica, and people cultivated their ground so that they might have produce to exchange with their neighbours – olive oil for wine, chestnuts for corn, fish for garments woven by the women, from the hair of the mountain sheep or goats.

The life led by both boys and girls in Corsica made them grow old early, and Charles Buonaparte, Napoleon's father, married at eighteen the beautiful Laetitia Ramolino, four years younger than himself. Charles had studied law in the University of Pisa,

and, unlike his fellow-countrymen, was able to talk French, so that his friends looked up to him with awe, and often consulted him about their affairs, which greatly pleased him, as he loved to think himself a person of importance. He was both restless and ambitious, and in the disturbed state of the island he saw his chance for advancement. The Corsicans had lately risen against the rule of Genoa, under the leadership of Paoli, who wished to form a Republic. But his party was not powerful enough of itself to drive out the Genoese, so Paoli sent over to Paris to beg the help of France. It is curious that his common-sense did not tell him what would be the consequence of this step. The French arrived, and by their aid the islanders got the upper hand, but when the Genoese had sailed away the newcomers refused to follow their example. Charles Buonaparte had at first been one of the strongest partisans of Paoli, but he was not proof against the offer of the title of 'Conseiller du Roi,' and of some small legal appointments that were given him by the French governor. He forsook his former leader and took service with the French. Henceforward he was no longer 'Buonaparte,' after the Italian manner, but 'Bonaparte.'

So Napoleon, who was born a few months after this event, was a Frenchman. He was the fourth child of his parents, but only Joseph, a year older than himself, was living; and though by-and-by Napoleon completely ruled his elder brother, for a long while the two stood apart from the younger children, Joseph sharing Napoleon's affections with Marianna, his next sister, who died

at the age of five. The others who lived were all much younger, Lucien, the next, being born in 1775. Madame Bonaparte was so much occupied after Napoleon's birth with trying to put things straight which had been upset by the war that she was forced to get a nurse for him. This woman, Camilla Ilari, was the wife of a man who picked up a living on the seashore, and all her life was devoted to her nursling, whom she always addressed as 'my son.'

Napoleon, on his part, fully returned her affection, and was never too great or too busy to give her proofs of it. Thirty-five years later, when the world was at his feet, she sent to say that she wished to be present at his coronation in Nôtre Dame. 'There is no one who will be more welcome,' was his reply, and when she had made the journey and braved the perils of the sea, and weary days of travel that seem so strange and so long when you do not understand a word of what is being said around you – when all this was over, and the Tuileries was reached, she found Méneval, the Emperor's own secretary, awaiting her, saying that he was to place himself at her orders and to show her everything she wished to see. Oh, how happy that old woman was, and what stories she had to tell when she got back to Corsica! She had long talks with 'Madame Mère,' as the Emperor's mother was now called, and with all her children, one by one. Even Marianna – or Elise, to give her the new name she thought more elegant – and Caroline, the youngest, forgot for a few minutes how grand they had become, and laughed as Camilla reminded them of the old days and the scoldings she had given them, while

Paulette, who gave herself no airs, but only wanted admiration and petting, asked fifty questions all at once, and never waited for the answers!

Of course, Camilla had no intention of going home without seeing the wife of 'mon fils,' and Napoleon's wife, Josephine, sent for her into her rooms, and, though she could not make out a word that Camilla said, smiled and nodded in reply, and presented her with two beautiful diamonds. Most wonderful of all, His Holiness Pope Pius VII. announced that he wished to give her an audience! Camilla was the proudest woman in the world when she received that message, but at the same time she was rather frightened. Why, she had never spoken to a bishop, and how was she to behave to a Pope? However, M. Méneval, who was the messenger, suggested that obedience was her first duty, so Camilla rose up and followed him meekly into the apartments of His Holiness.

'Be seated, my daughter,' said a gentle voice; and Camilla, who had knelt down at the threshold, got up slowly, and sat very upright in the chair which Méneval placed for her. For an hour and a half the audience lasted, the Pope putting to her all sorts of questions as to Napoleon's infancy and childhood. To begin with she only answered in as few words as possible, but gradually she ceased to remember where she was and to whom she was speaking, and poured forth a torrent of recollections about the nursling whom she loved better than her own son.

'Ah, the Signora Laetitia was a grand lady, and beautiful as an

angel! Yes, there were many children to be sure, and much work needing to be done for them, but the Signora Laetitia saw to their manners and never suffered them to lie, or be greedy or rude to each other. Punished? Oh yes, they were punished; in Corsica punishments were many, but the children loved their mother none the less for that; and had not her Napoleone told her only last night how much he had all his life owed to the advice of his mother? How the poor darling had suffered when he had gone, at five, for a few months to a girls' school, and how the horrid little creatures had laughed at him because his stockings would not keep up! Did they make him cry? Napoleone? She could count on one hand the tears he had shed since he was born! Well, it was true she *had* heard he had wept a little when Joseph, whom he loved better than anyone in the world, was separated from him at that French school where they were together; but then, as everyone knew, one tear of Napoleone's was worth bucketsful of Joseph's! What friends they were, those two, though they *did* quarrel sometimes! And how, big and little, they *did* love water! If ever you missed them, you might be certain they were bathing in one of the streams that came down from the mountains, and even when they were being driven in state to see their noble relations the boys would be sure to wriggle out of the carriage and jump into the river with their clothes on!'

Not since he was a boy himself had the Pope been so well amused, but all kinds of important people were waiting to see him, and very unwillingly he must put a stop to Camilla's

interesting talk. So, reaching some chaplets and rosaries from a table beside him, he held them out to her, and signing her to kneel before him, he gave her his blessing. A few days after the great ceremony Camilla returned to Corsica laden with gifts, and richer by a pension and many vineyards from 'Napoleone.'

Like other Corsican ladies Laetitia Bonaparte knew nothing of books, probably not even as much as her friend, the mother of Madame Junot, who had only read one in her whole life, and that was the 'Adventures of Telemaque,' which perhaps accounts for her never wishing to read another! She wrote very badly, and could not speak even her own language, which was Italian, without making many mistakes, and in this Napoleon resembled her. In spite of all his wars, of his reading, of the people he came in contact with, he never succeeded in learning either German or English, and was forced to speak Spanish through an interpreter.

It was this inability to 'pick up' languages which made him feel so dreadfully lonely when, in 1778, he and Joseph were taken by their father to France, and placed at school at Autun. Neither of them knew a word of French, but Joseph soon managed to learn enough to make himself understood, while Napoleon was tongue-tied. For five months they were left together, and then the younger boy, who was nine, was removed to the great military school of Brienne, in Champagne, for which the King had given his father a nomination. It was on this occasion that he shed the 'few tears' of which Camilla had told the Pope. Poor little boy! he had no one he could speak to, and hated games unless they

had to do with soldiers. His schoolfellows did not like him, and thought him sulky because he spent most of his time by himself. Occasionally he wrote home, but letters to Corsica cost nineteen sous apiece, and he knew that there was not much money to spare for postage.

Now and then he sent a letter to Joseph, in which he begs him to do his work and not be lazy; and once he writes to his uncle pointing out that it would be a pity to make Joseph into a soldier, for he would be no good in a fight. And as to this Napoleon could speak with certainty, for in all their boyish quarrels Joseph was never known to return a blow. One friend he did have, Bourrienne, in after-years his military secretary, who entered Brienne only a month after he did, and has written memoirs of his own life. But the rest of the boys stood aloof, though Napoleon seems to have got on better with the masters. When he had been at Brienne four years, his father again returned to France to place Marianna, who was six, at school at St. Cyr, near Paris, and Lucien, who was eight, at Brienne. Napoleon was glad to see his father, who died about fifteen months later; but he and Lucien were, of course, far apart in the school, and, what was more important, they never got on together, so that Napoleon was not much less lonely than before. Besides, he was fourteen now, and would soon be going to the military school in Paris.

That winter it was very cold, and snow fell heavily in Champagne. In England it would have been welcomed heartily by the boys, who would have spent hours in snowballing each other;

but the masters at Brienne never thought of this, and gave orders that exercise was to be taken in the big hall of the college. Now the hall, which only had a fire at one end, looked very dreary, and nobody felt inclined to play. The older boys stood round the chimney and the younger ones peered disconsolately out of the windows, hoping in vain to catch a glimpse of blue sky. Suddenly young Bonaparte left the fireplace where he had been leaning, and touched Bourrienne on the shoulder.

'I am not going to stay here,' he said. 'Let us go and make a snow castle, and besiege it. Who will come?'

'I,' and 'I,' and 'I,' they all shouted, and in a moment they were all gathered round Napoleon in the courtyard, begging him to tell them what to do.

'Get as many shovels as you can find in the tool house, and we will make a castle,' he answered. 'A proper castle with a keep, and a donjon and battlements. Then we must dig some trenches for cover. When we have finished we must garrison the castle, and I will lead the attacking party.' Unfortunately, the spades and shovels left by the gardeners only numbered about one to every fifteen or twenty boys, so they had to take them in turns, the others using any tools they could find, or even their own hands. All the afternoon they worked without a moment's pause, and at sunset, just before the bell for lessons sounded, the castle was finished. That night, when the lights were put out in their cold dormitory, they asked each other anxiously, before they went to sleep, if they were *quite* sure that it did not feel any warmer. It

would be dreadful to wake up and to find that their beautiful castle had crumbled away! Never before had there been so little difficulty in getting out of bed as when the boys woke up the next morning. No, it was certainly not warmer; in fact, it was a good deal colder, and their fingers were so frozen that they could hardly fasten the buttons of their uniforms, but their faces were rosy and smiling as they trooped down the stairs. At the classes they were more attentive than usual, and no pranks were played; nothing must be done which could earn them a punishment, or risk their being deprived of that glorious sport. So when the hour of recreation came the whole school filled the courtyard.

Deeply though he loved his military duties, Napoleon could not rest away from Corsica, and in the autumn he again asked for leave from his long-suffering colonel. He found the island in even a worse condition than when he had last left it, for parties were more numerous and hatred fiercer. More than once Napoleon narrowly escaped with his life, which, by all the laws of war, he had really forfeited as a deserter by long outstaying his leave. But this did not trouble Napoleon. With France upset, with 'Paris in convulsions,' and with the war with the allied Powers on the point of breaking out, no one was likely to inquire closely into the conduct of an unimportant young soldier. Besides, rumours had reached the island that the school of St. Cyr would shortly be closed, and his mother was anxious about Marianna, who was still a pupil there. Clearly his best plan was to go to Paris, and to Paris he went in May 1792, hoping to be allowed quietly

to take his old place in the regiment. Scarcely had he arrived when, walking in the street, watching all that passed and saying nothing, he came upon his old friend Bourrienne, from whom he had parted eight years before. The young men were delighted to meet, and spent their time making plans for the future. 'He had even less money than I,' writes Bourrienne, 'and that was little enough! We formed a scheme for taking some houses that were being built, and subletting them at a higher rate. But the owners asked too much, and we were forced to give it up. Every day he went to seek employment from the Minister of War, and I from the Foreign Office.'

Towards the end of June they both visited Marianna at St. Cyr, and from her Napoleon learned that the school was almost certain to be closed or totally changed in its institutions, and the girls returned to their relations without the present of 3,000 francs (120*l.*) usually given to them when they left. It is curious to think that at that time, when girls grew up so early and married so young, they were expected to remain at St. Cyr till they were twenty. Marianna was at this time sixteen, 'but,' says Napoleon in a letter to Joseph at Ajaccio, 'not at all advanced for her age, less so, indeed, than Paoletta. It would be impossible to marry her without having her at home for six or eight months first, but if you see any distant prospect of finding her a suitable husband, tell me, and I will bring her over. If not, she had better stay where she is till we see how things turn out. Still, I cannot help feeling that if she remains at St. Cyr for another four years she will be

too old to adapt herself to life in Corsica, while now she will glide into its ways almost without noticing them.' In the end St. Cyr was closed, and Marianna threw off the white cap which the girls so hated because its fashion dated back to the time of the foundress, Madame de Maintenon, and set out with her brother for Corsica. She was a dull and rather disagreeable young lady, with a great notion of her own importance, and a bad temper. Some of the new ideas, especially those of the superiority of women over men, had reached her ears in a confused way, and had readily been adopted by her. She spent hours in talking over these with Lucien, her next brother, a youth of rather peculiar disposition, who did not get on with the rest.

But all this happened in the autumn, and meanwhile Napoleon stayed in Paris, observing the course of events and roaming the streets with Bourrienne. One day they saw collected near the Palais Royal a crowd of five or six thousand men, dirty, ragged, evil-faced, and with tongues as evil. In their hands were guns, swords, knives, axes, or whatever they could seize upon, and, shouting, screaming, and gesticulating, they made their way towards the Tuileries. 'Let us follow those brutes,' said Bonaparte, and, taking a short cut, they reached the garden terrace which overlooks the Seine, and from there they watched terrible scenes. 'I could hardly describe the surprise and horror they excited in him,' writes Bourrienne, 'and when at length the King appeared at a window, wearing the Red Cap of Liberty which had been thrust on his head by one of the mob, a cry broke

from Napoleon:

'Why did they ever let these beasts enter?' he exclaimed, heedless of who might hear him. 'They should have mown down five hundred of them with the guns, and the rest would have run away.' 'They don't know what they are doing,' he said to Bourrienne a few hours after when they were sitting at dinner in a cheap restaurant. 'It is fatal to allow such things to pass unpunished, and they will rue it bitterly.' And so they did; for the 10th of August was soon to come, and after that the September massacres of nobles and great ladies.

With feelings like these – feelings often quite different from the doctrines which he held – Napoleon must have had hard work to keep his sword in its sheath on that very 10th of August when the Tuileries was attacked and the Swiss Guards so nobly died at their post. He was standing at a shop window in a side street, and his soul sickened at the sight of the struggle. At last he could bear it no longer, and, dashing into the midst of the fray, he dragged out a wounded man from the swords of the rabble, who by this time were drunk with blood. 'If Louis XVI. had only shown himself on horseback,' he writes to Joseph that same evening, 'the victory would have been his.' But, alas! Louis never did the thing that was wisest to do. Eager as he was to get away, Napoleon had to linger on amidst the horrors of the September massacres till he gained permission to take his sister back to Corsica. Here the state of affairs seemed almost as desperate as in France, and no man could trust his neighbour. Napoleon

now fought openly against Paoli, whom the execution of Louis XVI. threw into the arms of England, and fierce battles and sieges were the consequence. Once he was imprisoned in a house, and sentinels were placed before the door, but he contrived to escape through a side window, and hurried back to Ajaccio. Here his arrest was ordered, but warned by his friends Napoleon hid himself all day in a grotto, in the garden of one of his Ramolino cousins. Still, as it was clear that Ajaccio was no longer safe for him, he got on board a boat and rejoined Joseph at Bastia.

Furious at his having slipped through their hands, the partisans of Paoli turned their wrath upon Laetitia and her children. With the high courage she had shown all her life 'Madame Mère' wished to stay and defend her house, but was at last persuaded to fly, taking with her Louis, Marianna, and Paoletta, with her brother Fesch to guard them, leaving the two youngest children with her mother. Hardly had she gone when her house was pillaged and almost destroyed. It would have been burned to the ground but for fear of setting fire to the houses of the Paolistes. It was only on June 11, after perils by land and perils by sea, that the fugitives, now joined by Napoleon, set sail for Toulon. The voyage lasted two days, and as soon as they touched land Napoleon's first care was to find a lodging for his mother and the children, where they might rest in peace till he could decide what was best to be done. He then made his way to Nice, where a battery of artillery was quartered, and found that by great good luck the brother of his old general Baron du Teil was in

command. In happier times he would most likely have been put under arrest at once, before being shot as a deserter; but, as in earlier days, the Republic was in need of every man it could get, and he was at once employed to inspect the defences along the coast and to collect guns and ammunition. In all this the warfare he had carried on in Corsica stood him in good stead. It had taught him how to deal with men, and his eye had learned to discover the strong and weak points of a position, while his mind had grown rich in resource. As in the case of many of the greatest men, he had been trained for victory by defeat. It was at the siege of Toulon he gained the name at which for eleven years 'the world grew pale.' Revolted by the cruelties of the Convention in Paris, the town, like others in different parts of France, had declared for Louis XVIII. A friendly fleet of English and Spanish ships had cast anchor in the bay, and the French army which besieged the city was undisciplined and ill commanded. All that it had in the way of artillery was in so bad a condition as to be useless, the powder and shot were exhausted, Dommartin, the artillery officer, was wounded, and there was no man to take his place.

'Send for young Bonaparte,' said Salicetti, one of the commissioners of the Convention, who had known him elsewhere; and from that moment the tide began to turn. Messengers were despatched at once to bring in horses from miles round, while an arsenal was built on one of the surrounding hills. Day and night the men kept at work, and before a week had passed fourteen big guns and four mortars were ready, and

a large quantity of provisions stored up. Day and night the men laboured, and day and night Bonaparte was to be found beside them, directing, encouraging, praising. When he could no longer stand, he wrapped himself in his cloak and lay down beside them, present to guide them in any difficulty, to repair any blunder. And the representatives of the Convention noted it all, and one morning handed him his brevet of general of battalion. Armed with this authority Napoleon's task became easier. He had aides-de-camp to send where he would, and forthwith one rode along the coast to bring up cannon from the army of Italy, and another set out for Lyons to gather horses and food. But whatever he did, his eyes were fixed on the key of the city – the Fort Mulgrave which, it was plain to all, must be the first object of attack. Close underneath the fort a French battery was erected and manned – only to be swept clear by the guns from the English ships. Another set of volunteers slipped out from the ranks, and fell dead beside their comrades. For the third time Bonaparte gave the word of command, but there was silence. 'Call it the Battery of the Fearless,' he said, and in an instant every man had sprung forward. The battery was never without its gunner till the fort was taken.

With the fall of Toulon we must bid farewell to Napoleon, whose youth was over and whose manhood was now begun. You all know the story which ended at last in Waterloo, and there is no need to repeat it. 'He was not a gentleman,' is said by many. Well, perhaps he was not *always* a gentleman, but the hold he

obtained on France, and particularly on the men who followed him, was true and deep and lasting, for it endures even to this day. Listen to a soldier standing in the Invalides, where his body was laid when it was brought from St. Helena, with his hat and his sword placed beside him.

'Ah! c'est Lui! c'est son chapeau! c'est son épée!' he cries, the glorious memories of the past rushing over him, till he too feels that he has fought at Austerlitz and at Marengo.

> And when they asked for rights, he made reply
> 'Ye have my glory.' And so, drawing round them
> His ample purple, glorified and bound them
> In an embrace that seemed identity.
> 'He ruled them like a tyrant.' True. But none
> Were ruled like slaves. Each felt Napoleon.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF ROME

At nine o'clock on the morning of March 20, 1811, the boom of a cannon sounded through Paris. Peace reigned throughout France, yet the roar of the gun had a magical effect on the hurrying passers-by. Every man, woman, and child, whatever might be their business, stopped where they stood, as if a fairy had waved her wand over them. No one moved; no one spoke; not only did their feet seem enchanted, but their tongues too. Silently they all remained in their places while the thunder of the cannon still went on, but their faces wore a strained, intense look as if they were counting something. Nineteen! twenty! twenty-one! one and all they held their breath. Twenty-two! and a cry as of one man rung out. The spell was broken, handkerchiefs were waved, hats flew into the air, old soldiers embraced each other with tears in their eyes. The King of Rome was born.

And who was this King of Rome, the only bearer of a noble name, and why was his birth so dear to the citizens of Paris? He was the son of Napoleon and the Archduchess Marie Louise, destined, so it was hoped, to carry on the work of his father and to bear the eagles triumphant through many a field of battle. And yet, if they could have looked forward twenty-one years, they would have seen a youth dying of consumption far from the

country which he loved, after one of the saddest lives that perhaps any child ever knew.

But now, on the day of his birth, nobody dreamed of the doom that lay on him! Instead, he seemed the most fortunate baby in the whole world! He had a lady-in-waiting in charge of him and his numerous nurses, and chief attendant, the Comtesse de Montesquiou, 'Maman Quiou' as he called her in after-days; his room was hung with soft green silk curtains, with palm trees and golden lizards embroidered on them. He slept all night long, and part of the day too, in a cot shaped like a boat, with a gilded prow, and the green, myrtle broidered curtains that shaded him from the light were caught together by a wreath of golden laurels. In the room there was another cradle, more beautiful, given him by the City of Paris, which was to go with him by-and-by into exile, and can still be seen at the Palace of Schönbrunn. This cot had been the work of famous artists; Prud'hon had drawn the designs, and the most skilful sculptors and goldsmiths had carried them out. The curtains at his head were of lace, sprinkled with golden stars, and an eaglet, with outstretched wings, hovered over his feet.

When His Majesty the King of Rome was a month old, he was driven out to the palace of St. Cloud, where he lived with Madame de Montesquiou in rooms opening straight on to the gardens. Here, in the green and quiet, he grew strong, and able to bear the fatigues of his christening, which was celebrated in the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame, on June 9, with all

the pomp suitable to the occasion. Once again the bells rang out, and all along the way troops took up their places. At five o'clock the Tuileries gardens were filled with carriages, and the procession began to form. The escort of troops rode first, and were followed by the gay-coated heralds and the officers of State, these last in carriages drawn by four horses. The Emperor's brothers and sisters came next, and after them was a pause, till the Imperial carriage, drawn by eight horses, hove in sight, containing Madame de Montesquiou, holding on her knees the King of Rome. His long robe was of white satin covered with lace; a little lace cap was on his head, and across his breast lay the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour. 'Long live Napoleon Francis Charles Joseph, King of Rome!' cried the heralds when the baptismal ceremony was over, and the Emperor, snatching the child from the arms of its mother, held him out to the crowd who thronged the church. 'Long live the King of Rome!' it cried in answer: then the procession re-formed, and returned to the Tuileries in the same order.

Marie Louise does not seem to have had the boy much with her, though Isabey, the famous artist, was constantly ordered to paint his picture, and it was his father whom he first learned to know. Napoleon had always been fond of playing with children; and before the birth of his own son, his nephews and nieces were constantly about him. Best of all, he had loved the little Napoleon Charles, son of his brother Louis, King of Holland, and Hortense Beauharnais, and Charles was never happier than when trotting

about at 'Nanon's' side. Nanon was the pet name of Napoleon. Together they would go and feed the gazelles with tobacco – which (if strong) was very bad for the gazelles, and made them ill for a whole day after – or the Emperor would take him to parade, and Charles would cry, 'Long live Nanon the soldier!' And how proud Nanon was one day when Charles, who had been lost at a review held at Boulogne, was found wandering between the line of fire of the two armies, not a bit afraid of the guns.

Charles was a very nice little boy, and had been taught good manners by Queen Hortense. When he went into Nanon's dressing-room he did not pull about the things that were lying on the dressing-table, but sat still while he chattered to his uncle, or repeated some fable of La Fontaine's which he had learned the day before. He was a generous little fellow, and would readily give away his toys or sweets, and only laughed when Napoleon pulled his ears, instead of getting angry like his cousins, the little Murats. Every day he did his lessons, and was allowed sometimes, as a great treat, to copy out the 'Wolf and the Lamb,' or the 'Lion and the Mouse,' or the 'Goose with the Golden Eggs,' to show to Nanon. But by-and-by he had to say good-bye to Nanon and go back to his father and mother in Holland, where he fell ill and died, at the age of four and a half, in May 1807.

After Charles's death Napoleon made a pet of the dead child's younger brother, Napoleon Louis, though he never took the elder child's place in his uncle's heart. Still, the Emperor liked to have Louis about him, and swung him on to his knee at

breakfast, and gave him bits of omelette or cutlet on his fork. Louis, of course, wanted to do everything his uncle did, and one day insisted on sipping his coffee, but he did not like it, and made a face. 'Oh, Louis!' cried the Emperor, 'your education is certainly not finished, as you have not learned how to hide your feelings.' The boy stared and grew rather cross, for he felt he was being laughed at, though he did not understand why. His temper was never as good as his brother's, and he often flew into a rage when Napoleon teased him, as he was very fond of doing. One morning, when Louis was three years old, he was breakfasting with the Emperor, and was just going to eat an egg, when Napoleon caught it up, and held it out of his reach. 'Give me my egg, or I will kill you,' said Louis, picking up a knife. 'Would you really kill your uncle?' asked Napoleon.

'Give me my egg, or I will *kill* you,' repeated Louis, louder than before; and Napoleon laughed and gave it back to him, and patted his head, saying, 'Ah, some day you will be a fine fellow!'

But now that he had a son of his own, who would by-and-by inherit the Empire he had created and tread in his footsteps, Napoleon could not make enough of him. He, too, came to breakfast, and, much to Madame de Montesquiou's disgust, the Emperor would dip his fingers in the red wine he was drinking, and give it to the baby to suck. The King of Rome would shrink away in terror from the bunch of nodding plumes on his mother's bonnet, but he smiled and crowed when his father lifted him in the air. Sometimes, however, the play got too rough, and the child

would screw up the corners of his mouth and begin to cry. Then the Emperor would stop and look at him gravely, and say to him:

'What, Sire! are you crying? A king, and yet you cry! Oh, that is very bad! Kings don't cry!' and he would begin to make faces, which the baby loved, and it would break into smiles directly. The boy grew quickly, and at eight months old he was already trying to walk, but, on the other hand, he was very backward in talking. As he got older, he would often manage to escape from the nursery, and, running along the passage, knock with his fists on the door of the Emperor's study.

'Open! I want papa,' he would say to the sentry, who always answered:

'Sire, I must not let in your Majesty.'

'Why not? I am the little king.'

'But your Majesty is alone!' replied the sentry, who had been ordered not to admit the boy unless Madame de Montesquiou was with him. The child's eyes filled with tears, but hearing 'Maman Quiou's' voice behind him, he took hold of her hand and looked at the man, saying:

'Now open it. The little king desires it.'

'His Majesty the King of Rome,' announced the usher, and the little fellow ran straight up to his father, sure of his welcome. No matter how occupied the Emperor might be, the child was never sent away. His father would hold him on his knee while he signed State papers, or walk up and down the room with the boy on his back as he dictated despatches to his secretaries,

or, greatest joy of all, he would allow his son to play with the little wooden soldiers that he kept on the table when planning his campaigns. In face the little king grew daily more like an Austrian, though his father tried in vain to see some resemblance to himself. But in many ways he showed his Corsican blood, and chiefly in the sudden bursts of temper to which he was liable. These were always stopped at once by his governess, who never spoilt him herself or suffered anyone else to do so. One day, when something had displeased him, he stormed and raged till Madame de Montesquiou feared he would fall into convulsions, as his cousin, Achille Murat, had done only the week before. Finding that the child would listen to nothing, she ordered an attendant to close all the shutters. The boy, astonished at the sudden darkness, ceased crying at once, and asked why the sun was shut out.

'So that nobody might hear you, Sire. The people would never want you for their king if they knew how naughty you could be!'

'Did I scream very loud?' he inquired in rather a small voice.

'Very,' replied the governess.

'Do you think they heard?'

'I am afraid so.'

At this answer his tears began to fall again, but quite silently. He made a violent effort to check them, and when he could speak, he stretched up his arms to his governess, and whispered, 'I'll never do it again, Maman Quiou. I am very sorry.'

By the time he was two years old the little king had a whole

roomful of toys of every sort: there was a drum, mounted in silver, that Napoleon had given him on his first birthday, before the ill-fated army started for Russia; there was a top in an ivory frame, and a Polish lancer who could move his legs; there was a wonderful pearl and enamel box, with a locket inside, and out of the locket a bird jumped and sang. The King of Rome cherished them all; but best he loved a woolly sheep with a velvet collar and golden bells. He would play with this sheep for hours together, pretending it was the lamb that the wicked wolf was trying to catch, as told in his favourite story. When he went out, he had two real white sheep to draw him, in a beautiful little carriage given him on his birthday by his aunt, Caroline Murat, and in this he drove along the riverside terrace of the Tuileries, dressed in white muslin and lace, with the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour peeping out of the folds. And the Parisians were always delighted to see him, and at the bidding of his governess he smiled and waved his hand, for the Emperor was most particular about his manners. He was also anxious that the child should grow up as strong and hardy as he himself had done, so every day, whatever the weather, the little prince drove out in his carriage, with a merino pelisse over his muslin frock, and a pink or blue loose coat on top. The Empress thought it a pity, and feared her son might catch cold, but in this matter Napoleon had his way.

Long before this the château at Meudon had been prepared as a sort of school for the Imperial children; if indeed the King of Rome should have any brothers or sisters. It was a rest for

Napoleon to turn from the thoughts of war, and to plan every detail of the education that was to be given to his son. He collected a library of 6,000 volumes, which it would be years before the boy could read or understand. After the fashion of the day he ordered a dinner-service to be made at the manufactory at Sèvres, and each of the seventy plates contained a lesson. Eleven of them were painted with scenes from Roman history, thirty-two with famous victories of the French; while the rest were covered with pictures of sun, moon, and stars, or birds, beasts, and fishes. His rooms were hung with blue velvet, and the backs of the chairs and sofas, as well as the walls, were covered with drawings of the most celebrated Roman buildings. It was in the same spirit that Madame de Genlis desired to teach Roman history to her two pupils, Louis Philippe and his sister, only she wished to have the events woven into tapestries, which would have taken even longer to make than the dinner-set and have been still more costly.

So the little prince was sent, with his governesses and his nurses and his own staff of servants, to Meudon, and Madame de Montesquiou wrote constant reports of him to his parents at the Tuileries. At fourteen months he had for dinner soup, beef, chicken, and pudding; at least these things appeared on his table, though most likely he was not allowed to eat them all. Directly the dinner was ready, the dishes were placed in a large box, which was carefully locked by the head cook, who gave it to a footman, and by him it was carried to the prince's apartments, where the

box was unlocked by Madame de Montesquiou with a second key. These precautions dated back from many centuries, when poison, or rather the fear of it, played so large a part in the life of Courts. Certainly nobody wanted to poison the poor little King of Rome, and if they had, they would hardly have liked to face the consequences! Instead, he was adored by all his attendants, as a good-tempered, healthy baby generally is. They loved to stand and peep through the door, when 'Maman Quiou' was not looking, and watch him staggering and tumbling about on the mattresses, three feet thick, that were spread in his rooms, so that he might learn to walk without hurting himself; and they would wait behind the curtains to see him start for his drive, with his two white sheep beautifully combed and curled, the golden bells of their collars tinkling as they went.

For some months the baby and his household remained at Meudon with his governess, while the Emperor had begun the fatal war with Russia, and the Empress was enjoying herself at Dresden with her father, Francis II. Madame de Montesquiou writes her reports to the Emperor as usual, and no matter how busy he is, he never fails to answer. Sometimes these letters are accompanied by a bust or a miniature, and by-and-by Marie Louise herself sends a full-length portrait of him by Gérard, which arrives on September 6, 1812, the day of the battle of the Moskowa. For an instant Russia ceases to exist for Napoleon: the world holds nothing but a little boy in a white frock. 'Summon my generals,' he says, and they come crowding into his tent, where

the portrait of the King of Rome stands upon a rough table. As they look the Emperor turns to them with a wave of his hand. 'Gentlemen, if my son were fifteen years old instead of eighteen months, it is not only in his portrait that he would be present to-day.' Then, steadying his voice, which had trembled as he spoke, he added, 'Take it away; it is too soon for him to look upon a field of battle.'

It was on December 18 that the Emperor, ill and dejected, returned to France, leaving the remnant of his army behind him, to struggle with the horrors of the retreat. He knew too well that at the first sign of weakness and defeat the hatreds that his despotism had sown all over Europe would spring in scores from the earth, armed to the teeth, and for the first time in his career the thought entered like iron into his soul that the star in which he so firmly believed might be setting. Could anything be done, he wondered, in case, in case – it was as well to be prepared for everything. Yes, that was it! His son must be crowned Emperor by Pope Pius the Seventh, who was still a prisoner at Fontainebleau, and then, if abdication was forced upon himself, his dynasty would still sit on the throne of France. But though the Pope did not refuse when Napoleon arrived unexpectedly at Fontainebleau, and even allowed the day for the ceremony to be fixed, he made various difficulties, and in the end retracted altogether the consent which had been unwillingly wrung from him.

While his father was thus mapping out his future career,

the little prince was living happily at St. Cloud with Madame de Montesquiou. In April, just after he had passed his second birthday, a great event happened – he put on his first pair of trousers, and though they were only made of muslin, his nurses were as proud as if they had been a pair of jack boots! Nobody, they said, and it was quite true, would have taken him for less than three, or even four, but still it was strange that so quick and lively a child should be so slow in talking.

'Maman Quiou' agreed with them. It was very strange, but perhaps he needed a friend of his own age, to play and even quarrel with. So she made inquiries among the prince's attendants and chose the son of a Madame Froment, about a year older than the prince, a good-tempered and well-behaved boy who knew nothing about rank, only that they were two little boys together. What fun they had on their ponies, those two! and though of course they never went out without grooms to lead them, they both felt as great as ever Napoleon had done after Marengo or Austerlitz! Did they not wear the uniforms of Mamelouks or Turkish guards; and did not the people smile and bow as they passed, and the children look after them with envy? In the company of little Froment the King of Rome soon found his tongue, and when on Sundays ministers and marshals flocked to pay their court, he was able to stammer a few polite words taught him by his governess. On these occasions he was always dressed in a smart uniform, which soon became his daily costume. He was either a Lancer, or a Grenadier, or a National Guard,

and every Sunday he drove round the park and looked at the waterfalls which were always a joy to him. Once, as a special favour, a girls' school was allowed to stand in the hall of the palace and watch him go by! They gazed silent and awe-stricken at the fortunate baby, but when they got out into the air once more, they chattered like magpies about his golden hair and his lovely clothes, and his pretty manners. 'Oh! how nice to be a king,' they said.

Of course he was much too little to read any of the books his father provided for him, but he soon learned to know his letters, and to point out which was Cæsar and which Henri IV. Fairy tales were strictly forbidden to him; they were 'useless,' his father said, and the boy who had begun his life like a fairy prince ended it early in the grimmest of realities.

At the moment that the King of Rome was born Napoleon's power was at its height. One by one he had forced the nations of Europe to bow to his yoke, or to accept his alliance, except England, which still defied him, and Spain and Portugal that with her help were shaking themselves free of the chains that bound them. But soon there were signs that the vast Empire was about to crumble. Russia was the first to rebel, and the campaign against her in 1812 was full of disasters. The people did not hesitate to set fire to their beloved city of Moscow, rather than allow it to fall into the hands of the invaders, and its stores were destroyed and its fire engines broken. In November began the retreat amidst the winter snows. Thousands of French soldiers died from cold and

exposure, while, to add to the horrors, the Russian army hung on the rear, and harassed them at every step. At the news of each check to the French arms the hearts of Napoleon's many enemies beat faster, and soon it grew plain that he would have to fight not only Prussia and Russia, but his present ally Austria, and England, Portugal, and Spain: and that on the victory depended, not his supremacy in Europe, but his hold over France. Still, he had faith in his star, and in his soldiers, and shut out all doubts from his mind as he made his preparations.

It was on January 23, 1813, that, wearing the uniform of the National Guard, the King of Rome was carried by Madame de Montesquiou into the Salle des Maréchaux in the Tuileries, which was filled with the officers of the regiment. The Emperor signed to the governess to put the child on the ground, and, placing him by his side, advanced with the Empress into the middle of the room. 'I am on the eve of starting to lead my army to fresh victories,' he said, 'and I leave my wife and son to your care. Will you defend them? Say! will you defend them? Can I trust you; will you defend them?' A great shout answered him; then, snatching up the boy, he carried him down to the Place du Carrousel where the privates were assembled, crying, 'Long live the Emperor! Long live the King of Rome!' The boy waved his hand and smiled, and Napoleon smiled also. 'He knows you are my friends,' he said, and the shouts grew louder than before.

All that year, while Napoleon was desperately fighting the allied army in order to retain the Empire that was slipping from

him, his son was living quietly with 'Maman Quiou,' who did her best to train him for the position she was beginning to doubt that he would ever occupy. In spite of the care which she had exercised to treat him as an ordinary child, and the blows that had been given and taken by little Froment, it had naturally proved impossible to prevent foolish people from flattering and indulging him. 'As papa is away I am master,' he once said, not knowing that the 'master' was no longer himself or his father, but the Allies, for Napoleon's star had set at last. He was beaten.

Marie Louise and her son were sent to Blois, where they remained for a short time, the Empress, who was wholly Austrian at heart, nourishing hopes of a kingdom to be created for her by her father, Francis II. In vain did Méneval, the Secretary, and Madame de Montesquiou urge her to join her husband at Fontainebleau, and stand by him when he signed, on April 13, the act of abdication. To take her share in any trouble was never the way of Marie Louise; but she seems to have been satisfied when she learned that she was still to be called 'Empress,' and to have the duchies of Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla as her dowry. As for accompanying Napoleon to the island of Elba, which had been chosen for his prison, it never so much as occurred to her. The 'General,' as she henceforth called him, had passed out of her life. Scraps of conversation and anxious looks caused the little boy, 'King of Rome' no more, but 'Prince of Parma,' to feel that something terrible was in the air, something that had to do with himself and his father and mother, and he soon found out what

it was. 'Blücher is my enemy,' he said one day to his governess, and on his way to Vienna he remarked to one of his attendants, 'Louis XVIII. has taken papa's place, and has kept all my toys, but he must be made to give them up,' while another time he added sadly, 'I see that I am not a king any more, as I have no pages.'

It was at the château of Rambouillet, not far from Pau, that Marie Louise met her father, whom she welcomed with pure delight, as if the visit had been only one of pleasure. The arrangements for the journey to Vienna were soon made, and her son's attendants chosen. They were to be Madame de Montesquiou, who left her family behind so that the little prince might not feel himself forsaken; Madame Soufflot, and her daughter Fanny, a girl of fifteen, who, the boy thought, made a better playfellow than his friend Froment, from whom he was now parted; Madame Marchand, his nurse; and Gobereau, the valet, with his wife and little son. Most of his possessions were, as he said, left behind for Louis XVIII., but he was allowed to take with him to the country palace of Schönbrunn the wonderful cradle given him by the City of Paris, and some of his favourite toys, selected by himself. How hard it was to know what to choose out of those multitudes of beautiful things. 'Oh! I can't leave *that!* I must take *that!*' he would cry, as his nurses and governesses pulled out one toy after another, and it was very difficult to make him understand that he could not take them all. At length, after many tears, a few were put aside: two wooden horses, a stable, a grenadier, a hussar, a cow and a milkmaid,

a Turk playing on a mandoline, a grocer's shop – these and a few others were what he took with him, but dearer than all were his little carriage drawn by the sheep, and a hundred and fifty pebbles which he had collected himself.

He travelled in a carriage with Madame de Montesquiou, as his mother soon grew tired of him, and much preferred the company of her lady-in-waiting, Madame de Montebello. It was a long journey, and they did not travel fast, so that it was the end of May before they reached Schönbrunn. There the child began to feel as if he was a king again, so warm was the welcome of the people, who were charmed with his fair hair and merry smile. Indeed, though he did not forget his father, and often asked about him, he was quite happy for a few months, surrounded by his French friends who so dearly loved him. By this time he could read, and every morning after he got up and had had some coffee and rolls, he learned a little history and geography, with Gobereau, the valet's son, as a companion in his studies. When these were finished, an Italian master came and taught him the Italian names of the things in the room and short sentences, and *he* was followed by a German, whom the child did not like as well. After the German took leave of him, his playtime began, and he had great games at soldiers with himself and Fanny Soufflot on one side, and his little uncle the Archduke Francis and Gobereau on the other. From his earliest years war had been a passion with him; guns never frightened him, and military music made him dance with excitement. Little though he knew of his father

– for his Austrian tutors did not encourage conversation about Napoleon – he was at any rate aware that he had been a great general, and the older the prince grew, the more ardently he longed to tread in his footsteps. But the Revolution, which had given Napoleon his chance, was past and gone, though perhaps if the Eaglet (as the prince was called) had inherited his father's genius, he would have made an opportunity for himself. But he had not genius, only ambition; and the circumstances of his life were against him.

One March morning the news flashed through Europe that Napoleon had landed in France from Elba, and that with every fresh day many thousands joined his standard. Not for one moment did Marie Louise think of joining him, or of watching with any feeling but that of dismay the struggle which was yet to come. Her child was hurriedly removed from Schönbrunn into Vienna itself, so that he should run no risk of being carried off by his father's friends. To make all safer, his grandfather, Francis II., ordered Madame de Montesquiou to deliver the boy to him, and to return at once to her own country, though as a matter of fact she was kept in a sort of confinement till the battle of Waterloo had decided the fate of Napoleon and his son.

Madame de Montesquiou heard the command with a feeling of despair. For four years her life had been absorbed in that of the prince as it had never been absorbed in that of her own children. From seven in the morning, when he got up, to the time that he went to bed, he was scarcely out of her presence for half an hour.

During these four years he had been of more importance to her than anything in the world, not only from duty, but from love, and he knew it, and came to her for everything. It would have been hard enough to have parted from him had they still been in France – had Napoleon been there to watch over and protect him – but it was a thousand times more bitter to leave him alone, for he *was* alone, though his mother and his grandfather were both in Vienna.

Sorely though the boy wept at parting with 'Maman Quiou' there still remained the Soufflots and Marchand, the nurse, to console him, and they did their best. New games were invented for him and wonderful stories were told him, and when he grew tired of them he would go to Méneval, who knew all about soldiers, and could show him how they advanced to cross a river or besiege a fort. But by-and-by there came about him a strange lady whom he did not like, and who did not seem to like him either. She gave orders to Madame Soufflot and to Fanny, who curtsied and turned red, and said as little as possible; but though after she had gone they went back to their games, they did not enjoy them as heartily as before.

At last, one dreadful day, Méneval entered the room when the lady was present, and, with a low bow, he informed 'his Imperial Highness the Prince of Parma' that he was about to quit Vienna for France, and wished to know whether he had any messages for his father. The prince, grown dull and silent during the last few days, did not answer, but walked slowly down to the furthest

window and looked out. Méneval followed him to take leave, when the child whispered quickly, 'Tell him that I always love him, Monsieur Méva.'

He not only loved him, but thought about him, and listened eagerly to what his elders might let fall, though, as long as he had his French attendants with him, he rarely put any questions to his German tutors. But soon he noticed that both Madame Soufflot and Fanny had red circles round their eyes, and could hardly look at him without crying. The prince did not need to be told the reason; by this time he understood many things. As usual he said nothing, but went straight to his room and brought out all his treasures, the treasures that had come with him from France a year and a half before. There was his little gun, his Order of the Legion of Honour, his soldiers, the veil that he had worn at his christening, the medals that had been struck at his birth. 'Take them,' he said to Fanny Soufflot; 'take them back to France.'

Now there was only Marchand left, in whose presence he had slept every night since he was born. She was only a peasant woman, and surely could not be suspected of plotting against the Austrian Court! No, but she might talk to him of his father, and keep alive memories which were better let die. She put him to bed one night as usual, in the spring of 1816, but in the morning there stood at his bedside, not Marchand, but an Austrian officer. Once more the boy understood. He turned a shade paler, but asked no questions, merely saying, 'Monsieur Foresti, I should like to get up.'

It had not been without a struggle that the friends of Napoleon had allowed his son to be set aside. An effort was made to proclaim him Napoleon II. when his father, for the second time, abdicated the French throne. But the attempt met with no response, and was, indeed, quite ignored by the Chamber of Deputies. The only result to the prince was to surround him more strictly than before with German tutors and attendants, and to discourage him to speak in French. Henceforth he was to be an Austrian, and an Austrian only, and as he was not yet five years old the task did not seem difficult. They were soon undeceived; the child did not talk much about his former life to these strangers, but every now and then he would put inconvenient questions.

'Why was I called "King of Rome?"' he asked his tutor one day.

'Because at the time you were born your father ruled over many countries,' was the reply.

'Did Rome belong to my father?'

'No; Rome belongs to the Pope.'

'Is not my father in India now?'

'Oh dear no, certainly not.'

'Then he is in America?'

'Why should he be in America?'

'Where *is* he, then?'

'That I cannot tell you.'

'I heard someone say that he was in great misery.'

'Well, you must have known that that was not likely to be true.'

'No, I thought it couldn't be,' answered the boy, with a smile of relief.

All his teachers found that he was quick at his lessons, when he chose to take the trouble to learn them, which was not always, and, like many other little boys, he would listen for hours to what was read to him, though at first he was not fond of reading to himself. However, when he was about six he suddenly changed in this respect, and was often found poring over the Old Testament, delighting in the descriptions of the wars with the Amalekites or the exploits of Samson. As for his amusements, sometimes he acted in theatricals at the Court, and in spite of his age was present at the State balls, where everyone was struck with his grace, for, unlike his father, he always loved to dance. His tutors were quite kind to him, and did their best to bring him up in a way that was suitable to the grandson of the Emperor of Austria, but by trying to make him forget the country of his birth they went the wrong way to work. His recollections and feelings refused to be stifled; he was alone, and knew he had no place in the world; he had not a title, for the Congress of Vienna had deprived him of the succession to his mother's three duchies, and now even his name was taken from him. He was no longer 'Napoleon,' but 'Prince Francis Charles.' As his custom was, he kept silence about it, but this hurt him more than all the rest. After a time, however, Francis II., who was really fond of him, saw that it was not for his own dignity to leave his grandson in this position, and

created him Duke of Reichstadt, with coat-of-arms, and lands, and a palace at Vienna.

Early in the year 1821, when he was ten years old, the Duke of Reichstadt began his studies in a public school, which were to end in a commission in the Austrian army. In spite of all his teaching he does not seem to have had a much greater talent for languages than his father, whose dislike of Latin he shared cordially. Great pains had been taken at first to force him to forget French, and to make him speak only the tongues used in the Austrian Empire, which were German and Italian, but as he grew older his lessons in French were begun again. After eleven years of study he was unable to write an Italian letter without mistakes, while his French compositions show that he thought in German, and then translated his ideas, so that it did not seem like real French at all. Like Napoleon, again, he was fond of mathematics and loved history, but best of all his drill. However idle he might be in other things, he worked hard at this, and how proud he was when he earned his promotion as a sergeant, and was allowed to mount guard before the room of his grandfather.

The prince was at Schönbrunn with his tutors, when on a hot summer morning a messenger arrived from Vienna, and desired to speak with Monsieur Foresti. Their talk was long, and when they parted Foresti's face was unusually grave, but he said nothing till the evening, when he told the boy in a few words that the father of whom he thought so much had died at St. Helena on May 5. Notwithstanding his occasional bursts of temper, the

duke's silence and reserve about his feelings had won him the reputation of coldness of heart, and Foresti was amazed at the torrent of tears which broke from him. Now indeed he was alone, with only his shadowy recollections for company, and the stories of the Emperor's greatness which he had heard from his French governesses five years before. And during these five years his thoughts had never ceased to hover round his father, all the more persistently, perhaps, from the ignorance in which he had been kept concerning him. But well he remembered how the portraits and miniatures of himself had from time to time been sent to his father to Elba, to Fontainebleau, and some to St. Helena – though exactly where St. Helena was he did not know. *That* he was to learn later, when his tutor bade him look it out on the map, and gave him a lesson on its size and produce. Meanwhile he was put into mourning, which Foresti and Collin wore also; but they had strict orders not to go near any public places, where their black clothes might be seen and noticed, as neither the Emperor nor his Court had made the slightest change in their dress. The young duke's heart must have burned within him at the double affront to himself and his father, but what must his feelings have been if he ever heard of the conduct of his mother! The letter which she wrote to her son must have sounded cold and trifling even to a child; but perhaps the news may have been kept from him that she declined to allow Napoleon's name to be inserted in the prayers for the dead, and had refused his dying wish to have his heart buried in Parma. 'It would be a fresh shock to me,' she

wrote to Francis II.

So the years passed on, and outwardly 'Napoleon, King of Rome,' disappeared more and more completely, and in his place stood 'Francis, Duke of Reichstadt.' At twelve he became a cadet; at seventeen he was nominated captain in the regiment of Chasseurs. 'The spur of honour, and the wish to merit such a distinction, have completely changed me,' he writes to Foresti on this event, which he calls 'the happiest in his life,' and adds, 'I wish to shake off everything that is childish in me, and become a man in the best sense of the word.' But he was not allowed to join his regiment, though the Austrian army was full of young officers of fewer years than his, and for the present he was forced to remain idle, and employ himself in riding fiery horses, an exercise for which he had a passion. Yet his loyalty was no whit behind that of his friends, and for the time being his military ardour made him more Austrian than the precepts of his tutors could ever have done.

For the first time since he had crossed the French frontier the Duke of Reichstadt had become a person of importance. In France Louis XVIII. had been succeeded by his brother, Charles X., and a large party of discontented people were sowing afresh the seeds of revolution. The eyes of the Bourbons turned uneasily to Vienna, where the young Napoleon stood by his grandfather's side. If the Emperor chose to send him with an army across the Rhine, who could tell what fires might not be lighted in Paris? In Vienna rumours began to be heard of plots to kidnap

or assassinate the young duke, and measures were taken to guard him carefully. There was some talk of making him king of the newly formed kingdom of Greece, but neither Francis II. nor his minister Metternich would listen for a moment to the proposal that a Catholic prince should forsake his religion and become a member of the Greek Church. Then came the news that the Bourbon dynasty had been expelled from France. Who was to be king? Was it to be Louis Philippe, Duke of Orléans, or Napoleon II.?

As if by magic fifteen years were blotted out by the Parisians, and the remembrance of the great Emperor sprang into life. Pictures of Napoleon leading his army to victory, portraits of his son at every age, beginning with his childhood, when he was a fair-haired, white-skinned boy with eyes whose keen, far-seeing glances were never a heritage from his Austrian mother, were sold in the streets, while the backs of gloves were adorned by his image. In the young man himself all his early instincts and his worship of his father's memory stirred strongly. But the moment passed, and for eighteen years Louis Philippe sat on the throne of France.

As early as the year 1828 the Duke of Reichstadt began to show signs of delicacy. Always tall for his age, of late his growth had been very rapid, and he was now over six feet – seven inches taller than his father had been – but he became always thinner and thinner. The doctors carefully examined him and found great weakness in his chest and lungs, and reported the fact to

Neipperg, Marie Louise's second husband, and to Dietrichstein, the prince's governor, a strict and stern though just man, who was not likely to encourage fancies. But with the coming winter the state of the prince's health gave rise to great anxiety. 'I am forbidden to dance this carnival,' he writes to a friend in January; yet though dancing was prohibited he was ordered a course of swimming and cold baths. One can only suppose that this was intended to strengthen him, but the intense cold of an Austrian winter seems an odd moment to begin such treatment. It is hardly surprising that it failed, and that his weakness increased as the spring advanced, and a summer spent in camp did not improve matters. At last, in 1830, a fresh doctor was tried, one who had attended several of the Bonapartes, and he was horrified at the condition in which he found his patient. The duke scarcely ate anything at all, and coughed continually, and when at length his dearest wish was about to be fulfilled, and he was to accompany his regiment into camp, his hopes were dashed to the ground by the statement of the doctor that only the greatest care could save his life.

The disappointment was bitter. As long as he could remember he had dreamed dreams, and they were all of military glory. He was to prove himself his father's son, was to carry on worthily the name and traditions that had been left him, and now – But once again he practised the concealment of his feelings which he had so early learnt, and bore his pain in silence. It was during this time that the Revolution in France took place which caused

the downfall of Charles X., and caused the dying prince to become of such sudden importance. By the Emperor's orders an establishment was formed for him, and in the spring, when he reached his twentieth birthday, his tutors were dismissed. His health was no better, perhaps even worse, but it did not suit Metternich, the Emperor's chief Minister, to notice this; in spite of the remonstrances of the doctor, the prince was again allowed to join his regiment and take part in the manœuvres.

Ill though the duke felt, at last he was happy. His military duties were well done, and, like his father, he had the genius to make himself loved by his soldiers. For a time his strong will carried him along, but one day in giving orders to his troops his voice failed him. He made light of it, and said he had strained it unnecessarily, and that he would soon learn to manage it better; but a bad attack of fever which followed shortly after obliged him unwillingly to quit the camp, and to go for a change to Schönbrunn. Here, in the country, his health improved, but in a short time the fever returned, and left him too weak to care about anything. So passed the summer and autumn; but in the early spring his health began to mend, and with renewed strength came a sudden longing for the old pleasures. The doctor, thinking it would do the prince more harm to thwart him than to let him have his way, gave him permission to take a quiet ride; but the moment he once more felt a horse under him, he threw prudence to the winds and galloped madly round the park, till both horse and rider were quite exhausted. And as if this was not enough,

he insisted, wet though it was, in going for a drive in the evening. Unfortunately the carriage broke down, and no other was at hand. He had only one attendant with him, and the officer did not dare to leave him alone in the cold, shelterless place. There was therefore nothing for it but to walk back to Vienna, but it was quite plain that the prince scarcely had power to drag himself there. It was really a very short distance, but to the invalid the way seemed endless, and he had hardly reached the first houses when he staggered and fell.

From this period his state was practically hopeless, though he would sometimes surprise his doctors by sudden if short-lived improvements. When the warm weather came he was taken to Schönbrunn and fed at first on asses' milk. But his cough prevented his sleeping; he ate almost nothing, and it was evident to all who saw him that the end could not be far off. Then, and only then, did his mother consent to come to him, and the Viennese, who had always loved the ill-fated boy, said bitter things about her indifference. But the young Napoleon said no bitter things; he only smiled and welcomed her. Even at this time, though every symptom showed that death was close at hand, his mother could not bring herself to remain with him. Short visits in the day and one before she went to bed were all she thought needful. Another woman would have known that for her own sake it would have been well to have pretended, if she did not feel, a little more motherly love, but from first to last Marie Louise had been too stupid to guess how people would judge her.

In the night of July 22, 1832, he awoke from a feverish sleep crying out, 'I am dying,' and directly after he added, 'Call my mother.' He was past speaking when she came, followed by her brother, but he looked at her and feebly moved his head. Then the prayers for the dying were said, and at five o'clock his sufferings were over.

In the chapel of the Capuchins at Vienna his body lies amongst the tombs of the Hapsburgs, parted from his father in death as he had been in life. Yet, faithless and cold-hearted as she was, his mother did not dare refuse him at the last the name she had so hated and disgraced, and he stands forth to the world, not as the 'son of Marie Louise' alone, as he had been called hitherto, but as the 'Son of Napoleon.'

THE PRINCESS JEANNE

It was a cold day in January 1528 when Jeanne de Navarre was born in the royal castle of Fontainebleau. Most of her relations were remarkable people, famous even then for their cleverness and strong wills, and her mother, Marguérite d'Angoulême, sister of Francis I., was distinguished above them all for her learning. But Marguérite was better than learned, she was wise, and she thought that her little daughter would be much happier away from Court, with other children to play with, than in travelling about the rough roads and small mountain towns that formed a large part of the kingdom of Navarre, or in crossing the wide rivers that lay between the Pyrenees and the city of Paris. For Paris was the home of Francis I., whom Marguérite loved better than her husband, her mother, or her little girl. So in a few days the baby was quietly christened in the private chapel of the château, and when she was a month old was very warmly wrapped up, and taken in a big heavy carriage drawn by eight horses to a place near Alençon where lived her mother's great friend, Madame de Silly, wife of the Bailiff of Caen. Here, in company with Madame de Silly's own children, Jeanne left her babyhood behind her. She was very strong, and very lively and mischievous besides; it was she who led the others into mischief, who would tuck up the long silk frock worn by little girls in those days, and climb trees after rosy apples, or persuade one of the boys to get up very

early and go with her for hours into the woods on the hills, till Madame de Silly and everybody else were frightened out of their wits. Nothing ever frightened Jeanne, and she only laughed at the punishments dealt out to her.

'Oh, yes, I promise not to do it again – not till next time,' she would say; and her eyes looked up so merrily into the eyes of Madame de Silly that the scolding suddenly stopped.

The only thing that ever made Jeanne really sorry for her naughty tricks was when Madame de Silly talked to her about her mother, whom the child loved deeply, though she saw her so seldom. To grow up like her was Jeanne's great wish, even when she was quite a baby; and as her mother loved the king, her uncle, so much, why, of course, she must love him too. Every now and then Francis I. sent for her to the palace of St. Germain, to play with her cousins, Princess Madeleine, who was afterwards to be queen of Scotland, and Marguérite, the future duchess of Savoy. The two little princesses were both delicate, and could not ride and jump and run like Jeanne, who was besides the prettiest of the three, so she was petted and spoilt and flattered by all, and when she went back to Lonray, she gave herself all sorts of airs, till you would have thought she was not made of flesh and blood at all, or just a child like the rest.

By-and-by Jeanne's father, King Henry of Navarre, grew tired of dangling about the French Court, where nobody took much notice of him, and proposed going for a time to live in his own kingdom in the south of France. Marguérite was herself weary

of tournaments and pageants and constant banquets, and pined for leisure to read books, and to write poetry. So she gladly gave her consent, and wished to take Jeanne with her, that they might get to know one another. But to this Francis would not agree. He knew – or guessed – that the Emperor Charles V., King of Spain, desired to bring about a marriage between his son Philip, prince of the Asturias, and the heiress of Navarre, and such a marriage would mean that the King of Spain would also be lord of a great part of France. If Jeanne even approached the frontier who could say what might happen? Therefore, to the grief of her mother and the great wrath of her father, she was to remain in France as the ward of the king. However, to make things as pleasant as he could, Francis announced his desire to betrothe the princess to his second son, Henry, Duke of Orleans, a boy of twelve, even then showing signs of the silent and melancholy character which distinguished him in later years.

The prospect of this alliance delighted both the king and queen of Navarre, but in spite of it Marguérite refused to allow Jeanne to live at the Court and be brought up with her cousins. After much talk, it was arranged that the gloomy castle of Plessis-les-Tours should be her residence, and here she was to dwell in state under the care of Madame de Silly, with a bishop, two chaplains, and a poet, to look after her education, and some other children, probably the daughters of great nobles, for her to play with.

Considering how many large and beautiful castles were owned

by Francis, it seems strange that he should have chosen such a dismal place as Plessis for a child to be brought up in. The thick forests by which it was surrounded kept out the sun, and even Jeanne's high spirits were awed by the dark memories of Louis XI. which filled every corner – by the deep holes, or *oubliettes*, through which a man might be thrust – and forgotten; by Cardinal La Balue's iron cage. She was still, in spite of her strength and cleverness, a very little girl, and she often lay awake at night half afraid and half fascinated, wondering what *she* would have thought about all day long in that iron cage, and making plans how to get out of it.

As has been said, Jeanne desired in all things to resemble her mother, and worked hard at her lessons; she learned several languages, besides the history of France, and Navarre, and Spain, and a little about that strange country England, whose king, Henry VIII., had stirred up the Church and disobeyed his Holy Father the Pope, in his refusal to allow Henry to put away his wife Katharine of Aragon, and marry somebody else. In after years Jeanne disobeyed the Pope in other ways, and taught her son to do so also; but at Plessis her sharp little ears picked up all that was said about Henry VIII. and his three wives, and her sharp little mind was horrified at the bare idea of revolting against the Holy Father. She came to know many of the poems of Monsieur Pierre Ronsard and Joachim du Bellay by heart; but best of all she liked the songs of Louis, Duke of Orleans. She even struggled to write poems herself; but she had sense enough to see that they

were not good enough to waste her time on. On wet or cold days, when the wind whistled through the forest and the old towers, she and her friends would dance in the hall, or sing songs together in the firelight.

Sometimes the castle was turned upside down by the news that the king was coming to pay his niece a visit. Poor Madame de Silly rather dreaded these grand occasions, for Jeanne was apt to have her head turned by her uncle, who encouraged her to say what she liked, and only laughed when she answered him pertly. He was amused, too, by the way in which she stuck to any plan she had formed, and, if he refused his consent one day, would begin all over again the next. Very often she got her own way through sheer obstinacy, and Madame de Silly would sigh as she looked on, for she knew that it would take some time after the king's departure to get Jeanne into order again.

And when Jeanne was tiresome she could be very tiresome indeed. She not only had a quick tongue, but a quick temper, and would despise and even ill-treat anyone who was not so determined as herself. When she was ten years old her aunt, the Vicomtesse de Rohan, came to live at Plessis with some of her children, for her husband had lost so much money that they had almost nothing to live on. The eldest girl, Françoise, had already gone to live at Pau with Queen Marguérite, which made Jeanne bitterly jealous, so that when she heard from Madame de Silly that her cousin was to be left at Plessis while the Queen of Navarre went to Court, she was thoroughly prepared to dislike

her and everything she did. If only Mademoiselle de Rohan had behaved to Jeanne as Jeanne behaved to *her* they would soon have made friends; but, unluckily, she was easily frightened, and would give up anything sooner than quarrel about it. She was lazy, too, and preferred sitting over her embroidery to joining in the rough games in which Jeanne delighted. Of course she was not allowed to have her way, and was forced, little as she liked it, to go with the rest; but Jeanne, who played as earnestly as she did everything else, was speedily provoked by the listless Françoise, and even went so far as to give her a hard slap as a punishment for her indolence. Mademoiselle de Rohan did not slap her back, but she had weapons of her own which stung as well. When Marguérite returned to fetch her on her road to Pau, a poem of 'Farewell to Plessis' was left behind, each lady in the queen's suite writing one verse. The stanza composed by Françoise, whose poetical gifts were greater than her cousin's, ran as follows:

> Farewell, dear hand, farewell, I say,
> That used to slap me every day;
> And yet I love the slapper so,
> It breaks my heart that I must go!

No doubt Queen Marguérite heard all the story from Madame de Silly, and scolded her daughter, and no doubt also that when Jeanne recovered her temper she felt very much ashamed of her rudeness. All her life she was absolutely truthful, whatever it might cost her, and when she had done wrong, and knew it,

she never made excuses for herself, but accepted manfully the punishment that was given her. But though Jeanne was pleased enough to say good-bye to Françoise, she was extremely sorry to part from Mademoiselle de Grammont, who was three years older than herself, and a very clever and decided young lady, who at thirteen thought herself a woman, and wrote some pretty lines to Jeanne on her departure from Plessis, assuring the princess that she would never cease to love her all her life, and that when they were both married, which would probably be soon, they would crave their husbands' permission to meet often.

After all the excitement was over, and everyday habits were resumed, Jeanne began to feel very dull indeed. Her lessons ceased to interest her, and she no longer cared for games, but would listen eagerly to the dark tales of cruel deeds done by Louis XI. more than fifty years before, which you may read about in 'Quentin Durward,' by Sir Walter Scott. Her mind seemed to brood over them, and Madame de Silly would gladly have welcomed some of the mischievous pranks, which had formerly been Jeanne's delight, rather than watch her growing pale and thin, gazing out of the narrow windows into the dripping forest, yet seeing nothing that was before her. When this had gone on for many weeks Madame de Silly became really frightened, and told Jeanne that if she was unhappy where she was she had better write to the king and her mother and tell them so, and perhaps they would allow her to leave. Jeanne brightened a little at the thought of getting away, and Madame de Silly, who noticed this,

added letters of her own both to Francis and to Marguérite, pointing out that if the princess was kept there much longer her health would probably break down altogether.

Jeanne was, as usual, standing at the window when the two men-at-arms rode out through the great gate of the castle. Many days would pass, she knew, before they could come back again; but still – surely her mother would listen to her prayers, and not leave her in that horrible place, where she would soon die, and *then*, perhaps, they would be sorry they had treated her so unkindly! And Jeanne burst into tears at the sad picture she had made for herself. About three days later the messenger who had ridden to Francis at Amboise returned to Plessis, and handed Jeanne a letter. Her heart beat with excitement as she cut the strings wrapped round it, and so eager was she to know her fate that the words seemed to dance under her eyes. Then she looked up with the face of the old Jeanne once more. 'I'm going! I'm going!' she cried, tossing the king's letter in the air. 'I'm going to Pau at last. To *live* there – do you understand, Madame? But first the king is coming to see me, for he has not been here for a long time, and he fears I may have forgotten him. I wonder if I have any dresses fit to welcome him, for I have grown so tall – nearly as tall as *you*, Madame la baillive de Caen.'

Madame de Silly smiled at her pleasure; yet she was a little uneasy also, for she too had heard from the king, and he had told her something which he had hidden from Jeanne. He spoke of a marriage he wished to arrange between his niece and the

young Duke of Clèves, a Lutheran prince, part of whose duchy had been seized by the emperor. If, said the king, Jeanne were once wedded to the Duke of Clèves there would be an end to the project of her marriage with the Prince of the Asturias – and there would be an end, he might likewise have added, of the long-talked of match with his own son, the Duke of Orléans! But this had conveniently slipped from his mind, and he only remembered that by this alliance he would get the better of his life-long enemy, the King of Spain. If Francis had forgotten the early betrothal of Jeanne and her cousin, the King of Navarre most certainly had not, and great was his rage on receiving his brother-in-law's letter, which had arrived some time before Jeanne's. He was naturally angry at the hardly veiled contempt with which the King of France always treated him, and felt very sore with his wife for suffering it, and for always taking her brother's part against himself. Then, for reasons of state, he thought the marriage a very undesirable one, and when he laid the matter before his council they entirely agreed with him. Unluckily, however, Jeanne was in the power of the King of France, who made hardly any secret of his intention to invade Navarre should her father, Henri d'Albret, refuse his consent. In case of war, the country would inevitably fall to the lot of either France or Spain, and with a sullen face and heavy heart Henri desired his wife to inform her brother that he might do as he willed in the matter. Of course, when once he got his way, Francis was all smiles and gracious words again, and he instantly replied that as soon as the

betrothal ceremony had been performed Jeanne should join her mother and remain with her till she was fifteen. For, said he, he considered that she was at present of too tender years to take on herself the cares of the married state. And with that prospect, Henri who passionately loved his daughter, had to be content.

It was on a brilliant spring morning that Francis set out from the castle of Amboise to hunt in the forests on the banks of the river. For a while he seemed, as usual, eager for the chase, then suddenly he let it sweep past him, and, signing to two or three of his most constant attendants, galloped down the road to Plessis-les-Tours, and was pealing at the great bell before Jeanne had any time to think of her clothes.

'Oh, Sire, what happiness to see you!' she cried, throwing her arms round his neck. 'And look, am I not tall? and a woman grown, though my twelfth birthday is not long past!'

'A woman indeed, and beautiful withal! A woman ready for a husband! Is it not so, Jeanne?' And as he spoke Francis gazed at her steadily, and Jeanne dropped her eyes and blushed, though *why* she did not know. The story was soon told; the Duke of Clèves, rich, young, handsome, accomplished, brother of the lately wedded Queen of England, was to be the bridegroom of the heiress of Navarre, just half his age. There was no time to be lost, and she must make ready to join her mother at Alençon, where the contract was to be signed. The king expected some astonishment, perhaps a little hesitation; but he certainly did not expect the burst of tears which greeted his news, still less her

'humble petition' to the king's grace that she might not be forced into the marriage.

'Why, what do you mean? he is a cavalier in a thousand,' Francis exclaimed angrily, and Jeanne could give no answer. The duke *sounded* all that a maiden could dream of, but – she did not want him for a husband. So her tears flowed afresh, and the king, finding her still silent, bade her remember that he should expect to see her in Paris on her way to Alençon in a week, and returned to Amboise in a very bad temper.

Left to herself, Jeanne continued to cry for some time; then she dried her eyes, and wondered why she so hated the thought of marrying the duke. It was not any love she had for her cousin, though like her father she felt a rush of indignation when she thought of the way she had been used and thrown aside – no, it was something quite different. What could it be? In a moment the answer came to her: Oh, no! no! she could never leave France; 'France,' which was more to her than anything in the world except her mother! And after all, she reflected, holding up her head, they could not marry her against her will – her, the heiress of Navarre, and a person of great importance. With that smiles came back to her face, and she went quite cheerfully to give orders to her maids, not knowing, poor little girl, that it was exactly *because* she was 'a person of great importance' that it was so difficult for her to be happy.

Quite firm in her resolve, Jeanne rode out from Plessis two days after, accompanied by Madame de Silly, and followed by

the chief officers of the household and a guard of soldiers. Her spirits rose as they left the gloomy woods and gloomier towers behind them, and passed into the spring sunshine, and the lovely gardens of the valley of the Loire. Much too soon for Jeanne's wishes they reached Paris, and went straight to the palace of the Louvre. After she had changed her riding dress for a beautiful garment of blue velvet, with a chemisette and high collar of fine lace, she was summoned to the king's apartments, where he stood with the Duke of Clèves. If Jeanne had not been so determined to hate him, she would have been forced to admit that he was very handsome and manly, and that he moved and spoke with the ease and grace so highly prized in the Court of France. As it was, she stared at him rudely, and would scarcely answer any of his pretty speeches, and altogether (if she could only have known it) behaved more like the naughty little girl she *was* than like the grown-up woman she thought herself to be. As was natural, nothing came of this conduct, except that the king became extremely angry with her, and Madame de Silly was obliged to give her a scolding, and show her that she would not advance her cause with her uncle, whose mind was set on the marriage, and only make her future husband to despise and dislike her.

'I certainly fail to see what I am to gain by leaving France and my own kingdom in order to marry a duke of Clèves,' Jeanne answered contemptuously; and her governess, knowing that in this mood nothing was to be done with her, left her to herself.

Later in the day, Madame de Silly was sent for by Francis, whom she found much enraged by Jeanne's obstinacy.

'You will both set out for Alençon to-morrow morning,' he said sternly, 'and you will inform the Queen of Navarre of what has happened. I will see the princess no more till she has learned to obey me.' The news of her daughter's behaviour and her brother's displeasure sorely grieved Queen Marguérite. Giving Jeanne no time to rest after her long ride, she went at once to her chamber, and begged the girl to tell her all that had happened from the very beginning. The queen listened with anger and surprise to her daughter's account of her first interview with the king, whose lightest word had always been law to *her;* but Jeanne no more feared her mother than she did her uncle, and could not be induced either to express any regret for what she had done or to promise obedience for the future. So, with a troubled countenance, the queen left the room, and sat down to write to Francis.

To our eyes her letter seems rather slavish, and as if she possessed no rights in her own child. She assures the king that Jeanne's parents 'had no will but his,' and that her father was 'more indignant at his daughter's conduct than he had ever been about anything.' This was hardly the truth, as Marguérite could scarcely have forgotten her husband's wrath when the marriage was first proposed, and even if he now thought it wiser to change his tone so as not to irritate his brother-in-law further, she was too clever a woman to be deceived in this, and must have guessed

that, strong-willed though Jeanne was, she would not have dared to withstand them all if she had not been sure of the approval of her father. The visit to Alençon must have been rather unpleasant for everyone, for when the queen was not employed in trying to persuade her daughter to comply with her uncle's desire, she was engaged in teaching her some of the principles of the Reformed religion, professed, as has been said, by the Duke of Clèves. As Jeanne was at this time a devout Catholic, these lessons only served to exasperate her further, and it was probably a relief to all three when the Bishop of Séez, to whom the queen had entrusted the letter, returned with the answer.

It was very short, merely stating that the Queen of Navarre was to arrange without delay the ceremony of betrothal between her daughter and the Duke of Clèves, and this being over they were to go at once to Châtelherault, where the actual marriage would publicly take place. As to Marguérite's assurances of grief and abasement, scant notice was vouchsafed to *them*. Though Jeanne was her own daughter, and only twelve years old, the queen felt very uncomfortable as she walked up the narrow winding turret staircase which led to the girl's rooms. Jeanne turned first red and then white as she glanced at the letter in her mother's hand, but she listened without interruption while it was being read out to her. The queen was a little surprised at this, and felt she was getting on better than she expected; but when she had ended, and raised her eyes to Jeanne's face, what she saw there froze her into silence. In a moment more the storm broke, and such a torrent

of reproaches flowed from the princess – reproaches as to the sacrifice that was to be made of her, of the misery to which they wished to condemn her, and of her firm resolve never to utter the vows which would make her the duke's wife – that for a while the queen felt quite stunned. It was seldom indeed that a mother of those days listened to such words from her daughter. At length she recovered her presence of mind.

'Cease, Jeanne,' she said, laying her hand on the child's shoulder, 'is it thus you have learned your duty to me? Be quiet instantly, or I shall have to whip you as if you were a little girl again.'

The outburst of fury had somewhat exhausted Jeanne, and she felt rather ashamed of her anger. Not because, as she told herself eagerly, she retracted anything – it was all quite true; but perhaps she had behaved in an undignified way, and in a manner unbecoming a princess. So she made no reply, but began to think out another plan, and the result was a paper protesting at being forced against her will into this marriage. If she really composed it – it is certainly written in her own hand – it is surprisingly clever for a child of twelve; but it is possible that she may have been helped by one of the three officials who were witnesses of her signature. In any case, however, it was of no use, for the betrothal took place as arranged, and the public marriage at Châtelherault followed it. Outwardly, Jeanne had resolved to accept the fate which she could not escape, but before leaving Alençon she wrote a second protest, declaring that as her vows

were only made under force and not freely, they were null and void, and the marriage no marriage.

Francis I. was much relieved when he saw his niece ride up to the gate of the castle. Powerful though he was, Jeanne's opposition had caused him to feel uneasy as well as irritated; he could not have told *what* he feared, but he was aware that a burden rolled off him as she dismounted from her horse and walked towards the great door. He left the windows at once, in order to welcome her, so he did not notice the bridegroom hold out his hand to lead her up the steps, nor the air with which the bride repulsed him. Poor bridegroom! he was having a very unpleasant time, and it was well for him that he had a charming mother-in-law to talk to, who more than made up for the loss of her sulky daughter.

By the king's orders the marriage festivities were to be on the grandest possible scale, and Marguérite had given special care to Jeanne's dress. The jewels on her long robe of cloth of gold dazzled the eyes of the spectators, and her velvet mantle was broidered with ermine. No wonder that on a hot July day the weight of these clothes felt enormous, and Jeanne had some show of reason on her side when she told her uncle, who came forward to lead her to the altar, that she really could not move from her chair. Francis was naturally very much provoked, but not deigning to notice such childish behaviour, he turned to the constable, M. de Montmorency, and bade him carry the bride into the chapel. The constable fulfilled his orders, and set down

Jeanne in her place by the side of the duke, the royal family feeling truly thankful that she had not kicked or struggled, as they fully expected her to do.

After the quiet life she had led at Plessis the splendid ceremonies of her marriage, and particularly the banquet and ball that followed it, interested Jeanne very much, though she would have died rather than show it. She even contrived to keep all her eagerness out of her eyes, and sat there, like a little wooden image, till the Queen of Navarre would gladly have given her the whipping she deserved. When the ball was over, and she was alone with her mother (in whose care she was to spend the next two or three years) she was scolded severely for her childishness, but all in vain. Not one smile could be detected on her face as she occupied the place of honour at the tournaments that were held during eight days and nights in the great meadow adjoining the castle, or walked among the tents of twisted branches where dwelt hermits clad in velvet, green as the trees, who undertook the charge of any strange knights till they could fight in the tourney. All this she enjoyed secretly, and better still did she like the fairies and water sprites who peopled the woods and hovered on the banks of the stream, though she resolutely kept silence, instead of speaking to them graciously, as she knew quite well it was her duty to do. In fact Jeanne was as tiresome and perverse as a little girl could be, but in her own heart she thought herself very grand and dignified, and the more she saw everyone put out by her conduct the better she was pleased.

At length it was all over; the bridegroom took his leave and returned to fight against the emperor, and the king and queen of Navarre took theirs also, and started for Béarn. For the first time in her life Marguérite was thankful to part from her beloved brother. She had passed a miserable fortnight, never feeling sure what her daughter might do next, and generally being much ashamed of what she *did*. But when they had left the Loire behind them, and were entering the country which 'Madame la Duchesse de Clèves' had never visited since she was a tiny child, Jeanne threw off her injured airs and became the eager, observant girl she naturally was. Oh, how happy she felt to see Nérac again, and to spend the autumn in the free wild country where the sun shone, and the wind blew fresh from the mountains! She forgot at times (in spite of her title) that such a being as the Duke of Clèves existed, and she behaved so well, both at Nérac and at Pau, during the following winter, that Marguérite used to wonder if those terrible festivities had *really* only taken place a few months ago. During part of the day Jeanne was taught many things by her mother, and learned all the quicker for having the queen's maids of honour to share her lessons. In the evening she talked with some of the members of the Reformed religion, to whom the Court of Navarre was always open. Gradually she began to feel drawn to their doctrines, and probably would have adopted them altogether but for the fact that the Duke of Clèves had long ceased to be a Catholic.

So two years slipped happily by. Jeanne, without becoming

less truthful, had grown more gentle, and more humble also. She no longer dwelt with pride on the thought of her behaviour on her wedding-day, but if she was alone her cheeks even flushed red at the recollection of it. She was kind and pleasant to everyone she met with, and would chatter to the people in the curious *patois* which they spoke. She felt as if she had lived in Béarn for ever, and that Plessis and Alençon were a dream. Then, one morning, the Cardinal du Bellay rode into Pau, and craved an audience of Madame la Duchesse de Clèves. When admitted to her presence he delivered a letter from the King of France bidding Jeanne set out at once under the Cardinal's escort, and join him at Luxembourg, from which he would take her to Aix, where the Duke of Clèves then was. A frantic burst of tears was the only answer the cardinal received; but at last Jeanne found words, and declared that she would die if she was dragged away from her beloved Pau. Her mother, whom she hastily summoned, as usual took the side of the king; but her father wept with her, and assured her that if she was forced to go on this journey he would go with her. Henri was powerless to deliver her, as Jeanne well knew; still his presence was a comfort, and in two days the sad little procession took the northern road.

Meanwhile events across the Rhine had marched rapidly, and, unknown to Francis, the Duke of Clèves had done homage to the emperor, who had invaded his duchy. It was not until the treaty was actually signed by the duke that notice was sent to Francis of the matter, and with it went a letter requesting that the princess

Jeanne might be sent immediately to Aix to take up her position as Duchesse of Clèves. The terms of the letter were of course dictated by the emperor, and were not intended to soothe Francis. The king's first act was to despatch a messenger to Soissons, to meet Jeanne, who was to rest there for a day or two, after her long journey. At midnight she was awakened from a sound sleep by a clatter in the courtyard beneath her windows, and a few minutes later one of her maids brought a message that the cardinal would feel greatly honoured if the princess would see him for a few minutes. Wearily Jeanne suffered her ladies to dress her, and dropping into a chair, waited to hear what the cardinal had to say. Nothing pleasant it *could* be, for did not every hour bring closer her farewell to France, and her life among people that she hated. Bowing low, the cardinal entered, bearing the despatch, which he presented to Jeanne.

'Read it,' she said, in a tired voice, waving her hand; and the cardinal read it. As he went on her fatigue suddenly disappeared; she leaned eagerly forward, her eyes bright and her cheeks glowing. 'What is it you say? That the king will see that my marriage – my *hateful* marriage – shall be set aside, and that I am to go at once to Queen Eleanor at Fontainebleau? Oh, what joy! what a deliverance!' Jeanne's rapture was shared by her father, and next day they travelled, with very different feelings, over the road they had just come.

To judge by her letters, Queen Marguérite seems to have been more angry at the way in which her daughter – and her

brother – had been treated than relieved at the princess's escape from a husband whom she detested. Steps were at once taken, not only by the King of France, but by the Duke of Clèves, to implore from the Pope a dispensation setting aside the marriage contracted on July 15, 1540. And as the reason given for the appeal was the fact that the marriage had been forced on the bride against her will, the 'protests' were produced as evidence, and Jeanne felt with pride they had not been drawn up for nothing. Indeed, she was bidden by Francis to write a third one, which was sent straight to Pope Paul III. But royal marriages are neither made nor marred in a day, and a year and a half dragged by before Jeanne was a free woman again. After some months spent with her mother at Alençon, she returned to Plessis, with Madame de Silly, to await alone the decision of the Pope. Here in the chapel, on Easter Day, Jeanne addressed the bishops and nobles assembled to hear High Mass, and read to them a short statement of the events relating to her marriage five years before, begging that the Cardinal de Tournon might be sent to Rome without delay. This time Pope Paul III. paid more attention to the matter than he had done before, and by Whitsuntide the contract was annulled, and Jeanne and her bridegroom henceforth were strangers.

Strange to say, even after she was set free, Jeanne appears to have spent a considerable time at Plessis – which, as we know, she hated nearly as much as she did the Duke of Clèves – for she was still there when she heard of the death of Francis I.

in the spring of 1547. She at once joined her father, but does not seem to have tried to console her mother, who was broken-hearted, and henceforth gave up the life and studies, in which she had so much delighted, for the service of the poor. Many years previously Francis had married his son Henri to the young Catherine de Medici, who now sat on the throne of France, where the King of Navarre had thought to have placed his daughter. Henri was a very different man from Francis: he was shy and gloomy, and he had not the gay and pleasant manners of his father, and his affections were given to a wholly different set of friends. But on hearing of the fresh advances made by the Emperor Charles to the King of Navarre for a union between Jeanne and the young widower, Philip of Spain, Henri bethought him of the danger from Spain which was so prominently before the eyes of his father, and summoned Jeanne, then nearly twenty, to Fontainebleau. So seldom had the princess been at Court that she was almost a stranger, but her high spirits and quick tongue made her a favourite with most people. Queen Catherine, however, did not like her; she could not understand Jeanne, or the bold way in which she set forth her views. Speech, according to Catherine, was given you to hide your thoughts, and not to display them; while Jeanne thought the queen's elaborate compliments and constant reserve very tiresome, and avoided her as much as possible. 'How cold Catherine was, and how stingy,' said Jeanne to herself. 'She did not seem to care for anybody, even her own children, while as for gratitude' – and, with her head held high,

Jeanne sat down to write a letter respecting the care of her old nurse.

Of course, no sooner did the handsome young heiress appear at Court than suitors for her hand appeared also. The king favoured the claims of François, duke of Guise, afterwards the captor of Calais; but Jeanne declared that her husband must be of royal blood, and asked Henri how she could suffer the Duchesse d'Aumale, who now thought it an honour to bear her train, to walk beside her as her sister-in-law? Perhaps, being a man, the case might not have seemed as impossible to Henri as it did to Jeanne; but one thing was quite clear to him, and that was that he could never obtain the consent of the lady, so he wisely let the matter drop. The other suitor was Antoine de Bourbon, eldest son of the Duc de Vendôme, and nephew, by her first husband, of Marguérite. Antoine was now about thirty, a tall, handsome man, and a leader of fashion; but, had she known it, Jeanne would have been much happier as the wife of Francois de Guise. For the Duc de Vendôme, though brave and fascinating, was absolutely untrustworthy. His word was lightly given, and lightly broken; his friends were always changing, and only his love of pleasure and love of ease remained the same. As to the king and queen of Navarre, *their* opinions were, as usual, divided. Henri d'Albret did not like his proposed son-in-law – he was too thoughtless, and too extravagant; while Marguérite, on the contrary, was prepared to overlook everything, seeing he was the first prince of the blood, and, like his brother Condé, an advocate

of the Reformed religion. She did not pause to ask herself how far his life gave evidence of any religion at all! However, also as usual, the wishes of the King of Navarre were once more thwarted, and Jeanne, her mother, and Henri II. proved too much for him. The marriage took place at the town of Moulins, at the end of October 1548, when the bride was nearly twenty-one, the King and Queen of France being present at the ceremony. The King of Navarre did all he could to prevent his daughter's dowry from being wasted by declaring that it should only be paid in instalments, while the queen stipulated in the contract that Jeanne should have absolute control over the bringing up of her children till they were eighteen years of age.

The future life of Jeanne, married to a man like the Duc de Vendôme, was certain to be unhappy, and the state of France, with its perpetual religious wars, could only increase that unhappiness. As far as possible she stayed in her own kingdom, and kept her son, afterwards Henri IV., living a free, hardy life among the mountains. But there were times when policy forced her to visit the Court of Catherine, whom she hated and mistrusted, and, what was infinitely worse, to leave her son there. His tutors were men of the Reformed religion, but Henri had too much of his father in him for any faith to take root, and when he had to decide between Calvinism and a crown, it was easy to tell what his choice would be. But Jeanne was spared the knowledge of that, and of much else that would have grieved her sorely, for she died in Paris, whither she had gone to attend the marriage of

Henri and the Princess Margot, a few days before the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

HACON THE KING

When little Hacon, son of the dead king Hacon, and grandson of Sverrir, was born at Smaalen, in Norway, in the summer of 1204, the country was divided into two great parties. In the south were gathered the Croziermen, or churchmen, supported by the King of Denmark, while further north lay the followers of old Sverrir, who had been nicknamed 'Birchlegs' from the gaiters of birch-bark which they always wore. In those days men needed a king to keep order, and after the death of Hacon, son of Sverrir, the great council, called the Thing, met to consult about the matter. The first king they chose died in a few months, and then Ingi, his kinsman, was put in his place. But when the child of Hacon and Inga proved to be a boy the Birchlegs declared that he and none other should rule over them. Now the Croziermen were spread all over the south and east of Norway, and, as Smaalen was right in the middle of them, a few Birchlegs went secretly to Inga, the child's mother, and told her that for a time the baby must be hidden away so that no man should know where he was; for they feared King Ingi.

So Thrond the priest took the boy and gave him the name of his father, and his wife cared for him as her own, and no one knew he was a king's son, save only herself and her two boys. And Inga his mother abode close by.

In this manner a year passed over, and when Christmas was

coming for the second time whispers reached the ear of Thrond the priest, and he made a plan with Erlend, kinsman of Sverrir, that Hacon should leave the country of the Croziermen and go north. Then they two took the child and Inga his mother and journeyed by night through strange places till on Christmas Eve they reached a place called Hammar, where they met some Birchlegs, who told them that news of their flight had spread abroad, and that Croziermen were spread over the mountains. Worse than all, Ivar the bishop was at Hammar, and he, as everyone knew, was a sworn enemy to the race of Sverrir. Thrond and Erlend looked at each other as the Birchlegs spoke. It was what they had dreaded, and little surprised they felt when next day arrived a messenger from Ivar the bishop claiming kinship with the boy – which was true – and inviting Inga and her son to spend the feast of Yule, for so Christmas was called, with him. But, by counsel of the Birchlegs, an answer was sent saying that the child and his mother needed rest after journeying, and would stay where they were till Yule was past, and after that they would come to the bishop's house. When Ivar's messenger had ridden out of sight, the Birchlegs rose up swiftly and hid Hacon and his mother in a farm among the hills, while they bade all the Birchlegs that were scattered for many miles round to hold themselves ready. On Christmas night Inga wrapped the baby warmly up in furs, and, giving him to Erlend to carry, they set out from the farm, and took a path that led eastwards through mountains and forests, and on each side of Hacon walked

Thorstein the fighter and Skerwald the Shrimp, swiftest of all men on snow shoes, so that, should the Croziermen try to capture him, he might be borne away out of their reach.

For many nights and days they tramped forwards, lying in caves or scooping themselves huts in the snow. Not a house was to be seen anywhere; and, though Inga had a brave heart, she sometimes wondered if the guides knew the way any better than she did. At length they came to a barn, and here they kindled some wood by means of a fire-stick, but that only melted the snow on the broken roof till it was more uncomfortable inside than out. Their food had all been eaten that morning, and they had nothing to give little Hacon except the water of the snow. But he did not seem to mind, and only laughed when the drops fell on his nose. He was ever the merriest baby. A day after leaving the barn they struggled through snow so hard that it had to be broken with the spears of the Birchlegs, and before them lay a farm, where they received a hearty welcome, and were given good food to eat and soft beds to lie on. Then the farmer set them on horses and gave them guides, and they turned northwards towards Drontheim. On the journey many Birchlegs joined them, and some of them brought news that the Croziermen had started in pursuit, but the snowdrifts through which Inga and Hacon had won their way proved too deep for *them*, and they went back to Erling Stone-wall, whom they had chosen king.

Now Ingi, kinsman of little Hacon, lay at Drontheim with a large army, when one day a man entered his hall and told him

that his brother, who had been hunting bears in the mountains, had seen from afar a body of men marching towards the city, and the people of the hill country whispered that a king's son was with them. 'What king's son?' the young man had asked, but that no one could tell him. There were also tales of another force from further east; but all was uncertain, so Ingi the king waited for the return of his messengers, and spread tents for himself and his bodyguard, till the men came back.

'Well, what tidings?' said Ingi, as they entered his tent.

'Here are two guides who have travelled far,' answered the messengers pointing to the Birchlegs, 'they will tell you their story'; and so they did from the beginning, and that the child in their company was Hacon, grandson of Sverrir the king. Then Ingi gave thanks that the boy had come safe through such perils of winter and wild beasts, and bade the men sit down to eat and drink, and said that he himself would tarry where he was till Hacon his kinsman was brought to him. And when the boy hove in sight Ingi strode out to meet him, and took him in his arms and kissed him, bidding him and his mother welcome, and he was good to them both all the days of his life. Perhaps, when he grew older, Hacon may have heard the tale of another little boy across the seas named Arthur, like himself the heir to a kingdom, who, only a year before the birth of Hacon, had been done to death by John, his uncle, who coveted his crown. But no such thought ever entered the mind of Ingi.

It was strange for Hacon to wake up to find himself lying on

soft cushions, and broad beams over his head instead of the stars, or the brilliant, rushing, Northern Lights. Sometimes he would raise himself on his elbow and listen with bent head, dreaming that he heard the soft pad of a wolf's foot, or that if he looked he would see a pair of bright eyes staring at him from behind a bush, as he had often done in the mountain forests. Then he remembered that wolves did not come into palaces, and, curling himself up comfortably, went to sleep again. All that winter and the next he stayed in Drontheim, and every day the Birchlegs visited him and told him stories of his father and grandfather, which the boy liked to hear, but sometimes found beyond his understanding. But in the second spring after his coming, earl Hacon, brother of Ingi, took him to his castle at Bergen, and he loved him greatly, and would say to his men that little Hacon was in truth king of Norway. That summer, while earl Hacon was away, the Croziermen under their new king Philip besieged Bergen, and the boy fell into their hands, and some thought of making him king instead of Philip. Most likely Philip knew of this, and it would have been quite easy for him to kill Hacon, as King John across the seas would have done. Yet the Norsemen, though fierce in battle, were not apt to slay children, so he treated Hacon kindly, and in three days yielded him up to Thorir the archbishop. With him Hacon lived till his kinsman the earl came back from fighting; then he went again to his house, and remained with him always either on land or sea.

Of the two, Hacon loved best being on the sea, and when he

was four the earl built a splendid ship, larger than any which had sailed in those waters. Its prow was high out of the water and carved with a raven's head, and inside there were thirty-one benches for the rowers to sit on, who wielded the great long oars. Of course it was very important to find a good name for such a splendid vessel, and Hacon and the earl consulted daily about it, but at length they agreed that none was so fitting as Olaf's Clinker. So 'Olaf's Clinker' it was called, and in the autumn the two Hacons sailed in it to the Seljar Isles, and lay there all through the great frost. Food they had in plenty, but it was very hard to use it; their drink was a solid lump of ice, and their butter was frozen so tight that many a knife broke its blade in two before it could cut off a morsel for little Hacon to eat, for the men gave him of the best always. One day the earl bade the cook bake the child a soft, thick cake of flour, and it was brought to him where he stood listening to the tales of the king's guard. They also were eating their food, and he watched them biting morsels of the hard bread and after of the frozen butter.

'Give me some butter,' he said with a laugh, and the soldier chopped off a piece and handed it to him. 'Now let us fettle the butter, Birchlegs,' laughed he, and took the butter and folded it up in the hot cake so that the butter melted.

'So little and so wise,' they murmured to each other, and Hacon's saying was told throughout the army, and became a proverb in the land. All men loved him, for he always had merry words on his tongue and took nothing amiss. But for his years he

was small, and often the Birchlegs would take him by his head and heels and pull him out, 'to make him grow taller,' they said, but he never grew above middle stature.

When Hacon was seven years old the earl told him it was time he learned something out of books, as his father had done. Hacon was willing, and spent some time every day with the priest who was to teach him. For many months the boy worked at his lessons, or at least so the earl thought, as he no longer trotted at his heels like the big blue boarhound. One evening, when the earl had come in weary from a day's hunting, and had stretched himself in front of the huge hall fire, waiting for the skald or poet to come and sing to him the mighty deeds of his fathers the Vikings, Hacon ran in.

'Come hither, boy,' said the earl, 'and tell me what you are learning.'

'Chanting, lord earl,' answered Hacon.

'That was not the sort of learning I wished you to know,' replied the earl, 'and you shall not learn it any more, but how to read and write, for it is not a priest, nor even a bishop, that I mean you to be.'

It seems strange that though both Ingi the king and Hacon the earl loved the boy truly, and that, as has been told, the earl often said in the hearing of all men that if everyone had his rights the grandson of Sverrir, and not Ingi, would rule over them, yet in this very year Hacon the earl and Ingi the king agreed together that whichever of them lived longest should reign over the whole

of Norway, and that Hacon the child should be set aside. A Thing was called, where the archbishops, and bishops, and other men were present, and they declared that compact to be good. For, said they, did not Solomon speak truly when he wrote, 'Woe to the land whose king is a child,' and how should Hacon, Sverrir's grandson deliver us from the hands of the Croziermen and the Danes and keep order in the land?'

Now it happened that on the very day on which this matter was determined by the Thing, little Hacon had been sent by request of his mother to visit Astrida, his kinswoman, and an old Birchleg went with him. Though it was evening when he returned, the sun was quite high in the heavens, it being summer, and Hacon sought at once his old friend Helgi the keen, saying that there was yet time to play one of the games they both loved. But at the sight of him Helgi's face grew dark, and he roughly bade him begone.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.