

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Raabe Gibbon Tschchow  
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus  
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke  
Nestroy Marie de France  
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht  
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz  
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka  
Sachs Poe Liebermann Kock Korolenko  
de Sade Praetorius Mistral Zetkin



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# **Recollections of the Private Life of Napoleon –Volume 08**

Louis Constant Wairy

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## CHAPTER XXII.

Towards the end of September the Emperor made a journey to Raab; and, as he was mounting his horse to return to his residence at Schoenbrunn, he saw the bishop a few steps from him. "Is not that the bishop?" said he to M. Jardin, who was holding his horse's head. "No, Sire, it is Soliman."—"I asked you if that was not the bishop," repeated his Majesty, pointing to the prelate. M. Jardin, intent on business, and thinking only of the Emperor's horse which bore the name of Bishop, again replied, "Sire, you forget that you rode him on the last relay." The Emperor now perceived the mistake, and broke into a laugh. I was witness at Wagram of an act which furnished a fine illustration of the Emperor's kindness of heart and consideration for others, of which I have already given several instances; for, although in the one I shall now relate, he was forced to refuse an act of clemency, his very refusal challenges admiration as an exhibition of the generosity and greatness of his soul.

A very rich woman, named Madame de Combray, who lived near Caen, allowed her chateau to be occupied by a band of royalists, who seemed to think they upheld their cause worthily by robbing diligences on the highway. She constituted herself treasurer of this band of partisans, and consigned the funds thus obtained to a pretended treasurer of Louis XVIII. Her daughter, Madame Aquet, joined this troop, and, dressed in men's clothing, showed most conspicuous bravery. Their exploits, however, were not of long duration; and pursued and overcome by superior forces, they were brought to trial, and Madame Aquet was condemned to death with her accomplices. By means of a pretended illness she obtained a reprieve, of which she availed herself to employ every means in her power to obtain a pardon, and finally, after eight months of useless supplications, decided to send her children to Germany to intercede with the Emperor. Her physician, accompanied by her sister and two daughters, reached Schoenbrunn just as the Emperor had gone to visit the field of Wagram, and for an entire day awaited the Emperor's return on the steps of the palace; and these children, one ten,

the other twelve, years old, excited much interest. Notwithstanding this, their mother's crime was a terrible one; for although in political matters opinions may not be criminal, yet under every form of government opinions are punished, if thereby one becomes a robber and an assassin. The children, clothed in black, threw themselves at the Emperor's feet, crying, "Pardon, pardon, restore to us our mother." The Emperor raised them tenderly, took the petition from the hands of the aunt, read every word attentively, then questioned the physician with much interest, looked at the children, hesitated—but just as I, with all who witnessed this touching scene, thought he was going to pronounce her pardon, he recoiled several steps, exclaiming, "I cannot do it!" His changing color, eyes suffused with tears, and choking voice, gave evidence of the struggle through which he was passing; and witnessing this, his refusal appeared to me an act of sublime courage.

Following upon the remembrance of these violent crimes, so much the more worthy of condemnation since they were the work of a woman, who, in order to abandon herself to them, was forced to begin by trampling under foot all the gentle and modest virtues of her sex, I find recorded in my notes an act of fidelity and conjugal tenderness which well deserved a better result. The wife of an infantry colonel, unwilling to be parted from her husband, followed the march of his regiment in a coach, and on the days of battle mounted a horse and kept herself as near as possible to the line. At Friedland she saw the colonel fall, pierced by a ball, hastened to him with her servant, carried him from the ranks, and bore him away in an ambulance, though too late, for he was already dead. Her grief was silent, and no one saw her shed a tear. She offered her purse to a surgeon, and begged him to embalm her husband's corpse, which was done as well as possible under the circumstances; and she then had the corpse wrapped in bandages, placed in a box with a lid, and put in a carriage, and seating herself beside it, the heart-broken widow set out on her return to France. A grief thus repressed soon affected her mind; and at each halt she made on the journey, she shut herself up with her precious burden, drew the corpse from its bog, placed it on a bed, uncovered its face, and lavished on it the most tender caresses, talking to it as if it was living, and slept beside it. In the morning she replaced her husband in the box, and, resum-

ing her gloomy silence, continued her route. For several days her secret remained unknown, and was discovered only a few days before she reached Paris.

The body had not been embalmed in such a manner as to preserve it long from decay; and this soon reached such a point, that, when she arrived at an inn, the horrible odor from the box aroused suspicion, and the unhappy wife's room was entered that evening, and she was found clasping in her arms the already sadly disfigured corpse of her husband. "Silence," she cried to the frightened innkeeper. "My husband is asleep, why do you come to disturb his glorious rest?" With much difficulty the corpse was removed from the arms of the insane woman who had guarded it with such jealous care, and she was conveyed to Paris, where she afterward died, without recovering her reason for an instant.

There was much astonishment at the chateau of Schoenbrunn because the Archduke Charles never appeared there; for he was known to be much esteemed by the Emperor, who never spoke of him except with the highest consideration. I am entirely ignorant what motives prevented the prince from coming to Schoenbrunn, or the Emperor from visiting him; but, nevertheless, it is a fact, that, two or three days before his departure from Munich, his Majesty one morning attended a hunting-party, composed of several officers and myself; and that we stopped at a hunting-box called la Venerie on the road between Vienna and Bukusdorf, and on our arrival we found the Archduke Charles awaiting his Majesty, attended by a suite of only two persons. The Emperor and the archduke remained for a long while alone in the pavilion; and we did not return to Schoenbrunn until late in the evening.

On the 16th of October at noon the Emperor left this residence with his suite, composed of the grand marshal, the Duke of Frioul; Generals Rapp, Mouton, Savary, Nansouty, Durosne and Lebrun; of three chamberlains; of M. Labbe, chief of the topographical bureau; of M. de Meneval, his Majesty's secretary, and M. Yvan; and accompanied by the Duke of Bassano, and the Duke of Cadore, then minister of foreign relations.

We arrived at Passau on the morning of the 18th; and the Emperor passed the entire day in visiting Forts Maximilian and Napoleon,

and also seven or eight redoubts whose names recalled the principal battles of the campaign. More than twelve thousand men were working on these important fortifications, to whom his Majesty's visit was a fete. That evening we resumed our journey, and two days after we were at Munich.

At Augsburg, on leaving the palace of the Elector of Treves, the Emperor found in his path a woman kneeling in the dust, surrounded by four children; he raised her up and inquired kindly what she desired. The poor woman, without replying, handed his Majesty a petition written in German, which General Rapp translated. She was the widow of a German physician named Buiting, who had died a short time since, and was well known in the army from his faithfulness in ministering to the wounded French soldiers when by chance any fell into his hands. The Elector of Treves, and many persons of the Emperor's suite, supported earnestly this petition of Madame Buiting, whom her husband's death had reduced almost to poverty, and in which she besought the Emperor's aid for the children of this German physician, whose attentions had saved the lives of so many of his brave soldiers. His Majesty gave orders to pay the petitioner the first year's salary of a pension which he at once allowed her; and when General Rapp had informed the widow of the Emperor's action, the poor woman fainted with a cry of joy.

I witnessed another scene which was equally as touching. When the Emperor was on the march to Vienna, the inhabitants of Augsburg, who had been guilty of some acts of cruelty towards the Bavarians, trembled lest his Majesty should take a terrible revenge on them; and this terror was at its height when it was learned that a part of the French army was to pass through the town.

A young woman of remarkable beauty, only a few months a widow, had retired to this place with her child in the hope of being more quiet than anywhere else, but, frightened by the approach of the troops, fled with her child in her arms. But, instead of avoiding our soldiers as she intended, she left Augsburg by the wrong gate, and fell into the midst of the advance posts of the French army. Fortunately, she encountered General Decourbe, and trembling, and almost beside herself with terror, conjured him on her knees to save her honor, even at the expense of her life, and immediately

swooned away. Moved even to tears, the general showed her every attention, ordered a safe-conduct given her, and an escort to accompany her to a neighboring town, where she had stated that several of her relatives lived. The order to march was given at the same instant; and, in the midst of the general commotion which ensued, the child was forgotten by those who escorted the mother, and left in the outposts. A brave grenadier took charge of it, and, ascertaining where the poor mother had been taken, pledged himself to restore it to her at the earliest possible moment, unless a ball should carry him off before the return of the army. He made a leather pocket, in which he carried his young protege, arranged so that it was sheltered from the weather. Each time he went into battle the good grenadier dug a hole in the ground, in which he placed the little one, and returned for it when the battle was over; and though his comrades ridiculed him the first day, they could not but fail to admire the nobility of his conduct. The child escaped all danger, thanks to the incessant care of its adopted father; and, when the march to Munich was again begun, the grenadier, who was singularly attached to the little waif, almost regretted to see the moment draw near when he must restore it to its mother.

It may easily be understood what this poor woman suffered after losing her child. She besought and entreated the soldiers who escorted her to return; but they had their orders, which nothing could cause them to infringe. Immediately on her arrival she set out again on her return to Augsburg, making inquiries in all directions, but could obtain no information of her son, and at last being convinced that he was dead, wept bitterly for him. She had mourned thus for nearly six months, when the army re-passed Augsburg; and, while at work alone in her room one day, she was told that a soldier wished to see her, and had something precious to commit to her care; but he was unable to leave his corps, and must beg her to meet him on the public square. Little suspecting the happiness in store for her, she sought the grenadier, and the latter leaving the ranks, pulled the "little good man" out of his pocket, and placed him in the arms of the poor mother, who could not believe the evidence of her own eyes. Thinking that this lady was probably not rich, this excellent man had collected a sum of money, which he had placed in one of the pockets of the little one's coat.

The Emperor remained only a short time at Munich; and the day of his arrival a courier was sent in haste by the grand marshal to M. de Lucay to inform him that his Majesty would be at Fontainebleau on the 27th of October, in the evening probably, and that the household of the Emperor, as well as that of the Empress, should be at this residence to receive his Majesty. But, instead of arriving on the evening of the 27th, the Emperor had traveled with such speed, that, on the 26th at ten o'clock in the morning, he was at the gates of the palace of Fontainebleau; and consequently, with the exception of the grand marshal, a courier, and the gate-keeper of Fontainebleau, he found no one to receive him on his descent from the carriage. This mischance, which was very natural, since it had been impossible to foresee an advance of more than a day in the time appointed, nevertheless incensed the Emperor greatly. He was regarding every one around him as if searching for some one to scold, when, finding that the courier was preparing to alight from his horse, on which he was more stuck than seated, he said to him: "You can rest to-morrow; hasten to Saint-Cloud and announce my arrival," and the poor courier recommenced his furious gallop.

This accident, which vexed his Majesty so greatly, could not be considered the fault of any one; for by the orders of the grand marshal, received from the Emperor, M. de Lucay had commanded their Majesties' service to be ready on the morning of the next day. Consequently, that evening was the earliest hour at which the service could possibly be expected to arrive; and he was compelled to wait until then.

During this time of waiting, the Emperor employed himself in visiting the new apartments that had been added to the chateau. The building in the court of the Cheval-Blanc, which had been formerly used as a military school, had been restored, enlarged, and decorated with extraordinary magnificence, and had been turned entirely into apartments of honor, in order, as his Majesty said, to give employment to the manufacturers of Lyons, whom the war deprived of any, outside market. After repeated promenades in all directions, the Emperor seated himself with every mark of extreme impatience, asking every moment what time it was, or looking at his watch; and at last ordered me to prepare writing materials, and took

his seat all alone at a little table, doubtless swearing internally at his secretaries, who had not arrived.

At five o'clock a carriage came from Saint-Cloud; and as the Emperor heard it roll into the court he descended the stairs rapidly, and while a footman was opening the door and lowering the steps, he said to the persons inside: "Where is the Empress?" The answer was given that her Majesty the Empress would arrive in a quarter of an hour at most. "That is well," said the Emperor; and turning his back, quickly remounted the stairs and entered a little study, where he prepared himself for work.

At last the Empress arrived, exactly at six o'clock. It was now dark. The Emperor this time did not go down; but listening until he learned that it was her Majesty, continued to write, without interrupting himself to go and meet her. It was the first time he had acted in this manner. The Empress found him seated in the cabinet. "Ah!" said his Majesty, "have you arrived, Madame? It is well, for I was about to set out for Saint-Cloud." And the Emperor, who had simply lifted his eyes from his work to glance at her Majesty, lowered them again, and resumed his writing. This harsh greeting, distressed Josephine exceedingly, and she attempted to excuse herself; but his Majesty replied in such a manner as to bring tears to her eyes, though he afterwards repented of this, and begged pardon of the Empress, acknowledging that he had been wrong.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

It is not, as has been stated in some Memoirs, because and as a result of the slight disagreement which I have related above, that the first idea of a divorce came to his Majesty. The Emperor thought it necessary for the welfare of France that he should have an heir of his own line; and as it was now certain that the Empress would never bear him one, he was compelled to think of a divorce. But it was by most gentle means, and with every mark of tender consideration, that he strove to bring the Empress to this painful sacrifice. He had no recourse, as has been said, to either threats or menaces, for it was to his wife's reason that he appealed; and her consent was entirely voluntary. I repeat that there was no violence on the part of the Emperor; but there was courage, resignation, and submission on that of the Empress. Her devotion to the Emperor would have made her submit to any sacrifice, she would have given her life for him; and although this separation might break her own heart, she still found consolation in the thought that by this means she would save the one she loved more than all beside from even one cause of distress or anxiety. And when she learned that the King of Rome was born, she lost sight of her own disappointment in sympathizing with the happiness of her friend; for they had always treated each other with all the attention and respect of the most perfect friendship.

The Emperor had taken, during the whole day of the 26th, only a cup of chocolate and a little soup; and I had heard him complain of hunger several times before the Empress arrived. Peace being restored, the husband and wife embraced each other tenderly, and the Empress passed on into her apartments in order to make her toilet. During this time the Emperor received Messieurs Decres and De Montalivet, whom he had summoned in the morning by a mounted messenger; and about half-past seven the Empress reappeared, dressed in perfect taste. In spite of the cold, she had had her hair dressed with silver wheat and blue flowers, and wore a white satin polonaise, edged with swan's down, which costume was exceeding-

ly becoming. The Emperor interrupted his work to regard her: "I did not take long at my toilet, did I?" said she, smiling; whereupon his Majesty, without replying, showed her the clock, then rose, gave her his hand, and was about to enter the dining-room, saying to Messieurs De Montalivet and Decres, "I will be with you in five minutes."—"But," said the Empress, "these gentlemen have perhaps not yet dined, as they have come from Paris."—"Ah, that is so!....." and the ministers entered the dining-room with their Majesties. But hardly had the Emperor taken his seat, than he rose, threw aside his napkin, and re-entered his cabinet, where these gentlemen were compelled to follow him, though much against their inclinations.

The day ended better than it had begun. In the evening there was a reception, not large, but most agreeable, at which the Emperor was very gay, and in excellent humor, and acted as if anxious to efface the memory of the little scene with the Empress. Their Majesties remained at Fontainebleau till the 14th of November. The King of Saxony had arrived the evening before at Paris; and the Emperor, who rode on horseback nearly all the way from Fontainebleau to Paris, repaired on his arrival to the Palace de l'Elysee. The two monarchs appeared very agreeably impressed with each other, and went in public together almost every day, and one morning early left the Tuileries on foot, each accompanied by a single escort. I was with the Emperor. They directed their steps, following the course of the stream, towards the bridge of Jena, the work on which was being rapidly carried to completion, and reached the Place de la Revolution, where fifty or sixty persons collected with the intention of accompanying the two sovereigns; but as this seemed to annoy the Emperor, agents of the police caused them to disperse. When he had reached the bridge, his Majesty examined the work attentively; and finding some defects in the construction, had the architect called, who admitted the correctness of his observations, although, in order to convince him, the Emperor had to talk for some time, and often repeated the same explanations. His Majesty, turning then towards the King of Saxony, said to him, "You see, my cousin, that the master's eye is necessary everywhere."—"Yes," replied the King of Saxony; "especially an eye so well trained as your Majesty's."

We had not been long at Fontainebleau, when I noticed that the Emperor in the presence of his august spouse was preoccupied and

ill at ease. The same uneasiness was visible on the countenance of the Empress; and this state of constraint and mutual embarrassment soon became sufficiently evident to be remarked by all, and rendered the stay at Fontainebleau extremely sad and depressing. At Paris the presence of the King of Saxony made some diversion; but the Empress appeared more unhappy than ever, which gave rise to numerous conjectures, but as for me, I knew only too well the cause of it all. The Emperor's brow became more furrowed with care each day, until the 30th of November arrived.

On that day the dinner was more silent than ever. The Empress had wept the whole day; and in order to conceal as far as possible her pallor, and the redness of her eyes, wore a large white hat tied under her chin, the brim of which concealed her face entirely. The Emperor sat in silence, his eyes fastened on his plate, while from time to time convulsive movements agitated his countenance; and if he happened to raise his eyes, glanced stealthily at the Empress with unmistakable signs of distress. The officers of the household, immovable as statues, regarded this painful and gloomy scene with sad anxiety; while the whole repast was simply a form, as their Majesties touched nothing, and no sound was heard but the regular movement of plates placed and carried away, varied sadly by the monotonous tones of the household officers, and the tinkling sound made by the Emperor's striking his knife mechanically on the edge of his glass. Once only his Majesty broke the silence by a deep sigh, followed by these words addressed to one of the officers: "What time is it?" An aimless question of the Emperor's, it seemed, for he did not hear, or at any rate did not seem to hear, the answer; but almost immediately he rose from the table, and the Empress followed him with slow steps, and her handkerchief pressed against her lips as if to suppress her sobs. Coffee was brought, and, according to custom, a page presented the waiter to the Empress that she might herself pour it out; but the Emperor took it himself, poured the coffee in the cup, and dissolved the sugar, still regarding the Empress, who remained standing as if struck with a stupor. He drank, and returned the cup to the page; then gave a signal that he wished to be alone, and closed the door of the saloon. I remained outside seated by the door; and soon no one remained in the dining-room except one of the prefects of the palace, who walked up and

down with folded arms, foreseeing, as well as I, terrible events. At the end of a few moments I heard cries, and sprang up; just then the Emperor opened the door quickly, looked out, and saw there no one but us two. The Empress lay on the floor, screaming as if her heart were breaking: "No; you will not do it! You would not kill me!" The usher of the room had his back turned. I advanced towards him; he understood, and went out. His Majesty ordered the person who was with me to enter, and the door was again closed. I have since learned that the Emperor requested him to assist him in carrying the Empress to her apartment. "She has," he said, "a violent nervous attack, and her condition requires most prompt attention." M. de B--- with the Emperor's assistance raised the Empress in his arms; and the Emperor, taking a lamp from the mantel, lighted M. de B--- along the passage from which ascended the little staircase leading to the apartments of the Empress. This staircase was so narrow, that a man with such a burden could not go down without great risk of falling; and M. de B---, having called his Majesty's attention to this, he summoned the keeper of the portfolio, whose duty it was to be always at the door of the Emperor's cabinet which opened on this staircase, and gave him the light, which was no longer needed, as the lamps had just been lighted. His Majesty passed in front of the keeper, who still held the light, and carrying the feet of the Empress himself, descended the staircase safely with M. de B---; and they thus reached the bedroom. The Emperor rang for her women, and when they entered, retired with tears in his eyes and every sign of the deepest emotion. This scene affected him so deeply that he said to M. de B--- in a trembling, broken tone, some words which he must never reveal under any circumstances. The Emperor's agitation must have been very great for him to have informed M. de B--- of the cause of her Majesty's despair, and to have told him that the interests of France and of the Imperial Dynasty had done violence to his heart, and the divorce had become a duty, deplorable and painful, but none the less a duty.

Queen Hortense and M. Corvisart soon reached the Empress, who passed a miserable night. The Emperor also did not sleep, and rose many times to ascertain Josephine's condition. During the whole night her Majesty did not utter a word. I have never witnessed such grief.

Immediately after this, the King of Naples, the King of Westphalia, the King of Wurtemberg, and the king and princesses of the Imperial family, arrived at Paris to be present at the fetes given by the city of Paris to his Majesty in commemoration of the victories and the pacification of Germany, and at the same time to celebrate the anniversary of the coronation. The session of the legislative corps was also about to open. It was necessary, in the interval between the scene which I have just described and the day on which the decree of divorce was signed, that the Empress should be present on all these occasions, and attend all these fetes, under the eyes of an immense crowd of people, at a time when solitude alone could have in any degree alleviated her sorrow; it was also necessary that she should cover up her face with rouge in order to conceal her pallor and the signs of a month passed in tears. What tortures she endured, and how much she must have bewailed this elevation, of which nothing remained to her but the necessity of concealing her feelings!

On the 3d of December their Majesties repaired to Notre Dame, where a 'Te Deum' was sung; after which the Imperial cortege marched to the palace of the Corps Legislatif, and the opening of the session was held with unusual magnificence. The Emperor took his place amidst inexpressible enthusiasm, and never had his appearance excited such bursts of applause: even the Empress was more cheerful for an instant, and seemed to enjoy these proofs of affection for one who was soon to be no longer her husband; but when he began to speak she relapsed into her gloomy reflections.

It was almost five o'clock when the cortege returned to the Tuileries, and the Imperial banquet was to take place at half-past seven. During this interval, a reception of the ambassadors was held, after which the guests passed on to the gallery of Diana.

The Emperor held a grand dining in his coronation robes, and wearing his plumed hat, which he did not remove for an instant. He ate more than was his custom, notwithstanding the distress under which he seemed to be laboring, glanced around and behind him every moment, causing the grand chamberlain continually to bend forward to receive orders which he did not give. The Empress was seated in front of him, most magnificently dressed in an embroi-

dered robe blazing with diamonds; but her face expressed even more suffering than in the morning.

On the right of the Emperor was seated the King of Saxony, in a white uniform with red facings, and collar richly embroidered in silver, wearing a false cue of prodigious length.

By the side of the King of Saxony was the King of Westphalia, Jerome Bonaparte, in a white satin tunic, and girdle ornamented with pearls and diamonds, which reached almost up to his arms. His neck was bare and white, and he wore no whiskers and very little beard; a collar of magnificent lace fell over his shoulders; and a black velvet cap ornamented with white plumes, which was the most elegant in the assembly, completed this costume. Next him was the King of Wurtemberg with his enormous stomach, which forced him to sit some distance from the table; and the King of Naples, in so magnificent a costume that it might almost be considered extravagant, covered with crosses and stars, who played with his fork, without eating or drinking.

On the right of the Empress was Madame Mere, the Queen of Westphalia, the Princess Borghese, and Queen Hortense, pale as the Empress, but rendered only more beautiful by her sadness, her face presenting a striking contrast on this occasion to that of the Princess Pauline, who never appeared in better spirits. Princess Pauline wore an exceedingly handsome toilet; but this did not increase the charms of her person nearly so much as that worn by the Queen of Holland, which, though simple, was elegant and full of taste.

Next day a magnificent fete was held at the Hotel de Ville, where the Empress displayed her accustomed grace and kind consideration. This was the last time she appeared on occasions of ceremony.

A few days after all these rejoicings, the Vice-king of Italy, Eugene de Beauharnais, arrived, and learned from the lips of the Empress herself the terrible measure which circumstances were about to render necessary. This news overcame him: agitated and despairing, he sought his Majesty; and, as if he could not believe what he had just heard asked the Emperor if it was true that a divorce was about to take place. The Emperor made a sign in the affirmative, and, with deep grief depicted on his countenance, held out his hand to his adopted son. "Sire, allow me to quit your service." – "What!" –

"Yes, Sire; the son of one who is no longer Empress cannot remain vice-king. I wish to accompany my mother to her retreat, and console her." — "Do you wish to leave me, Eugene? You? Ah, you do not know how imperious are the reasons which force me to pursue such a course. And if I obtain this son, the object of my most cherished wishes, this son who is so necessary to me, who will take my place with him when I shall be absent? Who will be a father to him when I die? Who will rear him, and who will make a man of him?" Tears filled the Emperor's eyes as he pronounced these words; he again took Eugene's hand, and drawing him to his arms, embraced him tenderly. I did not hear the remainder of this interesting conversation.

At last the fatal day arrived; it was the 16th of December. The Imperial family were assembled in ceremonial costume, when the Empress entered in a simple white dress, entirely devoid of ornament; she was pale, but calm, and leaned on the arm of Queen Hortense, who was equally as pale, and much more agitated than her august mother. The Prince de Beauharnais stood beside the Emperor, and trembled so violently that it was thought he would fall every moment. When the Empress entered, Count Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely read the act of separation.

This was heard in the midst of profound silence, and the deepest concern was depicted on every face. The Empress appeared calmer than any one else in the assemblage, although tears incessantly flowed from her eyes. She was seated in an armchair in the midst of the saloon, resting her elbow on a table, while Queen Hortense stood sobbing behind her. The reading of the act ended, the Empress rose, dried her eyes, and in a voice which was almost firm, pronounced the words of assent, then seated herself in a chair, took a pen from the hand of M. Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely, and signed the act. She then withdrew, leaning on the arm of Queen Hortense; and Prince Eugene endeavored to retire at the same moment through the cabinet, but his strength failed, and he fell insensible between the two doors. The cabinet usher immediately raised him up, and committed him to the care of his aide-de-camp, who lavished on him every attention which his sad condition demanded.

During this terrible ceremony the Emperor uttered not a word, made not a gesture, but stood immovable as a statue, his gaze fixed and almost wild, and remained silent and gloomy all day. In the evening, when he had just retired, as I was awaiting his last orders, the door opened, and the Empress entered, her hair in disorder, and her countenance showing great agitation. This sight terrified me. Josephine (for she was now no more than Josephine) advanced towards the Emperor with a trembling step, and when she reached him, paused, and weeping in the most heartrending manner, threw herself on the bed, placed her arms around the Emperor's neck, and lavished on him most endearing caresses. I cannot describe my emotions. The Emperor wept also, sat up and pressed Josephine to his heart, saying to her, "Come, my good Josephine, be more reasonable! Come, courage, courage; I will always be your friend." Stifled by her sobs, the Empress could not reply; and there followed a silent scene, in which their tears and sobs flowed together, and said more than the tenderest expressions could have done. At last his Majesty, recovering from this momentary forgetfulness as from a dream, perceived that I was there, and said to me in a voice choked with tears, "Withdraw, Constant." I obeyed, and went into the adjoining saloon; and an hour after Josephine passed me, still sad and in tears, giving me a kind nod as she passed. I then returned to the sleeping-room to remove the light as usual; the Emperor was silent as death, and so covered with the bedclothes that his face could not be seen.

The next morning when I entered the Emperor's room he did not mention this visit of the Empress; but I found him suffering and dejected, and sighs which he could not repress issued from his breast. He did not speak during the whole time his toilet lasted, and as soon as it was completed entered his cabinet. This was the day on which Josephine was to leave the Tuileries for Malmaison, and all persons not engaged in their duties assembled in the vestibule to see once more this dethroned empress whom all hearts followed in her exile. They looked at her without daring to speak, as Josephine appeared, completely veiled, one hand resting on the shoulder of one of her ladies, and the other holding a handkerchief to her eyes. A concert of inexpressible lamentations arose as this adored woman crossed the short space which separated her from her carriage, and