

to console as if he had no sorrows of his own.

The idle formality of a trial by military commissions was yet to be gone through, but his doom was pronounced at Naples, before the members of the commission were appointed, and the night of October 12th, to which the progress of our tale now carries us, was the last through which he was to live, though his trial was to take place on the morrow. His demeanour, during the four days of his imprisonment, had been worthy of his fame, and of the gallant part he had played among the great spirits of an age so prolific in mighty deeds; and now, having thrown himself, without undressing, upon the rude couch provided for a fallen king, he slept as tranquilly and well as though he had neither care nor grief to drive slumber from his pillow. But his sleep was not without its dream.

The tide of time was rolled back forty years, and he was again a child in the humble dwelling of his father; again sporting with the playmates of his boyhood in the village where he was born, and displaying, even as a boy, in pastimes and occupations of his age the dawning of that fearless spirit which in after days had borne him to a throne. In every trial of courage, agility, and strength, he was again outstripping all his youthful competitors; foremost in the race, the conqueror in every battle, already noted for his bold and skilful horsemanship, and at school the most turbulent, idle, and mischievous, of his fellows, yet winning affection from the school-mates over whom he tyrannised, and even from the teacher, whom he worried and defied, by the generosity, the frankness, and the gay good-humor, of his spirit. Scenes and incidents that had long been effaced from his waking memory by the dazzling succession of bold and successful achievements which had been the history of his manhood, were now presented to his imagination with all the freshness of reality; the chivalrous warrior, the marshal of France, the sovereign duke of Berg and Cleves, the husband of the beautiful Caroline, and the king of Naples, all were merged and lost in the son of the village inn-keeper; the splendid leader of the cavalry charges at Aboukir, Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, and Leipsic, was dimly shadowed forth in the restless boy, whose chief delight it was to scour through the lanes and across the open fields of Frontoniere, upon one of his father's horses, scornful-like the admonitions of prudence and of parental fear.

Anon the scene was changed, and the boy was approaching manhood, still wild, passionate, reckless, and daring, as before, but displaying those faults of his nature in other and more censurable modes. Intended for the church, he was now a student at Toulouse, in the name, but in reality a youthful libertine; vain of his handsome person, eager in pursuit of pleasure, in love with every pretty face he met, ardent and enterprising in the licentious prosecution of his fickle attachments and ever ready to engage in the quarrels for which such a life gave frequent cause. The ecclesiastical profession had never been his own free choice, and now the martial spirit, which was to shine so gloriously forth in after years, was already contending for the mastery with his habits of idleness and dissipation. An escapade surpassing all his past exploits of folly, was now to bring his studies to a close, and decide the as yet uncertain current of his destiny. The turning incident of his youthful life was again enacted in the captive monarch's dream.

The prettiest maiden of his native village was Mariette Majastrie, the only daughter of a peasant, who tilled a little farm of some half-dozen acres, lying about a mile from his father's house, on the road to Perigord. About five years younger than himself, she had been his favourite playmate when a boy, and as he advanced in years, the only one who could control the violence of his temper or persuade him from his headlong impulses of mischief, either to others or himself. When at the age of fifteen, he was sent to the academy at Toulouse, Mariette, a blooming, bright-eyed child of ten, wept sorely at parting, and Joachim did not altogether escape the infection of her sorrow: but Mariette was almost forgotten, or remembered only as a child, when, six years afterwards, the Abbé Murat, as he was now called, met her again at Toulouse, whither she had gone to pass a few weeks with a relative, and met her as a charming country girl with eyes like diamonds, teeth like pearls, a graceful shape, and manners by no means inelegant or coarse, though telling somewhat of her rustic birth and breeding. Despite his destination for the church, the abbé was a passionate and by no means self-denying admirer of beauty, and the charms of Mariette were irresistible. Almost from the moment of her arrival, he neglected; not his studies merely, for they had never engrossed too much of his attention, but the frolics; the boon companions and the flirtations and intrigues that, for the last three or four years, had constituted the chief employment of his time; and the ad-