

**THE LAST DAYS OF A
KING. AN HISTORICAL
ROMANCE**

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The last days of a king. An historical romance by Moritz Hartmann

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MORITZ HARTMANN

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ROMANCE**

THE
LAST DAYS OF A KING.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY
MAURICE HARTMANN.

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THE LAST DAYS OF A KING.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD REPUBLICAN.

THE sea was of a brilliant purple; toward the southern and western horizons alone, had it retained its hue of deep blue, as evening advanced glowing and even blazing with a bright flame, giving the cliffs of Marseilles the appearance of melting ore, for over them stood the burning sun of Provence, which is wont to show himself in his greatest power and splendor at setting. The atmosphere was unusually clear and transparent, and one could have seen the Corsican coast from the hills of Toulon, had not the eye been dazzled by the stream of light which poured down from the sky and plunged into the waters. Notwithstanding, however, all the remarkable light and color of an August evening, this enchanting sea seemed lonely, sad, and deserted to the inhabitants of the coast, for it afforded not a single trace of the accustomed life and activity upon its broad expanse. However attractively the placid waters might invite the fishermen, of the hundreds of white sails which usually here encompassed the land in a large half circle, there were as few to be seen as of merchantmen and packets.

The Last Days of a King.

It was easy to perceive that one was looking upon a sea from which some calamity, war or pestilence, or something of a similar nature, must have swept seafaring vessels and ships for the transportation of passengers. Here and there only, moving sluggishly along or lying at anchor, a floating Colossus was seen, from whose fore-deck cannon mouths yawned threateningly, and from whose masts waved Old Jack, the British flag. These ships, although belonging to that nation which was sovereign upon the seas, and composing a part of the navy which rode supreme over all the waters of the globe, and which alone twenty years of fierce war had left unconquered, had, as they lay thus idly by, or crept slowly hither and thither, a doleful, melancholy look, as though they had been set to watch and to act as spies.

They were here to keep guard over the coast of Provence, and especially of Toulon, and belonged to the fleet of the Admiral, Lord Exmouth. As the flight of Joachim Murat from Naples had left them nothing to do, and Wellington had marched from Waterloo to Paris, they were lying here in order to be nearer that city and more convenient to the orders of the Iron Duke, and thus form a part of the iron circle which now, for the second time, was being drawn around conquered France. In addition to this, they had in view the maintenance of a close watch over the coast to prevent anything from stealing out which they did not wish to allow to escape the vengeance of the Bourbons, and, if necessary, to support those barbarous measures which were employed with special energy in the south for the uprooting of Bonapartism. England did not consider it beneath her dignity to render the Bourbons this service, and she

had, notwithstanding her piety and conscientious scruples, to support these measures, although they proceeded in part from the Jesuits and their friend Count d'Artois, afterward Charles the Tenth, and were directed against Protestantism. Of this policy of Castlereagh, Lord Exmouth was a worthy instrument. The blood-thirsty *Verdets*, who took their name from the colors of the Count d'Artois, and who pre-eminently brought the so-called "pale terror" into being, filling the south of France with crimes and murders, regarded, in common with all royalists, and forgetful of all honor and patriotism, these Englishmen as their devoted friends and allies, while the lover of his country turned his eyes away, the more easily to repress a sigh.

Pascal Morin, therefore, felt it a real misfortune that his cottage in the suburbs of Toulon, and which was separated from the briny deep only by the country-road, should be so situated that, as he sat in his old easy chair, he must needs from his window gaze upon the English ships. To have succumbed to the English by giving up a habit of nearly ten years' standing, and removing his chair from its accustomed place, would have seemed cowardice. He remained, and only sought to aid and divert his mind by making every effort to lose himself in thought and feeling in the old histories of Philip de Comines and Joinville and the olden time. But when he read of the deeds of renown of the past, he involuntarily glanced out toward the hateful ensigns and masts of Old England, and he felt that the glory and grandeur of France had passed forever. His arm, which had been permanently crippled by a Prussian bullet, and with which he with difficulty turned the leaves of the book, fell as if palsied into his lap, in despair of the