

**MARIE LOUISE, THE
ISLAND OF ELBA, AND THE
HUNDRED DAYS, PP. 1-280**

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IMBERT DE SAINT-AMAND

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Maria Luigia

MARIE LOUISE

THE ISLAND OF ELBA, AND THE
HUNDRED DAYS

BY

Antoine de
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TRANSLATED BY

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MARIE LOUISE,

THE ISLAND OF ELBA, AND THE HUNDRED DAYS.

I.

THE RETURN OF MARIE LOUISE TO AUSTRIA.

FROM the double point of view of psychology and history it is a sad but curious task to study the gradations by which the Empress Marie Louise was, little by little, transformed from a devoted and irreproachable wife into a forgetful, indifferent, and faithless one. When she left the soil of France, her sentiments toward her husband were still honest. If she had not rejoined him at Fontainebleau, the fault should be attributed to him rather than to her. To the very end she had fulfilled her duties as Regent with exactness and loyalty, and Napoleon rendered her entire justice on this point. We believe that, when she entered Switzerland, she was still minded to go to Elba very soon. During the early days of her sojourn at Schoenbrunn she remained more French than Austrian. She greatly preferred the Duchess of Montebello to any of the Viennese court ladies; she showed high esteem for Madame de Montesquiou, M.

de Bausset, and M. de Méneval, who constantly talked to her of Napoleon and of France; she retained her husband's imperial coat-of-arms upon her carriages, her silver, and the liveries of her attendants. Her household was entirely French, and at the court of her father she was reproached with always playing the part of Empress. The Countess of Montesquiou, who continued to fulfil her functions as governess with the greatest zeal, talked unceasingly of the Emperor Napoleon to the little Bonaparte, as the unfortunate King of Rome was styled at Vienna. She taught the child to love his father and to pray for him.

The Emperor Francis proceeded slowly and by degrees. He was too adroit to precipitate counsels or commands which at the first moment his daughter might have found cynical. He did nothing to wound or shock her. He permitted her to take the waters at Aix-les-Bains, which, in 1814, was still a French town, and where she went out driving in open carriages bearing the imperial arms of France.

At this time the attitude of Marie Louise was still absolutely correct. But the crafty Austrian policy understood how to find a man who should succeed in turning the wife from her husband. This man was a military diplomatist, General Count Neipperg, a relentless enemy of France and of Napoleon. Complaisant, skilful, energetic, a thorough man of the world, an accomplished courtier, an excellent musician, he knew how to make his way by insinuation