

## A WINTER SONG.

SING a song of the white, white snow,  
Sing a song of the frost and cold ;  
What care we if the north wind blow,  
Moaning, and groaning, and bending low  
The boughs of the yew-tree old ?

Winter has joys that no summer day  
Can give with its sunshine bright ;  
Snowballing, sliding, or skating away,  
Whilst from fairy cloudland full many a fay  
Sly powders our coats with white.

Oh ! the horses and sleighs that go,  
Whilst the sleigh-bells merrily ring,  
In the countries where long the winter snow  
Lies hard on the ground and makes, as we know,  
A pavement fit for a king !

And oh, the sledge made by Tom and me,  
To be drawn by a team of boys !  
No better sledge in the world need be ;  
And if we're upset, oh what care we ?  
'Tis but part of our winter joys.

J. G.

## ROYAL PRISONERS.

LOUIS XVII. OF FRANCE.



ONE of the saddest stories of imprisoned royalty is that of the youthful son of the unfortunate Louis XVI. of France ; a mere child in years, he was made to suffer the sharpest sorrows and the cruellest sufferings till death mercifully removed him to where neither could touch him more. He had committed no crime, but was made to ex-

piate the crimes of his kingly ancestors.

He was born in the magnificent palace of Versailles on the 27th of March, 1785, and on the same day received in baptism the names of Louis Charles.

It was at Versailles that the first four years of his life were passed, the only happy ones the poor boy was destined to know. Here he daily grew in health and beauty ; his blue eyes sparkled with excitement, his fair cheeks flushed with pleasure, as he played with his sister in the garden, or toiled, hoe in hand, at his own little beds of flowers, which he carefully tended, and of which he made a bouquet to present each morning to his mother.

The queen's love for her son was great ; love that surrounded him with all those little tokens of affection which a mother's heart alone can devise, but at the same time she carefully watched the development of his character.

When he was four years and a few months old,

she writes of him as being quick and violent in temper, full of spirits, too thoughtless to learn, yet good humoured, affectionate, possessed of a good heart, and loving his sister. He was accustomed to place great confidence in his mother, and when he had done wrong to go at once to her and confess it. She would reprove him gently, always appearing more grieved and hurt than angry.

But while the youthful Louis was growing in years and spending his days happily, troubles were beginning to gather which were soon destined to overwhelm the whole royal family. The population of France were in a restless and discontented state, but more so in Paris than in any other part of the country. To years of cruel oppression had succeeded bad harvests, and now so great was the scarcity of food that bread was sold at a price too high for the poorer people to purchase, and many died with hunger. Murmurs and complaints were everywhere heard ; men grew desperate ; gaunt, half-starved persons would be daily seen gazing fiercely at those who seemed to possess bread and money in abundance ; as the wealthy nobles rolled through the streets in their carriages, many a half-muttered threat was heard and many a clenched hand was raised in the air as if calling down vengeance.

At last the people broke out into open insurrection. One day, from every court and alley in Paris, streamed forth thousands of raggedly clad men and women, armed with all kinds of weapons, mad with hunger and eager for revenge ; shouting, singing, dancing, uttering fierce threats, they made their way to the great state prison called the Bastille ; this they besieged and took and utterly destroyed, killing the governor and soldiers who had dared



to fire upon them. Not satisfied with this, and unreasonably thinking that it was the king and queen who caused all their misery, they soon after determined to go to Versailles and bring them to Paris.

The king had been warned of the coming danger, and anxious for the safety of his wife and children, earnestly entreated her to take a carriage and convey them away to some distant but secure asylum. Her most devoted friends added their voices to that of the king, but she boldly replied, "Nothing shall induce me, in such an extremity, to be separated from my husband. I know that they seek my life. But I am a daughter of Maria Theresa, and have learned not to fear death." From the windows they soon saw the disorderly multitude, heard their savage cries and frantic shouts. Through every avenue the mob streamed towards the palace in the twilight of that October evening. The rain began to fall heavily; the people tore down trees and made huge bonfires, on which they roasted horses, and round which they prepared to spend the night; guns were continually fired, and some of the queen's guards were killed.

The commander of the national guard, La Fayette, had assured the royal family that they need be under no apprehension of an attack, as he had posted men at every entrance. Towards morning, worn out with excitement and fatigue, they went to their separate chambers; but scarcely had the queen laid her head upon the pillow before she was startled by a tumult on the stairs, the clashing of swords, the firing of guns, and the shouts of the mob making their way to her room. Two faithful guards stationed at her door had only time to shout, "Fly! fly for your life!" ere they were cut down by the assailants. Springing from her bed, the queen rushed to the door leading to the king's apartments; to her dismay she found it locked. She knocked, and cried loudly for help; it was speedily opened, and she had just time to slip through and re-lock it before the mob burst into her room.

King and queen and children passed the remaining hours of darkness in a state of dreadful suspense. Everywhere they heard shrieks and cries, the tumult of fight and exultant shouts; every moment they expected the armed rabble to break in upon them. When morning dawned there was a universal shout "The queen! the queen!" She must present herself to the multitude who hated her with such fierce hatred. Taking her children by the hand, she immediately stepped out on the balcony. "Away with the children! away with the children!" cried the people. The queen led them back, and returning, stood calmly before the

infuriated thousands, with her arms folded and her eyes raised to heaven. Muskets had been loaded to kill her, but at the sight of so much heroism not one was raised. For a moment there was silence, then the temper of the fickle multitude changed, and the air was rent with cries of "*Vive la reine! Vive la reine!*"

Then followed the dreadful ride to Paris, during which the royal family must have endured the most acute agonies. Yelling men and women, armed with every kind of weapon, dirty, ragged, using language such as never before fell upon royal ears, surrounded the carriage all the weary seven hours the journey occupied. Night was closing over the city when the captives entered the Tuileries.

In the morning the Dauphin was early aroused by sounds of firing in the streets; frightened, he threw his arms round his mother's neck, saying, "O mother! mother! is to-day yesterday again?" The poor queen could only clasp him to her bosom, and by gentle words and caresses try to still his fears. When his father entered the room, the boy said to him, "Dear father, why are you people, who formerly loved you so well, now all of a sudden so angry with you? and what have you done to irritate them so much?"

"I wished, my dear child," replied the king, "to render the people still happier than they were. I wanted money to pay the expenses occasioned by wars, and I asked the Parliament for money, as my predecessors have always done. Magistrates composing the parliament opposed it, and said the *people* alone had a right to consent to it. I assembled the principal inhabitants of every town, whether distinguished by birth, fortune, or talents, at Versailles; that is what is called the *States General*. When they were assembled, they required concessions of me which I could not make either with due respect to myself, or with justice to you, who will be my successor. Wicked men inducing the people to rise, have occasioned the excesses of the last few days. The *people* must not be blamed for them."

The royal boy did not like the Tuileries after the splendours of Versailles. It had not been put in order, and the ancient tapestries and furniture were all worm-eaten. "Everything here is ugly," he said to his mother.

"My son," replied the queen, "Louis XIV. was content to lodge here."

Like it or not, this for some time was to be his residence. He was given a corner of the garden in which to work as he had previously done at his more sumptuous home. He tended his little plot of ground with care, but he constantly regretted



the garden he had left. "They will not be my own flowers that I planted and watered," he said; "I shall never love any flowers so well as those."

The education of the poor boy was not neglected during the time he resided at this palace. He was also made captain of a regiment of boys who had been enrolled into a corps, and many a pleasant hour was spent by him in exercising his little soldiers. It is also said that during this time of comparative freedom his mother trained him to acts of pity and kindness, made him feel for the sufferings and sorrows of others, and for this purpose took him to hospitals and asylums, encouraging him to save his pocket-money to relieve the distressed.

The aspect of affairs grew worse, and the hatred of the people towards royalty more intense. Even an act of apparent friendliness was intended as an insult. One day a deputation from the conquerors of the Bastille arrived at the Tuileries, demanding an interview with the king and his family. When admitted, they presented to the Dauphin a box of dominoes ingeniously made from one of the stones of the terrible state prison; on the lid of the box the following words were engraved:—

"These stones, from the walls which enclosed the innocent victims of arbitrary power, have been converted into a toy, to be presented to you, monseigneur, as an homage of the people's love, and to teach you the extent of their power."

In August, 1792, the violence of the people increased; they threatened to storm the Tuileries and massacre the royal family in the very palace itself. The fidelity of guards could not be trusted; the Swiss alone were faithful to their duty. For refuge the king and queen, with their children, fled to the Legislative Assembly, the members of which ordered them to be conveyed to the Temple, a very old, gloomy structure, with narrow staircases leading to two towers, the windows of which were guarded with iron bars, the rooms in them being low, with thick oaken doors either studded with large-headed nails or lined with iron. The garden surrounding this building was one mass of tangled vegetation, and encompassed by high brick walls. In the rooms of the smallest tower, scantily and miserably furnished, the prisoners were confined; all their personal attendants dismissed; rough, coarse men, as guards, were present at their meals; they could scarcely command any privacy whatever. Even the noonday walk allowed them in the garden was used as a time for outrage. The jailor who unlocked the several doors would brush roughly against them and puff his tobacco-smoke in their faces; and on the walls they passed were written cruel threats.

Even here, in this gloomy abode, the king continued to teach his son. Retiring to bed every night, the boy knelt at his mother's knee to say the following prayer which she had taught him:—"Almighty God, who created and redeemed me, I love you! Preserve the days of my father and family. Protect us against our enemies. Give my mother, my aunt, my sister the strength they need to support their troubles."

Sadder days were yet in store for this unfortunate family. The king was beheaded. The queen was still consoled by the presence of her son, but even this consolation was snatched away. An order came for the boy to be separately imprisoned. It was ten o'clock at night, Louis was asleep on his bed, while the queen and her sister were sitting close to him mending their clothes. Suddenly the clashing of bolts and locks was heard; six men entered and abruptly announced their errand. The agony and grief of the poor mother was intense. The boy awoke nearly frantic with terror; throwing himself into his mother's arms, he shrieked out, "*O mother! mother! mother! do not abandon me to those men! They will kill me as they did papa!*"

Clasping him to her bosom, the queen, with prayers and tears, entreated that her son might not be taken away. Deaf to her supplications, the men threatened to call the guard, and have the child forcibly torn from her, if she did not yield him peaceably. Finding no mercy was to be expected, the mother and aunt proceeded slowly to dress him, at the same time whispering to him some parting words.

The heart-broken boy was dragged away, and thrust into the cell where his father had spent the last night on earth; there he threw himself down on the floor, and for two days would neither eat nor drink, his one incessant cry being "*Mother, mother!*" The queen never had another interview with her son. One day, while walking on the platform of the tower, she looked through a crack in the board, and saw her little boy flying with terror from his cruel jailor, who was pursuing him with dreadful threats of punishment. This was the last time she ever saw her son.

The jailors appointed to guard the child were Simon the shoemaker and his wife—a coarse, cruel, savage, and drunken couple, from whom no tenderness was to be expected. They were ordered *not to kill* the lad, but *to get rid of him*. And well they did their brutal work. The heart is moved with horror while the eye reads of the sufferings of the poor prisoner. Simon generally called him by such names as "*viper,*" "*toad,*" or "*wolf-cub;*" inhumanly beat him with whatever instrument he



had in his hand; indeed, blows were the daily portion of the innocent little creature. His tormentor made the son of a king wait upon him while he had his meals, and taught him to sing revolutionary songs. His wife cut off his long curls, and dressed him in the republican fashion of the day. "The child is a very dear and charming child," said the woman; "he cleans and blackens my shoes, and brings me my foot-warmer when I get up."

Simon disliked prayer, and had forbidden the little fellow to pray. One night he detected him kneeling in his bed with his hands joined. It was in the middle of January and dreadfully cold; the man seized a pitcher of water and poured its contents all over his captive, saying, "I'll teach you to get up in the night and pray"—then he struck him on the head with the heel of his shoe, and made him lie in his wet bed all night.

This cruel treatment dulled the hitherto bright mind of the youthful king—for now that his father was dead the royalists called him Louis XVII. But although almost a wreck, bodily and mentally, he was yet capable of feeling gratitude for every word or act of kindness. One day his heartless jailor seized him by the hair and threatened to dash his head against the wall; the surgeon who was present interfered to save the child. The next day he offered him two pears, which had been given him the previous evening, as an expression of his gratitude.

When Simon and his wife were removed from the guardianship of the "little Capet," as he was called, he was confined in an inner room in almost complete solitude, with nothing to amuse him and no one to talk to; his food and drink were passed to him through an iron grating in the door; no fire or light was allowed. For a little time he tried to keep both himself and his cell clean, but strength and courage alike failed; he gave himself up to silence and despair. For one whole year his clothes were not changed, and they grew almost to his body. His bed was not made for six months; day after day he lay there in silence, only wishing to die.

When a man named Laurent was appointed the boy's keeper, he was conducted to his cell by a municipal who shouted through the bars, "Capet, Capet." The child would not answer. When the door was forced open he shuddered, but otherwise lay quite still. Yesterday's food stood there untouched. They bent over him; and when one asked why he had not eaten it, he faintly replied,

"Because I want to die." His condition was made somewhat better after this. His dress was changed, and his person and cell were kept clean.

When two men, Lasne and Gomin, were appointed his keepers in place of Laurent, they appear to have treated him with unvarying kindness; they would sing to him, play the violin, and tell him stories. But nothing seemed to waken up the torpid faculties of the child, and it was three weeks before a word could be extracted from him; then, as Lasne was telling him a story of the army which seemed to recall to his mind his own regiment of boys, he whispered, "Did you see me with my sword?"

Permission was given for the young king to walk occasionally on the roof of the tower. He was obliged to be supported by his keeper at these times, and his great delight was to watch the sparrows, his birds, he called them, come and drink out of the hollows of the worn stones. But the sufferings of the poor boy had been too severe for any radical change for the better to take place.

In the year 1795 the Committee of General Safety were informed of the dangerous illness of their captive, but no notice was taken for several months, when they were again informed that "there was danger of death." A physician was then sent, but his services came too late. On the morning of the 8th of June the keepers dreaded finding him dead in his room. He lay very quiet; bending over him, Gomin said—

"I hope you are not in pain just now?"

"Oh, yes, I still suffer, but much less! the music is so beautiful!"

"Where do you hear it?" asked the man, surprised.

"Up there. Listen! listen!" and the dying prince pointed eagerly upwards; suddenly he exclaimed, with a flush of joy, "Through all the voices I hear my mother's."

Just then Lasne came into the room to relieve the other keeper. The young king looked at him for a time, and then said, "Do you think my sister heard the music?" Then, as he looked towards the window, a happy exclamation broke from his lips; a moment after he said to Lasne, "I have something to tell you."

Those were his last words; as the keeper bent down to hear what he had to say, the child's head fell upon his breast, and a moment after he was dead.

