

# **Memoirs of Napoleon — Volume 03 eBook**

## **Memoirs of Napoleon — Volume 03 by Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne**

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# Page 1

## CHAPTER XV.

1798.

Establishment of a divan in each Egyptian province—Desaix in Upper Egypt—Ibrahim Bey beaten by Bonaparte at Balehye'h—Sulkowsky wounded—Disaster at Abonkir—Dissatisfaction and murmurs of the army—Dejection of the General-in-Chief—His plan respecting Egypt—Meditated descent upon England—Bonaparte's censure of the Directory—Intercepted correspondence.

From the details I have already given respecting Bonaparte's plans for colonising Egypt, it will be seen that his energy of mind urged him to adopt anticipatory measures for the accomplishment of objects which were never realised. During the short interval in which he sheathed his sword he planned provisional governments for the towns and provinces occupied by the French troops, and he adroitly contrived to serve the interests of his army without appearing to violate those of the country. After he had been four days at Cairo, during which time he employed himself in examining everything, and consulting every individual from whom he could obtain useful information, he published the following order:

*Headquarters, Cairo,  
9th Thermidor, year VI.*

*Bonaparte, member of the national institute,  
and general-in-chief, orders:*

Art. 1. There shall be in each province of Egypt a divan, composed of seven individuals, whose duty will be to superintend the interests of the province; to communicate to me any complaints that may be made; to prevent warfare among the different villages; to apprehend and punish criminals (for which purpose they may demand assistance from the French commandant); and to take every opportunity of enlightening the people. Art. 2. There shall be in each province an aga of the Janizaries, maintaining constant communication with the French commandant. He shall have with him a company of sixty armed natives, whom he may take wherever he pleases, for the maintenance of good order, subordination, and tranquillity. Art. 3. There shall be in each province an intendant, whose business will be to levy the miri, the feddam, and the other contributions which formerly belonged to the Mamelukes, but which now belong to the French Republic. The intendants shall have us many agents as may be necessary.

Art. 4. The said intendant shall have a French agent to correspond with the Finance Department, and to execute all the orders he may receive.

*(Signed) Bonaparte.*

While Bonaparte was thus actively taking measures for the organization of the country,

—[Far more thoroughly and actively than those taken by the English Government in 1882-3-4]—



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General Desaix had marched into Upper Egypt in pursuit of Mourad Bey. We learned that Ibrahim, who, next to Mourad, was the most influential of the bays, had proceeded towards Syria, by the way of Belbeis and Salehye'h. The General-in-Chief immediately determined to march in person against that formidable enemy, and he left Cairo about fifteen days after he had entered it. It is unnecessary to describe the well-known engagement in which Bonaparte drove Ibrahim back upon El-Arish; besides, I do not enter minutely into the details of battles, my chief object being to record events which I personally witnessed.

At the battle of Salehye'h Bonaparte thought he had lost one of his 'aides de camp', Sulkowsky, to whom he was much attached, and who had been with us during the whole of the campaign of Italy. On the field of battle one object of regret cannot long engross the mind; yet, on his return to Cairo, Bonaparte frequently spoke to me of Sulkowsky in terms of unfeigned sorrow.

"I cannot," said he one day, "sufficiently admire the noble spirit and determined courage of poor Sulkowsky." He often said that Sulkowsky would have been a valuable aid to whoever might undertake the resuscitation of Poland. Fortunately that brave officer was not killed on that occasion, though seriously wounded. He was, however, killed shortly after.

The destruction of the French squadron in the roads of Aboukir occurred during the absence of the General-in-Chief. This event happened on the 1st of August. The details are generally known; but there is one circumstance to which I cannot refrain from alluding, and which excited deep interest at the time. This was the heroic courage of the son of Casablanca, the captain of the 'Orient'. Casablanca was among the wounded, and when the vessel was blown up his son, a lad of ten years of age, preferred perishing with him rather than saving himself, when one of the seamen had secured him the means of escape. I told the 'aide de camp', sent by General Kleber, who had the command of Alexandria, that the General-in-Chief was near Salehye'h. He proceeded thither immediately, and Bonaparte hastened back to Cairo, a distance of about thirty-three leagues.

In spite of any assertions that may have been made to the contrary, the fact is, that as soon as the French troops set foot in Egypt, they were filled with dissatisfaction, and ardently longed to return home.'

—['Erreurs' objects to this description of the complaints of the army, but Savary (tome i. pp. 66, 67, and tome i. p. 89) fully confirms it, giving the reason that the army was not a homogeneous body, but a mixed force taken from Rome, Florence, Milan, Venice, Genoa, and Marseilles; see also Thiers, tome v. p. 283. But the fact is not singular. For a striking instance, in the days of the Empire, of the soldiers in 1809, in Spain, actually threatening Napoleon in his own hearing, see De Gonneville



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(tome i. pp. 190- 193): "The soldiers of Lapisse's division gave loud expression to the most sinister designs against the Emperor's person, stirring up each other to fire a shot at him, sad bandying accusations of cowardice for not doing it." He heard it all as plainly as we did, and seemed as if he did not care a bit for it, but "sent the division into good quarters, when the men were as enthusiastic as they were formerly mutinous." In 1796 d'Entraigues, the Bourbon spy, reports, "As a general rule, the French soldier grumbles and is discontented. He accuses Bonaparte of being a thief and a rascal. But to-morrow the very same soldier will obey him blindly" (lung's Bonaparte, tome iii. p. 152).]—

The illusion of the expedition had disappeared, and only its reality remained. What bitter murmuring have I not heard from Murat, Lannes, Berthier, Bessieres, and others! Their complaints were, indeed, often so unmeasured as almost to amount to sedition. This greatly vexed Bonaparte, and drew from him severe reproaches and violent language.

—[Napoleon related at St. Helena that in a fit of irritation he rushed among a group of dissatisfied generals, and said to one of them, who was remarkable for his stature, "you have held seditious language; but take care I do not perform my duty. Though you are five feet ten inches high, that shall not save you from being shot."—Bourrienne.]—

When the news arrived of the loss of the fleet, discontent increased. All who had acquired fortunes under Napoleon now began to fear that they would never enjoy them. All turned their thoughts to Paris, and its amusements, and were utterly disheartened at the idea of being separated from their homes and their friends for a period, the termination of which it was impossible to foresee.

The catastrophe of Aboukir came like a thunderbolt upon the General-in-Chief. In spite of all his energy and fortitude, he was deeply distressed by the disasters which now assailed him. To the painful feelings excited by the complaints and dejection of his companions in arms was now added the irreparable misfortune of the burning of our fleet. He measured the fatal consequences of this event at a single glance. We were now cut off from all communication with France, and all hope of returning thither, except by a degrading capitulation with an implacable and hated enemy. Bonaparte had lost all chance of preserving his conquest, and to him this was indeed a bitter reflection. And at what a time did this disaster befall him? At the very moment when he was about to apply for the aid of the mother-country.

From what General Bonaparte communicated to me previously to the 1st of August, his object was, having once secured the possession of Egypt; to return to Toulon with the fleet; then to send troops and provisions of every kind to Egypt; and next to combine with the fleet all the forces that could be supplied, not only by France, but by her allies, for the purpose of attacking England. It is certain that previously to his departure for



Egypt he had laid before the Directory a note relative to his plans. He always regarded a descent upon England as possible, though in its result fatal, so long as we should be inferior in naval strength; but he hoped by various manoeuvres to secure a superiority on one point.



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His intention was to return to France. Availing himself of the departure of the English fleet for the Mediterranean, the alarm excited by his Egyptian expedition, the panic that would be inspired by his sudden appearance at Boulogne, and his preparations against England, he hoped to oblige that power to withdraw her naval force from the Mediterranean, and to prevent her sending out troops to Egypt. This project was often in his head. He would have thought it sublime to date an order of the day from the ruins of Memphis, and three months later, one from London. The loss of the fleet converted all these bold conceptions into mere romantic visions.

When alone with me he gave free vent to his emotion. I observed to him that the disaster was doubtless great, but that it would have been infinitely more irreparable had Nelson fallen in with us at Malta, or had he waited for us four-and-twenty hours before Alexandria, or in the open sea. "Any one of these events," said I, "which were not only possible but probable, would have deprived us of every resource. We are blockaded here, but we have provisions and money. Let us then wait patiently to see what the Directory will do for us."—"The Directory!" exclaimed he angrily, "the Directory is composed of a set of scoundrels! they envy and hate me, and would gladly let me perish here. Besides, you see how dissatisfied the whole army is: not a man is willing to stay."

The pleasing illusions which were cherished at the outset of the expedition vanished long before our arrival in Cairo. Egypt was no longer the empire of the Ptolemies, covered with populous and wealthy cities; it now presented one unvaried scene of devastation and misery. Instead of being aided by the inhabitants, whom we had ruined, for the sake of delivering them from the yoke of the beys, we found all against us: Mamelukes, Arabs, and fellahs. No Frenchman was secure of his life who happened to stray half a mile from any inhabited place, or the corps to which he belonged. The hostility which prevailed against us and the discontent of the army were clearly developed in the numerous letters which were written to France at the time, and intercepted.

The gloomy reflections which at first assailed Bonaparte, were speedily banished; and he soon recovered the fortitude and presence of mind which had been for a moment shaken by the overwhelming news from Aboukir. He, however, sometimes repeated, in a tone which it would be difficult to describe, "Unfortunate Brueys, what have you done!"

I have remarked that in some chance observations which escaped Napoleon at St. Helena he endeavoured to throw all the blame of the affair on Admiral Brueys. Persons who are determined to make Bonaparte an exception to human nature have unjustly reproached the Admiral for the loss of the fleet.



## CHAPTER XVI.

1798.



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The Egyptian Institute—Festival of the birth of Mahomet—Bonapartes prudent respect for the Mahometan religion—His Turkish dress—Djezzar, the Pasha of Acre—Thoughts of a campaign in Germany—Want of news from France—Bonaparte and Madame Fours—The Egyptian fortune-teller, M. Berthollet, and the Sheik El Bekri—The air “Marlbrook”—Insurrection in Cairo—Death of General Dupuis—Death of Sulkowsky—The insurrection quelled—Nocturnal executions— Destruction of a tribe of Arabs— Convoy of sick and wounded— Massacre of the French in Sicily—projected expedition to Syria— Letter to Tippoo Saib.

The loss of the fleet convinced General Bonaparte of the necessity of speedily and effectively organising Egypt, where everything denoted that we should stay for a considerable time, excepting the event of a forced evacuation, which the General was far from foreseeing or fearing. The distance of Ibrahim Bey and Mourad Bey now left him a little at rest. War, fortifications, taxation, government, the organization of the divans, trade, art, and science, all occupied his attention. Orders and instructions were immediately despatched, if not to repair the defeat, at least to avert the first danger that might ensue from it. On the 21st of August Bonaparte established at Cairo an institute of the arts and sciences, of which he subsequently appointed me a member in the room of M. de Sucey, who was obliged to return to France, in consequence of the wound he received on board the flotilla in the Nile.

—[The Institute of Egypt was composed of members of the French Institute, and of the men of science and artists of the commission who did not belong to that body. They assembled and added to their number several officers of the artillery and staff, and others who had cultivated the sciences and literature. The Institute was established in one of the palaces of the bey's. A great number of machines, and physical, chemical, and astronomical instruments had been brought from France. They were distributed in the different rooms, which were also successively filled with all the curiosities of the country, whether of the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom. The garden of the palace became a botanical garden. A chemical laboratory was formed at headquarters; Merthollet performed experiments there several times every week, which Napoleon and a great number of officers attended ('Memoirs of Napoleon')]

In founding this Institute, Bonaparte wished to afford an example of his ideas of civilisation. The minutes of the sittings of that learned body, which have been printed, bear evidence of its utility, and of Napoleon's extended views. The objects of the Institute were the advancement and propagation of information in Egypt, and the study and publication of all facts relating to the natural history, trade, and antiquities of that ancient country.



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On the 18th Bonaparte was present at the ceremony of opening the dyke of the canal of Cairo, which receives the water of the Nile when it reaches the height fixed by the Mequyas.

Two days after came the anniversary festival of the birth of Mahomet. At this Napoleon was also present, in company with the sheik El Bekri, who at his request gave him two young Mamelukes, Ibrahim, and Roustan.

—[The General-in-Chief went to celebrate, the feast of the Prophet at the house of the sheik El Bekri. The ceremony was begun by the recital of a kind of litany, containing the life of Mahomet from his birth to his death. About a hundred sheiks, sitting in a circle, on carpets, with their legs crossed, recited all the verses, swinging their bodies violently backwards and forwards, and altogether. A grand dinner was afterwards served up, at which the guests sat on carpets, with their legs across. There were twenty tables, and five or six people at each table. That of the General-in-Chief and the sheik El Bekri was in the middle; a little slab of a precious kind of wood ornamented with mosaic work was placed eighteen inches above the floor and covered with a great number of dishes in succession. They were pillaws of rice, a particular kind of roast, entrees, and pastry, all very highly spiced. The sheiks picked everything with their fingers. Accordingly water was brought to wash the hands three times during dinner. Gooseberry-water, lemonade, and other sorts of sherbets were served to drink, and abundance of preserves and confectionery with the dessert. On the whole, the dinner was not disagreeable; it was only the manner of eating it that seemed strange to us. In the evening the whole city was illuminated. After dinner the party went into the square of El Bekri, the illumination of which, in coloured lamps, was very beautiful. An immense concourse of people attended. They were all placed in order, in ranks of from twenty to a hundred persons, who, standing close together, recited the prayers and litanies of the Prophet with movements which kept increasing, until at length they seemed to be convulsive, and some of the most zealous fainted away ('Memoirs of Napoleon').]——  
[Roustan or Rustan, a Mameluke, was always with Napoleon from the time of the return from Egypt till 1814, when he abandoned his master. He slept at or near the door of Napoleon. See Remusat, tome i, p. 209, for an amusing description of the alarm of Josephine, and the precipitate flight of Madame de Remusat, at the idea of being met and killed by this man in one of Josephine's nocturnal attacks on the privacy of her husband when closeted with his mistress.]—

It has been alleged that Bonaparte, when in Egypt, took part in the religious ceremonies and worship of the Mussulmans; but it cannot be said that he celebrated the festivals of the overflowing of the Nile and the



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anniversary of the Prophet. The Turks invited him to these merely as a spectator; and the presence of their new master was gratifying to the people. But he never committed the folly of ordering any solemnity. He neither learned nor repeated any prayer of the Koran, as many persons have asserted; neither did he advocate fatalism, polygamy, or any other doctrine of the Koran. Bonaparte employed himself better than in discussing with the Imaums the theology of the children of Ismael. The ceremonies, at which policy induced him to be present, were to him, and to all who accompanied him, mere matters of curiosity. He never set foot in a mosque; and only on one occasion, which I shall hereafter mention, dressed himself in the Mahometan costume. He attended the festivals to which the green turbans invited him. His religious tolerance was the natural consequence of his philosophic spirit.

—[From this Sir Walter Scott infers that he did not scruple to join the Musselmans in the external ceremonies of their religion. He embellishes his romance with the ridiculous farce of the sepulchral chamber of the grand pyramid, and the speeches which were addressed to the General as well as to the muftis and Imaums; and he adds that Bonaparte was on the point of embracing Islamism. All that Sir Walter says on this subject is the height of absurdity, and does not even deserve to be seriously refuted. Bonaparte never entered a mosque except from motives of curiosity,(see contradiction in previous paragraph. D.W.) and he never for one moment afforded any ground for supposing that he believed to the mission of Mahomet.— Bourrienne.]—

Doubtless Bonaparte did, as he was bound to do, show respect for the religion of the country; and he found it necessary to act more like a Mussulman than a Catholic. A wise conqueror supports his triumphs by protecting and even elevating the religion of the conquered people. Bonaparte's principle was, as he himself has often told me, to look upon religions as the work of men, but to respect them everywhere as a powerful engine of government. However, I will not go so far as to say that he would not have changed his religion had the conquest of the East been the price of that change. All that he said about Mahomet, Islamism, and the Koran to the, great men of the country he laughed at himself. He enjoyed the gratification of having all his fine sayings on the subject of religion translated into Arabic poetry, and repeated from mouth to mouth. This of course tended to conciliate the people.

I confess that Bonaparte frequently conversed with the chiefs of the Mussulman religion on the subject of his conversion; but only for the sake of amusement. The priests of the Koran, who would probably have been delighted to convert us, offered us the most ample concessions. But these conversations were merely started by way of entertainment, and never could have warranted a supposition of their leading to any serious



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result. If Bonaparte spoke as a Mussulman, it was merely in his character of a military and political chief in a Mussulman country. To do so was essential to his success, to the safety of his army, and, consequently; to his glory. In every country he would have drawn up proclamations and delivered addresses on the same principle. In India he would have been for Ali, at Thibet for the Dalai-lama, and in China for Confucius.

—[On the subject of his alleged conversion to Mahometanism Bonaparte expressed himself at St. Helena as follows:

“I never followed any of the tenets of that religion. I never prayed in the mosques. I never abstained from wine, or was circumcised, neither did I ever profess it. I said merely that we were the friends of the Mussulmans, and that I respected Mahomet their prophet, which was true; I respect him now. I wanted to make the Imaums cause prayers to be offered up in the mosques for me, in order to make the people respect me still more than they actually did, and obey me more readily. The Imaums replied that there was a great obstacle, because their Prophet in the Koran had inculcated to them that they were not to obey, respect, or hold faith with infidels, and that I came under that denomination. I then desired them to hold a consultation, and see what was necessary to be done in order to become a Musselman, as some of their tenets could not be practised by us. That, as to circumcision, God had made us unfit for that. That, with respect to drinking wine, we were poor cold people, inhabitants of the north, who could not exist without it. They consulted together accordingly, and in about three weeks issued a fetham, declaring that circumcision might be omitted, because it was merely a profession; that as to drinking wine, it might be drunk by Mussulmans, but that those who drank it would not go to paradise, but to hell I replied that this would not do; that we had no occasion to make ourselves Mussulmans in order to go to hell, that there were many ways of getting there without coining to Egypt, and desired them to hold another consultation. After deliberating and battling together for I believe three months, they finally decided that a man might become a Mussulman, and neither circumcise nor abstain from wine; but that, in proportion to the wine drunk, some good works must be done. I then told them that we were all Mussulmans and friends of the Prophet, which they really believed, as the French soldiers never went to church, and had no priests with them. For you must know that during the Revolution there was no religion whatever in the French army. Menou,” continued Napoleon, “really turned Mahometan, which was the reason I left him behind.” —(Voices from St. Helena.)—

The General-in-Chief had a Turkish dress made, which he once put on, merely in joke. One day he desired me to go to breakfast without waiting for him, and that he would follow me. In about a quarter of an hour he made his appearance in his new costume. As soon as he was recognised he was received with a loud burst of laughter. He sat down very coolly; but he found himself so encumbered and ill at ease in his turban and

Oriental robe that he speedily threw them off, and was never tempted to a second performance of the masquerade.



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About the end of August Bonaparte wished to open negotiations with the Pasha of Acre, nicknamed the Butcher. He offered Djeddar his friendship, sought his in return, and gave him the most consolatory assurances of the safety of his dominions. He promised to support him against the Grand Seignior, at the very moment when he was assuring the Egyptians that he would support the Grand Seignior against the beys. But Djeddar, confiding in his own strength and in the protection of the English, who had anticipated Bonaparte, was deaf to every overture, and would not even receive Beauvoisin, who was sent to him on the 22d of August. A second envoy was beheaded at Acre. The occupations of Bonaparte and the necessity of obtaining a more solid footing in Egypt retarded for the moment the invasion of that pashalic, which provoked vengeance by its barbarities, besides being a dangerous neighbour.

From the time he received the accounts of the disaster of Aboukir until the revolt of Cairo on the 22d of October, Bonaparte sometimes found the time hang heavily on his hands. Though he devoted attention to everything, yet there was not sufficient occupation for his singularly active mind. When the heat was not too great he rode on horseback; and on his return, if he found no despatches to read (which often happened), no orders to send off; or no letters to answer, he was immediately absorbed in reverie, and would sometimes converse very strangely. One day, after a long pause, he said to me:

“Do you know what I am thinking of?”—“Upon my word, that would be very difficult; you think of such extraordinary things.”—“I don’t know,” continued he, “that I shall ever see France again; but if I do, my only ambition is to make a glorious campaign in Germany—in the plains of Bavaria; there to gain a great battle, and to avenge France for the defeat of Hochstadt. After that I would retire into the country, and live quietly.”

He then entered upon a long dissertation on the preference he would give to Germany as the theatre of war; the fine character of the people, and the prosperity and wealth of the country, and its power of supporting an army. His conversations were sometimes very long; but always replete with interest.

—[So early as 1794 Napoleon had suggested that Austria should always be attacked in Germany, not in Italy. “It is Germany that should be overwhelmed; that done, Italy and Spain fall of themselves. Germany should be attacked, not Spain or Italy. If we obtain great success, advantage should never be taken of it to penetrate into Italy while Germany, unweakened, offers a formidable front” (Lung’s Bonaparte, tome ii. p. 936), He was always opposed to the wild plans which had ruined so many French armies in Italy, and which the Directory tried to force on him, of marching on Rome and Naples after every success in the north.]—

In these intervals of leisure Bonaparte was accustomed

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to retire to bed early. I used to read to him every evening. When I read poetry he would fall asleep; but when he asked for the Life of Cromwell I counted on sitting up pretty late. In the course of the day he used to read and make notes. He often expressed regret at not receiving news from France; for correspondence was rendered impracticable by the numerous English and Turkish cruisers. Many letters were intercepted and scandalously published. Not even family secrets and communications of the most confidential nature were respected.

About the middle of September in this year (1798), Bonaparte ordered to be brought to the house of Elfy Bey half a dozen Asiatic women whose beauty he had heard highly extolled. But their ungraceful obesity displeased him, and they were immediately dismissed. A few days after he fell violently in love with Madame Foures, the wife of a lieutenant of infantry. She was very pretty, and her charms were enhanced by the rarity of seeing a woman in Egypt who was calculated to please the eye of a European. Bonaparte engaged for her a house adjoining the palace of Elfy Bey, which we occupied. He frequently ordered dinner to be prepared there, and I used to go there with him at seven o'clock, and leave him at nine.

This connection soon became the general subject of gossip at head-quarters. Through a feeling of delicacy to M. Foures, the General-in-Chief gave him a mission to the Directory. He embarked at Alexandria, and the ship was captured by the English, who, being informed of the cause of his mission, were malicious enough to send him back to Egypt, instead of keeping him prisoner. Bonaparte wished to have a child by Madame Foures, but this wish was not realised.

A celebrated soothsayer was recommended to Bonaparte by the inhabitants of Cairo, who confidentially vouched for the accuracy with which he could foretell future events. He was sent for, and when he arrived, I, Venture, and a sheik were with the General. The prophet wished first to exercise his skill upon Bonaparte, who, however, proposed that I should have my fortune told first, to which I acceded without hesitation. To afford an idea of his prophetic skill I must mention that since my arrival in Cairo I had been in a very weak state. The passage of the Nile and the bad food we had had for twelve days had greatly reduced me, so that I was miserably pale and thin.

After examining my hands, feeling my pulse, my forehead, and the nape of my neck, the fortune-teller shrugged his shoulders, and, in a melancholy tone, told Venture that he did not think it right to inform me of my fate. I gave him to understand that he might say what he pleased, as it was a matter of indifference to me. After considerable hesitation on his part and pressing on mine, he announced to me that the earth of Egypt would receive me in two months.



I thanked him, and he was dismissed. When we were alone the General said to me, "Well, what do you think of that?" I observed that the fortune-teller did not run any great risk in foretelling my death, which was a very probable circumstance in the state in which I was; "but," added I, "if I procure the wines which I have ordered from France, you will soon see me get round again."



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The art of imposing on mankind has at all times been an important part of the art of governing; and it was not that portion of the science of government which Bonaparte was the least acquainted with. He neglected no opportunity of showing off to the Egyptians the superiority of France in arts and sciences; but it happened, oftener than once, that the simple instinct of the Egyptians thwarted his endeavours in this way. Some days after the visit of the pretended fortune-teller he wished, if I may so express myself, to oppose conjurer to conjurer. For this purpose he invited the principal sheiks to be present at some chemical experiments performed by M. Berthollet. The General expected to be much amused at their astonishment; but the miracles of the transformation of liquids, electrical commotions and galvanism, did not elicit from them any symptom of surprise. They witnessed the operations of our able chemist with the most imperturbable indifference. When they were ended, the sheik El Bekri desired the interpreter to tell M. Berthollet that it was all very fine; "but," said he, "ask him whether he can make me be in Morocco and here at one and the same moment?" M. Berthollet replied in the negative, with a shrug of his shoulders. "Oh! then," said the sheik, "he is not half a sorcerer."

Our music produced no greater effect upon them. They listened with insensibility to all the airs that were played to them, with the exception of "Marlbrook." When that was played they became animated, and were all in motion, as if ready to dance.

An order which had been issued on our arrival in Cairo for watching the criers of the mosques had for some weeks been neglected. At certain hours of the night these criers address prayers to the Prophet. As it was merely a repetition of the same ceremony over and over again, in a short time no notice was taken of it. The Turks, perceiving this negligence, substituted for their prayers and hymns cries of revolt, and by this sort of verbal telegraph, insurrectionary excitement was transmitted to the northern and southern extremities of Egypt. By this means, and by the aid of secret emissaries, who eluded our feeble police, and circulated real or forged firmans of the Sultan disavowing the concord between France and the Porte, and provoking war, the plan of a revolution was organised throughout the country.

The signal for the execution of this plan was given from the minarets on the night of the 20th of October, and on the morning of the 21st it was announced at headquarters that the city of Cairo was in open insurrection. The General-in-Chief was not, as has been stated, in the isle of Raeuddah: he did not hear the firing of the alarm-guns. He rose when the news arrived; it was then five o'clock. He was informed that all the shops were closed, and that the French were attacked. A moment after he heard of the death of General Dupuis, commandant of the garrison, who was killed by a lance in the street. Bonaparte immediately mounted his horse, and, accompanied by only thirty guides, visited all the threatened points, restored confidence, and, with great presence of mind adopted measures of defence.

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He left me at headquarters with only one sentinel; but he had been accurately informed of the situation of the insurgents; and such was my confidence in his activity and foresight that I had no apprehension, and awaited his return with perfect composure. This composure was not disturbed even when I saw a party of insurgents attack the house of M. Esteve, our paymaster-general, which was situated on the opposite side of Ezbekye'h Place. M. Esteve was, fortunately, able to resist the attack until troops from Boulac came up to his assistance.

After visiting all the posts, and adopting every precautionary measure, Bonaparte returned to headquarters. Finding me still alone with the sentinel, he asked me, smiling, "whether I had not been frightened?"— "Not at all, General, I assure you," replied I.

—It was about half-past eight in the morning when Bonaparte returned to headquarters, and while at breakfast he was informed that some Bedouin Arabs, on horseback, were trying to force their entrance into Cairo. He ordered his aide de camp, Sulkowsky, to mount his horse, to take with him fifteen guides, and proceed to the point where the assailants were most numerous. This was the Bab-el-Nasser, or the gate of victory. Croisier observed to the General-in-Chief that Sulkowsky had scarcely recovered from the wounds at Salehye'h, and he offered to take his place. He had his motives for this. Bonaparte consented; but Sulkowsky had already set out. Within an hour after, one of the fifteen guides returned, covered with blood, to announce that Sulkowsky and the remainder of his party had been cut to pieces. This was speedy work, for we were still at table when the sad news arrived.

Mortars were planted on Mount Mokatam, which commands Cairo. The populace, expelled from all the principal streets by the troops, assembled in the square of the Great Mosque, and in the little streets running into it, which they barricaded. The firing of the artillery on the heights was kept up with vigour for two days.

About twelve of the principal chiefs of Cairo were arrested and confined in an apartment at headquarters. They awaited with the calmest resignation the death they knew they merited; but Bonaparte merely detained them as hostages. The aga in the service of Bonaparte was astonished that sentence of death was not pronounced upon them; and he said, shrugging his shoulders, and with a gesture apparently intended to provoke severity, "You see they expect it."

On the third the insurrection was at an end, and tranquillity restored. Numerous prisoners were conducted to the citadel. In obedience to an order which I wrote every evening, twelve were put to death nightly. The bodies were then put into sacks and thrown into the Nile. There were many women included in these nocturnal executions.

I am not aware that the number of victims amounted to thirty per day, as Bonaparte assured General Reynier in a letter which he wrote to him six days after the restoration of tranquillity. "Every night," said he, "we cut off thirty heads. This, I hope, will be an

effectual example.” I am of opinion that in this instance he exaggerated the extent of his just revenge.



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Some time after the revolt of Cairo the necessity of ensuring our own safety forced the commission of a terrible act of cruelty. A tribe of Arabs in the neighbourhood of Cairo had surprised and massacred a party of French. The General-in-Chief ordered his aide de camp Croisier to proceed to the spot, surround the tribe, destroy the huts, kill all the men, and conduct the rest of the population to Cairo. The order was to decapitate the victims, and bring their heads in sacks to Cairo to be exhibited to the people. Eugene Beauharnais accompanied Croisier, who joyfully set out on this horrible expedition, in hope of obliterating all recollection of the affair of Damanhour.

On the following day the party returned. Many of the poor Arab women had been delivered on the road, and the children had perished of hunger, heat, and fatigue. About four o'clock a troop of asses arrived in Ezbekye'h Place, laden with sacks. The sacks were opened and the heads rolled out before the assembled populace. I cannot describe the horror I experienced; but I must nevertheless acknowledge that this butchery ensured for a considerable time the tranquillity and even the existence of the little caravans which were obliged to travel in all directions for the service of the army.

Shortly before the loss of the fleet the General-in Chief had formed the design of visiting Suez, to examine the traces of the ancient canal which united the Nile to the Gulf of Arabia, and also to cross the latter. The revolt at Cairo caused this project to be adjourned until the month of December.

Before his departure for Suez. Bonaparte granted the commissary Sucy leave to return to France. He had received a wound in the right hand, when on board the xebec 'Cerf'. I was conversing with him on deck when he received this wound. At first it had no appearance of being serious; but some time after he could not use his hand. General Bonaparte despatched a vessel with sick and-wounded, who were supposed to be incurable, to the number of about eighty. All, envied their fate, and were anxious to depart with them, but the privilege was conceded to very few. However, those who were, disappointed had, no cause for regret. We never know what we wish for. Captain Marengo, who landed at Augusta in Sicily, supposing it to be a friendly land, was required to observe quarantine for twenty-two days, and information was given of the arrival of the vessel to the court, which was at Palermo. On the 25th of January 1799 all on board the French vessel were massacred, with the exception of twenty-one who were saved by a Neapolitan frigate, and conducted to Messing, where they were detained.

Before he conceived the resolution of attacking the Turkish advanced guard in the valleys of Syria, Bonaparte had formed a plan of invading British India from Persia. He had ascertained, through the medium of agents, that the Shah of Persia would, for a sum, of money paid in advance consent to the establishment of military magazines on certain points of his territory. Bonaparte frequently told me that if, after the subjugation of Egypt, he could have left 15,000 men in that country, and have had 30,000

disposable troops, he would have marched on the Euphrates. He was frequently speaking about the deserts which were to be crossed to reach Persia.



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How many, times have I seen him extended on the ground, examining the beautiful maps which he had brought with him, and he would sometimes make me lie down in the same position to trace to me his projected march. This reminded him of the triumphs of his favourite hero, Alexander, with whom he so much desired to associate his name; but, at the same time, he felt that these projects were incompatible with our resources, the weakness of the Government; and the dissatisfaction which the army already evinced. Privation and misery are inseparable from all these remote operations.

This favourite idea still occupied his mind a fortnight before his departure for Syria was determined on, and on the 25th of January 1799 he wrote to Tippoo Saib as follows:—

You are of course already informed, of my arrival on the banks of the Red Sea, with a numerous and invincible army. Eager to deliver you from the iron yoke of England, I hasten to request that you will send me, by the way of Mascate or Mocha, an account of the political situation in which you are. I also wish that you could send to Suez, or Grand Cairo, some able man, in your confidence, with whom I may confer.—[It is not true, as has often been stated, that Tippoo Saib wrote to General Bonaparte. He could not reply to a letter written on the 23th of January, owing to the great difficulty of communication, the considerable distance, and the short interval which elapsed between the 25th of January and the fall of the Empire of Mysore, which happened on the 20th of April following. The letter to Tipoo Saib commenced “Citizen-Sultan!”— Bourrienne]—

## CHAPTER XVII.

1798-1799.

Bonaparte’s departure for Suez—Crossing the desert—Passage of the Red Sea—The fountain of Moses—The Cenobites of Mount Sinai—Danger in recrossing the Red Sea—Napoleon’s return to Cairo—Money borrowed at Genoa—New designs upon Syria—Dissatisfaction of the Ottoman Porte—Plan for invading Asia—Gigantic schemes—General Berthier’s permission to return to France—His romantic love and the adored portrait—He gives up his permission to return home—Louis Bonaparte leaves Egypt—The first Cashmere shawl in France— Intercepted correspondence—Departure for Syria—Fountains of Messoudish—Bonaparte jealous—Discontent of the troops—El-Arish taken—Aspect of Syria—Ramleh—Jerusalem.

On the 24th of December we set out for Suez, where we arrived on the 26th. On the 25th we encamped in the desert some leagues before Ad-Geroth. The heat had been very great during the day; but about eleven at night the cold became so severe as to be precisely in an inverse ratio to the temperature of the day. This desert, which is the route of the caravans from Suez, from Tor and the countries situated on the north of

Arabia, is strewed with the bones of the men and animals who, for ages past, have perished



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in crossing it. As there was no wood to be got, we collected a quantity of these bones for fuel. Monge himself was induced to sacrifice some of the curious skulls of animals which he had picked up on the way and deposited in the Berlin of the General-in-Chief. But no sooner had we kindled our fires than an intolerable effluvium obliged us to, raise our camp and advance farther on, for we could procure no water to extinguish the fires.

On the 27th Bonaparte employed himself in inspecting the town and port of Suez, and in giving orders for some naval and military works. He feared-what indeed really occurred after his departure from Egypt—the arrival of some English troops from the East Indies, which he had intended to invade. These regiments contributed to the loss of his conquest.

—[Sir David Baird, with a force of about 7000 men sent from India, landed at Cosseir in July 1801.]—

On the morning of the 28th we crossed the Red Sea dry-shod, to go to the Wells of Moses, which are nearly a myriametre from the eastern coast, and a little southeast of Suez. The Gulf of Arabia terminates at about 5,000 metres north of that city. Near the port the Red Sea is not above 1,500 metres wide, and is always fordable at low water. The caravans from Tor and Mount Sinai always pass at that part,

—[I shall say nothing of the Cenobites of Mount Sinai, as I had not the honour of seeing them. Neither did I see the register containing the names of Ali, Salah-Eddin, Ibrahim or Abraham, on which Bonaparte is said to have inscribed his name. I perceived at a distance some high hills which were said to be Mount Sinai. I conversed, through the medium of an interpreter, with some Arabian chiefs of Tor and its neighbourhood. They had been informed of our excursion to the Wells, and that they might there thank the French General for the protection granted to their caravans and their trade with Egypt. On the 19th of December, before his departure from Suez, Bonaparte signed a sort of safeguard, or exemption from duties, for the convent of Mount Sinai. This had been granted out of respect to Moses and the Jewish nation, and also because the convent of Mount Sinai is a seat of learning and civilisation amidst the barbarism of the deserts.— Bourrienne.]—

either in going to or returning from Egypt. This shortens their journey nearly a myriametre. At high tide the water rises five or six feet at Suez, and when the wind blows fresh it often rises to nine or ten feet.

We spent a few hours seated by the largest of the springs called the Wells of Moses, situated on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Arabia. We made coffee with the water from these springs, which, however, gave it such a brackish taste that it was scarcely drinkable.



Though the water of the eight little springs which form the Wells of Moses is not so salt as that of many wells dug in other parts of the deserts, it is, nevertheless, exceedingly brackish, and does not allay thirst so well as fresh water.



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Bonaparte returned to Suez that same night. It was very dark when we reached the sea-shore. The tide was coming up, and the water was pretty high. We deviated a little from the way we had taken in the morning; we crossed a little too low down; we were thrown into disorder, but we did not lose ourselves in the marshes as has been stated. There were none. I have read somewhere, though I did not see the fact, nor did I hear it mentioned at the time, that the tide, which was coming up, would have been the grave of the General-in-Chief had not one of the guides saved him by carrying him on his shoulders. If any such danger had existed, all who had not a similar means of escape must have perished.

This is a fabrication. General Caffarelli was the only person who was really in danger, for his wooden leg prevented his sitting firmly on his horse in the water; but some persons came to his assistance and supported him.

—[Bonaparte extricated himself as the others did from the real danger he and his escort had run. At St. Helena he said, “Profiting by the low tide, I crossed the Red Sea dry-shod. On my return I was overtaken by the night and went astray in the middle of the rising tide. I ran the greatest danger. I nearly perished in the same manner as Pharaoh did. This would certainly have furnished all the Christian preachers with a magnificent test against me.” —Bourrienne.]—

On his return to Cairo the General-in-Chief wished to discover the site of the canal which in ancient times formed a junction between the Red Sea and the Nile by Belbeis. M. Lepere, who was a member of the Egyptian Institute, and is now inspector-general of bridges and highways, executed on the spot a beautiful plan, which may confidently be consulted by those who wish to form an accurate idea of that ancient communication, and the level of the two seas.

—[Since accurately ascertained during the progress of the works for the Suez Canal.]—

On his arrival at the capital Bonaparte again devoted all his thoughts to the affairs of the army, which he had not attended to during his short absence. The revenues of Egypt were far from being sufficient to meet the military expenditure. To defray his own expenses Bonaparte raised several considerable loans in Genoa through the medium of M. James. The connection of James with the Bonaparte family takes its date from this period.

—[Joseph Bonaparte says that the fathers of Napoleon and of M. James had long known one another, and that Napoleon had met James at Autun. (*‘Erreurs’*, tome i, p. 296).]—

Since the month of August the attention of General Bonaparte had been constantly fixed on Syria. The period of the possible landing of an enemy in Egypt had now passed



away, and could not return until the month of July in the following year. Bonaparte was fully convinced that that landing would take place, and he was not deceived. The Ottoman Porte had, indeed, been persuaded that the conquest of Egypt was not in her interest. She preferred enduring a rebel whom she hoped one day to subdue to supporting a power which, under the specious pretext of reducing her insurgent beys to obedience, deprived her of one of her finest provinces, and threatened the rest of the empire.



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On his return to Cairo the General-in-Chief had no longer any doubt as to the course which the Porte intended to adopt. The numerous class of persons who believed that the Ottoman Porte had consented to our occupation of Egypt were suddenly undeceived. It was then asked how we could, without that consent, have attempted such an enterprise? Nothing, it was said, could justify the temerity of such an expedition, if it should produce a rupture between France, the Ottoman empire, and its allies. However, for the remainder of the year Bonaparte dreaded nothing except an expedition from Gaza and El-Arish, of which the troops of Djezzar had already taken possession. This occupation was justly regarded as a decided act of hostility; war was thus practically declared. "We must adopt anticipatory measures," thought Napoleon; "we must destroy this advanced guard of the Ottoman empire, overthrow the ramparts of Jaffa and Acre, ravage the country, destroy all her resources, so as to render the passage of an army across the desert impracticable." Thus was planned the expedition against Syria.

General Berthier, after repeated entreaties, had obtained permission to return to France. The 'Courageuse' frigate, which was to convey him home, was fitting out at Alexandria; he had received his instructions, and was to leave Cairo on the 29th of January, ten days before Bonaparte's departure for Syria. Bonaparte was sorry to part with him; but he could not endure to see an old friend, and one who had served him well in all his campaigns, dying before his eyes, the victim of nostalgia and romantic love. Besides, Berthier had been for some time past, anything but active in the discharge of his duties. His passion, which amounted almost to madness, impaired the feeble faculties with which nature had endowed him. Some writers have ranked him in the class of sentimental lovers: be this as it may, the homage which Berthier rendered to the portrait of the object of his adoration more frequently excited our merriment than our sensibility.

One day I went with an order from Bonaparte to the chief of his staff, whom I found on his knees before the portrait of Madame Visconti, which was hanging opposite the door. I touched him, to let him know I was there. He grumbled a little, but did not get angry.

The moment was approaching when the two friends were to part, perhaps forever. Bonaparte was sincerely distressed at this separation, and the chief of his staff was informed of the fact. At a moment when it was supposed Berthier was on his way to Alexandria, he presented himself to the General-in-Chief. "You are, then, decidedly going to Asia?" said he.—"You know," replied the General, "that all is ready, and I shall set out in a few days."—"Well, I will not leave you. I voluntarily renounce all idea of returning to France. I could not endure to forsake you at a moment when you are going to encounter new dangers. Here are my instructions and my passport." Bonaparte, highly pleased with this resolution, embraced Berthier; and the coolness which had been excited by his request to return home was succeeded by a sincere reconciliation.



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Louis Bonaparte, who was suffering from the effects of the voyage, was still at Alexandria. The General-in-Chief, yielding to the pacific views of his younger brother, who was also beginning to evince some symptoms of nostalgia, consented to his return home. He could not, however, depart until the 11th of March 1799. I felt the absence of Louis very much.

On his return to France Louis passed through Sens, where he dined with Madame de Bourrienne, to whom he presented a beautiful shawl, which General Berthier had given me. This, I believe, was the first Cashmere that had ever been seen in France. Louis was much surprised when Madame de Bourrienne showed him the Egyptian correspondence, which had been seized by the English and printed in London. He found in the collection some letters addressed to himself, and there were others, he said, which were likely to disturb the peace of more than one family on the return of the army.

On the 11th of February 1799 we began our march for Syria, with about 12,000 men. It has been erroneously stated that the army amounted to only 6000: nearly that number was lost in the course of the campaign. However, at the very moment we were on our way to Syria, with 12,000 men, scarcely as many being left in Egypt, the Directory published that, "according to the information which had been received," we had 60,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry; that the army had doubled its numbers by battles; and that since our arrival in Egypt, we had lost only 300 men. Is history to be written from such documents?

We arrived, about four o'clock in the afternoon, at Messoudiah, or, "the Fortunate Spot." Here we witnessed a kind of phenomenon, which was not a little agreeable to us. Messoudiah is a place situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, surrounded with little dunes of very fine sand, which the copious rains of winter readily penetrate. The rain remains in the sand, so that on making with the fingers holes of four or five inches in depth at the bottom of these little hills, the water immediately flows out. This water was, indeed, rather thick, but its flavour was agreeable; and it would have become clear if we could have spared time to allow it to rest and deposit the particles of sand it contained.

It was a curious spectacle to behold us all lying prostrate, digging wells in miniature; and displaying a laughable selfishness in our endeavours to obtain the most abundant source. This was a very important discovery to us. We found these sand-wells at the extremity of the desert, and it contributed, in no small degree, to revive the courage of our soldiers; besides, when men are, as was the case with us, subject to privations of every kind, the least benefit which accrues inspires the hope of a new advantage. We were approaching the confines of Syria, and we enjoyed by anticipation, the pleasure we were about to experience, on treading a soil which, by its variety of verdure and vegetation, would remind us of our native land. At Messoudiah we likewise possessed the advantage of bathing in the sea, which was not more than fifty paces from our unexpected water-supply.

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Whilst near the wells of Messoudiah, on the way to El-Arish, I one day saw Bonaparte walking alone with Junot, as he was often in the habit of doing. I stood at a little distance, and my eyes, I know not why, were fixed on him during their conversation. The General's countenance, which was always pale, had, without my being able to divine the cause, become paler than usual. There was something convulsive in his features—a wildness in his look, and he several times struck his head with his hand. After conversing with Junot about a quarter of an hour he quitted him and came towards me. I never saw him exhibit such an air of dissatisfaction, or appear so much under the influence of some prepossession. I advanced towards him, and as soon as we met, he exclaimed in an abrupt and angry tone, “So! I find I cannot depend upon you.—These women!—Josephine! —if you had loved me, you would before now have told me all I have heard from Junot—he is a real friend—Josephine!—and I 600 leagues from her—you ought to have told me.—That she should thus have deceived me!—’Woe to them! —I will exterminate the whole race of fops and puppies!—As to her—divorce!—yes, divorce! a public and open divorce!—I must write! —I know all!—It is your fault—you ought to have told me!”

These energetic and broken exclamations, his disturbed countenance and altered voice informed me but too well of the subject of his conversation with Junot. I saw that Junot had been drawn into a culpable indiscretion; and that, if Josephine had committed any faults, he had cruelly exaggerated them. My situation was one of extreme delicacy. However, I had the good fortune to retain my self-possession, and as soon as some degree of calmness succeeded to this first burst, I replied that I knew nothing of the reports which Junot might have communicated to him; that even if such reports, often the offspring of calumny, had reached my ear, and if I had considered it my duty to inform him of them, I certainly would not have selected for that purpose the moment when he was 600 leagues from France. I also did not conceal how blamable Junot's conduct appeared to me, and how ungenerous I considered it thus rashly to accuse a woman who was not present to justify or defend herself; that it was no great proof of attachment to add domestic uneasiness to the anxiety, already sufficiently great, which the situation of his brothers in arms, at the commencement of a hazardous enterprise, occasioned him.

Notwithstanding these observations, which, however, he listened to with some calmness, the word “divorce” still escaped his lips; and it is necessary to be aware of the degree of irritation to which he was liable when anything seriously vexed him, to be able to form an idea of what Bonaparte was during this painful scene. However, I kept my ground. I repeated what I had said. I begged of him to consider with what facility tales were fabricated and circulated,



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and that gossip such as that which had been repeated to him was only the amusement of idle persons; and deserved the contempt of strong minds. I spoke of his glory. "My glory!" cried he. "I know not what I would not give if that which Junot has told me should be untrue; so much do I love Josephine! If she be really guilty a divorce must separate us for ever. I will not submit to be a laughing-stock for all the imbeciles in Paris. I will write to Joseph; he will get the divorce declared."

Although his agitation continued long, intervals occurred in which he was less excited. I seized one of these moments of comparative calm to combat this idea of divorce which seemed to possess his mind. I represented to him especially that it would be imprudent to write to his brother with reference to a communication which was probably false. "The letter might be intercepted; it would betray the feelings of irritation which dictated it. As to a divorce, it would be time to think of that hereafter, but advisedly."

These last words produced an effect on him which I could not have ventured to hope for so speedily. He became tranquil, listened to me as if he had suddenly felt the justice of my observations, dropped the subject, and never returned to it; except that about a fortnight after, when we were before St. Jean d'Acre, he expressed himself greatly dissatisfied with Junot, and complained of the injury he had done him by his indiscreet disclosures, which he began to regard as the inventions of malignity. I perceived afterwards that he never pardoned Junot for this indiscretion; and I can state, almost with certainty, that this was one of the reasons why Junot was not created a marshal of France, like many of, his comrades whom Bonaparte had loved less. It may be supposed that Josephine, who was afterwards informed by Bonaparte of Junot's conversation, did not feel particularly interested in his favour. He died insane on the 27th of July 1813.

—[However indiscreet Junot might on this occasion have shown himself in interfering in so delicate a matter, it is pretty certain that his suspicions were breathed to no other ear than that of Bonaparte himself. Madame Junot, in speaking of the ill-suppressed enmity between her husband and Madame Bonaparte, says that he never uttered a word even to her of the subject of his conversation with, the General-in-Chief to Egypt. That Junot's testimony, however, notwithstanding the countenance it obtained from Bonaparte's relations, ought to be cautiously received, the following passage from the *Memoirs of the Duchesse d'Abrantes*, vol. i. p. 250, demonstrative of the feelings of irritation between the parties, will show: "Junot escorted Madame Bonaparte when she went to join the General-in-Chief in Italy. I am surprised that M. de Bourrienne has omitted mentioning this circumstance in his *Memoirs*. He must have known it, since he was well acquainted



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with everything relating to Josephine, and knew many facts of high interest in her life at this period and subsequently. How happens it too that he makes no mention of Mademoiselle Louise, who might be called her 'demioselle de compagnie' rather than her 'femme de chambre'? At the outset of the journey to Italy she was such a favourite with Josephine that she dressed like her mistress, ate at table with her, and was in all respects her friend and confidante. "The journey was long, much too long for Junot, though he was very much in love with Mademoiselle Louise. But he was anxious to join the army, for to him his General was always the dearest of mistresses. Junot has often spoken to me, and to me alone, of the vexations he experienced on this journey. He might have added to his circumstantial details relative to Josephine the conversation he is reported to have had with Bonaparte to Egypt; but he never breathed a word on the subject, for his character was always noble and generous. The journey to Italy did not produce the effect which usually arises from such incidents in common life; namely, a closer friendship and intimacy between the parties. On the contrary, Madame Bonaparte from that moment evinced some degree of ill-humour towards Junot, and complained with singular warmth of the want of respect which he had shown her, in making love to her 'femme de chambre' before her face." According to 'Erreurs (tome i. pp. 4, 50) Junot was not then in Syria. On 10th February Napoleon was at Messoudiah. Junot only arrived from Egypt at Gaza on the 25th February. Madame d'Abrantes (ii. 32) treats this conversation as apocryphal. "This (an anecdote of her own) is not an imaginary episode like that, for example, of making a person speak at Messoudiah who never was there."—

Our little army continued its march on El-Arish, where we arrived on the 17th of February. The fatigues experienced in the desert and the scarcity of water excited violent murmurs amongst the soldiers during their march across the isthmus. When any person on horseback passed them they studiously expressed their discontent. The advantage possessed by the horsemen provoked their sarcasms. I never heard the verses which they are said to have repeated, but they indulged in the most violent language against the Republic, the men of science, and those whom they regarded as the authors of the expedition. Nevertheless these brave fellows, from whom it was not astonishing that such great privations should extort complaints, often compensated by their pleasantries for the bitterness of their reproaches.

Many times during the crossing of the isthmus I have seen soldiers, parched with thirst, and unable to wait till the hour for distribution of water, pierce the leathern bottles which contained it; and this conduct, so injurious to all, occasioned numerous quarrels.

El-Arish surrendered on the 17th of February. It has been erroneously stated that the garrison of this insignificant place, which was set at liberty on condition of not again serving against us, was afterwards found amongst the besieged at Jaffa. It has also been stated that it was because the men composing the El-Arish garrison did not

proceed to Bagdad, according to the capitulation, that we shot them at Jaffa. We shall presently see the falsehood of these assertions.



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On the 28th of February we obtained the first glimpse of the green and fertile plains of Syria, which, in many respects, reminded us of the climate and soil of Europe. We now had rain, and sometimes rather too much. The feelings which the sight of the valleys and mountains called forth made us, in some degree, forget the hardships and vexations of an expedition of which few persons could foresee the object or end. There are situations in life when the slightest agreeable sensation alleviates all our ills.

On the 1st of March we slept at Ramleh, in a small convent occupied by two monks, who paid us the greatest attention. They gave us the church for a hospital. These good fathers did not fail to tell us that it was through this place the family of Jesus Christ passed into Egypt, and showed us the wells at which they quenched their thirst.

—[Ramleh, the ancient Arimathea, is situated at the base of a chain of mountains, the eastern extremity of which is washed by the Persian Gulf, and the western by the Mediterranean.—Bourrienne.]—

The pure and cool water of these wells delighted us.

We were not more than about six leagues from Jerusalem.

I asked the General whether he did not intend to direct his march by the way of that city, so celebrated in many respects. He replied, "Oh no! Jerusalem is not in my line of operations. I do not wish to be annoyed by mountaineers in difficult roads. And, besides, on the other side of the mountain I should be assailed by swarms of cavalry. I am not ambitious of the fate of Cassius."

We therefore did not enter Jerusalem, which was not disturbed by the war. All we did was to send a written declaration to the persons in power at Jerusalem, assuring them that we had no design against that country, and only wished them to remain at peace. To this communication no answer was returned, and nothing more passed on the subject.

—[Sir Walter Scott says, speaking of Bonaparte, that he believes that little officer of artillery dreamed of being King of Jerusalem. What I have just stated proves that he never thought of such a thing. The "little officer of artillery" had a far more splendid dream in his head.—Bourrienne.]—

We found at Ramleh between two and three hundred Christians in a pitiable state of servitude, misery, and dejection. On conversing with them I could not help admiring how much the hope of future rewards may console men under present ills. But I learned from many of them that they did not live in harmony together. The feelings of hatred and jealousy are not less common amongst these people than amongst the better-instructed inhabitants of rich and populous cities.

## CHAPTER XVIII

1799.



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Arrival at Jaffa—The siege—Beauharnais and Croisier—Four thousand prisoners—Scarcity of provisions—Councils of war—Dreadful necessity—The massacre—The plague—Lannes and the mountaineers—Barbarity of Djezasi—Arrival at St Jean d’Acre, and abortive attacks—Sir Sidney Smith—Death of Caffarelli—Duroc wounded—Rash bathing—Insurrections in Egypt.

On arriving before Jaffa, where there were already some troops, the first person I met was Adjutant-General Gresieux, with whom I was well acquainted. I wished him good-day, and offered him my hand. “Good God! what are you about?” said he, repulsing me with a very abrupt gesture; “you may have the plague. People do not touch each other here! “I mentioned the circumstance to Bonaparte, who said, “If he be afraid of the plague, he will die of it.” Shortly after, at St. Jean d’Acre, he was attacked by that malady, and soon sank under it.

On the 4th of March we commenced the siege of Jaffa. That paltry place, which, to round a sentence, was pompously styled the ancient Joppa, held out only to the 6th of March, when it was taken by storm, and given up to pillage. The massacre was horrible. General Bonaparte sent his aides de camp Beauharnais and Croisier to appease the fury of the soldiers as much as possible, and to report to him what was passing. They learned that a considerable part of the garrison had retired into some vast buildings, a sort of caravanserai, which formed a large enclosed court. Beauharnais and Croisier, who were distinguished by wearing the ‘aide de camp’ scarf on their arms, proceeded to that place. The Arnauts and Albanians, of whom these refugees were almost entirely composed, cried from the windows that they were willing to surrender upon an assurance that they would be exempted from the massacre to which the town was doomed; if not, they threatened to fire on the ‘aides de camp’, and to defend themselves to the last extremity. The two officers thought that they ought to accede to the proposition, notwithstanding the decree of death which had been pronounced against the whole garrison, in consequence of the town being token by storm. They brought them to our camp in two divisions, one consisting of about 2500 men, the other of about 1600.

I was walking with General Bonaparte, in front of his tent, when he beheld this mass of men approaching, and before he even saw his ‘aides de camp’ he said to me, in a tone of profound sorrow, “What do they wish me to do with these men? Have I food for them?—ships to convey them to Egypt or France? Why, in the devil’s name, have they served me thus?” After their arrival, and the explanations which the General-in-Chief demanded and listened to with anger, Eugene and Croisier received the most severe reprimand for their conduct. But the deed was done. Four thousand men were there. It was necessary to decide upon their fate. The two aides de camp observed that they



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had found themselves alone in the midst of numerous enemies, and that he had directed them to restrain the carnage. "Yes, doubtless," replied the General-in-Chief, with great warmth, "as to women, children, and old men—all the peaceable inhabitants; but not with respect to armed soldiers. It was your duty to die rather than bring these unfortunate creatures to me. What do you want me to do with them?" These words were pronounced in the most angry tone.

The prisoners were then ordered to sit down, and were placed, without any order, in front of the tents, their hands tied behind their backs. A sombre determination was depicted on their countenances. We gave them a little biscuit and bread, squeezed out of the already scanty supply for the army.

On the first day of their arrival a council of war was held in the tent of the General-in-Chief, to determine what course should be pursued with respect to them the council deliberated a long time without coming to any decision.

On the evening of the following day the daily reports of the generals of division came in. They spoke of nothing but the insufficiency of the rations, the complaints of the soldiers—of their murmurs and discontent at seeing their bread given to enemies who had been withdrawn from their vengeance, inasmuch as a decree of death; in conformity with the laws of war, had been passed on Jaffa. All these reports were alarming, and especially that of General Bon, in which no reserve was made. He spoke of nothing less than the fear of a revolt, which would be justified by the serious nature of the case.

The council assembled again. All the generals of division were summoned to attend, and for several hours together they discussed, under separate questions, what measures might be adopted, with the most sincere desire to discover and execute one which would save the lives of these unfortunate prisoners.

(1.) Should they be sent into Egypt? Could it be done? To do so; it would be necessary to send with them a numerous escort, which would too much weaken our little army in the enemy's country. How, besides, could they and the escort be supported till they reached Cairo, having no provisions to give them on setting out, and their route being through a hostile territory, which we had exhausted, which presented no fresh resources, and through which we, perhaps, might have to return,

(2.) Should they be embarked? Where were the ships?—Where could they be found? All our telescopes, directed over the sea could not descry a single friendly sail Bonaparte, I affirm, would have regarded such an event as a real favour of fortune. It was, and—I am glad to have to say it, this sole idea, this sole hope, which made him brave, for three days, the murmurs of his army. But in vain was help looked for seaward. It did not come.



(3.) Should the prisoners be set at liberty? They would then instantly proceed to St. Jean d'Acre to reinforce the pasha, or else, throwing themselves into the mountains of Nablous, would greatly annoy our rear and right-flank, and deal out death to us, as a recompense for the life we had given them. There could be no doubt of this. What is a Christian dog to a Turk? It would even have been a religious and meritorious act in the eye of the Prophet.

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(4.) Could they be incorporated, disarmed, with our soldiers in the ranks? Here again the question of food presented itself in all its force. Next came to be considered the danger of having such comrades while marching through an enemy's country. What might happen in the event of a battle before St. Jean d'Acre? Could we even tell what might occur during the march? And, finally, what must be done with them when under the ramparts of that town, if we should be able to take them there? The same embarrassments with respect to the questions of provisions and security would then recur with increased force.

The third day arrived without its being possible, anxiously as it was desired, to come to any conclusion favourable to the preservation of these unfortunate men. The murmurs in the camp grew louder the evil went on increasing—remedy appeared impossible—the danger was real and imminent. The order for shooting the prisoners was given and executed on the 10th of March. We did not, as has been stated, separate the Egyptians from the other prisoners. There were no Egyptians.

Many of the unfortunate creatures composing the smaller division, which was fired on close to the seacoast, at some distance from the other column, succeeded in swimming to some reefs of rocks out of the reach of musket-shot. The soldiers rested their muskets on the sand, and, to induce the prisoners to return, employed the Egyptian signs of reconciliation in use in the country. They, came back; but as they advanced they were killed, and disappeared among the waves.

I confine myself to these details of this act of dreadful necessity, of which I was an eye-witness. Others, who, like myself, saw it, have fortunately spared me the recital of the sanguinary result. This atrocious scene, when I think of it, still makes me shudder, as it did on the day I beheld it; and I would wish it were possible for me to forget it, rather than be compelled to describe it. All the horrors imagination can conceive, relative to that day of blood, would fall short of the reality.

I have related the truth, the whole truth. I was present at all the discussions, all the conferences, all the deliberations. I had not, as may be supposed, a deliberative voice; but I am bound to declare that the situation of the army, the scarcity of food, our small numerical strength, in the midst of a country where every individual was an enemy, would have induced me to vote in the affirmative of the proposition which was carried into effect, if I had a vote to give. It was necessary to be on the spot in order to understand the horrible necessity which existed.



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War, unfortunately, presents too many occasions on which a law, immutable in all ages, and common to all nations, requires that private interests should be sacrificed to a great general interest, and that even humanity should be forgotten. It is for posterity to judge whether this terrible situation was that in which Bonaparte was placed. For my own part, I have a perfect conviction that he could not do otherwise than yield to the dire necessity of the case. It was the advice of the council, whose opinion was unanimous in favour of the execution, that governed him, Indeed I ought in truth to say, that he yielded only in the last extremity, and was one of those, perhaps, who beheld the massacre with the deepest pain.

After the siege of Jaffe the plague began to exhibit itself with a little more virulence. We lost between seven and eight hundred, men by the contagion during the campaign of Syria'

—[Sir Walter Scott says, that Heaven sent this pestilence amongst us to avenge the massacre of Jaffa]—

During our march on St. Jean d'Acre, which was commenced on the 14th of March, the army neither obtained the brilliant triumphs nor encountered the numerous obstacles spoken of in certain works. Nothing of importance occurred but a rash skirmish of General Lannes who, in spite of contrary orders, from Bonaparte, obstinately pursued a troop of mountaineers into the passes of Nabloua. On returning, he found the mountaineers placed in ambush in great numbers amongst rocks, the windings of which they were well, acquainted with, whence they fired close upon our troops; whose situation rendered them unable to defend themselves. During the time of this foolish and useless enterprise; especially while the firing was brisk, Bonaparte, exhibited much impatience, and it must be confessed, his anger was but natural: The Nablousians halted at the openings of the mountain defiles. Bonaparte reproached Lannes bitterly for having uselessly exposed himself, and "sacrificed, without any object, a number of brave men." Lannes excused himself by saying that the mountaineers had defied him, and he wished to chastise the rabble. "We are not in a condition to play the swaggerer," replied Napoleon.

In four days we arrived before St. Jean d'Acre, where we learned that Djezzar had cut off the head of our envoy, Mailly-de-Chateau-Renaud, and thrown his body into the sea in a sack. This cruel pasha was guilty of a great number of similar executions. The waves frequently drove dead bodies towards the coast, and we came upon them whilst bathing.



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The details: of the siege of Acre are well known. Although surrounded by a wall, flanked with strong towers, and having, besides, a broad-and deep ditch defended by works this little fortress did not appear likely to hold out against French valour and the skill of our corps of engineers and artillery; but the ease and rapidity with which Jaffa had been taken occasioned us to overlook in some degree the comparative strength of the two places, and the difference of their respective situations. At Jaffa we had sufficient artillery: at St. Jean d'Acre we had not. At Jaffa we had to deal only with a garrison left to itself: at St. Jean d'Acre we were opposed by a garrison strengthened by reinforcements of men and supplies of provisions, supported by the English fleet, and assisted by European Science. Sir Sidney Smith was, beyond doubt, the man who did us the greatest injury.

—[Sir Sidney Smith was the only Englishman besides the Duke of Wellington who defeated Napoleon in military operations. The third Englishman opposed to him, Sir John Moore, was compelled to make a precipitate retreat through the weakness of his force]—

Much has been said respecting his communications with the General-in-Chief. The reproaches which the latter cast upon him for endeavouring to seduce the soldiers and officers of the army by tempting offers were the more singular, even if they were well founded, inasmuch as these means are frequently employed by leaders in war.

—[At one time the French General was so disturbed by them as to endeavour to put a stop to them; which object he effected by interdicting all communication with the English, and signifying, in an order of the day, that their Commodore was a madman. This, being believed in the army, so enraged Sir Sidney Smith, that in his wrath he sent a challenge to Napoleon. The latter replied, that he had too many weighty affairs on his hands to trouble himself in so trifling a matter. Had it, indeed, been the great Marlborough, it might have been worthy his attention. Still, if the English sailor was absolutely bent upon fighting, he would send him a bravo from the army, and show them a small portion of neutral ground, where the mad Commodore might land, and satisfy his humour to the full.— (Editor of 1836 edition.)]—

As to the embarking of French prisoners on board a vessel in which the plague existed, the improbability of the circumstance alone, but especially the notorious facts of the case, repel this odious accusation. I observed the conduct of Sir Sidney Smith closely at the time, and I remarked in him a chivalric spirit, which sometimes hurried him into trifling eccentricities; but I affirm that his behaviour towards the French was that of a gallant enemy. I have seen many letters, in which the writers informed him that they “were very sensible of the good treatment which the French experienced when they fell into his hands.” Let any one examine Sir Sidney's conduct before the capitulation of El-Arish, and after its rupture, and then they can judge of his character.



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—[Napoleon, when at St. Helena, in speaking of the siege of Acre, said,—Sidney Smith is a brave officer. He displayed considerable ability in the treaty for the evacuation of Egypt by the French. He took advantage of the discontent which he found to prevail amongst the French troops at being so long away from France, and other circumstances. He manifested great honour in sending immediately to Kleber the refusal of Lord Keith to ratify the treaty, which saved the French army; if he had kept it a secret seven or eight days longer, Cairo would have been given up to the Turks, and the French army necessarily obliged to surrender to the English. He also showed great humanity and honour in all his proceedings towards the French who fell into his hands. He landed at Havre, for some 'sottice' of a bet he had made, according to some, to go to the theatre; others said it was for espionage; however that may be, he was arrested and confined in the Temple as a spy; and at one time it was intended to try and execute him. Shortly after I returned from Italy he wrote to me from his prison, to request that I would intercede for him; but, under the circumstances in which he was taken, I could do nothing for him. He is active, intelligent, intriguing, and indefatigable; but I believe that he is 'mezzo pazo'. "The chief cause of the failure at Acre was, that he took all my battering train, which was on board of several small vessels. Had it not been for that, I would have taken Acre in spite of him. He behaved very bravely, and was well seconded by Phillipeaux, a Frenchman of talent, who had studied with me as an engineer. There was a Major Douglas also, who behaved very gallantly. The acquisition of five or six hundred seamen as gunners was a great advantage to the Turks, whose spirits they revived, and whom they showed how to defend the fortress. But he committed a great fault in making sorties, which cost the lives of two or three hundred brave fellows without the possibility of success. For it was impossible he could succeed against the number of the French who were before Acre. I would lay a wage that he lost half of his crew in them. He dispersed Proclamations amongst my troops, which certainly shook some of them, and I in consequence published an order, stating that he was read, and forbidding all communication with him. Some days after he sent, by means of a flag of truce, a lieutenant or a midshipman with a letter containing a challenge to me to meet him at some place he pointed out in order to fight a duel. I laughed at this, and sent him back an intimation that when he brought Marlborough to fight me I would meet him. Not, withstanding this, I like the character of the man." (Voices from St. Helena, vol. 4, p. 208).]—

All our manoeuvres, our works, and attacks were made with that levity and carelessness which over-confidence inspires. Kleber, whilst walking with me one

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day in the lines of our camp, frequently expressed his surprise and discontent. "The trenches," said, he, "do not come up to my knees." Besieging artillery was, of necessity, required: we commenced with field artillery. This encouraged the besieged, who perceived the weakness of our resources. The besieging artillery, consisting only of three twenty-four pounders and six, eighteen pounders, was not brought up until the end of April, and before that period threw assaults had taken place with very serious loss. On the 4th of May our powder began to fail us. This cruel event obliged us to slacken our fire. We also wanted shot; and an order of the day fixed a price to be given for all balls, according to their calibre, which might be picked up after being fired from the fortress or the two ships of the line, the 'Tiger' and 'Theseus', which were stationed on each side of the harbour: These two vessels embarrassed the communication, between the camp and the trenches; but though they made much noise, they did little harm. A ball from one of them; killed an officer on the evening the siege was raised.

The enemy had within the walls some excellent riflemen, chiefly Albanians. They placed stones, one over the other, on the walls, put their firearms through the interstices, and thus, completely sheltered, fired with destructive precision.

On the 9th of April General Caffarelli, so well known for his courage and talents, was passing through the trench, his hand resting as he stooped on his hip, to preserve the equilibrium which his wooden leg, impaired; his elbow only was raised above the trench. He was warned that the enemy's shot, fired close upon us did not miss the smallest object. He paid no attention to any observation of this kind, and in a few instants his elbow joint was fractured. Amputation of the arm was judged indispensable. The General survived the operation eighteen days. Bonaparte went regularly twice a day to his tent. By his order, added to my friendship for Caffarelli, I scarcely ever quitted him. Shortly before he expired he said to me, "My dear Bourrienne, be so good as to read to me Voltaire's preface to 'Esprit des Lois'." When I returned to the tent of the General-in-Chief he asked, "How is Caffarelli?" I replied, "He is near his end; but he asked me to read him Voltaire's preface to the 'Esprit de Lois', he has just fallen asleep." Bonaparte said, "Bah! to wish to hear that preface? how singular!" He went to see Caffarelli, but he was still asleep. I returned to him that evening and received his last breath. He died with the utmost composure. His death. was equally regretted by the soldiers and the men of science, who accompanied us. It was a just regret due to that distinguished man, in whom very extensive information was united with great courage and amiable disposition.

On the 10th of May; when an assault took place, Bonaparte proceeded at an early hour to the trenches.



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—[Sir Sidney Smith, in his Official report of the assault of the 8th of May, says that Napoleon was distinctly seen directing the operation.]—

Croisier, who was mentioned on our arrival at Damanhour and on the capture of Jaffa, had in vain courted death since the commencement of the siege. Life had become insupportable to him since the unfortunate affair at Jaffa. He as usual accompanied his General to the trenches. Believing that the termination of the siege, which was supposed to be near, would postpone indefinitely the death which he sought, he mounted a battery. In this situation his tall figure uselessly provoked all the enemy's shots. "Croisier, come down, I command you; you have no business there," cried Bonaparte, in a loud and imperative tone. Croisier remained without making any reply. A moment after a ball passed through his right leg. Amputation was not considered, indispensable. On the day of our departure he was placed on a litter which was borne by sixteen men alternately, eight at a time. I received his farewell between Gaza and El-Arish, where, he died of tetanus. His modest tomb will not be often visited.

The siege of St. Jean d'Acre lasted sixty days. During that time eight assaults and twelve sorties took place. In the assault of the 8th of May more than 200 men penetrated into the town. Victory was already shouted; but the breach having been taken in reverse by the Turks, it was not approached without some degree of hesitation, and the men who had entered were not supported. The streets were barricaded. The cries, the howlings of the women, who ran through the streets throwing, according to the custom of the country, dust in the air, excited the male inhabitants to a desperate resistance, which rendered unavailing, this short occupation of the town, by a handful of men, who, finding themselves left without assistance, retreated towards the breach. Many who could not reach it perished in the town.

During this assault Duroc, who was in the trench, was wounded in the right thigh by the splinter from a shell fired against the fortifications. Fortunately this accident only carried away the flesh from the bone, which remained untouched. He had a tent in common with several other 'aides de camp'; but for his better accommodation I gave him mine, and I scarcely ever quitted him. Entering his tent one day about noon, I found him in a profound sleep. The excessive heat had compelled him to throw off all covering, and part of his wound was exposed. I perceived a scorpion which had crawled up the leg of the camp-bed and approached very near to the wound. I was just in time to hurl it to the ground. The sudden motion of my hand awoke Duroc.

We often bathed in the sea. Sometimes the English, perhaps after taking a double allowance of grog, would fire at our heads, which appeared above water. I am not aware that any accident was occasioned by their cannonade; but as we were beyond reach of their guns, we paid scarcely any attention to the firing. It was seen a subject of amusement to us.



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Had our attack on St. Jean d'Acre been less precipitate, and had the siege been undertaken according to the rules of war; the place would not have held out three days; one assault, like that of the 8th of May, would have been sufficient. If, in the situation in which we were on the day when we first came in sight of the ramparts of Acre; we had made a less inconsiderate estimate of the strength of the place; if we had likewise taken into consideration the active co-operation of the English and the Ottoman Porte; our absolute want of artillery of sufficient calibre; our scarcity of gunpowder and the difficulty of procuring food; we certainly should not have undertaken the siege; and that would have been by far the wisest course.

Towards the end of the siege the General-in-Chief received intelligence of some trifling insurrections in northern Egypt. An angel had excited them, and the heavenly messenger, who had condescended to assume a name, was called the Mahdi, or El Mohdy. This religious extravagance, however, did not last long, and tranquillity was soon restored. All that the fanatic Mahdi, who shrouded himself in mystery, succeeded in doing was to attack our rear by some vagabonds, whose illusions were dissipated by a few musket shots.

### CHAPTER XIX.

1799.

The siege of Acre raised—Attention to names in bulletins—Gigantic project— The Druses—Mount Caramel—The wounded and infected— Order to march on foot—Loss of our cannon—A Nablousian fires at Bonaparte—Return to Jaffa—Bonaparte visits the plague hospital— A potion given to the sick—Bonaparte's statement at St. Helena.

The siege of St. Jean d'Acre was raised on the 20th of May. It cost us a loss of nearly 3000 men, in killed, deaths by the plague, or wounds. A great number were wounded mortally. In those veracious documents, the bulletins, the French loss was made 500 killed, and 1000 wounded, and the enemy's more than 15,000.

Our bulletins may form curious materials for history; but their value certainly will not depend on the credit due to their details. Bonaparte attached the greatest importance to those documents; generally drawing them up himself, or correcting them, when written by another hand, if the composition did not please him.

It must be confessed that at that time nothing so much flattered self-love as being mentioned in a bulletin. Bonaparte was well aware of this; he knew that to insert a name in a bulletin was conferring a great honour, and that its exclusion was a severe disappointment. General Berthier, to whom I had expressed a strong desire to examine the works of the siege, took me over them; but notwithstanding his promise of secrecy; he mentioned the circumstance to the General-in-Chief, who had desired me not to

approach the works. “What did you go there for?” said Bonaparte to me, with some severity;



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“that is not your place.” I replied that Berthier told me that no assault would take place that day; and he believed there would be no sortie, as the garrison had made one the preceding evening. “What matters that? There might have been another. Those who have nothing to do in such places are always the first victims. Let every man mind his own business. Wounded or killed, I would not even have noticed you in the bulletin. You could have been laughed at, and that justly.”

Bonaparte; not having at this time experienced reverses, having continually proceeded from triumph to triumph, confidently anticipated the taking of St. Jean d’Acre. In his letters to the generals in Egypt he fixed the 25th of April for the accomplishment of that event. He reckoned that the grand assault against the tower could not be made before that day; it took place, however, twenty-four hours sooner. He wrote to Desaix on the 19th of April, “I count on being master of Acre in six days.” On the 2d of May he told Junot, “Our 18 and 24 pounders have arrived. We hope to enter Acre in a few days. The fire of their artillery is completely extinguished.” Letters have been printed, dated 30th Floreal (19th. May), in which he announces to, Dugua and to Poussielque that they can rely on his being in Acre on 6th Floreal (25th April). Some mistake has evidently been made. “The slightest circumstances produce the greatest events,” said Napoleon, according to the Memorial of St. Helena; “had St. Jean d’Acre fallen, I should have changed the face of the world.” And again, “The fate of the East lay in that small town.”

This idea is not one which he first began to entertain at St. Helena; he often repeated the very same words at St. Jean d’Acre. On the shore of Ptolemes gigantic projects agitated him, as, doubtless, regret for not having carried them into execution tormented him at St. Helena.

Almost every evening Bonaparte and myself used to walk together, at a little distance from the sea-shore. The day after the unfortunate assault of the 8th of May Bonaparte, afflicted at seeing the blood of so many brave men uselessly shed, said to me, “Bourrienne, I see that this wretched place has cost me a number of men, and wasted much time. But things are too far advanced not to attempt a last effort. If I succeed, as I expect, I shall find in the town the pasha’s treasures, and arms for 300,000 men. I will stir up and arm the people of Syria, who are disgusted at the ferocity of Djezzar, and who, as you know, pray for his destruction at every assault. I shall then march upon Damascus and. Aleppo. On advancing into the country, the discontented will flock round my standard, and swell my army. I will announce to the people the abolition of servitude and of the tyrannical governments of the pashas. I shall arrive at Constantinople with large masses of soldiers. I shall overturn the Turkish empire, and found in the East a new and grand empire, which



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will fix my place in the records of posterity. Perhaps I shall return to Paris by Adrianople, or by Vienna, after having annihilated the house of Austria.” After I had made some observations which these grand projects naturally suggested, he replied, “What! do you not see that the Druses only wait for the fall of Acre to rise in rebellion? Have not the keys of Damascus already been offered me? I only stay till these walls fall because until then I can derive no advantage from this large town. By the operation which I meditate I cutoff all kind of succour from the beys, and secure the conquest of Egypt. I will have Desaix nominated commander-in-chief; but if I do not succeed in the last assault I am about to attempt, I set off directly. Time presses,—I shall not be at Cairo before the middle of June; the winds will then lie favourable for ships bound to Egypt, from the north. Constantinople will send troops to Alexandria and Rosetta. I must be there. As for the army, which will arrive afterwards by land, I do not fear it this year. I will cause everything to be destroyed, all the way, to the entrance of the desert. I will render the passage of an army impossible for two years. Troops cannot exist among ruins.”

As soon as I returned to my tent I committed to paper this conversation, which was then quite fresh in my memory, and, I may venture to say that every word I put down is correct. I may add, that during the siege our camp was, constantly filled with the inhabitants, who invoked Heaven to favour our arms, and prayed fervently at every assault for our success, many of them on their knees, with their faces to the city. The people of Damascus, too, had offered the keys to Bonaparte. Thus everything contributed to make him confident in his favourite plan.

The troops left St. Jean d’Acre on the 20th of May, taking advantage of the night to avoid a sortie from the besieged, and to conceal the retreat of the army, which had to march three leagues along the shore, exposed to the fire of the English vessels lying in the roads of Mount Carmel. The removal of the wounded and sick commenced on the 18th and 19th of May.

Bonaparte then made a proclamation, which from one end to the other offends against truth. It has been published in many works. The season of the year for hostile landing is there very dexterously placed in the foreground; all the rest is a deceitful exaggeration. It must be observed that the proclamations which Bonaparte regarded as calculated to dazzle an ever too credulous public were amplifications often ridiculous and incomprehensible upon the spot, and which only excited the laughter of men of common sense. In all Bonaparte’s correspondence there is an endeavour to disguise his reverses, and impose on the public, and even on his own generals. For example, he wrote to General Dugua, commandant of Cairo, on the 15th of February, “I will bring you plenty of prisoners and flags! “One would almost be inclined to say that he had resolved, during his stay in the East, thus to pay a tribute to the country of fables.



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—[The prisoners and flags were sent. The Turkish flags were entrusted by Berthier to the Adjutant-Commandant Boyer, who conducted a convoy of sick and wounded to Egypt. Sidney Smith acknowledges the loss of some flags by the Turks. The Turkish prisoners were used as carriers of the litters for the wounded, and were, for the most part, brought into Egypt. (Erreurs, tome i. pp. 47 and 160)]—

Thus terminated this disastrous expedition. I have read somewhere that during this immortal campaign the two heroes Murat and Mourad had often been in face of one another. There is only a little difficulty; Mourad Bey never put his foot in Syria.

We proceeded along the coast, and passed Mount Carmel. Some of the wounded were carried on litters, the remainder on horses, mules, and camels. At a short distance from Mount Carmel we were informed that three soldiers, ill of the plague, who were left in a convent (which served for a hospital), and abandoned too confidently to the generosity of the Turks, had been barbarously put to death.

A most intolerable thirst, the total want of water, an excessive heat, and a fatiguing march over burning sand-hills, quite disheartened the men, and made every generous sentiment give way to feelings of the grossest selfishness and most shocking indifference. I saw officers, with their limbs amputated, thrown off the litters, whose removal in that way had been ordered, and who had themselves given money to recompense the bearers. I saw the amputated, the wounded, the infected, or those only suspected of infection, deserted and left to themselves. The march was illumined by torches, lighted for the purpose of setting fire to the little towns, villages, and hamlets which lay in the route, and the rich crops with which the land was then covered. The whole country was in a blaze. Those who were ordered to preside at this work of destruction seemed eager to spread desolation on every side, as if they could thereby avenge themselves for their reverses, and find in such dreadful havoc an alleviation of their sufferings. We were constantly surrounded by plunderers, incendiaries, and the dying, who, stretched on the sides of the road, implored assistance in a feeble voice, saying, "I am not infected—I am only wounded;" and to convince those whom they addressed, they reopened their old wounds, or inflicted on themselves fresh ones. Still nobody attended to them. "It is all over with him," was the observation applied to the unfortunate beings in succession, while every one pressed onward. The sun, which shone in an unclouded sky in all its brightness, was often darkened by our conflagrations. On our right lay the sea; on our left, and behind us, the desert made by ourselves; before were the privations and sufferings which awaited us. Such was our true situation.

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We reached Tentoura on the 20th of May, when a most oppressive heat prevailed, and produced general dejection. We had nothing to sleep on but the parched and burning sand; on our right lay a hostile sea; our losses in wounded and sick were already considerable since leaving Acre; and there was nothing consolatory in the future. The truly afflicting condition in which the remains of an army called triumphant were plunged, produced, as might well be expected, a corresponding impression on the mind of the General-in-Chief. Scarcely had he arrived at Tentoura when he ordered his tent to be pitched. He then called me, and with a mind occupied by the calamities of our situation, dictated an order that every one should march on foot; and that all the horses, mules, and camels should be given up to the wounded, the sick, and infected who had been removed, and who still showed signs of life. "Carry that to Berthier," said he; and the order was instantly despatched. Scarcely had I returned to the tent when the elder Vigogne, the (General-in-Chief's groom), entered, and raising his hand to his cap, said, "General, what horse do you reserve for yourself?" In the state of excitement in which Bonaparte was this question irritated him so violently that, raising his whip, he gave the man a severe blow on the head; saying in a terrible voice, "Every-one must go on foot, you rascal—I the first—Do you not know the order? Be off!"

Every one in parting with his horse was now anxious to avoid giving it to any unfortunate individual supposed to be suffering from plague. Much pains were taken to ascertain the nature of the diseases of the sick; and no difficulty was made in accommodating the wounded of amputated. For my part I had an excellent horse; a mule, and two camels, all which I gave up with the greatest pleasure; but I confess that I directed my servant to do all he could to prevent an infected person from getting my horse. It was returned to me in a very short time. The same thing happened to many others. The cause maybe easily conjectured.

The remains of our heavy artillery were lost in the moving sands of Tentoura, from the want of horses, the small number that remained being employed in more indispensable services. The soldiers seemed to forget their own sufferings, plunged in grief at the loss of their bronze guns, often the instruments of their triumphs, and which had made Europe tremble.

We halted at Caesarea on the 22d of May, and we marched all the following night. Towards daybreak a man, concealed in a bush upon the left of the road (the sea was two paces from us on the right), fired a musket almost close to the head of the General-in-Chief, who was sleeping on his horse. I was beside him. The wood being searched, the Nablousian was taken without difficulty, and ordered to be shot on the spot. Four guides pushed him towards the sea by thrusting their carbines against his back; when close to the



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water's edge they drew the triggers, but all the four muskets hung fire: a circumstance which was accounted for by the great humidity of the night. The Nablousian threw himself into the water, and, swimming with great agility and rapidity, gained a ridge of rocks so far off that not a shot from the whole troop, which fired as it passed, reached him. Bonaparte, who continued his march, desired me to wait for Kleber, whose division formed the rear-guard, and to tell him not to forget the Nablousian. He was, I believe, shot at last.

We returned to Jaffa on the 24th of May, and stopped there during the 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th. This town had lately been the scene of a horrible transaction, dictated by necessity, and it was again destined to witness the exercise of the same dire law. Here I have a painful duty to perform—I will perform it. I will state what I know, what I saw.

I have seen the following passage in a certain, work:—"Bonaparte, having arrived at Jaffa, ordered three removals of the infected: one by sea to Damietta, and also by land; the second to Gaza; and the third to El-Arish!" So, many words, so many errors!

Some tents were pitched on an eminence near the gardens east of Jaffa. Orders were given directly to undermine the fortifications and, blow them up; and on the 27th of May, upon the signaling given, the town was in a moment laid bare. An hour afterwards the General-in-Chief left his tent and repaired to the town, accompanied by Berthier, some physicians and surgeons, and his usual staff. I was also one of the party. A long and sad deliberation took place on the question which now arose relative to the men who were incurably ill of the plague, or who were at the point of death. After a discussion of the most serious and conscientious kind it was decided to accelerate a few moments, by a potion, a death which was inevitable, and which would otherwise be painful and cruel.

Bonaparte took a rapid view of the destroyed ramparts of the town and returned to the hospital, where there were men whose limbs had been amputated, many wounded, many afflicted with ophthalmia, whose lamentations were distressing, and some infected with the plague. The beds of the last description of patients were to the right on entering the first ward. I walked by the General's side, and I assert that I never saw him touch any one of the infected. And why should he have done so? They were in the last stage of the disease. Not one of them spoke a word to him, and Bonaparte well knew that he possessed no protection against the plague. Is Fortune to be again brought forward here? She had, in truth, little favoured him during the last few months, when he had trusted to her favours. I ask, why should he have exposed himself to certain death, and have left his army in the midst of a desert created by our ravages, in a desolate town, without succour, and without the hope of ever receiving any? Would he have acted rightly in doing so—he who was evidently so necessary, so indispensable to his army; he on whom depended at that moment the lives of all who lead survived the last



disaster, and who had proved their attachment to him by their sufferings, their privations, and their unshaken courage, and who had done all that he could have required of men, and whose only trust was in him?



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Bonaparte walked quickly through the rooms, tapping the yellow top of his boot with a whip he held in his hand. As he passed along with hasty steps he repeated these words: "The fortifications are destroyed. Fortune was against me at St. Jean d'Acre. I must return to Egypt to preserve it from the enemy, who will soon be there: In a few hours the Turks will be here. Let all those who have strength enough rise and come along with us. They shall be carried on litters and horses." There were scarcely sixty cases of plague in the hospital; and all accounts stating a greater number are exaggerated. The perfect silence, complete dejection, and general stupor of the patients announced their approaching end. To carry them away in the state in which they were would evidently have been doing nothing else than inoculating the rest of the army with the plague. I have, it is true, learned, since my return to Europe, that some persons touched the infected with impunity; nay; that others went so far as to inoculate themselves with the plague in order to learn how to cure those whom it might attack. It certainly was a special protection from Heaven to be preserved from it; but to cover in some degree the absurdity of such a story, it is added that they knew how to elude the danger, and that any one else who braved it without using precautions met with death for their temerity. This is, in fact; the whole point of the question. Either those privileged persons took indispensable precautions; and in that case their boasted heroism is a mere juggler's trick; or they touched the infected without using precautions, and inoculated themselves with the plague, thus voluntarily encountering death, and then the story is really a good one.

The infected were confided, it has been stated, to the head apothecary of the army, Royer, who, dying in Egypt three years after, carried the secret with him to the grave. But on a moment's reflection it will be evident that the leaving of Royer alone in Jaffa would have been to devote to certain death; and that a prompt and, cruel one, a man who was extremely useful to the army, and who was at the time in perfect health. It must be remembered that no guard could be left with him, and that the Turks were close at our heels. Bonaparte truly said, while walking through the rooms of the hospital, that the Turks would be at Jaffa in a few hours. With this conviction, would he have left the head apothecary in that town?

Recourse has been had to suppositions to support the contrary belief to what I state. For example, it is said that the infected patients were embarked in ships of war. There were no such ships. Where had they disembarked, who had received them; what had been done with them? No one speaks of them. Others, not doubting that the infected men died at Jaffa, say, that the rearguard under Kleber, by order of Bonaparte, delayed its departure for three days, and only began its march when death had put



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an end to the sufferings of these unfortunate beings, unshortened by any sacrifice. All this is incorrect. No rear-guard was left—it could not be done. Pretence is made of forgetting that the ramparts were destroyed, that the town—was as open and as defenceless as any village, so this small rear-guard would have been left for certain destruction. The dates themselves tell against these suppositions. It is certain, as can be seen by the official account, that we arrived at Jaffa on 24th May, and stayed there the 25th, 26th, and 27th. We left it on the 28th. Thus the rear-guard, which, according to these writers; left on the 29th, did not remain, even according to their own hypothesis, three days after the army to see the sick die. In reality it left on the 29th of May, the day after we did: Here are the very words of the Major-General (Berthier) in his official account, written under the eye and under the dictation of the Commander-in-Chief:—

The army arrived at Jaffa, 5th Prairial (24th May), and remained there the 6th, 7th, and 8th (25th-27th May). This time was employed in punishing the village, which had behaved badly. The fortifications of Jaffa were blown up. All the iron guns of the place were thrown into the sea. The wounded were removed by sea and by land. There were only a few ships, and to give time to complete the evacuation by land, the departure of the army had to be deferred until the 9th (28th May). Klebers division formed the rear-guard, and only left Jaffa, on the 10th (29th May).

The official report of what passed at Jaffa was drawn up by Berthier, under the eye of Bonaparte. It has been published; but it may be remarked that not a word about the infected, not a word of the visit to the hospital, or the touching of the plague-patients with impunity, is there mentioned. In no official report is anything said about the matter. Why this silence? Bonaparte was not the man to conceal a fact which would have afforded him so excellent and so allowable a text for talking about his fortune. If the infected were removed, why not mention it? Why be silent on so important an event? But it would have been necessary to confess that being obliged to have recourse to so painful a measure was the unavoidable consequence of this unfortunate expedition. Very disagreeable details must have been entered into; and it was thought more advisable to be silent on the subject.

But what did Napoleon, himself say on the subject at St. Helena? His statement there was to the following, effect:—“I ordered a consultation as to what was best to be done. The report which was made stated that there were seven or eight men (the question is not about the number) so dangerously ill that they could not live beyond twenty-four hours, and would besides infect the rest of the army with the plague. It was thought it would be an act of charity to anticipate their death a few, hours.”



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Then comes the fable of the 500 men of the rear guard, who, it is pretended, saw them die! I make no doubt that the story of the poisoning was the invention of Den——. He was a babbler, who understood a story badly, and repeated it worse. I do not think it would have been a crime to have given opium to the infected. On the contrary, it would have been obedience to the dictates of reason. Where is the man who would not, in such a situation, have preferred a prompt death, to being exposed to the lingering tortures inflicted by barbarians? If my child, and I believe I love him as much as any father does his; had been in such a state; my advice would have been the same; if I had been among the infected myself, I should have demanded to be so treated.

Such was the reasoning at St. Helena, and such was the view which he and every one else took of the case twenty years ago at Jaffa.

Our little army arrived at Cairo on the 14th of June, after a painful and harassing march of twenty-five days. The heats during the passage of the desert between El-Arish and Belbeis exceeded thirty-three degrees. On placing the bulb of the thermometer in the sand the mercury rose to forty-five degrees. The deceitful mirage was even more vexatious than in the plains of Bohahire'h. In spite of our experience an excessive thirst, added to a perfect illusion, made us goad on our wearied horses towards lakes which vanished at our approach; and left behind nothing but salt and arid sand. In two days my cloak was completely covered with salt, left on it after the evaporation of the moisture which held it in solution. Our horses, who ran eagerly to the brackish springs of the desert, perished in numbers; after travelling about a quarter of a league from the spot where they drank the deleterious fluid.

Bonaparte preceded his entry into the capital of Egypt by one of those lying bulletins which only imposed on fools. "I will bring with me," said he, "many prisoners and flags. I have razed the palace of the Djezzar and the ramparts of Acre—not a stone remains upon another, All the inhabitants have left the city, by sea. Djezzar is severely wounded."

I confess that I experienced a painful sensation in writing, by his dictation, these official words, everyone of which was an imposition. Excited by all I had just witnessed, it was difficult for me to refrain from making the observation; but his constant reply was, "My dear fellow, you are a simpleton: you do not understand this business." And he observed, when signing the bulletin, that he would yet fill the world with admiration, and inspire historians and poets.

Our return to Cairo has been attributed to the insurrections which broke out during the unfortunate expedition into Syria. Nothing is more incorrect. The term insurrection cannot be properly applied to the foolish enterprises of the angel El-Mahdi in the Bohahire'h, or to the less important disturbances in the Charkyeh. The reverses experienced before St. Jean d'Acre, the fear, or rather the prudent anticipation of a hostile landing, were sufficient motives, and the only ones, for our return to Egypt. What

more could we do in Syria but lose men and time, neither of which the General had to spare?



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### CHAPTER XX.

1799.

Murat and Moarad Bey at the Natron Lakes—Bonapartes departure for the Pyramids—Sudden appearance of an Arab messenger—News of the landing of the Turks at Aboukir—Bonaparte marches against them—They are immediately attacked and destroyed in the battle of Aboukir—Interchange of communication with the English—Sudden determination to return to Europe—Outfit of two frigates— Bonaparte's dissimulation—His pretended journey to the Delta— Generous behaviour of Lanusee—Bonaparte's artifice—His bad treatment of General Kleber.

Bonaparte had hardly set foot in Cairo when he was, informed that the brave and indefatigable Mourad Bey was descending by the Fayoum, in order to form a junction with reinforcements which had been for some time past collected in the Bohahire'h. In all probability this movement of Mourad Bey was the result of news he had received respecting plans formed at Constantinople, and the landing which took place a short time after in the roads of Aboukir. Mourad had selected the Natron Lakes for his place of rendezvous. To these lakes Murat was despatched. The Bey no sooner got notice of Murat's presence than he determined to retreat and to proceed by the desert to Gizeh and the great Pyramids. I certainly never heard, until I returned to France, that Mourad had ascended to the summit of the great Pyramid for the propose of passing his time in contemplating Cairo!

Napoleon said at St. Helena that Murat might have taken Mourad Bey had the latter remained four-and-twenty hours longer in the Natron Lakes: Now the fact is, that as soon as the Bey heard of Murat's arrival he was off The Arabian spies were far more serviceable to our enemies than to us; we had not, indeed, a single friend in Egypt. Mourad Bey, on being informed by the Arabs, who acted as couriers for him, that General Desaix was despatching a column from the south of Egypt against him, that the General-in-Chief was also about to follow his footsteps along the frontier of Gizeh, and that the Natron Lakes and the Bohahire'h were occupied by forces superior to his own, retired into Fayoum.

Bonaparte attached great importance to the destruction of Mourad, whom he looked upon as the bravest, the most active, and most dangerous of his enemies in Egypt. As all accounts concurred in stating that Mourad, supported by the Arabs, was hovering about the skirts of the desert of the province of Gizeh, Bonaparte proceeded to the Pyramids, there to direct different corps against that able and dangerous partisan. He, indeed, reckoned him so redoubtable that lie wrote to Murat, saying he wished fortune might reserve for him the honour of putting the seal on the conquest of Egypt by the destruction of this opponent.



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On the 14th of July Bonaparte left Cairo for the Pyramids. He intended spending three or four days in examining the ruins of the ancient necropolis of Memphis; but he was suddenly obliged to alter his plan. This journey to the Pyramids, occasioned by the course of war, has given an opportunity for the invention of a little piece of romance. Some ingenious people have related that Bonaparte gave audiences to the mufti and ulemas, and that on entering one of the great Pyramids he cried out, "Glory to Allah! God only is God, and Mahomet is his prophet!" Now the fact is, that Bonaparte never even entered the great Pyramid. He never had any thought of entering it:—I certainly should have accompanied him had he done so for I never quitted his side a single moment in the desert He caused some person to enter into one of the great Pyramids while he remained outside, and received from them, on their return, an account of what they had seen. In other words, they informed him there was nothing, to be seen!

On the evening of the 15th of July, while we were taking a walk, we perceived, on the road leading from Alexandria, an Arab riding up to us in all haste. He brought to the General-in-Chief a despatch from General Marmont, who was entrusted with the command of Alexandria, and who had conducted himself so well, especially during the dreadful ravages of the plague, that he had gained the unqualified approbation of Bonaparte. The Turks had landed on the 11th of July at Aboukir, under the escort and protection of English ships of war. The news of the landing of from fifteen to sixteen thousand men did not surprise Bonaparte, who had for some time expected it. It was, not so, however, with the generals most in his favor; whose apprehensions, for reasons which may be conjectured, he had endeavoured to calm. He had even written to Marmont, who, being in the most exposed situation, had the more reason to be vigilant, in these terms:

The army which was to have appeared before Alexandria, and which left Constantinople on the 1st of the Ramadhan, has been destroyed under the walls of Acre. If, however, that mad Englishman (Smith) has embarked the remains of that army in order to convey them to Aboukir, I do not believe there can be more than 2000 men.

He wrote in the following strain to General Dugua, who had the command of Cairo:

The English Commander, who has summoned Damietta, is a madman. The combined army they speak of has been destroyed before Acre, where it arrived a fortnight before we left that place.

As soon as he arrived at Cairo, in a letter he despatched to Desaix, he said:

The time has now arrived when disembarkations have become practicable. I shall lose no time in getting ready. The probabilities, however, are, that none will take place this year.



What other language could he hold, when he had proclaimed when after, the raising of the siege of Acre, that he had destroyed those 15,000 men who two months after landed at Aboukir?

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No sooner had Bonaparte perused the contents of Marmont's letter than he retired into his tent and dictated to me, until three in the morning, his orders for the departure of the troops, and for the routes he wished to be pursued during his absence by the troops who should remain in the interior. At this moment I observed in him the development of that vigorous character of mind which was excited by obstacles until he overcame them—that celerity of thought which foresaw everything. He was all action, and never for a moment hesitated. On the 16th of July, at four in the morning, he was on horseback and the army in full march. I cannot help doing justice to the presence of mind, promptitude of decision, and rapidity of execution which at this period of his life never deserted him on great occasions.

We reached Ouardan, to the north of Gizeh, on the evening of the 16th; on the 19th we arrived at Rahmalanie'h, and on the 23d at Alexandria, where every preparation was made for that memorable battle which, though it did not repair the immense losses and fatal consequences of the naval conflict of the same name, will always recall to the memory of Frenchmen one of the most brilliant achievements of their arms.

—[As M. de Bourrienne gives no details of the battle, the following extract from the Due de Rovigo's Memoirs, tome i, p. 167, will supply the deficiency:

“General Bonaparte left Cairo in the utmost haste to place himself at the head of the troops which he had ordered to quit their cantonments and march down to the coast.

“Whilst the General was making these arrangements and coming in person from Cairo, the troops on board the Turkish fleet had effected a landing and taken possession of the fort of Aboukir, and of a redoubt placed behind the village of that name which ought to have been put into a state of defence six months before, but had been completely neglected.”The Turks had nearly destroyed the weak garrisons that occupied those two military points when General Marmont (who commanded at Alexandria) came to their relief. This general, seeing the two posts in the power of the Turks, returned to shut himself up in Alexandria, where he would probably have been blockaded by the Turkish army had it not been for the arrival of General Bonaparte with his forces, who was very angry when he saw that the fort and redoubt had been taken; but he did not blame Marmont for retreating to Alexandria with the forces at his disposal.”General Bonaparte arrived at midnight with his guides and the remaining part of his army, and ordered the Turks to be attacked the next morning. In this battle, as in the preceding ones, the attack, the encounter, and the rout were occurrences of a moment, and the result of a single movement on the part of our troops. The whole Turkish army plunged into the sea



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to regain its ships, leaving behind them everything they had brought on shore. "Whilst this event was occurring on the seashore a pasha had left the field of battle with a corps of about 3000 men in order to throw himself, into the fort of Aboukir. They soon felt the extremities of thirst, which compelled them, after the lapse of a few days, to surrender unconditionally to General Menou, who was left to close, the operations connected with the recently defeated Turkish army."]

After the-battle, which took place on the 25th of July, Bonaparte sent a flag of truce on board the English Admiral's ship. Our intercourse was full of politeness, such as might be expected in the communications of the people of two civilised nations. The English Admiral gave the flag of truce some presents in exchange for some we sent, and likewise a copy of the French Gazette of Frankfort, dated 10th of June 1799. For ten months we had received no news from France. Bonaparte glanced over this journal with an eagerness which may easily be conceived.

—[The French, on their return from St. Jean d'Acre were totally ignorant of all that had taken place in Europe for several months. Napoleon, eager to obtain Intelligence, sent a flag of truce on board the Turkish admiral's ship, under the pretence of treating for the ransom of the Prisoners taken at Aboukir, not doubting but the envoy would be stopped by Sir Sidney Smith, who carefully prevented all direct communication between the French and the Turks. Accordingly the French flag of truce received directions from Sir Sidney to go on board his ship. He experienced the handsomest treatment; and the English commander having, among other things, ascertained that the disasters of Italy were quite unknown to Napoleon, indulged in the malicious pleasure of sending him a file of newspapers. Napoleon spent the whole night in his tent perusing the papers; and he came to the determination of immediately proceeding to Europe to repair the disasters of France; and if possible, to save her from destruction (Memorial de Sainte Helene)].

"Heavens!" said he to me, "my presentiment is verified: the fools have lost Italy. All the fruits of our victories are gone! I must leave Egypt!"

He sent for Berthier, to whom he communicated the news, adding that things were going on very badly in France—that he wished to return home—that he (Berthier) should go along with him, and that, for the present, only he, Gantheaume, and I were in the secret. He recommended Berthier to be prudent, not to betray any symptoms of joy, nor to purchase or sell anything, and concluded by assuring him that he depended on him. "I can answer," said he, "for myself and for Bourrienne." Berthier promised to be secret, and he kept his word. He had had enough of Egypt, and he so ardently longed to return to France, that there was little reason to fear he would disappoint himself by any indiscretion.



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Gantheaume arrived, and Bonaparte gave him orders to fit out the two frigates, the 'Muiron' and the 'Carree', and the two small vessels, the 'Revanche' and the 'Fortune', with a two months' supply of provisions for from four to five hundred men. He enjoined his secrecy as to the object of these preparations, and desired him to act with such circumspection that the English cruisers might have no knowledge of what was going on. He afterwards arranged with Gantheaume the course he wished to take. No details escaped his attention.

Bonaparte concealed his preparations with much care, but still some vague rumours crept abroad. General Dueua, the commandant of Cairo, whom he had just left for the purpose of embarking, wrote to him on the 18th of August to the following effect:

I have this moment heard that it is reported at the Institute you are about to return to France, taking with you Monge, Berthollet, Berthier, Lannes, and Murat. This news has spread like lightning through the city, and I should not be at all surprised if it produce an unfavourable effect, which, however, I hope you will obviate.

Bonaparte embarked five days after the receipt of Dugua's letter, and, as may be supposed; without replying to it.

On the 18th of August he wrote to the divan of Cairo as follows:

I set out to-morrow for Menouf, whence I intend to make various excursions in the Delta, in order that I may myself witness the acts of oppression which are committed there, and acquire some knowledge of the people.

He told the army but half the truth:

The news from Europe (said he) has determined me to proceed to France. I leave the command of the army to General Kleber. The army shall hear from me forthwith. At present I can say no more. It costs me much pain to quit troops to whom I am so strongly attached. But my absence will be but temporary, and the general I leave in command has the confidence of the Government as well as mine.

I have now shown the true cause of General Bonaparte's departure for Europe. This circumstance, in itself perfectly natural, has been the subject of the most ridiculous conjectures to those who always wish to assign extraordinary causes for simple events. There is no truth whatever in the assertion of his having planned his departure before the battle of Aboukir. Such an idea never crossed his mind. He had no thought whatever of his departure for France when he made the journey to the Pyramids, nor even when he received the news of the landing of the Anglo-Turkish force.

At the end of December 1798 Bonaparte thus wrote to the Directory: "We are without any news from France. No courier has arrived since the month of June."



Some writers have stated that we received news by the way of Tunis, Algiers, or Morocco; but there is no contradicting a positive fact. At that period I had been with Bonaparte more than two years, and during that time not a single despatch on any occasion arrived of the contents of which I was ignorant. How then should the news alluded to have escaped me?



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—[Details on the question of the correspondence of Napoleon with France while he was to Egypt will be found in Colonel Lung's work, *Lucien Bonaparte* (Paris. Charpentier, 1882), tome i. pp. 251-274. It seems most probable that Napoleon was in occasional communication with his family and with some of the Directors by way of Tunis and Tripoli. It would not be his interest to let his army or perhaps even Bourrienne know of the disasters in Italy till he found that they were sure to hear of them through the English. This would explain his affected ignorance till such a late date. On the 11th of April Barras received a despatch by which Napoleon stated his intention of returning to France if the news brought by Hamelin was confirmed. On the 26th of May 1799 three of the Directors, Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveillier-Lepeaux, wrote to Napoleon that Admiral Bruix had been ordered to attempt every means of bringing back his army. On the 15th of July Napoleon seems to have received this and other letters. On the 20th of July he warns Admiral Gantheaume to be ready to start. On the 11th of September the Directors formally approved the recall of the army from Egypt. Thus at the time Napoleon landed in France (on the 8th October), his intended return had been long known to and approved by the majority of the Directors, and had at last been formally ordered by the Directory. At the most he anticipated the order. He cannot be said to have deserted his post. Lantrey (tome i. p. 411) remarks that the existence and receipt of the letter from Joseph denied by Bourrienne is proved by Miot (the commissary, the brother of Miot de Melito) and by Joseph himself. Talleyrand thanks the French Consul at Tripoli for sending news from Egypt, and for letting Bonaparte know what passed in Europe. See also Ragusa (Marmont), tome i. p. 441, writing on 24th December 1798: "I have found an Arab of whom I am sure, and who shall start to-morrow for Derne . . . . This means can be need to send a letter to Tripoli, for boats often go there.]"

Almost all those who endeavour to avert from Bonaparte the reproach of desertion quote a letter from the Directory, dated the 26th of May 1799. This letter may certainly have been written, but it never reached its destination. Why then should it be put upon record?

The circumstance I have stated above determined the resolution of Bonaparte, and made him look upon Egypt as, an exhausted field of glory, which it was high time he had quitted, to play another part in France. On his departure from Europe Bonaparte felt that his reputation was tottering. He wished to do something to raise up his glory, and to fix upon him the attention of the world. This object he had in great part accomplished; for, in spite of serious disasters, the French flag waved over the cataracts of the Nile and the ruins of Memphis, and the battles of the Pyramids, and Aboukir were calculated in no small degree to dazzle; the imagination. Cairo and Alexandria too were ours. Finding, that the glory of his arms no longer supported the feeble power of the Directory, he was anxious to see whether: he could not share it, or appropriate it to himself.



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A great deal has been said about letters and Secret communications from the Directory, but Bonaparte needed no such thing. He could do what he pleased: there was no power to check him; such had been the nature of his arrangements an leaving France. He followed only the dictates of his own will, and probably, had not the fleet been destroyed; he would have departed from Egypt much sooner. To will and to do were with him one and the same thing. The latitude he enjoyed was the result of his verbal agreement with the Directory, whose instructions and plans he did not wish should impede his operations.

Bonaparte left Alexandria on the 5th of August, and on the 10th arrived at Cairo. He at first circulated the report of a journey to Upper Egypt. This seemed so much the more reasonable, as he had really entertained that design before he went to the Pyramids, and the fact was known to the army and the inhabitants of Cairo. Up to this time our secret had been studiously kept. However, General Lanusse, the commandant at Menouf, where we arrived on the 20th of August, suspected it. "You are going to France," said he to me. My negative reply confirmed his suspicion. This almost induced me to believe the General-in-Chief had been the first to make the disclosure. General Lanusse, though he envied our good fortune, made no complaints. He expressed his sincere wishes for our prosperous voyage, but never opened his mouth on the subject to any one.

On the 21st of August we reached the wells of Birkett. The Arabs had rendered the water unfit for use, but the General-in-Chief was resolved to quench his thirst, and for this purpose squeezed the juice of several lemons into a glass of the water; but he could not swallow it without holding his nose and exhibiting strong feelings of disgust.

The next day we reached Alexandria, where the General informed all those, who had accompanied him from Cairo that France was their destination. At this announcement joy was pictured in every countenance.

General Kleber, to whose command Bonaparte had resigned the army, was invited to come from Damietta to Rosette to confer with the General-in-Chief on affairs of extreme importance. Bonaparte, in making an appointment which he never intended to keep, hoped to escape the unwelcome freedom of Kleber's reproaches. He afterwards wrote to him all he had to say; and the cause he assigned for not keeping his appointment was, that his fear of being observed by the English cruisers had forced him to depart three days earlier than he intended. But when he wrote Bonaparte well knew that he would be at sea before Kleber could receive his letter. Kleber, in his letter to the Directory, complained bitterly of this deception. The singular fate that befell this letter will be seen by and by.

## CHAPTER XXI

1799.



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Our departure from Egypt—Nocturnal embarkation—M. Parseval Grandmaison—On course—Adverse winds—Fear of the English—Favourable weather—Vingt-et-un-Chess—We land at Ajaccio—Bonaparte's pretended relations—Family domains—Want of money—Battle of Novi—Death of Joubert—Visionary schemes—Purchase of a boat—Departure from Corsica—The English squadron—Our escape—The roads of Frejus—Our landing in France—The plague or the Austrians—Joy of the people—The sanitary laws—Bonaparte falsely accused.

We were now to return to our country—again to cross the sea, to us so pregnant with danger—Caesar and his fortune were once more to embark. But Caesar was not now advancing to the East to add Egypt to the conquests of the Republic. He was revolving in his mind vast schemes, unawed by the idea of venturing everything to chance in his own favour the Government for which he had fought. The hope of conquering the most celebrated country of the East no longer excited the imagination, as on our departure from France. Our last visionary dream had vanished before the walls of St. Jean d'Acre, and we were leaving on the burning sands of Egypt most of our companions in arms. An inconceivable destiny seemed to urge us on, and we were obliged to obey its decrees.

On the 23d of August we embarked on board two frigates, the 'Muiron'

—[Named after Bonaparte's aide de camp killed in the Italian campaign]—

and 'Carrere'. Our number was between four and five hundred. Such was our squadron, and such the formidable army with which Bonaparte had resolved, as he wrote to the divan of Cairo, "to annihilate all his enemies." This boasting might impose on those who did not see the real state of things; but what were we to think of it? What Bonaparte himself thought the day after.

The night was dark when we embarked in the frigates which lay at a considerable distance from the port of Alexandria; but by the faint light of the stars we perceived a corvette, which appeared to be observing our silent nocturnal embarkation.

—[The horses of the escort had been left to run loose on the beach, and all was perfect stillness in Alexandria, when the advanced posts of the town were alarmed by the wild galloping of horses, which from a natural instinct, were returning to Alexandria through the desert. The picket ran to arms on seeing horses ready saddled and bridled, which were soon discovered to belong to the regiment of guides. They at first thought that a misfortune had happened to some detachment in its pursuit of the Arabs. With these horses came also those of the generals who had embarked with General Bonaparte; so that Alexandria was for a time in considerable alarm. The cavalry was ordered to proceed in all haste in the direction whence the horses came, and every one was giving

himself up to the most gloomy conjectures, when the cavalry returned to the city with the Turkish



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groom, who was bringing back General Bonaparte's horse to Alexandria (Memoirs of the Due de Rovigo, tome i. p. 182).]—

Next morning, just as we were on the point of setting sail, we saw, coming from the port of Alexandria a boat, on board of which was M. Parseval Grandmaison. This excellent man, who was beloved by all of us, was not included among the persons whose, return to France had been determined by the General-in-Chief. In his anxiety to get off Bonaparte would not hear of taking him on board. It will readily be conceived how urgent were the entreaties of Parseval; but he would have sued in vain had not Gantheaume, Bionge, Berthollet, and I interceded for him. With some difficulty we overcame Bonaparte's resistance, and our colleague of the Egyptian Institute got on board after the wind had filled our sails.

It has been erroneously said that Admiral Gantheaume had full control of the frigates, as if any one could command when Bonaparte was present. On the contrary, Bonaparte declared to the admiral, in my hearing, that he would not take the ordinary course and get into the open sea. "Keep close along the coast of the Mediterranean," said he, "on the, African side, until you get south of Sardinia. I have here a handful of brave fellows and a few pieces of artillery; if the English should appear I will run ashore, and with my party, make my way by land to Oran, Tunis, or some other port, whence we may find an opportunity of getting home." This, was his irrevocable determination.

For twenty-one days adverse winds, blowing from west or north-west, drove us continually on the coast of Syria, or in the direction of Alexandria. At one time it was even proposed that we should again put into the port; but Bonaparte declared he would rather, brave every danger than do so. During the day we tacked to a certain distance northward, and in the evening we stood towards Africa, until we came within, sight of the coast. Finally after no less than twenty-one days of impatience and disappointment, a favourable east wind carried us past that point of Africa on which Carthage formerly stood, and we soon doubled Sardinia. We kept very near the western coast of that island, where Bonaparte had determined to land in case of our falling in with the English, squadron. From, thence his plan was to reach Corsica, and there to await a favourable opportunity of returning to France.

Everything had contributed to render our voyage dull and monotonous; and, besides, we were not entirely without uneasiness as to the steps which might be taken by the Directory, for it was certain that the publication of the intercepted correspondence must have occasioned many unpleasant disclosures. Bonaparte used often to walk on deck to superintend the execution of his orders. The smallest sail that appeared in view excited his alarm.



The fear of falling into the hands of the English never forsook him. That was what he dreaded most of all, and yet, at a subsequent period, he trusted to the generosity of his enemies.



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However, in spite of our well-founded alarm, there were some moments in which we sought to amuse ourselves, or, to use a common expression, to kill time. Cards afforded us a source of recreation, and even this frivolous amusement served to develop the character of Bonaparte. In general he was not fond of cards; but if he did play, vingt-et-un was his favourite game, because it is more rapid than many others, and because, in short, it afforded him an opportunity of cheating. For example, he would ask for a card; if it proved a bad one he would say nothing, but lay it down on the table and wait till the dealer had drawn his. If the dealer produced a good card, then Bonaparte would throw aside his hand, without showing it, and give up his stake. If, on the contrary, the dealer's card made him exceed twenty-one, Bonaparte also threw his cards aside without showing them, and asked for the payment of his stake. He was much diverted by these little tricks, especially when they were played off undetected; and I confess that even then we were courtiers enough to humour him, and wink at his cheating. I must, however, mention that he never appropriated to himself the fruit of these little dishonesties, for at the end of the game he gave up all his winnings, and they were equally divided. Gain, as may readily be supposed, was not his object; but he always expected that fortune would grant him an ace or a ten at the right moment with the same confidence with which he looked for fine weather on the day of battle. If he were disappointed he wished nobody to know it.

Bonaparte also played at chess, but very seldom, because he was only a third-rate player, and he did not like to be beaten at that game, which, I know not why, is said to bear a resemblance to the grand game of war. At this latter game Bonaparte certainly feared no adversary. This reminds me that when we were leaving Passeriano he announced his intention of passing through Mantua.

He was told that the commandant of that town, I believe General Beauvoir, was a great chess-player, and he expressed a wish to play a game with him: General Beauvoir asked him to point out any particular pawn with which he would be checkmated; adding, that if the pawn were taken, he, Bonaparte, should be declared the winner. Bonaparte pointed out the last pawn on the left of his adversary. A mark was put upon it, and it turned out that he actually was checkmated with that very pawn. Bonaparte was not very well pleased at this. He liked to play with me because, though rather a better player than himself, I was not always able to beat him. As soon as a game was decided in his favour he declined playing any longer; preferring to rest on his laurels.

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The favourable wind which had constantly prevailed after the first twenty days of our voyage still continued while we kept along the coast of Sardinia; but after we had passed that island the wind again blew violently from the west, and on the 1st of October we were forced to enter the Gulf of Ajaccio. We sailed again next day but we found it impossible to work our way out of the gulf. We were therefore obliged to put into the port and land at Ajaccio. Adverse winds obliged us to remain there until the 7th of October. It may readily be imagined how much this delay annoyed Bonaparte. He sometimes expressed his impatience, as if he could enforce the obedience of the elements as well as of men. He was losing time, and time was everything to him.

There was one circumstance which seemed to annoy him as much as any of his more serious vexations. "What will become of me," said he, "if the English, who are cruising hereabout, should learn that I have landed in Corsica? I shall be forced to stay here. That I could never endure. I have a torrent of relations pouring upon me." His great reputation had certainly prodigiously augmented the number of his family. He was overwhelmed with visits, congratulations, and requests. The whole town was in a commotion. Every one of its inhabitants wished to claim him as their cousin; and from the prodigious number of his pretended godsons and goddaughters, it might have been supposed that he had held one-fourth of the children of Ajaccio at the baptismal font.

Bonaparte frequently walked with us in the neighbourhood of Ajaccio; and when in all the plenitude of his power he did not count his crowns with greater pleasure than he evinced in pointing out to us the little domains of his ancestors.

While we were at Ajaccio M. Fesch gave Bonaparte French money in, exchange for a number of Turkish sequins, amounting in value to 17,000 francs: This sum was all that the General brought with him from Egypt. I mention this fact because he was unjustly calumniated in letters written after his departure, and which were intercepted and published by the English: I ought also to add, that as he would never for his own private use resort to the money-chest of the army, the contents of which were, indeed, never half sufficient to defray the necessary expenses, he several times drew on Genoa, through M. James, and on the funds he possessed in the house of Clary, 16,000, 25,000, and up to 33,000 francs. I can bear witness that in Egypt I never saw him touch any money beyond his pay; and that he left the country poorer than he had entered it is a fact that cannot be denied. In his notes on Egypt it appears that in one year 12,600,000 francs were received. In this sum were included at least 2,000,000 of contributions, which were levied at the expense of many decapitations. Bonaparte was fourteen months in Egypt, and he is said to have brought away with him 20,000,000. Calumny may be very gratifying to certain persons, but they should at least give it a colouring of probability. The fact is, that Bonaparte had scarcely enough to maintain himself at Ajaccio and to defray our posting expenses to Paris.



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On our arrival at Ajaccio we learnt the death of Joubert, and the loss of the battle of Novi, which was fought on the 15th of August. Bonaparte was tormented by anxiety; he was in a state of utter uncertainty as to the future. From the time we left Alexandria till our arrival in Corsica he had frequently talked of what he should do during the quarantine, which he supposed he would be required to observe on reaching Toulon, the port at which he had determined to land.

Even then he cherished some illusions respecting the state of affairs; and he often said to me, "But for that confounded quarantine, I would hasten ashore, and place myself at the head of the army of Italy. All is not over; and I am sure that there is not a general who would refuse me the command. The news of a victory gained by me would reach Paris as soon as the battle of Aboukir; that, indeed, would be excellent."

In Corsica his language was very different. When he was informed of our reverses, and saw the full extent of the evil, he was for a moment overwhelmed. His grand projects then gave way to the consideration of matters of minor import, and he thought about his detention in the Lazaretto of Toulon. He spoke of the Directory, of intrigues, and of what would be said of him. He accounted his enemies those who envied him, and those who could not be reconciled to his glory and the influence of his name. Amidst all these anxieties Bonaparte was outwardly calm, though he was moody and reflective.

Providing against every chance of danger, he had purchased at Ajaccio a large launch which was intended to be towed by the 'Hetciron', and it was manned by twelve of the best sailors the island could—furnish. His resolution was, in case of inevitable danger, to jump into this boat and get ashore. This precaution had well-nigh proved useful.

—[Sir Walter Scott, at the commencement of his *Life of Napoleon*, says that Bonaparte did not see his native City after 1793. Probably to avoid contradicting himself, the Scottish historian observes that Bonaparte was near Ajaccio on his return from Egypt. He spent eight days there.—Bourrienne.]—

After leaving the Gulf of Ajaccio the voyage was prosperous and undisturbed for one day; but on the second day, just at sunset, an English squadron of fourteen sail hove in sight. The English, having advantage of the lights which we had in our faces, saw us better than we could see them. They recognised our two frigates as Venetian built; but luckily for us, night came on, for we were not far apart. We saw the signals of the English for a long time, and heard the report of the guns more and more to our left, and we thought it was the intention of the cruisers to intercept us on the south-east. Under these circumstances Bonaparte had reason to thank fortune; for it is very evident that had the English suspected our two frigates of coming from the East and going to France, they would have shut us out from land by running between us and it, which to them was very easy. Probably they took us for a convoy of provisions going from Toulon to Genoa; and it was to this error and the darkness that we were indebted for escaping with no worse consequence than a fright.



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—[Here Bourrienne says in a note “Where did Sir Walter Scott learn that we were neither seen nor recognised? We were not recognised, but certainly seen,” This is corroborated by the testimony of the Due de Rovigo, who, in his Memoirs, says, “I have met officers of the English navy who assured me that the two frigates had been seen but were considered by the Admiral to belong to his squadron, as they steered their course towards him; and as he knew we had only one frigate in the Mediterranean, and one in Toulon harbour, he was far from supposing that the frigates which he had descried could have General Bonaparte on board ” (Savary, tome i. p. 226).]—

During the remainder of the night the utmost agitation prevailed on board the Muiron. Gantheaume especially was in a state of anxiety which it is impossible to describe, and which it was painful to witness: he was quite beside himself, for a disaster appeared inevitable. He proposed to return to Corsica. “No, no!” replied Bonaparte imperiously. “No! Spread all sail! Every man at his post! To the north-west! To the north-west!” This order saved us; and I am enabled to affirm that in the midst of almost general alarm Bonaparte was solely occupied in giving orders. The rapidity of his judgment seemed to grow in the face of danger. The remembrance of that night will never be effaced from my mind. The hours lingered on; and none of us could guess upon what new dangers the morrow’s sun would shine.

However, Bonaparte’s resolution was taken: his orders were given, his arrangements made. During the evening he had resolved upon throwing himself into the long boat; he had already fixed on the persons who were to share his fate, and had already named to me the papers which he thought it most important to save. Happily our terrors were vain and our arrangements useless. By the first rays of the sun we discovered the English fleet sailing to the north-east, and we stood for the wished-for coast of France.

The 8th of October, at eight in the morning, we entered the roads of Frejus. The sailors not having recognised the coast during the night, we did not know where we were. There was, at first, some hesitation whether we should advance. We were by no means expected, and did not know how to answer the signals, which has been changed during our absence. Some guns were even fired upon us by the batteries on the coast; but our bold entry into the roads, the crowd upon the decks of the two frigates, and our signs of joy, speedily banished all doubt of our being friends. We were in the port, and approaching the landing-place, when the rumour spread that Bonaparte was on board one of the frigates. In an instant the sea was covered with boats. In vain we begged them to keep at a distance; we were carried ashore, and when we told the crowd, both of men and women who were pressing about us, the risk they ran, they all exclaimed, “We prefer the plague to the Austrians!”



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What were our feelings when we again set foot on the soil of France I will not attempt to describe. Our escape from the dangers that threatened us seemed almost miraculous. We had lost twenty days at the beginning of our voyage, and at its close the had been almost taken by an English squadron. Under these circumstances, how rapturously we inhaled the balmy, air of Provence! Such was our joy, that we were scarcely sensible of the disheartening news which arrived from all quarters. At the first moment of our arrival, by a spontaneous impulse, we all repeated, with tears in our eyes, the beautiful lines which Voltaire has put into the mouth of the exile of Sicily.

Bonaparte has been reproached with having violated the sanitary laws; but, after what I have already stated respecting his intentions, I presume there can remain no doubt of the falsehood of this accusation. All the blame must rest with the inhabitants of Frejus, who on this occasion found the law of necessity more imperious than the sanitary laws. Yet when it is considered that four or five hundred persons, and a quantity of effects, were landed from Alexandria, where the plague had been raging during the summer, it is almost a miracle that France, and indeed Europe escaped the scourge.

### CHAPTER XXII.

1799.

Effect produced by Bonaparte's return—His justification—  
Melancholy letter to my wife—Bonaparte's intended dinner at Sens—  
Louis Bonaparte and Josephine—He changes his intended route—  
Melancholy situation of the provinces—Necessity of a change—  
Bonaparte's ambitious views—Influence of popular applause—  
Arrival in Paris—His reception of Josephine—Their reconciliation—  
Bonaparte's visit to the Directory—His contemptuous treatment of  
Sieyes.

The effect produced in France and throughout Europe by the mere intelligence of Bonaparte's return is well known. I shall not yet speak of the vast train of consequences which that event entailed. I must, however, notice some accusations which were brought against him from the time of our landing to the 9th of November. He was reproached for having left Egypt, and it was alleged that his departure was the result of long premeditation. But I, who was constantly with him, am enabled positively to affirm that his return to France was merely the effect of a sudden resolution. Of this the following fact is in itself sufficient evidence.

While we were at Cairo, a few days before we heard of the landing of the Anglo-Turkish fleet, and at the moment when we were on the point of setting off to encamp at the Pyramids, Bonaparte despatched a courier to France. I took advantage of this opportunity to write to my wife. I almost bade her an eternal adieu: My letter breathed



expressions of grief such as I had not before evinced. I said, among other things, that we knew not when or how it would be possible for us to return to France. If Bonaparte had then entertained any thought of a speedy return I must have known it, and in that case I should not certainly have distressed my family by a desponding letter, when I had not had an opportunity of writing for seven months before.



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Two days after the receipt of my letter my wife was awoke very early in the morning to be informed of our arrival in France. The courier who brought this intelligence was the bearer of a second letter from me, which I had written on board ship, and dated from Frejus. In this letter I mentioned that Bonaparte would pass through Seas and dine with my mother.

In fulfilment of my directions Madame de Bourrienne set off for Paris at five in the morning. Having passed the first post-house she met a Berlin containing four travellers, among whom she recognised Louis Bonaparte going to meet the General on the Lyons road. On seeing Madame de Bourrienne Louis desired the postillion to stop, and asked her whether she had heard from me. She informed him that we should pass through Sens, where the General wished to dine with my mother, who had made every preparation for receiving him. Louis then continued his journey. About nine o'clock my wife met another Berlin, in which were Madame Bonaparte and her daughter. As they were asleep, and both carriages were driving at a very rapid rate, Madame de Bourrienne did not stop them. Josephine followed the route taken by Louis. Both missed the General, who changed his mind at Lyons, and proceeded by way of Bourbonnais. He arrived fifteen hours after my wife; and those who had taken the Burgundy road proceeded to Lyons uselessly.

Determined to repair in all haste to Paris, Bonaparte had left Frejus on the afternoon of the day of our landing. He himself had despatched the courier to Sens to inform my mother of his intended visit to her; and it was not until he got to Lyons that he determined to take the Bourbonnais road. His reason for doing so will presently be seen. All along the road, at Aix, at Lyons, in every town and village, he was received, as at Frejus, with the most rapturous demonstrations of joy.

—[From Frejus to, Aix a crowd of men kindly escorted us, carrying torches alongside the carriage of the General, not so much to show their enthusiasm as to ensure our safety (Bourrienne) These brigands became so bad in France that at one time soldiers were placed in the imperials of all the diligences, receiving from the wits the curiously anticipative name of "imperial armies".]—

Only those who witnessed his triumphal journey can form any notion of it; and it required no great discernment to foresee something like the 18th Brumaire.

The provinces, a prey to anarchy and civil war, were continually threatened with foreign invasion. Almost all the south presented the melancholy spectacle of one vast arena of conflicting factions. The nation groaned beneath the yoke of tyrannical laws; despotism was systematically established; the law of hostages struck a blow at personal liberty, and forced loans menaced every man's property. The generality of the citizens had declared themselves against a pentarchy devoid of power, justice, and morality, and which had become the sport of faction and intrigue. Disorder was general; but in the

provinces abuses were felt more sensibly than elsewhere. In great cities it was found more easy to elude the hand of despotism and oppression.



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A change so earnestly wished for could not fail to be realised, and to be received with transport. The majority of the French people longed to be relieved from the situation in which they then stood. There were two dangers bar to cope with—anarchy and the Bourbons. Every one felt the urgent and indispensable necessity of concentrating the power of the Government in a single hand; at the same time maintaining the institutions which the spirit of the age demanded, and which France, after having so dearly purchased, was now about to lose. The country looked for a man who was capable of restoring her to tranquillity; but as yet no such man had appeared. A soldier of fortune presented himself, covered with glory; he had planted the standard of France on the Capitol and on the Pyramids. The whole world acknowledged his superior talent; his character, his courage, and his victories had raised him to the very highest rank. His great works, his gallant actions, his speeches, and his proclamations ever since he had risen to eminence left no doubt of his wish to secure happiness and freedom to France, his adopted country. At that critical moment the necessity of a temporary dictatorship, which sometimes secures the safety of a state, banished all reflections on the consequences of such a power, and nobody seemed to think glory incompatible with personal liberty. All eyes were therefore directed on the General, whose past conduct guaranteed his capability of defending the Republic abroad, and liberty at home,—on the General whom his flatterers, and indeed some of his sincere friends, styled, “the hero of liberal ideas,” the title to which he aspired.

Under, every point of view, therefore, he was naturally chosen as the chief of a generous nation, confiding to him her destiny, in preference to a troop of mean and fanatical hypocrites, who, under the names of republicanism and liberty, had reduced France to the most abject slavery.

Among the schemes which Bonaparte was incessantly revolving in his mind may undoubtedly be ranked the project of attaining the head of the French Government; but it would be a mistake to suppose that on his return from Egypt he had formed any fixed plan. There was something vague in his ambitious aspirations; and he was, if I may so express myself, fond of building those imaginary edifices called castles in the air. The current of events was in accordance with his wishes; and it may truly be said that the whole French nation smoothed for Bonaparte the road which led to power. Certainly the unanimous plaudits and universal joy which accompanied him along a journey of more than 200 leagues must have induced him to regard as a national mission that step which was at first prompted merely by his wish of meddling with the affairs of the Republic.

This spontaneous burst of popular feeling, unordered and unpaid for, loudly proclaimed the grievances of the people, and their hope that the man of victory would become their deliverer. The general enthusiasm excited by the return of the conqueror of Egypt delighted him to a degree which I cannot express, and was, as he has often assured me, a powerful stimulus in urging him to the object to which the wishes of France seemed to direct him.



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Among people of all classes and opinions an 18th Brumaire was desired and expected. Many royalists even believed that a change would prove favourable to the King. So ready are we to persuade ourselves of the reality of what we wish.

As soon as it was suspected that Bonaparte would accept the power offered him, an outcry was raised about a conspiracy against the Republic, and measures were sought for preserving it. But necessity, and indeed, it must be confessed, the general feeling of the people, consigned the execution of those measures to him who was to subvert the Republic. On his return to Paris Bonaparte spoke and acted like a man who felt his own power; he cared neither for flattery, dinners, nor balls,—his mind took a higher flight.

We arrived in Paris on the 24th Vendemiaire (the 16th of October). As yet he knew nothing of what was going on; for he had seen neither his wife nor his brothers, who were looking for him on the Burgundy road. The news of our landing at Frejus had reached Paris by a telegraphic despatch. Madame Bonaparte, who was dining with M. Gohier when that despatch was communicated to him, as president of the Directory, immediately set off to meet her husband, well knowing how important it was that her first interview with him should not be anticipated by his brothers.

The imprudent communications of Junot at the fountains of Messoudiah will be remembered, but, after the first ebullition of jealous rage, all traces of that feeling had apparently disappeared. Bonaparte however, was still harassed by secret suspicion, and the painful impressions produced by Junot were either not entirely effaced or were revived after our arrival in Paris. We reached the capital before Josephine returned. The recollection of the past; the ill-natured reports of his brothers,

—[Joseph Bonaparte remarks on this that Napoleon met Josephine at Paris before his brothers arrived there, (Compare d'Abrantis, vol. 1, pp. 260-262 and Rumusat, tome i. pp. 147-148.)]—

and the exaggeration of facts had irritated Napoleon to the very highest pitch, and he received Josephine with studied coldness, and with an air of the most cruel indifference. He had no communication with her for three days, during which time he frequently spoke to me of suspicions which his imagination converted into certainty; and threats of divorce escaped his lips with no less vehemence than when we were on the confines of Syria. I took upon me the office of conciliator, which I had before discharged with success. I represented to him the dangers to be apprehended from the publicity and scandal of such an affair; and that the moment when his grand views might possibly be realized was not the fit time to entertain France and Europe with the details of a charge of adultery. I spoke to him of Hortense and Eugene, to whom he was much attached. Reflection, seconded by his ardent affection for Josephine, brought about a complete reconciliation. After these three days of conjugal misunderstanding their happiness was never afterwards disturbed by a similar cause.



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—[In speaking of the unexpected arrival of Bonaparte and of the meeting between him and Josephine, Madame Junot says: “On the 10th October Josephine set off to meet her husband, but without knowing exactly what road he would take. She thought it likely he would come by way of Burgundy, and therefore Louis and she set off for Lyons.”Madame Bonaparte was a prey to great and well-founded aspersions. Whether she was guilty or only imprudent, she was strongly accused by the Bonaparte family, who were desirous that Napoleon should obtain a divorce, The elder M. de Caulaincourt stated to us his apprehensions on this point; but whenever the subject was introduced my mother changed the conversation, because, knowing as she did the sentiments of the Bonaparte family, she could not reply without either committing them or having recourse to falsehood. She knew, moreover, the truth of many circumstances which M. de Caulaincourt seemed to doubt, and which her situation with respect to Bonaparte prevented her from communicating to him.”Madame Bonaparte committed a great fault in neglecting at this juncture to conciliate her mother-in-law, who might have protected her against those who sought her ruin and effected it nine years later; for the divorce in 1809 was brought about by the joint efforts of all the members of the Bonaparte family, aided by some of Napoleon’s most confidential servants, whom Josephine, either as Madame Bonaparte or as Empress, had done nothing to make her friends.”Bonaparte, on his arrival in Paris, found his house deserted: but his mother, sisters, and sisters-in-law, and, in short, every member of his family, except Louis, who had attended Madame Bonaparte to Lyons, came to him immediately. The impression made upon him by the solitude of his home and its desertion by its mistress was profound and terrible, and nine years afterwards, when the ties between him and Josephine were severed for ever, he showed that it was not effaced. From not finding her with his family he inferred that she felt herself unworthy of their presence, and feared to meet the man she had wronged. He considered her journey to Lyons as a mere pretence.”M. de Bourrienne says that for some days after Josephine’s return Bonaparte treated her with extreme coldness. As he was an eyewitness, why does he not state the whole truth, and say that on her return Bonaparte refused to see her and did not see her? It was to the earnest entreaties of her children that she owed the recovery, not of her husband’s love, for that had long ceased, but of that tenderness acquired by habit, and that intimate intercourse which made her still retain the rank of consort to the greatest man of his age. Bonaparte was at this period much attached to Eugene Beauharnais, who, to do him justice, was a charming youth. He knew less of Hortense; but her youth and sweetness



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of temper, and the protection of which, as his adopted daughter, she besought him not to deprive her, proved powerful advocates, and overcame his resistance. "In this delicate negotiation it was good policy not to bring any other person into play, whatever might be their influence with Bonaparte, and Madame Bonaparte did not, therefore, have recourse either to Barras, Bourrienne, or Berthier. It was expedient that they who interceded for her should be able to say something without the possibility of a reply. Now Bonaparte could not with any degree of propriety explain to such children as Eugene or Hortense the particulars of their mother's conduct. He was therefore constrained to silence, and had no argument to combat the tears of two innocent creatures at his feet exclaiming, 'Do not abandon our mother; she will break her heart! and ought injustice to take from us, poor orphans, whose natural protector the scaffold has already deprived us of, the support of one whom Providence has sent to replace him!'" "The scene, as Bonaparte has since stated, was long and painful, and the two children at length introduced their mother, and placed her in his arms. The unhappy woman had awaited his decision at the door of a small back staircase, extended at almost full length upon the stairs, suffering the acutest pangs of mental torture. "Whatever might be his wife's errors, Bonaparte appeared entirely to forget them, and the reconciliation was complete. Of all the members of the family Madame Leclerc was most vexed at the pardon which Napoleon had granted to his wife. Bonaparte's mother was also very ill pleased; but she said nothing. Madame Joseph Bonaparte, who was always very amiable, took no part in these family quarrels; therefore she could easily determine what part to take when fortune smiled on Josephine. As to Madame Baccocchi, she gave free vent to her ill-humour and disdain; the consequence was that her sister-in-law could never endure her. Christine who was a beautiful creature, followed the example of Madame Joseph, and Caroline was so young that her opinion could have no weight in such an affair. As to Bonaparte's brothers, they were at open war with Josephine." ]—

On the day after his arrival Bonaparte visited the Directors.

—[The Directors at this time were Barras, Sieyes, Moulins, Gohier, and Roger Ducos.]—

The interview was cold. On the 24th of October he said to me, "I dined yesterday at Gohier's; Sieyes was present, and I pretended not to see him. I observed how much he was enraged at this mark of disrespect."— "But are you sure he is against you?" inquired I. "I know nothing yet; but he is a scheming man, and I don't like him." Even at that time Bonaparte had thoughts of getting himself elected a member of the Directory in the room of Sieyes.

## CHAPTER XXIII



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1799.

Moreau and Bernadotte—Bonaparte's opinion of Bernadotte—False report—The crown of Sweden and the Constitution of the year *iii.*—Intrigues of Bonaparte's brothers—Angry conversation between Bonaparte and Bernadotte—Bonaparte's version—Josephine's version—An unexpected visit—The Manege Club—Salicetti and Joseph Bonaparte—Bonaparte invites himself to breakfast with Bernadotte—Country excursion—Bernadotte dines with Bonaparte—The plot and conspiracy—Conduct of Lucien—Dinner given to Bonaparte by the Council of the Five Hundred—Bonaparte's wish to be chosen a member of the Directory—His reconciliation with Sieyes—Offer made by the Directory to Bonaparte—He is falsely accused by Barras.

To throw a clear light on the course of the great events which will presently be developed it is necessary to state briefly what intrigues had been hatched and what ambitious hopes had risen up while we were in Egypt. When in Egypt Bonaparte was entirely deprived of any means of knowing what was going on in France; and in our rapid journey from Frejus to Paris we had no opportunity of collecting much information. Yet it was very important that we should know the real state of affairs, and the sentiments of those whom Bonaparte had counted among his rivals in glory, and whom he might now meet among his rivals in ambition.

Moreau's military reputation stood very high, and Bernadotte's firmness appeared inflexible. Generally speaking, Bonaparte might have reckoned among his devoted partisans the companions of his glory in Italy, and also those whom he subsequently denominated "his Egyptians." But brave men had distinguished themselves in the army of the Rhine; and if they did not withhold their admiration from the conqueror of Italy, they felt at least more personally interested in the admiration which they lavished on him who had repaired the disaster of Scherer. Besides, it must be borne in mind that a republican spirit prevailed, almost without exception, in the army, and that the Directory appeared to be a Government invented expressly to afford patronage to intriguers. All this planted difficulties in our way, and rendered it indispensably necessary that we should know our ground. We had, it is true, been greeted by the fullest measure of popular enthusiasm on our arrival; but this was not enough. We wanted suffrages of a more solid kind.

During the campaign of Egypt, Bernadotte, who was a zealous republican, had been War Minister,

—[Bernadotte was Minister of war from 2d July 1799 to 14th September 1799, when, as he himself wrote to the Directory, they "accepted" the resignation he had not offered.]—



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but he had resigned the portfolio to Dubois-Crance three weeks before Bonaparte's return to France. Some partisans of the old Minister were endeavouring to get him recalled, and it was very important to Bonaparte's interests that he should prevent the success of this design. I recollect that on the second day of our arrival Bonaparte said to me, "I have learned many things; but we shall see what will happen. Bernadotte is a singular man. When he was War Minister Augereau, Salicetti, and some others informed him that the Constitution was in danger, and that it was necessary to get rid of Sieyes, Barras, and Fouché, who were at the head of a plot. What did Bernadotte do? Nothing. He asked for proofs. None could be produced. He asked for powers. Who could grant them? Nobody. He should have taken them; but he would not venture on that. He wavered. He said he could not enter into the schemes which were proposed to him. He only promised to be silent on condition that they were renounced. Bernadotte is not a help; he is an obstacle, I have heard from good authority that a great number of influential persons wished to invest him with extensive power for the public good; but he was obstinate, and would listen to nothing."

After a brief interval of silence, during which Bonaparte rubbed his forehead with his right hand, he then resumed:

"I believe I shall have Bernadotte and Moreau against me. But I do not fear Moreau. He is devoid of energy. I know he would prefer military to political power. The promise of the command of an army would gain him over. But Bernadotte has Moorish blood in his veins. He is bold and enterprising. He is allied to my brothers.

—[Joseph Bonaparte and Bernadotte had married sisters. Mario-Julie and Eugenie Bernardine-Desiree Clary. The feeling of Bourrienne for Bernadotte makes this passage doubtful. It is to be noticed that in the same conversation he makes Napoleon describe Bernadotte as not venturing to act without powers and as enterprising. The stern republican becoming Prince de Monte Carlo and King of Sweden, in a way compatible with his fidelity to the Constitution of the year *iii.*, is good. Lanfrey attributes Bernadotte's refusal to join more to rivalry than to principle (Lanfrey, tome i. p. 440). But in any case Napoleon did not dread Bernadotte, and was soon threatening to shoot him; see Lucien, tome ii. p. 107.]—

"He does not like me, and I am almost certain that he will oppose me. If he should become ambitious he will venture anything. And yet, you recollect in what a lukewarm way he acted on the 18th Fructidor, when I sent him to second Augereau. This devil of a fellow is not to be seduced. He is disinterested and clever. But; after all, we have but just arrived, and know not what may happen."



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Bernadotte, it was reported, had advised that Bonaparte should be brought to a court-martial, on the two-fold charge of having abandoned his army and violated the quarantine laws. This report came to the ear of Bonaparte; but he refused to believe it and he was right. Bernadotte thought himself bound to the Constitution which he had sworn to defend. Hence the opposition he manifested to the measures of the 18th Brumaire. But he cherished no personal animosity against Bonaparte as long as he was ignorant of his ambitious designs. The extraordinary and complicated nature of subsequent events rendered his possession of the crown of Sweden in no way incompatible with his fidelity to the Constitution of the year *iii*.

On our first arrival in Paris, though I was almost constantly with the General, yet, as our routine of occupation was not yet settled, I was enabled now and then to snatch an hour or two from business. This leisure time I spent in the society of my family and a few friends, and in collecting information as to what had happened during our absence, for which purpose I consulted old newspapers and pamphlets. I was not surprised to learn that Bonaparte's brothers—that is to say, Joseph and Lucien—had been engaged in many intrigues. I was told that Sieyes had for a moment thought of calling the Duke of Brunswick to the head of the Government; that Barras would not have been very averse to favouring the return of the Bourbons; and that Moulins, Roger Ducos, and Gohier alone believed or affected to believe, in the possibility of preserving the existing form of government. From what I heard at the time I have good reasons for believing that Joseph and Lucien made all sorts of endeavours to inveigle Bernadotte into their brother's party, and in the hope of accomplishing that object they had assisted in getting him appointed War Minister. However, I cannot vouch for the truth of this. I was told that Bernadotte had at first submitted to the influence of Bonaparte's two brothers; but that their urgent interference in their client's behalf induced him to shake them off, to proceed freely in the exercise of his duties, and to open the eyes of the Directory on what the Republic might have to apprehend from the enterprising character of Bonaparte. It is certain that what I have to relate respecting the conduct of Bernadotte to Bonaparte is calculated to give credit to these assertions.

All the generals who were in Paris, with the exception of Bernadotte, had visited Bonaparte during the first three days which succeeded his arrival. Bernadotte's absence was the more remarkable because he had served under Bonaparte in Italy. It was not until a fortnight had elapsed, and then only on the reiterated entreaties of Joseph and Madame Joseph Bonaparte (his sister-in-law), that he determined to go and see his old General-in-Chief. I was not present at their interview, being at that moment occupied in the little



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cabinet of the Rue Chantereine. But I soon discovered that their conversation had been long and warm; for as soon as it was ended Bonaparte entered the cabinet exceedingly agitated, and said to me, "Bourrienne, how do you think Bernadotte has behaved? You have traversed France with me—you witnessed the enthusiasm which my return excited—you yourself told me that you saw in that enthusiasm the desire of the French people to be relieved from the disastrous position in which our reverses have placed them. Well! would you believe it? Bernadotte boasts, with ridiculous exaggeration, of the brilliant and victorious situation of France! He talks about the defeat of the Russians, the occupation of Genoa, the innumerable armies that are rising up everywhere. In short, I know not what nonsense he has got in his head."—"What can all this mean?" said I. "Did he speak about Egypt?"—"Oh, yes! Now you remind me. He actually reproached me for not having brought the army back with me! 'But,' observed I, 'have you not just told me that you are absolutely overrun with troops; that all your frontiers are secure, that immense levies are going on, and that you will have 200,000 infantry?—If this be true, what do you want with a few thousand men who may ensure the preservation of Egypt?' He could make no answer to this. But he is quite elated by the honour of having been War Minister, and he told me boldly that he looked upon the army of Egypt as lost nay, more. He made insinuations. He spoke of enemies abroad and enemies at home; and as he uttered these last words he looked significantly at me. I too gave him a glance! But stay a little. The pear will soon be ripe! You know Josephine's grace and address. She was present. The scrutinising glance of Bernadotte did not escape her, and she adroitly turned the conversation. Bernadotte saw from my countenance that I had had enough of it, and he took his leave. But don't let me interrupt you farther. I am going back to speak to Josephine."

I must confess that this strange story made me very impatient to find myself alone with Madame Bonaparte, for I wished to hear her account of the scene. An opportunity occurred that very evening. I repeated to her what I had heard from the General, and all that she told me tended to confirm its accuracy. She added that Bernadotte seemed to take the utmost pains to exhibit to the General a flattering picture of the prosperity of France; and she reported to me, as follows, that part of the conversation which was peculiarly calculated to irritate Bonaparte:—"I do not despair of the safety of the Republic, which I am certain can restrain her enemies both abroad and at home.' As Bernadotte uttered these last words," continued Josephine, "his glance made me shudder. One word more and Bonaparte could have commanded himself no longer! It is true," added she, "that it was in some degree his own fault, for it was he who turned the conversation on politics; and Bernadotte,



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in describing the flourishing condition of France, was only replying to the General, who had drawn a very opposite picture of the state of things. You know, my dear Bourrienne, that Bonaparte is not always very prudent. I fear he has said too much to Bernadotte about the necessity of changes in the Government.” Josephine had not yet recovered from the agitation into which this violent scene had thrown her. After I took leave of her; I made notes of what she had told me.

A few days after, when Bonaparte, Josephine, Hortense, Eugene, and I were together in the drawing-room, Bernadotte unexpectedly entered. His appearance, after what had passed, was calculated to surprise us. He was accompanied by a person whom he requested permission to introduce to Bonaparte. I have forgotten his name, but he was, I think, secretary-general while Bernadotte was in office. Bonaparte betrayed no appearance of astonishment. He received Bernadotte with perfect ease, and they soon entered into conversation. Bonaparte, who seemed to acquire confidence from the presence of those who were about him, said a great deal about the agitation which prevailed among the republicans, and expressed himself in very decided terms against the Manege Club.’

—[The Manege Club, the last resort of the Jacobins, formed in 1799, and closed seven or eight months afterwards. Joseph Bonaparte (*Erreurs*, tome i. p. 251) denies that he or Lucien—for whom the allusion is meant—were members of this club, and he disputes this conversation ever having taken place. Lucien (tome i. p. 219) treats this club as opposed to his party.]—

I seconded him by observing that M. Moreau de Worms of my department, who was a member of that club, had himself complained to me of the violence that prevailed in it. “But, General,” said Bernadotte, “your brothers were its most active originators. Yet,” added he in a tone of firmness, “you accuse me of having favoured that club, and I repel the charge. It cannot be otherwise than false. When I came into office I found everything in the greatest disorder. I had no leisure to think about any club to which my duties did not call me. You know well that your friend Salicetti, and that your brother, who is in your confidence, are both leading men in the Manege Club. To the instructions of I know not whom is to be attributed the violence of which you complain.” At these words, and especially the tone in which Bernadotte uttered ‘I know not whom,’ Bonaparte could no longer restrain himself. “Well, General,” exclaimed he furiously, “I tell you plainly, I would rather live wild in the woods than in a state of society which affords no security.” Bernadotte then said, with great dignity of manner, “Good God! General, what security would you have?” From the warmth evinced by Bonaparte I saw plainly that the conversation would soon be converted into a dispute, and in a whisper I requested Madame Bonaparte to change the conversation, which she immediately did by addressing a question to some one present. Bernadotte, observing Madame

Bonaparte's design, checked his warmth. The subject of conversation was changed, and it became general Bernadotte soon took up his hat and departed.

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One morning, when I entered Bonaparte's chamber—it was, I believe, three or four days after the second visit of Bernadotte—he said:

“Well, Bourrienne, I wager you will not guess with whom I am going to breakfast this morning?”--“Really, General, I -----”--“With Bernadotte; and the best of the joke is, that I have invited myself. You would have seen how it was all brought about if you had been with us at the Theatre Francais, yesterday evening. You know we are going to visit Joseph today at Mortfontaine. Well, as we were coming out of the theatre last night, finding myself side by aide with Bernadotte and not knowing what to talk about, I asked him whether he was to be of our party to-day? He replied in the affirmative; and as we were passing his house in the Rue Cisalpine,

—[Joseph Bonaparte lays great stress on the fact that Napoleon would not have passed this house, which was far from the theatre (Erreurs, tome i, p. 251).]—

“I told him, without any ceremony, that I should be happy to come and take a cup of coffee with him in the morning. He seemed pleased. What do you think of that, Bourrienne?”—“Why, General, I hope you may have reason on your part to be pleased with him.”—“Never fear, never fear. I know what I am about. This will compromise him with Gohier. Remember, you must always meet your enemies with a bold face, otherwise they think they are feared, and that gives them confidence.”

Bonaparte stepped into the carriage with Josephine, who was always ready when she had to go out with him, for he did not like to wait. They proceeded first to Bernadotte's to breakfast, and from thence to Mortfontaine. On his return Bonaparte told me very little about what had passed during the day, and I could see that he was not in the best of humours. I afterwards learned that Bonaparte had conversed a good deal with Bernadotte, and that he had made every effort to render himself agreeable, which he very well knew how to do when he chose! but that, in spite of all his conversational talent; and supported as he was by the presence of his three brothers, and Regnault de St. Jean d'Angely, he could not withstand the republican firmness of Bernadotte. However, the number of his partisans daily augmented; for all had not the uncompromising spirit of Bernadotte; and it will soon be seen that Moreau himself undertook charge of the Directors who were made prisoners on the 18th Brumaire.

Bernadotte's shrewd penetration made him one of the first to see clearly into Bonaparte's designs. He was well convinced of his determination to overthrow the constitution and possess himself of power. He saw the Directory divided into two parties; the one duped by the promises and assurances of Bonaparte, and the other



conniving with him for the accomplishment of his plans. In these circumstances Bernadotte offered his services to all persons connected with the Government who, like himself, were averse to the change which he saw good reason to apprehend. But Bonaparte was not the man to be outdone in cunning or activity; and every moment swelled the ranks of his adherents.

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On the 16th Brumaire I dined in the Rue de la Victoire. Bernadotte was present, and I believe General Jourdan also. While the grand conspiracy was hastening to its accomplishment Madame Bonaparte and I had contrived a little plot of a more innocent kind. We let no one into our secret, and our 16th Brumaire was crowned with complete success. We had agreed to be on the alert to prevent any fresh exchange of angry words. All succeeded to the utmost of our wishes. The conversation languished during dinner; but it was not dulness that we were afraid of. It turned on the subject of war, and in that vast field Bonaparte's superiority over his interlocutors was undeniable.

When we retired to the drawing-rooms a great number of evening visitors poured in, and the conversation then became animated, and even gay. Bonaparte was in high spirits. He said to some one, smiling, and pointing to Bernadotte, "You are not aware that the General yonder is a Chouan."—"A Chouan?" repeated Bernadotte, also in a tone of pleasantry. "Ah! General you contradict yourself. Only the other day you taxed me with favouring the violence of the friends of the Republic, and now you accuse me of protecting the Chouans.

—[The "Chouans," so called from their use of the cry of the screech-owl (chathouan) as a signal, were the revolted peasants of Brittany and of Maine.]—

"You should at least be consistent." A few moments after, availing himself of the confusion occasioned by the throng of visitors, Bernadotte slipped off.

As a mark of respect to Bonaparte the Council of the Five Hundred appointed Lucien its president. The event proved how important this nomination was to Napoleon. Up to the 19th Brumaire, and especially on that day, Lucien evinced a degree of activity, intelligence, courage, and presence of mind which are rarely found united in one individual I have no hesitation in stating that to Lucien's nomination and exertions must be attributed the success of the 19th Brumaire.

The General had laid down a plan of conduct from which he never deviated during the twenty-three days which intervened between his arrival in Paris and the 18th Brumaire. He refused almost all private invitations, in order to avoid indiscreet questions, unacceptable offers, and answers which might compromise him.

It was not without some degree of hesitation that he yielded to a project started by Lucien, who, by all sorts of manoeuvring, had succeeded in prevailing on a great number of his colleagues to be present at a grand subscription dinner to be given to Bonaparte by the Council of the Ancients.



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The disorder which unavoidably prevailed in a party amounting to upwards of 250 persons, animated by a diversity of opinions and sentiments; the anxiety and distrust arising in the minds of those who were not in the grand plot, rendered this meeting one of the most disagreeable I ever witnessed. It was all restraint and dulness. Bonaparte's countenance sufficiently betrayed his dissatisfaction; besides, the success of his schemes demanded his presence elsewhere. Almost as soon as he had finished his dinner he rose, saying to Berthier and me, "I am tired: let us be, gone." He went round to the different tables, addressing to the company compliments and trifling remarks, and departed, leaving at table the persons by whom he had been invited.

This short political crisis was marked by nothing more grand, dignified, or noble than the previous revolutionary commotions. All these plots were so contemptible, and were accompanied by so much trickery, falsehood, and treachery, that, for the honour of human nature, it is desirable to cover them with a veil.

General Bonaparte's thoughts were first occupied with the idea he had conceived even when in Italy, namely, to be chosen a Director. Nobody dared yet to accuse him of being a deserter from the army of the East. The only difficulty was to obtain a dispensation on the score of age. And was this not to be obtained? No sooner was he installed in his humble abode in the Rue de la Victoire than he was assured that, on the retirement of Rewbell, the majority of suffrages would have devolved on him had he been in France, and had not the fundamental law required the age of forty; but that not even his warmest partisans were disposed to violate the yet infant Constitution of the year *iii*.

Bonaparte soon perceived that no efforts would succeed in overcoming this difficulty, and he easily resolved to possess himself wholly of an office of which he would nominally have had only a fifth part had he been a member of the Directory.

As soon as his intentions became manifest he found himself surrounded by all those who recognised in him the man they had long looked for. These persons, who were able and influential in their own circles, endeavoured to convert into friendship the animosity which existed between Sieyes and Bonaparte. This angry feeling had been increased by a remark made by Sieyes, and reported to Bonaparte. He had said, after the dinner at which Bonaparte treated him so disrespectfully, "Do you see how that little insolent fellow behaves to a member of a Government which would do well to order him to be *shot*?"

But all was changed when able mediators pointed out to Bonaparte the advantage of uniting with Sieye's for the purpose of overthrowing a Constitution which he did not like. He was assured how vain it would be to think of superseding him, and that it would be better to flatter him with the hope of helping to subvert the constitution and raising up a new one. One day some one said to Bonaparte in my hearing, "Seek for support

among the party who call the friends of the Republic Jacobins, and be assured that Sieyes is at the head of that party.”



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On the 25th Vendemiaire (17th of October) the Directory summoned General Bonaparte to a private sitting. "They offered me the choice of any army I would command," said he to me the next morning. "I would not refuse, but I asked to be allowed a little time for the recovery of my health; and, to avoid any other embarrassing offers, I withdrew. I shall go to no more of their sittings." (He attended only one after this.) "I am determined to join Sieyes' party. It includes a greater diversity of opinions than that of the profligate Barras. He proclaims everywhere that he is the author of my fortune. He will never be content to play an inferior part, and I will never bend to such a man. He cherishes the mad ambition of being the support of the Republic. What would he. do with me? Sieyes, on the contrary, has no political ambition."

No sooner did Sieyes begin to grow friendly with Bonaparte than the latter learned from him that Barras had said, "The 'little corporal' has made his fortune in Italy and does not want to go back again." Bonaparte repaired to the Directory for the sole purpose of contradicting this allegation. He complained to the Directors of its falsehood, boldly affirmed that the fortune he was supposed to possess had no existence, and that even if he had made his fortune it was not, at all events, at the expense of the Republic "You know," said he to me, "that the mines of Hydria have furnished the greater part of what I possess."—"Is it possible," said I, "that Barras could have said so, when you know so well of all the speculations of which he has been guilty since your return?"

Bonaparte had confided the secret of his plans to very few persons—to those only whose assistance he wanted. The rest mechanically followed their leaders and the impulse which was given to them; they passively awaited the realisation of the promises they had received, and on the faith of which they had pledged themselves.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

1799.

Cambaceres and Lebrun—Gohier deceived—My nocturnal visit to Barras —The command of the army given to Bonaparte—The morning of the 18th Brumaire—Meeting of the generals at Bonaparte's house— Bernadotte's firmness—Josephine's interest, for Madame Gohier— Disappointment of the Directors—Review in the gardens of the Tuileries—Bonaparte's harangue—Proclamation of the Ancients— Moreau, jailer of the Luxembourg—My conversation with La Palette— Bonaparte at St. Cloud.

The parts of the great drama which was shortly to be enacted were well distributed. During the three days preceding the 18th Brumaire every one was at his post. Lucien, with equal activity and intelligence, forwarded the conspiracy in the two Councils; Sieyes had the management of the Directory; Real,



—[Pierre Francois Real (1757-1834); public accuser before the revolutionary criminal tribunal; became, under Napoleon, Conseiller d'Etat and Comte, and was charged with the affairs of the "haute police." ]—

under the instructions of Fouche,



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—[Joseph Fouche (1754-1820); Conventionalist; member of extreme Jacobin party; Minister of Police under the Directory, August 1799; retained by Napoleon in that Ministry till 1802, and again from 1801 to 1810; became Duc d'Otrante in 1809; disgraced in 1810, and sent in 1813 as governor of the Illyrian Provinces; Minister of Police during the 'Cent Jours'; President of the Provisional Government, 1815; and for a short time Minister of Police under second restoration.]—

negotiated with the departments, and dexterously managed, without compromising Fouche, to ruin those from whom that Minister had received his power. There was no time to lose; and Fouche said to me on the 14th Brumaire, "Tell your General to be speedy; if he delays, he is lost."

On the 17th, Regnault de St. Jean d'Angely told Bonaparte that the overtures made to Cambaceres and Lebrun had not been received in a very decided way. "I will have no tergiversation," replied Bonaparte with warmth. "Let them not flatter themselves that I stand in need of them. They must decide to-day; to-morrow will be too late. I feel myself strong enough now to stand alone."

Cambaceres

—[Cambaceres (J. J. Regis de) (1763-1824) Conventionalist; Minister of Justice under Directory, 1799; second Consul, 25th December 1799; Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, 1804; Duc de Parma, 1806; Minister of Justice during the 'Cent Jours': took great part in all the legal and administrative projects of the Consulate and Empire.]—

and Lebrun

—[Charles Francois Lebrun (1757-1824). Deputy to the National Assembly, and member of the Council of the Five Hundred; Third Consul, 25th December 1799; Arch-Treasurer of the Empire, 1804; Duc de Plaisance, 1806; Governor-General of Holland, 1806; Lieutenant-Governor of Holland, 1810 to 1813; chiefly engaged in financial measures]—

were, almost utter strangers to the intrigues which preceded the 18th Brumaire. Bonaparte had cast his eyes on the Minister of Justice to be one of his colleagues when he should be at liberty to name them, because his previous conduct had pledged him as a partisan of the Revolution. To him Bonaparte added Lebrun, to counterbalance the first choice. Lebrun was distinguished for honourable conduct and moderate principles. By selecting these two men Bonaparte hoped to please every one; besides, neither of them were able to contend against his fixed determination and ambitious views.

What petty intrigues marked the 17th Brumaire! On that day I dined with Bonaparte; and after dinner he said, "I have promised to dine to-morrow with Gohier; but, as you may readily suppose, I do not intend going. However, I am very sorry for his obstinacy.

By way of restoring his confidence Josephine is going to invite him to breakfast with us to-morrow. It will be impossible for him to suspect anything. I saw Barras this morning,



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and left him much disturbed. He asked me to return and visit him to-night. I promised to do so, but I shall not go. To-morrow all will be over. There is but little time; he expects me at eleven o'clock to-night. You shall therefore take my carriage, go there, send in my name, and then enter yourself. Tell him that a severe headache confines me to my bed, but that I will be with him without fail tomorrow. Bid him not be alarmed, for all will soon be right again. Elude his questions as much as possible; do not stay long, and come to me on your return."

At precisely eleven o'clock I reached the residence of Barras, in General Bonaparte's carriage. Solitude and silence prevailed in all the apartments through which I passed to Barras' cabinet. Bonaparte was announced, and when Barras saw me enter instead of him, he manifested the greatest astonishment and appeared much cast down. It was easy to perceive that he looked on himself as a lost man. I executed my commission, and stayed only a short time. I rose to take my leave, and he said, while showing me out, "I see that Bonaparte is deceiving me: he will not come again. He has settled everything; yet to me he owes all." I repeated that he would certainly come tomorrow, but he shook his head in a way which plainly denoted that he did not believe me. When I gave Bonaparte an account of my visit he appeared much pleased. He told me that Joseph was going to call that evening on Bernadotte, and to ask him to come tomorrow. I replied that, from all I knew, he would be of no use to him. "I believe so too," said he; "but he can no longer injure me, and that is enough. Well, good-night; be here at seven in the morning." It was then one o'clock.

I was with him a little before seven o'clock on the morning of the 18th Brumaire, and on my arrival I found a great number of generals and officers assembled. I entered Bonaparte's chamber, and found him already up—a thing rather unusual with him. At this moment he was as calm as on the approach of a battle. In a few moments Joseph and Bernadotte arrived. Joseph had not found him at home on the preceding evening, and had called for him that morning. I was surprised to see Bernadotte in plain clothes, and I stepped up to him and said in a low voice, "General, every one here, except you and I, is in uniform."—"Why should I be in uniform?" said he. As he uttered these words Bonaparte, struck with the same surprise as myself, stopped short while speaking to several persons around him, and turning quickly towards Bernadotte said, "How is this? you are not in uniform!"—"I never am on a morning when I am not on duty," replied Bernadotte.—"You will be on duty presently."—"I have not heard a word of it: I should have received my orders sooner."

Bonaparte then led Bernadotte into an adjoining room. Their conversation was not long, for there was no time to spare.

On the other hand, by the influence of the principal conspirators the removal of the legislative body to St. Cloud was determined on the morning of the 18th Brumaire, and the command of the army was given to Bonaparte.



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All this time Barras was no doubt waiting for Bonaparte, and Madame Bonaparte was expecting Gohier to breakfast. At Bonaparte's were assembled all the general's who were devoted to him. I never saw so great a number before in the Rue de la Victoire. They were all, except Bernadotte, in full uniform; and there were, besides, half a dozen persons there initiated in the secrets of the day. The little hotel of the conqueror of Italy was much too small for such an assemblage, and several persons were standing in the court-yard. Bonaparte was acquainted with the decree of the Council of the Ancients, and only waited for its being brought to him before he should mount his horse. That decree was adopted in the Council of the Ancients by what may be called a false majority, for the members of the Council were summoned at different hours, and it was so contrived that sixty or eighty of them, whom Lucien and his friends had not been able to gain over, should not receive their notices in time.

As soon as the message from the Council of the Ancients arrived Bonaparte requested all the officers at his house to follow him. At that announcement a few who were in ignorance of what was going on did not follow—at least I saw two groups separately leave the hotel. Bernadotte said to me, "I shall stay with you." I perceived there was a good deal of suspicion in his manner. Bonaparte, before going down the stairs which led from the small round dining-room into the courtyard, returned quickly to bid Bernadotte follow him. He would not, and Bonaparte then said to me, while hurrying off, "Gohier is not come—so much the worse for him," and leaped on his horse. Scarcely was he off when Bernadotte left me. Josephine and I being now left alone; she acquainted me with her anxiety. I assured her that everything had been so well prepared that success was certain. She felt much interest about Gohier on account of her friendship for his wife. She asked me whether I was well acquainted with Gohier. "You know, Madame," replied I, "that we have been only twenty days in Paris, and that during that time I have only gone out to sleep in the Rue Martel. I have seen M. Gohier several times, when he came to visit the General, and have talked to him about the situation of our affairs in Switzerland, Holland, France, and other political matters, but I never exchanged a word with him as to what is now going on. This is the whole extent of my acquaintance with him."

"I am sorry for it," resumed Josephine, "because I should have asked you to write to him, and beg him to make no stir, but imitate Sieyes and Roger, who will voluntarily retire, and not to join Barras, who is probably at this very moment forced to do so. Bonaparte has told me that if Gohier voluntarily resigns, he will do everything for him." I believe Josephine communicated directly with the President of the Directory through a friend of Madame Gohier's.

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Gohier and Moulins, no longer depending on Sieyes and Roger Ducos, waited for their colleague, Barras, in the hall of the Directory, to adopt some measure on the decree for removing the Councils to St. Cloud. But they were disappointed; for Barras, whose eyes had been opened by my visit on the preceding night, did not join them. He had been invisible to his colleagues from the moment that Bruix and M. de Talleyrand had informed him of the reality of what he already suspected; and insisted on his retirement.

On the 18th Brumaire a great number of military, amounting to about 10,000 men, were assembled in the gardens of the Tuileries, and were reviewed by Bonaparte, accompanied by Generals Beurnonville, Moreau, and Macdonald. Bonaparte read to them the decree just issued by the commission of inspectors of the Council of the Ancients, by which the legislative body was removed to St. Cloud; and by which he himself was entrusted with the execution of that decree, and appointed to the command of all the military force in Paris, and afterwards delivered an address to the troops.

Whilst Bonaparte was haranguing the soldiers, the Council of the Ancients published an address to the French people, in which it was declared that the seat of the legislative body was changed, in order to put down the factions, whose object was to control the national representation.

While all this was passing abroad I was at the General's house in the Rue de la Victoire; which I never left during the whole day. Madame Bonaparte and I were not without anxiety in Bonaparte's absence. I learned from Josephine that Joseph's wife had received a visit from Adjutant-General Rapatel, who had been sent by Bonaparte and Moreau to bring her husband to the Tuileries. Joseph was from home at the time, and so the message was useless. This circumstance, however, awakened hopes which we had scarcely dared to entertain. Moreau was then in accordance with Bonaparte, for Rapatel was sent in the name of both Generals. This alliance, so long despaired of, appeared to augur favourably. It was one of Bonaparte's happy strokes. Moreau, who was a slave to military discipline, regarded his successful rival only as a chief nominated by the Council of the Ancients. He received his orders and obeyed them. Bonaparte appointed him commander of the guard of the Luxembourg, where the Directors were under confinement. He accepted the command, and no circumstance could have contributed more effectually to the accomplishment of Bonaparte's views and to the triumph of his ambition.

At length Bonaparte, whom we had impatiently expected, returned. Almost everything had gone well with him, for he had had only to do with soldiers. In the evening he said to me, "I am sure that the committee of inspectors of the hall are at this very moment engaged in settling what is to be done at St. Cloud to-morrow. It is better to let them decide the matter, for by that means their vanity is flattered. I will obey orders which I have myself concerted." What Bonaparte was speaking of had been arranged nearly two or three days previously. The committee of inspectors was under the influence of the principal conspirators.



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In the evening of this anxious day, which was destined to be succeeded by a stormy morrow, Bonaparte, pleased with having gained over Moreau, spoke to me of Bernadotte's visit in the morning.—“I saw,” said he, “that you were as much astonished as I at Bernadotte's behaviour. A general out of uniform! He might as well have come in slippers. Do you know what passed when I took him aside? I told him all; I thought that the best way. I assured him that his Directory was hated, and his Constitution worn out; that it was necessary to turn them all off, and give another impulse to the government. 'Go and put on your uniform said I: I cannot wait for you long. You will find me at the Tuileries, with the rest of our comrades. Do not depend on Moreau, Beurnonville, or the generals of your party. When you know them better you will find that they promise much but perform little. Do not trust them.' Bernadotte then said that he would not take part in what he called a rebellion. A rebellion! Bourrienne, only think of that! A set of imbeciles, who from morning to night do nothing but debate in their kennels! But all was in vain. I could not move Bernadotte. He is a bar of iron. I asked him to give me his word that he would do nothing against me; what do you think was his answer?”—“Something unpleasant, no doubt.”—“Unpleasant! that is too mild a word. He said, 'I will remain quiet as a citizen; but if the Directory order me to act, I will march against all disturbers.' But I can laugh at all that now. My measures are taken, and he will have no command. However, I set him at ease as to what would take place. I flattered him with a picture of private life, the pleasures of the country, and the charms of Malmaison; and I left him with his head full of pastoral dreams. In a word, I am very well satisfied with my day's work. Good-night, Bourrienne; we shall see what will turn up to-morrow.”

On the 19th I went to St. Cloud with my friend La Vallette. As we passed the Place Louis XV., now Louis XVI., he asked me what was doing, and what my opinion was as to the coming events? Without entering into any detail I replied, “My friend, either we shall sleep tomorrow at the Luxembourg, or there will be an end of us.” Who could tell which of the two things would happen! Success legalised a bold enterprise, which the slightest accident might have changed into a crime.

The sitting of the Ancients, under the presidency of Lemercier, commenced at one o'clock. A warm discussion took place upon the situation of affairs, the resignation of the members of the Directory, and the immediate election of others. Great heat and agitation prevailed during the debate. Intelligence was every minute carried to Bonaparte of what was going forward, and he determined to enter the hall and take part in the discussion. He entered in a hasty and angry way, which did not give me a favourable foreboding of what he was about to say. We passed through a narrow passage to the centre of the hall; our backs were turned to the door. Bonaparte had the President to his right. He could not see him full in the face. I was close to the General on his right. Berthier was at his left.



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All the speeches which have been subsequently passed off as having been delivered by Bonaparte on this occasion differ from each other; as well they may, for he delivered none to the Ancients, unless his confused conversation with the President, which was alike devoid of dignity and sense, is to be called a speech. He talked of his “brothers in arms” and the “frankness of a soldier.” The questions of the President followed each other rapidly: they were clear; but it is impossible to conceive anything more confused or worse delivered than the ambiguous and perplexed replies of Bonaparte. He talked without end of “volcanoes; secret agitations, victories, a violated constitution! “He blamed the proceedings of the 18th Fructidor, of which he was the first promoter and the most powerful supporter. He pretended to be ignorant of everything until the Council of Ancients had called him to the aid of his country. Then came “Caesar—Cromwell—tyrant!” and he several times repeated, “I have nothing more to say to you!” though, in fact, he had said nothing. He alleged that he had been called to assume the supreme authority, on his return from Italy, by the desire of the nation, and afterwards by his comrades in arms. Next followed the words “liberty-equality!” though it was evident he had not come to St. Cloud for the sake of either. No sooner did he utter these words, than a member of the Ancients, named, I think, Linglet, interrupting him, exclaimed, “You forget the Constitution!” His countenance immediately lighted up; yet nothing could be distinguished but, “The 18th Fructidor—the 30th Prairial—hypocrites—intriguers—I will disclose all!—I will resign my power, when the danger which threatens the Republic shall have passed away!”

Bonaparte, believing all his assertions to be admitted as proved, assumed a little confidence, and accused the two directors Barras and Moulins of having proposed to put him at the head of a party whose object was to oppose all men professing liberal ideas.

At these words, the falsehood of which was odious, a great tumult arose in the hall. A general committee was loudly called for to hear the disclosures. “No, no!” exclaimed others, “no general committee! conspirators have been denounced: it is right that France should know all!”

Bonaparte was then required to enter into the particulars of his accusation against Barras and Moulins, and of the proposals which had been made to him: “You must no longer conceal anything.”

Embarrassed by these interruptions and interrogatories Bonaparte believed that he was completely lost. Instead of giving an explanation of what he had said, he began to make fresh accusations; and against whom? The Council of the Five Hundred, who, he said, wished for “scaffolds, revolutionary committees, and a complete overthrow of everything.”

Violent murmurs arose, and his language became more and more incoherent and inconsequent. He addressed himself at one moment to the representatives of the



people, who were quite overcome by astonishment; at another to the military in the courtyard, who could not hear him. Then, by an unaccountable transition, he spoke of “the thunderbolts of war!” and added, that he was “attended by the God of war and the God of fortune.”



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The President, with great calmness, told him that he saw nothing, absolutely nothing, upon which the Council could deliberate; that there was vagueness in all he had said. "Explain yourself; reveal the plot which you say you were urged to join."

Bonaparte repeated again the same things. But only those who were present can form any idea of his manner. There was not the slightest connection in what he stammered out. Bonaparte was then no orator. It may well be supposed that he was more accustomed to the din of war than to the discussions of the tribunes. He was more at home before a battery than before a President's chair.

Perceiving the bad effect which this unconnected babbling produced on the assembly, as well as the embarrassment of Bonaparte, I said, in a low voice, pulling him gently by the skirt of his coat, "withdraw, General; you know not what you are saying." I made signs to Berthier, who was on his left, to second me in persuading him to leave the hall; and all at once, after having stammered out a few more words, he turned round exclaiming, "Let those who love me follow me!" The sentinels at the door offered no opposition to his passing. The person who went before him quietly drew aside the tapestry which concealed the door, and General Bonaparte leaped upon his horse, which stood in the court-yard. It is hard to say what would have happened if, on seeing the General retire, the President had said, "Grenadiers, let no one pass!" Instead of sleeping next day at the Luxembourg he would, I am convinced, have ended his career on the Place de la Revolution.

## CHAPTER XXV.

1799.

The two Councils—Barras' letter—Bonaparte at the Council of the Five Hundred—False reports—Tumultuous sitting—Lucien's speech—He resigns the Presidency of the Council of the Five Hundred—He is carried out by grenadiers—He harangues the troops—A dramatic scene—Murat and his soldiers drive out the Five Hundred—Council of Thirty—Consular commission—Decree—Return to Paris—Conversation with Bonaparte and Josephine respecting Gohier and Bernadotte—The directors Gohier and Moulins imprisoned.

The scene which occurred at the sitting of the Council of the Ancients was very different from that which passed outside. Bonaparte had scarcely reached the courtyard and mounted his horse when cries of "Vive Bonaparte!" resounded on all sides. But this was only a sunbeam between two storms. He had yet to brave the Council of the Five Hundred, which was far more excited than the Council of the Ancients. Everything tended to create a dreadful uncertainty; but it was too late to draw back. We had already staked too heavily. The game was desperate, and everything was to be ventured. In a few hours all would be determined.



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Our apprehensions were not without foundation. In the Council of the Five Hundred agitation was at its height. The most serious alarm marked its deliberations. It had been determined to announce to the Directory the installation of the Councils, and to inquire of the Council of the Ancients their reasons for resolving upon an extraordinary convocation. But the Directory no longer existed. Sieyes and Roger Ducos had joined Bonaparte's party. Gohier and Moulins were prisoners in the Luxembourg, and in the custody of General Moreau; and at the very moment when the Council of the Five Hundred had drawn up a message to the Directory, the Council of the Ancients transmitted to them the following letter, received from Barras. This letter; which was addressed to the Council of the Ancients, was immediately read by Lucien Bonaparte, who was President of the Council of the Five Hundred.

*Citizen president*—Having entered into public affairs solely from my love of liberty, I consented to share the first magistracy of the State only that I might be able to defend it in danger; to protect against their enemies the patriots compromised in its cause; and to ensure to the defenders of, their country that attention to their interests which no one was more calculated to feel than a citizen, long the witness of their heroic virtues, and always sensible to their wants. The glory which accompanies the return of the illustrious warrior to whom I had the honour of opening the path of glory, the striking marks of confidence given him by the legislative body, and the decree of the National Convention, convince me that, to whatever post he may henceforth be called, the dangers to liberty will be averted, and the interests of the army ensured.

I cheerfully return to the rank of a private citizen: happy, after so many storms, to resign, unimpaired, and even more glorious than ever, the destiny of the Republic, which has been, in part, committed to my care.

(Signed) *Barras*.

This letter occasioned a great sensation in the Council of the Five Hundred. A second reading was called for, and a question was started, whether the retirement was legal, or was the result of collusion, and of the influence of Bonaparte's agents; whether to believe Barras, who declared the dangers of liberty averted, or the decree for the removal of the legislative corps, which was passed and executed under the pretext of the existence of imminent peril? At that moment Bonaparte appeared, followed by a party of grenadiers, who remained at the entrance of the hall.

I did not accompany him to the Council of the Five Hundred. He had directed me to send off an express to ease the apprehensions of Josephine, and to assure her that everything would go well. It was some time before I joined him again.

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However, without speaking as positively as if I had myself been an eye-witness of the scene, I do not hesitate to declare that all that has been said about assaults and poniards is pure invention. I rely on what was told me, on the very night, by persons well worthy of credit, and who were witnesses of all that passed.

As to what passed at the sitting, the accounts, given both at the time and since, have varied according to opinions. Some have alleged that unanimous cries of indignation were excited by the appearance of the military. From all parts of the hall resounded, "The sanctuary of the laws is violated. Down with the tyrant!—down with Cromwell!—down with the Dictator! "Bonaparte stammered out a few words, as he had done before the Council of the Ancients, but his voice was immediately drowned by cries of "Vive la Republique!" "Vive la Constitution!" "Outlaw the Dictator!" The grenadiers are then said to have rushed forward, exclaiming, "Let us save our General!" at which indignation reached its height, and cries, even more violent than ever, were raised; that Bonaparte, falling insensible into the arms of the grenadiers, said, "They mean to assassinate me!" All that regards the exclamations and threats I believe to be correct; but I rank with the story of the poniards the assertion of the members of the Five Hundred being provided with firearms, and the grenadiers rushing into the hall; because Bonaparte never mentioned a word of anything of the sort to me, either on the way home, or when I was with him in his chamber. Neither did he say anything on the subject to his wife, who had been extremely agitated by the different reports which reached her.

After Bonaparte left the Council of the Five Hundred the deliberations were continued with great violence. The excitement caused by the appearance of Bonaparte was nothing like subsided when propositions of the most furious nature were made. The President, Lucien, did all in his power to restore tranquillity. As soon as he could make himself heard he said, "The scene which has just taken place in the Council proves what are the sentiments of all; sentiments which I declare are also mine. It was, however, natural to believe that the General had no other object than to render an account of the situation of affairs, and of something interesting to the public. But I think none of you can suppose him capable of projects hostile to liberty."

Each sentence of Lucien's address was interrupted by cries of "Bonaparte has tarnished his glory! He is a disgrace to the Republic!"

Lucien

—[The next younger brother of Napoleon, President of the Council of the Five Hundred in 1799; Minister of the Interior, 1st December 1799 to 1841; Ambassador in Spain, 1801 to December 1801; left France in disgrace in 1804; retired to Papal States; Prisoner in Malta and England, 1810 to 1814; created by Pope in 1814 Prince de

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Canino and Duc de Musignano; married firstly, 1794, Christine Boyer, who died 1800; married secondly, 1802 or 118, a Madame Jonberthon. Of his part in the 18th Brumaire Napoleon said to him in 1807, "I well know that you were useful to me en the 18th Brumaire, but it is not so cleat to me that you saved me then" (lung's Lucien, tome iii. p.89).]—

made fresh efforts to be heard, and wished to be allowed to address the assembly as a member of the Council, and for that purpose resigned the Presidentship to Chasal. He begged that the General might be introduced again and heard with calmness. But this preposition was furiously opposed. Exclamations of "Outlaw Bonaparte! outlaw him!" rang through the assembly, and were the only reply given to the President. Lucien, who had reassumed the President's chair, left it a second time, that he might not be constrained to put the question of outlawry demanded against his brother. Braving the displeasure of the assembly, he mounted the tribune, resigned the Presidentship, renounced his seat as a deputy, and threw aside his robes.

Just as Lucien left the Council I entered. Bonaparte, who was well informed of all that was passing,

—[Lucien distinctly states that he himself, acting within his right as President, had demanded an escort of the grenadiers of the Councils as soon as he saw his withdrawal might be opposed. Then the first entry of the soldiers with Napoleon would be illegal. The second, to withdraw Lucien, was nominally legal (see lung's Lucien, tome i, pp, 318-322)]—

had sent in soldiers to the assistance of his brother; they carried him off from the midst of the Council, and Bonaparte thought it a matter of no little importance to have with him the President of an assembly which he treated as rebellious. Lucien was reinstalled in office; but he was now to discharge his duties, not in the President's chair, but on horseback, and at the head of a party of troops ready to undertake anything. Roused by the danger to which both his brother and himself were exposed he delivered on horseback the following words, which can never be too often remembered, as showing what a man then dared to say, who never was anything except from the reflection of his brother's glory:—

*Citizens! Soldiers!*—The President of the Council of the Five Hundred declares to you that the majority of that Council is at this moment held in terror by a few representatives of the people, who are armed with stilettoes, and who surround the tribune, threatening their colleagues with death, and maintaining most atrocious discussions.I declare to you

that these brigands, who are doubtless in the pay of England, have risen in rebellion against the Council of the Ancients, and have dared to talk of outlawing the General, who is charged with the execution of its decree,



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as if the word "outlaw" was still to be regarded as the death-warrant of persons most beloved by their country. I declare to you that these madmen have outlawed themselves by their attempts upon the liberty of the Council. In the name of that people, which for so many years have been the sport of terrorism, I consign to you the charge of rescuing the majority of their representatives; so that, delivered from stilettoes by bayonets, they may deliberate on the fate of the Republic. General, and you, soldiers, and you, citizens, you will not acknowledge, as legislators of France, any but those who rally round me. As for those who remain in the orangery, let force expel them. They are not the representatives of the people, but the representatives of the poniard. Let that be their title, and let it follow them everywhere; and whenever they dare show themselves to the people, let every finger point at them, and every tongue designate them by the well-merited title of representatives of the poniard!

Vive la Republique!

Notwithstanding the cries of "Vive Bonaparte!" which followed this harangue, the troops still hesitated. It was evident that they were not fully prepared to turn their swords against the national representatives. Lucien then drew his sword, exclaiming, "I swear that I will stab my own brother to the heart if he ever attempt anything against the liberty of Frenchmen." This dramatic action was perfectly successful; hesitation vanished; and at a signal given by Bonaparte, Murat, at the head of his grenadiers, rushed into the hall, and drove out the representatives. Everyone yielded to the reasoning of bayonets, and thus terminated the employment of the armed force on that memorable day.

At ten o'clock at night the palace of St. Cloud, where so many tumultuous scenes had occurred, was perfectly tranquil. All the deputies were still there, pacing the hall, the corridors, and the courts. Most of them had an air of consternation; others affected to have foreseen the event, and to appear satisfied with it; but all wished to return to Paris, which they could not do until a new order revoked the order for the removal of the Councils to St. Cloud.

At eleven o'clock Bonaparte, who had eaten nothing all day, but who was almost insensible to physical wants in moments of great agitation, said to me, "We must go and write, Bourrienne; I intend this very night to address a proclamation to the inhabitants of Paris. To-morrow morning I shall be all the conversation of the capital." He then dictated to me the following proclamation, which proves, no less than some of his reports from Egypt, how much Bonaparte excelled in the art of twisting the truth to own advantage:

*To the people.*

19th Brumaire, 11 o'clock, p.m.



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Frenchmen!—On my return to France I found division reigning amongst all the authorities. They agreed only on this single point, that the Constitution was half destroyed, and was unable to protect liberty!

Each party in turn came to me, confided to me their designs, imparted their secrets, and requested my support. I refused to be the man of a party.

The Council of the Ancients appealed to me. I answered their appeal. A plan of general restoration had been concerted by men whom the nation has been accustomed to regard as the defenders of, liberty, equality, and property. This plan required calm and free deliberation, exempt from all influence and all fear. The Ancients, therefore, resolved upon the removal of the legislative bodies to St. Cloud. They placed at my disposal the force necessary to secure their independence. I was bound, in duty to my fellow-citizens, to the soldiers perishing in our armies, and to the national glory, acquired at the cost of so much blood, to accept the command. The Councils assembled at St. Cloud. Republican troops guaranteed their safety from without, but assassins created terror within. Many members of the Council of the Five Hundred, armed with stilettoes and pistols, spread menaces of death around them. The plans which ought to have been developed were withheld. The majority of the Council was rendered inefficient; the boldest orators were disconcerted, and the inutility of submitting any salutary proposition was quite evident. I proceeded, filled with indignation and grief, to the Council of the Ancients. I besought them to carry their noble designs into execution. I directed their attention to the evils of the nation, which were their motives for conceiving those designs. They concurred in giving me new proofs of their uniform goodwill, I presented myself before the Council of the Five Hundred, alone, unarmed, my head uncovered, just as the Ancients had received and applauded me. My object was to restore to the majority the expression of its will, and to secure to it its power. The stilettoes which had menaced the deputies were instantly raised against their deliverer. Twenty assassins rushed upon me and aimed at my breast. The grenadiers of the legislative body, whom I had left at the door of the hall, ran forward, and placed themselves between me and the assassins. One of these brave grenadiers (Thome) had his clothes pierced by a stiletto. They bore me off.

—[Thome merely had a small part of his coat torn by a deputy, who took him by the collar. This constituted the whole of the attempted assassinations of the 19th Brumaire.—Bourrienne]—

At the same moment cries of “Outlaw him!” were raised against the defender of the law. It was the horrid cry of assassins against the power destined to repress them.

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They crowded round the President, uttering threats. With arms in their hands they commanded him to declare “the outlawry.” I was informed of this. I ordered him to be rescued from their fury, and six grenadiers of the legislative body brought him out. Immediately afterwards some grenadiers of the legislative body charged into the hall and cleared it. The factions, intimidated, dispersed and fled. The majority, freed from their assaults, returned freely and peaceably into the hall; listened to the propositions made for the public safety, deliberated, and drew up the salutary resolution which will become the new and provisional law of the Republic.

Frenchmen, you doubtless recognise in this conduct the zeal of a soldier of liberty, of a citizen devoted to the Republic.

Conservative, tutelary, and liberal ideas resumed their authority upon the dispersion of the factions, who domineered in the Councils, and who, in rendering themselves the most odious of men, did not cease to be the most contemptible.

(Signed) *Bonaparte*, General, etc.

The day had been passed in destroying a Government; it was necessary to devote the night to framing a new one. Talleyrand, Raederer, and Sieyes were at St. Cloud. The Council of the Ancients assembled, and Lucien set himself about finding some members of the Five Hundred on whom he could reckon. He succeeded in getting together only thirty; who, with their President, represented the numerous assembly of which they formed part. This ghost of representation was essential, for Bonaparte, notwithstanding his violation of all law on the preceding day, wished to make it appear that he was acting legally. The Council of the Ancients had, however, already decided that a provisional executive commission should be appointed, composed of three members, and was about to name the members of the commission—a measure which should have originated with the Five Hundred—when Lucien came to acquaint Bonaparte that his chamber ‘introuvable’ was assembled.

This chamber, which called itself the Council of the Five Hundred, though that Council was now nothing but a Council of Thirty, hastily passed a decree, the first article of which was as follows:

The Directory exists no longer; and the individuals hereafter named are no longer members of the national representation, on account of the excesses and illegal acts which they have constantly committed, and more particularly the greatest part of them, in the sitting of this morning.

Then follow the names of sixty-one members expelled.



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By other articles of the same decree the Council instituted a provisional commission, similar to that which the Ancients had proposed to appoint, resolved that the said commission should consist of three members, who should assume the title of Consuls; and nominated as Consuls Sieyes, Roger Ducos, and Bonaparte. The other provisions of the nocturnal decree of St. Cloud had for their object merely the carrying into effect those already described. This nocturnal sitting was very calm, and indeed it would have been strange had it been otherwise, for no opposition could be feared from the members of the Five Hundred, who were prepared to concur with Lucien. All knew beforehand what they would have to do. Everything was concluded by three o'clock in the morning; and the palace of St. Cloud, which had been so agitated since the previous evening, resumed in the morning its wonted stillness, and presented the appearance of a vast solitude.

All the hurrying about, the brief notes which I had to write to many friends, and the conversations in which I was compelled to take part, prevented me from dining before one o'clock in the morning. It was not till then that Bonaparte, having gone to take the oath as Consul before the Five Hundred, afforded me an opportunity of taking some refreshment with Admires Bruix and some other officers.

At three o'clock in the morning I accompanied Bonaparte, in his carriage to Paris. He was extremely fatigued after so many trials and fatigues. A new future was opened before him. He was completely absorbed in thought, and did not utter a single word during the journey. But when he arrived at his house in the Rue de la Victoire, he had no sooner entered his chamber and wished good morning to Josephine, who was in bed, and in a state of the greatest anxiety on account of his absence, than he said before her, "Bourrienne, I said many ridiculous things?"—"Not so very bad, General"—"I like better to speak to soldiers than to lawyers. Those fellows disconcerted me. I have not been used to public assemblies; but that will come in time."

We then began, all three, to converse. Madame Bonaparte became calm, and Bonaparte resumed his wonted confidence. The events of the day naturally formed the subject of our conversation. Josephine, who was much attached to the Gohier family, mentioned the name of that Director in a tone of kindness. "What would you have, my dear?" said Bonaparte to her. "It is not my fault. He is a respectable man, but a simpleton. He does not understand me!—I ought, perhaps, to have him transported. He wrote against me to the Council of the Ancients; but I have his letter, and they know nothing about it. Poor man! he expected me to dinner yesterday. And this man thinks himself a statesman!—Speak no more of him."



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During our discourse the name of Bernadotte was also mentioned. "Have you seen him, Bourrienne?" said Bonaparte to me.—"No, General"— "Neither have I. I have not heard him spoken of. Would you imagine it? I had intelligence to-day of many intrigues in which he is concerned. Would you believe it? he wished nothing less than to be appointed my colleague in authority. He talked of mounting his horse and marching with the troops that might be placed under his command. He wished, he said, to maintain the Constitution: nay, more; I am assured that he had the audacity to add that, if it were necessary to outlaw me, the Government might come to him and he would find soldiers capable of carrying the decree into execution."—"All this, General, should give you an idea how inflexible his principles are."—"Yes, I am well aware of it; there is something in that: he is honest. But for his obstinacy, my brothers would have brought him over. They are related to him. His wife, who is Joseph's sister-in-law, has ascendancy over him. As for me, have I not, I ask you, made sufficient advances to him? You have witnessed them. Moreau, who has a higher military reputation than he, came over to me at once. However, I repent of having cajoled Bernadotte. I am thinking of separating him from all his coteries without any one being able to find fault with the proceeding. I cannot revenge myself in any other manner. Joseph likes him. I should have everybody against me. These family considerations are follies! Goodnight, Bourrienne.—By the way, we will sleep in the Luxembourg to-morrow."

I then left the General, whom, henceforth, I will call the First Consul, after having remained with him constantly during nearly twenty-four hours, with the exception of the time when he was at the Council of the Five Hundred. I retired to my lodging, in the Rue Martel, at five o'clock in the morning.

It is certain that if Gohier had come to breakfast on the morning of the 18th Brumaire, according to Madame Bonaparte's invitation, he would have been one of the members of the Government. But Gohier acted the part of the stern republican. He placed himself, according to the common phrase of the time, astride of the Constitution of the year *iii.*; and as his steed made a sad stumble, he fell with it.

It was a singular circumstance which prevented the two Directors Gohier and Moulins from defending their beloved Constitution. It was from their respect for the Constitution that they allowed it to perish, because they would have been obliged to violate the article which did not allow less than three Directors to deliberate together. Thus a king of Castile was burned to death, because there did not happen to be in his apartment men of such rank as etiquette would permit to touch the person of the monarch.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

1799.



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General approbation of the 18th Brumaire—Distress of the treasury— M. Collot's generosity—Bonaparte's ingratitude—Gohier set at Liberty—Constitution of the year VIII.—The Senate, Tribunate, and Council of State—Notes required on the character of candidates— Bonaparte's love of integrity and talent—Influence of habit over him—His hatred of the Tribunate—Provisional concessions—The first Consular Ministry—Mediocrity of La Place—Proscription lists— Cambaceres report—M. Moreau de Worms—Character of Sieyes— Bonaparte at the Luxembourg—Distribution of the day and visits— Lebrun's opposition—Bonaparte's singing—His boyish tricks— Assumption of the titles "Madame" and "Monseigneur"—The men of the Revolution and the partisans of the Bourbons—Bonaparte's fears— Confidential notes on candidates for office and the assemblies.

It cannot be denied that France hailed, almost with unanimous voice, Bonaparte's accession to the Consulship as a blessing of Providence. I do not speak now of the ulterior consequences of that event; I speak only of the fact itself, and its first results, such as the repeal of the law of hostages, and the compulsory loan of a hundred millions. Doubtless the legality of the acts of the 18th Brumaire may be disputed; but who will venture to say that the immediate result of that day ought not to be regarded as a great blessing to France? Whoever denies this can have no idea of the wretched state of every branch of the administration at that deplorable epoch. A few persons blamed the 18th Brumaire; but no one regretted the Directory, with the exception, perhaps, of the five Directors themselves. But we will say no more of the Directorial Government. What an administration! In what a state were the finances of France! Would it be believed? on the second day of the Consulate, when Bonaparte wished to send a courier to General Championet, commander-in-chief of the army of Italy, the treasury had not 1200 francs disposable to give to the courier!

It may be supposed that in the first moments of a new Government money would be wanted. M. Collot, who had served under Bonaparte in Italy, and whose conduct and administration deserved nothing but praise, was one of the first who came to the Consul's assistance. In this instance M. Collot was as zealous as disinterested. He gave the Consul 500,000 francs in gold, for which service he was badly rewarded. Bonaparte afterwards behaved to M. Collot as though he was anxious to punish him for being rich. This sum, which at the time made so fine an appearance in the Consular treasury, was not repaid for a long time after, and then without interest. This was not, indeed, the only instance in which M. Collot had cause to complain of Bonaparte, who was never inclined to acknowledge his important services, nor even to render justice to his conduct.

On the morning of the 20th Brumaire Bonaparte sent his brother Louis to inform the Director Gohier that he was free. This haste in relieving Gohier was not without a reason, for Bonaparte was anxious to install himself in the Luxembourg, and we went there that same evening.

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Everything was to be created. Bonaparte had with him almost the whole of the army, and on the soldiers he could rely. But the military force was no longer sufficient for him. Wishing to possess a great civil power established by legal forms, he immediately set about the composition of a Senate and Tribunate; a Council of State and a new legislative body, and, finally, a new Constitution.

—[The Constitution of the year VIII. was presented on the 18th of December 1799 (22d Frimaire, year VIII.), and accepted by the people on the 7th of February 1800 (18th Pluviose, year VIII.). It established a Consular Government, composed of Bonaparte, First Consul, appointed for ten years; Cambaceres, Second Consul, also for ten Years; and Lebrun, Third Consul appointed for five years. It established a conservative Senate, a legislative body of 800 members, and a Tribunate composed of 100 members. The establishment of the Council of State took place on the 29th of December 1799. The installation of the new legislative body and the Tribunate was fixed for the 1st of January 1800.—Bourrienne. Lanfrey (tome i. p. 329) sees this Constitution foreshadowed in that proposed by Napoleon in 1797 for the Cisalpine Republic.]—

As Bonaparte had not time to make himself acquainted with the persons by whom he was about to be surrounded; he requested from the most distinguished men of the period, well acquainted with France and the Revolution, notes respecting the individuals worthy and capable of entering the Senate, the Tribunate, and the Council of State. From the manner in which all these notes were drawn up it was evident that the writers of them studied to make their recommendation correspond with what they conceived to be Bonaparte's views, and that they imagined he participated in the opinions which were at that time popular. Accordingly they stated, as grounds for preferring particular candidates, their patriotism, their republicanism, and their having had seats in preceding assemblies.

Of all qualities, that which most influenced the choice of the First Consul was inflexible integrity; and it is but just to say that in this particular he was rarely deceived. He sought earnestly for talent; and although he did not like the men of the Revolution, he was convinced that he could not do without them. He had conceived an extreme aversion for mediocrity, and generally rejected a man of that character when recommended to him; but if he had known such a man long, he yielded to the influence of habit, dreading nothing so much as change, or, as he was accustomed to say himself, new faces.'

—[Napoleon loved only men with strong passions and great weakness; he judged the most opposite qualities in men by these defects (Metternich, tome iii. p.589)]—



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Bonaparte then proceeded to organise a complaisant Senate, a mute legislative body, and a Tribunals which was to have the semblance of being independent, by the aid of some fine speeches and high-sounding phrases. He easily appointed the Senators, but it was different with the Tribunats. He hesitated long before he fixed upon the candidates for that body, which inspired him with an anticipatory fear. However, on arriving at power he dared not oppose himself to the exigencies of the moment, and he consented for a time to delude the ambitious dupes who kept up a buzz of fine sentiments of liberty around him. He saw that circumstances were not yet favourable for refusing a share in the Constitution to this third portion of power, destined apparently to advocate the interests of the people before the legislative body. But in yielding to necessity, the mere idea of the Tribunate filled him with the utmost uneasiness; and, in a word, Bonaparte could not endure the public discussions on his projects.'

—[The Tribunate under this Constitution of the year VIII. was the only body allowed to debate in public on proposed laws, the legislative body simply hearing in silence the orators sent by the Council of State and by the Tribunals to state reasons for or against propositions, and then voting in silence. Its orators were constantly giving umbrage to Napoleon. It was at first Purified, early in 1802, by the Senate naming the members to go out in rotation then reduced to from 100 to 50 members later in 1802, and suppressed in 1807; its disappearance being regarded by Napoleon as his last break with the Revolution.]—

Bonaparte composed the first Consular Ministry as follows: Berthier was Minister of War; Gaudin, formerly employed in the administration of the Post Office, was appointed Minister of Finance; Cambaceres remained Minister of Justice; Forfait was Minister of Marine; La Place of the Interior; Fouche of Police; and Reinhard of Foreign Affairs.

Reinhard and La Place were soon replaced, the former by the able M. Talleyrand, the latter by Lucien Bonaparte.

—[When I quitted the service of the First Consul Talleyrand was still at the head of the Foreign Department. I have frequently been present at this great statesman's conferences with Napoleon, and I can declare that I never saw him flatter his dreams of ambition; but, on the contrary, he always endeavoured to make him sensible of his true interests.—Bourrienne.]—

It maybe said that Lucien merely passed through the Ministry on his way to a lucrative embassy in Spain. As to La Place, Bonaparte always entertained a high opinion of his talents. His appointment to the Ministry of the Interior was a compliment paid to science; but it was not long before the First Consul repented of his choice. La Place, so happily calculated for science, displayed the most inconceivable mediocrity in administration. He was incompetent to the most trifling matters; as if his mind, formed to embrace the system of the world, and to interpret the laws of Newton and Kepler, could not descend to the level of subjects of detail, or apply itself to the duties of the

department with which he was entrusted for a short, but yet, with regard to him, too long a time.



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On the 26th Brumaire (17th November 1799) the Consuls issued a decree, in which they stated that, conformably with Article *iii.* of the law of the 19th of the same month, which especially charged them with the reestablishment of public tranquillity, they decreed that thirty-eight individuals, who were named, should quit the continental territory of the Republic, and for that purpose should proceed to Rochefort, to be afterwards conducted to, and detained in, the department of French Guiana. They likewise decreed that twenty-three other individuals, who were named, should proceed to the commune of Rochelle, in the department of the lower Charente, in order to be afterwards filed and detained in such part of that department as should be pointed out by the Minister of General Police. I was fortunate enough to keep my friend M. Moreau de Worms, deputy from the Youne, out of the fiat of exiles. This produced a mischievous effect. It bore a character of wanton severity quite inconsistent with the assurances of mildness and moderation given at St. Cloud on the 19th Brumaire. Cambaceres afterwards made a report, in which he represented that it was unnecessary for the maintenance of tranquillity to subject the proscribed to banishment, considering it sufficient to place them under the supervision of the superior police. Upon receiving the report the Consuls issued a decree, in which they directed all the individuals included in the proscription to retire respectively into the different communes which should be fixed upon by the Minister of Justice, and to remain there until further orders.

At the period of the issuing of these decrees Sieyes was still one of the Consuls; conjointly with Bonaparte and Roger Ducos; and although Bonaparte had, from the first moment, possessed the whole power of the government, a sort of apparent equality was, nevertheless, observed amongst them. It was not until the 25th of December that Bonaparte assumed the title of First Consul, Cambaceres and Lebrun being then joined in the office with him. He had fixed his eyes on them previously to the 18th Brumaire, and he had no cause to reproach them with giving him much embarrassment in his rapid progress towards the imperial throne.

I have stated that I was so fortunate as to rescue M. Moreau de Worms from the list of proscription. Some days after Sieyes entered Bonaparte's cabinet and said to him, "Well, this M. Moreau de Worms, whom M. Bourrienne induced you to save from banishment, is acting very finely! I told you how it would be! I have received from Sens, his native place, a letter which informs me that Moreau is in that town, where he has assembled the people in the market-place, and indulged in the most violent declamations against the 18th Brumaire,"—"Can you, rely upon your agent" asked Bonaparte.—"Perfectly. I can answer for the truth of his communication." Bonaparte showed me the bulletin of Sieyes' agent, and reproached me bitterly. "What



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would you say, General," I observed, "if I should present this same M. Moreau de Worms, who is declaiming at Sens against the 18th Brumaire, to you within an hour?"—"I defy you to do it."—"I have made myself responsible for him, and I know what I am about. He is violent in his politics; but he is a man of honour, incapable of failing in his word."—" Well, we shall see. Go and find him." I was very sure of doing what I had promised, for within an hour before I had seen M. Moreau de Worms. He had been concealed since the 13th Brumaire, and had not quitted Paris. Nothing was easier than to find him, and in three-quarters of an hour he was at the Luxembourg. I presented him to Bonaparte, who conversed with him a long time concerning the 18th Brumaire. When M. Moreau departed Bonaparte said to me, "You are right. That fool Sieyes is as inventive as a Cassandra. This proves that one should not be too ready to believe the reports of the wretches whom we are obliged to employ in the police." Afterwards he added, "Bourrienne, Moreau is a nice fellow: I am satisfied with him; I will do something for him." It was not long before M. Moreau experienced the effect of the Consul's good opinion. Some days after, whilst framing the council of prizes, he, at my mere suggestion, appointed M. Moreau one of the members, with a salary of 10,000 francs. On what extraordinary circumstances the fortunes of men frequently depend! As to Sieyes, in the intercourse, not very frequent certainly, which I had with him, he appeared to be far beneath the reputation which he then—enjoyed.'

—[M. de Talleyrand, who is so capable of estimating men, and whose admirable sayings well deserve to occupy a place in history, had long entertained a similar opinion of Sieyes. One day, when he was conversing with the Second Consul concerning Sieyes, Cambaceres said to him. "Sieyes, however, is a very profound man."—"Profound?" said Talleyrand. "Yes, he is, a cavity, a perfect cavity, as you would say."— Bourrienne.]—

He reposed a blind confidence in a multitude of agents, whom he sent into all parts of France. When it happened, on other occasions, that I proved to him, by evidence as sufficient as that in the case of M. Moreau, the falseness of the reports he had received, he replied, with a confidence truly ridiculous, "I can rely on my men." Sieyes had written in his countenance, "Give me money!" I recollect that I one day alluded to this expression in the anxious face of Sieyes to the First Consul. "You are right," observed he to me, smiling; "when money is in question, Sieyes is quite a matter-of-fact man. He sends his ideology to the right about and thus becomes easily manageable. He readily abandons his constitutional dreams for a good round sum, and that is very convenient."



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—[Everybody knows, in fact, that Sieyes refused to resign his consular dignities unless he received in exchange a beautiful farm situated in the park of Versailles, and worth about 15,000 livres a year. The good abbe consoled himself for no longer forming a third of the republican sovereignty by making himself at home in the ancient domain of the kings of France.—Bourrienne.]—

Bonaparte occupied, at the Little Luxembourg, the apartments on the ground floor which lie to the right on entering from the Rue de Vaugirard. His cabinet was close to a private staircase, which conducted me to the first floor, where Josephine dwelt. My apartment was above.

After breakfast, which was served at ten o'clock, Bonaparte would converse for a few moments with his usual guests, that is to say, his 'aides de camp', the persons he invited, and myself, who never left him. He was also visited very often by Deferment, Regnault (of the town of St. Jean d'Angely), Boulay (de la Meurthe), Monge, and Berber, who were, with his brothers, Joseph and Lucien, those whom he most delighted to see; he conversed familiarly with them. Cambaceres generally came at mid-day, and stayed some time with him, often a whole hour. Lebrun visited but seldom. Notwithstanding his elevation, his character remained unaltered; and Bonaparte considered him too moderate, because he always opposed his ambitious views and his plans to usurp power. When Bonaparte left the breakfast-table it was seldom that he did not add, after bidding Josephine and her daughter Hortense good-day, "Come, Bourrienne, come, let us to work."

After the morning audiences I stayed with Bonaparte all the day, either reading to him, or writing to his dictation. Three or four times in the week he would go to the Council. On his way to the hall of deliberation he was obliged to cross the courtyard of the Little Luxembourg and ascend the grand staircase. This always vexed him, and the more so as the weather was very bad at the time. This annoyance continued until the 25th of December, and it was with much satisfaction that he saw himself quit of it. After leaving the Council he used to enter his cabinet singing, and God knows how wretchedly he sung! He examined whatever work he had ordered to be done, signed documents, stretched himself in his arm-chair, and read the letters of the preceding day and the publications of the morning. When there was no Council he remained in his cabinet, conversed with me, always sang, and cut, according to custom, the arm of his chair, giving himself sometimes quite the air of a great boy. Then, all at once starting up, he would describe a plan for the erection of a monument, or dictate some of those extraordinary productions which astonished and dismayed the world. He often became again the same man, who, under the walls of St. Jean d'Acre, had dreamed of an empire worthy his ambition.



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At five o'clock dinner was served up. When that was over the First Consul went upstairs to Josephine's apartments, where he commonly received the visits of the Ministers. He was always pleased to see among the number the Minister of Foreign Affairs, especially since the portfolio of that department had been entrusted to the hands of M. de Talleyrand. At midnight, and often sooner, he gave the signal for retiring by saying in a hasty manner, "Allons nous coucher."

It was at the Luxembourg, in the salons of which the adorable Josephine so well performed the honours, that the word 'Madame' came again into use. This first return towards the old French politeness was startling to some susceptible Republicans; but things were soon carried farther at the Tuileries by the introduction of 'Votre Altesse' on occasions of state ceremony, and Monseigneur in the family circle.

If, on the one hand, Bonaparte did not like the men of the Revolution, on the other he dreaded still more the partisans of the Bourbons. On the mere mention of the name of those princes he experienced a kind of inward alarm; and he often spoke of the necessity of raising a wall of brass between France and them. To this feeling, no doubt, must be attributed certain nominations, and the spirit of some recommendations contained in the notes with which he was supplied on the characters of candidates, and which for ready reference were arranged alphabetically. Some of the notes just mentioned were in the handwriting of Regnault de St. Jean d'Angely, and some in Lucien Bonaparte's.

—[Among them was the following, under the title of "General Observations": "In choosing among the men who were members of the Constituent Assembly it is necessary to be on guard against the Orleans' party, which is not altogether a chimera, and may one day or other prove dangerous." "There is no doubt that the partisans of that family are intriguing secretly; and among many other proofs of this fact the following is a striking one: the journal called the 'Aristargue', which undisguisedly supports royalism, is conducted by a man of the name of Voidel, one of the hottest patriots of the Revolution. He was for several months president of the committee of inquiry which caused the Marquis de Favras to be arrested and hanged, and gave so much uneasiness to the Court. There was no one in the Constituent Assembly more hateful to the Court than Voidel, so much on account of his violence as for his connection with the Duke of Orleans, whose advocate and counsel he was. When the Duke of Orleans was arrested, Voidel, braving the fury of the revolutionary tribunals, had the courage to defend him, and placarded all the walls of Paris with an apology for the Duke and his two sons. This man, writing now in favour of royalism, can have no other object than to advance a member of the Orleans family to the throne."—Bourrienne.]—



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At the commencement of the First Consul's administration, though he always consulted the notes he had collected, he yet received with attention the recommendations of persons with whom he was well acquainted; but it was not safe for them to recommend a rogue or a fool. The men whom he most disliked were those whom he called babblers, who are continually prating of everything and on everything. He often said,—“I want more head and less tongue.” What he thought of the regicides will be seen farther on, but at first the more a man had given a gage to the Revolution, the more he considered him as offering a guarantee against the return of the former order of things. Besides, Bonaparte was not the man to attend to any consideration when once his policy was concerned.

As I have said a few pages back, on taking the government into his own hands Bonaparte knew so little of the Revolution and of the men engaged in civil employments that it was indispensably necessary for him to collect information from every quarter respecting men and things. But when the conflicting passions of the moment became more calm and the spirit of party more prudent, and when order had been, by his severe investigations, introduced where hitherto unbridled confusion had reigned, he became gradually more scrupulous in granting places, whether arising from newly-created offices, or from those changes which the different departments often experienced. He then said to me, “Bourrienne, I give up your department to you. Name whom you please for the appointments; but remember you must be responsible to me.”

What a list would have been which should contain the names of all the prefects, sub-prefects, receivers-general, and other civil officers to whom I gave places! I have kept no memoranda of their names; and indeed, what advantage would there have been in doing so? It was impossible for me to have a personal knowledge of all the fortunate candidates; but I relied on recommendations in which I had confidence.

I have little to complain of in those I obliged; though it is true that, since my separation from Bonaparte, I have seen many of them take the opposite side of the street in which I was walking, and by that delicate attention save me the trouble of raising my hat.