

Memoirs of Napoleon — Volume 06 eBook

Memoirs of Napoleon — Volume 06 by Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne

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Contents

Memoirs of Napoleon — Volume 06 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	5
Page 1.....	6
Page 2.....	8
Page 3.....	9
Page 4.....	10
Page 5.....	11
Page 6.....	12
Page 7.....	13
Page 8.....	14
Page 9.....	15
Page 10.....	16
Page 11.....	17
Page 12.....	18
Page 13.....	19
Page 14.....	20
Page 15.....	21
Page 16.....	22
Page 17.....	23
Page 18.....	24
Page 19.....	25
Page 20.....	26
Page 21.....	28
Page 22.....	29



[Page 23..... 30](#)

[Page 24..... 31](#)

[Page 25..... 32](#)

[Page 26..... 33](#)

[Page 27..... 34](#)

[Page 28..... 35](#)

[Page 29..... 36](#)

[Page 30..... 37](#)

[Page 31..... 39](#)

[Page 32..... 41](#)

[Page 33..... 42](#)

[Page 34..... 43](#)

[Page 35..... 45](#)

[Page 36..... 46](#)

[Page 37..... 47](#)

[Page 38..... 48](#)

[Page 39..... 49](#)

[Page 40..... 50](#)

[Page 41..... 52](#)

[Page 42..... 53](#)

[Page 43..... 54](#)

[Page 44..... 55](#)

[Page 45..... 56](#)

[Page 46..... 57](#)

[Page 47..... 58](#)

[Page 48..... 59](#)



Page 49..... 60
Page 50..... 61
Page 51..... 63
Page 52..... 64
Page 53..... 66
Page 54..... 67
Page 55..... 68
Page 56..... 69
Page 57..... 70
Page 58..... 72
Page 59..... 74
Page 60..... 76
Page 61..... 78
Page 62..... 80
Page 63..... 81
Page 64..... 82
Page 65..... 83
Page 66..... 84
Page 67..... 85
Page 68..... 87

Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
CHAPTER IX.		1
CHAPTER X.		6
CHAPTER XI.		16
CHAPTER XII.		23
CHAPTER XIII.		32
CHAPTER XIV		37
CHAPTER XV		43
CHAPTER XVI		51
CHAPTER XVII.		61
CHAPTER XVIII.		65
ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:		68



Page 1

CHAPTER IX.

1802.

Proverbial falsehood of bulletins—M. Doublet—Creation of the Legion of Honour—Opposition to it in the Council and other authorities of the State—The partisans of an hereditary system— The question of the Consulship for life.

The historian of these times ought to put no faith in the bulletins, despatches, notes, and proclamations which have emanated from Bonaparte, or passed through his hands. For my part, I believe that the proverb, "As great a liar as a bulletin," has as much truth in it as the axiom, two and two make four.

The bulletins always announced what Bonaparte wished to be believed true; but to form a proper judgment on any fact, counter-bulletins must be sought for and consulted. It is well known, too, that Bonaparte attached great importance to the place whence he dated his bulletins; thus, he dated his decrees respecting the theatres and Hamburg beef at Moscow.

The official documents were almost always incorrect. There was falsity in the exaggerated descriptions of his victories, and falsity again in the suppression or palliation of his reverses and losses. A writer, if he took his materials from the bulletins and the official correspondence of the time, would compose a romance rather than a true history. Of this many proofs have been given in the present work.

Another thing which always appeared to me very remarkable was, that Bonaparte, notwithstanding his incontestable superiority, studied to depreciate the reputations of his military commanders, and to throw on their shoulders faults which he had committed himself. It is notorious that complaints and remonstrances, as energetic as they were well founded, were frequently addressed to General Bonaparte on the subject of his unjust and partial bulletins, which often attributed the success of a day to some one who had very little to do with it, and made no mention of the officer who actually had the command. The complaints made by the officers and soldiers stationed at Damietta compelled General Lanusse, the commander, to remonstrate against the alteration of a bulletin, by which an engagement with a body of Arabs was represented as an insignificant affair, and the loss trifling, though the General had stated the action to be one of importance, and the loss considerable. The misstatement, in consequence of his spirited and energetic remonstrances, was corrected.

Bonaparte took Malta, as is well known, in forty-eight hours. The empire of the Mediterranean, secured to the English by the battle of Aboukir, and their numerous cruising vessels, gave them the means of starving the garrison, and of thus forcing General Vaubois, the commandant of Malta, who was cut off from all communication

with France, to capitulate. Accordingly on the 4th of September 1800 he yielded up the Gibraltar of the Mediterranean, after a noble defence of two years. These facts require to be stated in order the better to understand what follows.



Page 2

On 22d February 1802 a person of the name of Doublet, who was the commissary of the French Government at Malta when we possessed that island, called upon me at the Tuileries. He complained bitterly that the letter which he had written from Malta to the First Consul on the 2d Ventose, year VIII. (9th February 1800), had been altered in the 'Moniteur'. "I congratulated him," said M. Doublet, "on the 18th Brumaire, and informed him of the state of Malta, which was very alarming. Quite the contrary was printed in the 'Moniteur', and that is what I complain of. It placed me in a very disagreeable situation at Malta, where I was accused of having concealed the real situation of the island, in which I was discharging a public function that gave weight to my words." I observed to him that as I was not the editor of the 'Moniteur' it was of no use to apply to me; but I told him to give me a copy of the letter, and I would mention the subject to the First Consul, and communicate the answer to him. Doublet searched his pocket for the letter, but could not find it. He said he would send a copy, and begged me to discover how the error originated. On the same day he sent me the copy of the letter, in which, after congratulating Bonaparte on his return, the following passage occurs:—"Hasten to save Malta with men and provisions: no time is to be lost." For this passage these words were substituted in the 'Moniteur': "His name inspires the brave defenders of Malta with fresh courage; we have men and provisions."

Ignorant of the motives of so strange a perversion, I showed this letter to the First Consul. He shrugged up his shoulders and said, laughing, "Take no notice of him, he is a fool; give yourself no further trouble about it."

It was clear there was nothing more to be done. It was, however, in despite of me that M. Doublet was played this ill turn. I represented to the First Consul the inconveniences which M. Doublet might experience from this affair. But I very rarely saw letters or reports published as they were received. I can easily understand how particular motives might be alleged in order to justify such falsifications; for, when the path of candour and good faith is departed from, any pretext is put forward to excuse bad conduct. What sort of a history would he write who should consult only the pages of the 'Moniteur'?

After the vote for adding a second ten years to the duration of Bonaparte's Consulship he created, on the 19th of May, the order of the Legion of Honour. This institution was soon followed by that of the new nobility. Thus, in a short space of time, the Concordat to tranquillize consciences and re-establish harmony in the Church; the decree to recall the emigrants; the continuance of the Consular power for ten years, by way of preparation for the Consulship for life, and the possession of the Empire; and the creation, in a country which had abolished all distinctions, of an order which was to engender prodigies, followed closely on the heels of each other. The Bourbons, in reviving the abolished orders, were wise enough to preserve along with them the Legion of Honour.

Page 3

It has already been seen how, in certain circumstances, the First Consul always escaped from the consequences of his own precipitation, and got rid of his blunders by throwing the blame on others—as, for example, in the affair of the parallel between Caesar, Cromwell, and Bonaparte. He was indeed so precipitate that one might say, had he been a gardener, he would have wished to see the fruits ripen before the blossoms had fallen off. This inconsiderate haste nearly proved fatal to the creation of the Legion of Honour, a project which ripened in his mind as soon as he beheld the orders glittering at the button-holes of the Foreign Ministers. He would frequently exclaim, “This is well! These are the things for the people!”

I was, I must confess, a decided partisan of the foundation in France of a new chivalric order, because I think, in every well-conducted State, the chief of the Government ought to do all in his power to stimulate the honour of the citizens, and to render them more sensible to honorary distinctions than to pecuniary advantages. I tried, however, at the same time to warn the First Consul of his precipitancy. He heard me not; but I must with equal frankness confess that on this occasion I was soon freed from all apprehension with respect to the consequences of the difficulties he had to encounter in the Council and in the other constituted orders of the State.

On the 4th of May 1801 he brought forward, for the first time officially, in the Council of State the question of the establishment of the Legion of Honour, which on the 19th May 1802 was proclaimed a law of the State. The opposition to this measure was very great, and all the power of the First Consul, the force of his arguments, and the immense influence of his position, could procure him no more than 14 votes out of 24. The same feeling was displayed at the Tribunate; where the measure only passed by a vote of 56 to 38. The balance was about the same in the Legislative Body, where the votes were 166 to 110. It follows, then, that out of the 394 voters in those three separate bodies a majority only of 78 was obtained. Surprised at so feeble a majority, the First Consul said in the evening, “Ah! I see very clearly the prejudices are still too strong. You were right; I should have waited. It was not a thing of such urgency. But then, it must be owned, the speakers for the measure defended it badly. The strong minority has not judged me fairly.”— “Be calm,” rejoined I: “without doubt it would have been better to wait; but the thing is done, and you will soon find that the taste for these distinctions is not near gone by. It is a taste which belongs to the nature of man. You may expect some extraordinary circumstances from this creation—you will soon see them.”

In April 1802 the First Consul left no stone unturned to get himself declared Consul for life. It is perhaps at this epoch of his career that he most brought into play those principles of duplicity and dissimulation which are commonly called Machiavellian. Never were trickery, falsehood, cunning, and affected moderation put into play with more talent or success.



Page 4

In the month of March hereditary succession and a dynasty were in everybody's mouths. Lucien was the most violent propagator of these ideas, and he pursued his vocation of apostle with constancy and address. It has already been mentioned that, by his brother's confession; he published in 1800 a pamphlet enforcing the same ideas; which work Bonaparte afterwards condemned as a premature development of his projects. M. de Talleyrand, whose ideas could not be otherwise than favourable to the monarchical form of government, was ready to enter into explanations with the Cabinets of Europe on the subject. The words which now constantly resounded in every ear were "stability and order," under cloak of which the downfall of the people's right was to be concealed. At the same time Bonaparte, with the view of disparaging the real friends of constitutional liberty, always called them ideologues,

—[I have classed all these people under the denomination of Ideologues, which, besides, is what specially and literally fits them,—searchers after ideas (ideas generally empty). They have been made more ridiculous than even I expected by this application, a correct one, of the term ideologue to them. The phrase has been successful, I believe, because it was mine (Napoleon in lung's Lucien, tome ii. p, 293). Napoleon welcomed every attack on this description of sage. Much pleased with a discourse by Royer Collard, he said to Talleyrand, "Do you know, Monsieur is Grand Electeur, that a new and serious philosophy is rising in my university, which may do us great honour and disembarass us completely of the ideologues, slaying them on the spot by reasoning?" It is with something of the same satisfaction that Renan, writing of 1898, says that the finer dreams had been disastrous when brought into the domain of facts, and that human concerns only began to improve when the ideologues ceased to meddle with them (Souvenirs, p. 122).]—

or terrorists. Madame Bonaparte opposed with fortitude the influence of counsels which she believed fatal to her husband. He indeed spoke rarely, and seldom confidentially, with her on politics or public affairs. "Mind your distaff or your needle," was with him a common phrase. The individuals who applied themselves with most perseverance in support of the hereditary question were Lucien, Roederer, Regnault de St. Jean d'Angely, and Fontanel. Their efforts were aided by the conclusion of peace with England, which, by re-establishing general tranquillity for a time, afforded the First Consul an opportunity of forwarding any plan.

While the First Consul aspired to the throne of France, his brothers, especially Lucien, affected a ridiculous pride and pretension. Take an almost incredible example of which I was witness. On Sunday, the 9th of May, Lucien came to see Madame Bonaparte, who said to him, "Why did you not come to dinner last Monday?"—"Because there was no place marked for me: the brothers of Napoleon ought to have the first place after him."—"What am I to understand by that?" answered Madame Bonaparte. "If you are the brother of Bonaparte, recollect what you were. At my house all places are the same. Eugene would never have committed such a folly."

Page 5

—[On such points there was constant trouble with the Bonapartist family, as will be seen in Madame de Remusat's Memoirs. For an instance, in 1812, where Joseph insisted on his mother taking precedence of Josephine at a dinner in his house, when Napoleon settled the matter by seizing Josephine's arm and leading her in first, to the consternation of the party. But Napoleon, right in this case, had his own ideas on such points, The place of the Princess Elisa, the eldest of his sisters, had been put below that of Caroline, Queen of Naples. Elisa was then only princess of Lucca. The Emperor suddenly rose, and by a shift to the right placed the Princess Elisa above the Queen. 'Now,' said he, 'do not forget that in the imperial family I am the only King.' (lung's Lucien, tome ii. p. 251), This rule he seems to have adhered to, for when he and his brothers went in the same carriage to the Champ de Mai in 1815, Jerome, titular King of Westphalia, had to take the front seat, while his elder brother, Lucien, only bearing the Roman title of Prince de Canino, sat on one of the seats of honour alongside Napoleon. Jerome was disgusted, and grumbled at a King having to give way to a mere Roman Prince, See lung's Lucien, tome ii. p, 190.]—

At this period, when the Consulate for life was only in embryo, flattering counsels poured in from all quarters, and tended to encourage the First Consul in his design of grasping at absolute power.

Liberty rejected an unlimited power, and set bounds to the means he wished and had to employ in order to gratify his excessive love of war and conquest. "The present state of things, this Consulate of ten years," said he to me, does not satisfy me; "I consider it calculated to excite unceasing troubles." On the 7th of July 1801, he observed, "The question whether France will be a Republic is still doubtful: it will be decided in five or six years." It was clear that he thought this too long a term. Whether he regarded France as his property, or considered himself as the people's delegate and the defender of their rights, I am convinced the First Consul wished the welfare of France; but then that welfare was in his mind inseparable from absolute power. It was with pain I saw him following this course. The friends of liberty, those who sincerely wished to maintain a Government constitutionally free, allowed themselves to be prevailed upon to consent to an extension of ten years of power beyond the ten years originally granted by the constitution. They made this sacrifice to glory and to that power which was its consequence; and they were far from thinking they were lending their support to shameless intrigues. They were firm, but for the moment only, and the nomination for life was rejected by the Senate, who voted only ten years more power to Bonaparte, who saw the vision of his ambition again adjourned.



Page 6

The First Consul dissembled his displeasure with that profound art which, when he could not do otherwise, he exercised to an extreme degree. To a message of the Senate on the subject of that nomination he returned a calm but evasive and equivocating answer, in which, nourishing his favourite hope of obtaining more from the people than from the Senate, he declared with hypocritical humility, "That he would submit to this new sacrifice if the wish of the people demanded what the Senate authorised." Such was the homage he paid to the sovereignty of the people, which was soon to be trampled under his feet!

An extraordinary convocation of the Council of State took place on Monday, the 10th of May. A communication was made to them, not merely of the Senate's consultation, but also of the First Consul's adroit and insidious reply. The Council regarded the first merely as a notification, and proceeded to consider on what question the people should be consulted. Not satisfied with granting to the First Consul ten years of prerogative, the Council thought it best to strike the iron while it was hot, and not to stop short in the middle of so pleasing a work. In fine, they decided that the following question should be put to the people: "Shall the First Consul be appointed for life, and shall he have the power of nominating his successor?" The reports of the police had besides much influence on the result of this discussion, for they one and all declared that the whole of Paris demanded a Consul for life, with the right of naming a successor. The decisions on these two questions were carried as it were by storm. The appointment for life passed unanimously, and the right of naming the successor by a majority. The First Consul, however, formally declared that he condemned this second measure, which had not originated with himself. On receiving the decision of the Council of State the First Consul, to mask his plan for attaining absolute power, thought it advisable to appear to reject a part of what was offered him. He therefore cancelled that clause which proposed to give him the power of appointing a successor, and which had been carried by a small majority.

CHAPTER X.

1802.

General Bernadotte pacifies La vendee and suppresses a mutiny at Tours—Bonaparte's injustice towards him—A premeditated scene— Advice given to Bernadotte, and Bonaparte disappointed—The First Consul's residence at St. Cloud—His rehearsals for the Empire— His contempt of mankind—Mr. Fox and Bonaparte—Information of plans of assassination—A military dinner given by Bonaparte—Moreau not of the party— Effect of the 'Senates-consultes' on the Consulate for life—Journey to Plombieres— Previous scene between Lucien and Josephine—Theatrical representations at Neuilly and Malmaison— Loss of a watch, and honesty rewarded—Canova at St. Cloud— Bonaparte's reluctance

Page 7

to stand for a model.

Having arrived at nearly the middle of the career which I have undertaken to trace, before I advance farther I must go back for a few moments, as I have already frequently done, in order to introduce some circumstances which escaped my recollection, or which I purposely reserved, that I might place them amongst facts analogous to them: Thus, for instance, I have only referred in passing to a man who, since become a monarch, has not ceased to honour me with his friendship, as will be seen in the course of my Memoirs, since the part we have seen him play in the events of the 18th Brumaire. This man, whom the inexplicable combination of events has raised to a throne for the happiness of the people he is called to govern, is Bernadotte.

It was evident that Bernadotte must necessarily fall into a kind of disgrace for not having supported Bonaparte's projects at the period of the overthrow of the Directory. The First Consul, however, did not dare to avenge himself openly; but he watched for every opportunity to remove Bernadotte from his presence, to place him in difficult situations, and to entrust him with missions for which no precise instructions were given, in the hope that Bernadotte would commit faults for which the First Consul might make him wholly responsible.

At the commencement of the Consulate the deplorable war in La Vendee raged in all its intensity. The organization of the Chouans was complete, and this civil war caused Bonaparte much more uneasiness than that which he was obliged to conduct on the Rhine and in Italy, because, from the success of the Vendean might arise a question respecting internal government, the solution of which was likely to be contrary to Bonaparte's views. The slightest success of the Vendean spread alarm amongst the holders of national property; and, besides, there was no hope of reconciliation between France and England, her eternal and implacable enemy, as long as the flame of insurrection remained unextinguished.

The task of terminating this unhappy struggle was obviously a difficult one. Bonaparte therefore resolved to impose it on Bernadotte; but this general's conciliatory disposition, his chivalrous manners, his tendency to indulgence, and a happy mixture of prudence and firmness, made him succeed where others would have failed. He finally established good order and submission to the laws.

Some time after the pacification of La Vendee a rebellious disposition manifested itself at Tours amongst the soldiers of a regiment stationed there. The men refused to march until they received their arrears of pay. Bernadotte, as commander-in-chief of the army of the west, without being alarmed at the disturbance, ordered the fifty-second demi-brigade—the one in question—to be drawn up in the square of Tours, where, at the very head of the corps, the leaders of the mutiny were by his orders arrested without any resistance being offered. Carnot



Page 8

who was then Minister of War, made a report to the First Consul on this affair, which, but for the firmness of Bernadotte, might have been attended with disagreeable results. Carnet's report contained a plain statement of the facts, and of General Bernadotte's conduct. Bonaparte was, however, desirous to find in it some pretext for blaming him, and made me write these words on the margin of the report: "General Bernadotte did not act discreetly in adopting such severe measures against the fifty-second demi-brigade, he not having the means, if he had been unsuccessful, of re-establishing order in a town the garrison of which was not strong enough to subdue the mutineers."

A few days after, the First Consul having learned that the result of this affair was quite different from that which he affected to dread, and being convinced that by Bernadotte's firmness alone order had been restored, he found himself in some measure constrained to write to the General, and he dictated the following letter to me:

Paris, 11th Vendemiaire. Year XI.

Citizen-general—I have read with interest the account of what you did to re-establish order in the fifty-second demi-brigade, and also the report of General Liebert, dated the 5th Vendemiaire. Tell that officer that the Government is satisfied with his conduct. His promotion from the rank of Colonel to that of General of brigade is confirmed. I wish that brave officer to come to Paris. He has afforded an example of firmness and energy which does honour to a soldier.

(Signed) *Bonaparte.*

Thus in the same affair Bonaparte, in a few days, from the spontaneous expression of blame dictated by hate, was reduced to the necessity of declaring his approbation, which he did, as may be seen, with studied coldness, and even taking pains to make his praises apply to Colonel Liebert, and not to the general-in-chief.

Time only served to augment Bonaparte's dislike of Bernadotte. It might be said that the farther he advanced in his rapid march towards absolute power the more animosity he cherished against the individual who had refused to aid his first steps in his adventurous career. At the same time the persons about Bonaparte who practised the art of flattering failed not to multiply reports and insinuations against Bernadotte. I recollect one day, when there was to be a grand public levee, seeing Bonaparte so much out of temper that I asked him the cause of it. "I can bear it no longer," he replied impetuously. "I have resolved to have a scene with Bernadotte to-day. He will probably be here. I will open the fire, let what will come of it. He may do what he pleases. We shall see! It is time there should be an end of this."



Page 9

I had never before observed the First Consul so violently irritated. He was in a terrible passion, and I dreaded the moment when the levee was to open. When he left me to go down to the salon I availed myself of the opportunity to get there before him, which I could easily do, as the salon was not twenty steps from the cabinet. By good luck Bernadotte was the first person I saw. He was standing in the recess of a window which looked on the square of the Carrousel. To cross the salon and reach the General was the work of a moment. "General!" said I, "trust me and retire!—I have good reasons for advising it!" Bernadotte, seeing my extreme anxiety, and aware of the sincere sentiments of esteem and friendship which I entertained for him, consented to retire, and I regarded this as a triumph; for, knowing Bernadotte's frankness of character and his nice sense of honour, I was quite certain that he would not submit to the harsh observations which Bonaparte intended to address to him. My stratagem had all the success I could desire. The First Consul suspected nothing, and remarked only one thing, which was that his victim was absent. When the levee was over he said to me, "What do you think of it, Bourrienne?—Bernadotte did not come."—"So much the better for him, General," was my reply. Nothing further happened. The First Consul on returning from Josephine found me in the cabinet, and consequently could suspect nothing, and my communication with Bernadotte did not occupy five minutes. Bernadotte always expressed himself much gratified with the proof of friendship I gave him at this delicate conjuncture. The fact is, that from a disposition of my mind, which I could not myself account for, the more Bonaparte's unjust hatred of Bernadotte increased the more sympathy and admiration I felt for the noble character of the latter.

The event in question occurred in the spring of 1802. It was at this period that Bonaparte first occupied St. Cloud, which he was much pleased with, because he found himself more at liberty there than at the Tuileries; which palace is really only a prison for royalty, as there a sovereign cannot even take the air at a window without immediately being the object of the curiosity of the public, who collect in large crowds. At St. Cloud, on the contrary, Bonaparte could walk out from his cabinet and prolong his promenade without being annoyed by petitioners. One of his first steps was to repair the cross road leading from St. Cloud to Malmaison, between which places Bonaparte rode in a quarter of an hour. This proximity to the country, which he liked, made staying at St. Cloud yet pleasanter to him. It was at St. Cloud that the First Consul made, if I may so express it, his first rehearsals of the grand drama of the Empire. It was there he began to introduce, in external forms, the habits and etiquette which brought to mind the ceremonies of sovereignty. He soon perceived the influence which pomp of ceremony, brilliancy of appearance, and richness of costume, exercise over the mass of mankind. "Men," he remarked to me at this period, "well deserve the contempt I feel for them. I have only to put some gold lace on the coats of my virtuous republicans and they immediately become just what I wish them."

Page 10

I remember one day, after one of his frequent sallies of contempt for human kind, I observed to him that although baubles might excite vulgar admiration, there were some distinguished men who did not permit themselves to be fascinated by their allurements; and I mentioned the celebrated Fox by way of example, who, previous to the conclusion of the peace of Amiens, visited Paris, where he was remarked for his extreme simplicity. The First Consul said, "Ah! you are right with respect to him. Mr. Fox is a truly great man, and pleases me much."

In fact, Bonaparte always received Mr. Fox's visits with the greatest satisfaction; and after every conversation they had together he never failed to express to me the pleasure which he experienced in discoursing with a man every way worthy of the great celebrity he had attained. He considered him a very superior man, and wished he might have to treat with him in his future negotiations with England. It may be supposed that Mr. Fox, on his part, never forgot the terms of intimacy, I may say of confidence, on which he had been with the First Consul. In fact, he on several occasions informed him in time of war of the plots formed against his life. Less could not be expected from a man of so noble a character. I can likewise affirm, having more than once been in possession of proofs of the fact, that the English Government constantly rejected with indignation all such projects. I do not mean those which had for their object the overthrow of the Consular or Imperial Government, but all plans of assassination and secret attacks on the person of Bonaparte, whether First Consul or Emperor. I will here request the indulgence of the reader whilst I relate a circumstance which occurred a year before Mr. Fox's journey to Paris; but as it refers to Moreau, I believe that the transposition will be pardoned more easily than the omission.

During the summer 1801 the First Consul took a fancy to give a grand military dinner at a restaurateur's. The restaurateur he favoured with his company was Veri, whose establishment was situated on the terrace of the Feuillans with an entrance into the garden of the Tuileries. Bonaparte did not send an invitation to Moreau, whom I met by chance that day in the following manner:—The ceremony of the dinner at Veri's leaving me at liberty to dispose of my time, I availed myself of it to go and dine at a restaurateur's named Rose, who then enjoyed great celebrity amongst the distinguished gastronomes. I dined in company with M. Carbonnet, a friend of Moreau's family, and two or three other persons. Whilst we were at table in the rotunda we were informed by the waiter who attended on us that General Moreau and his wife, with Lacuee and two other military men, were in an adjoining apartment. Suchet, who had dined at Veri's, where he said everything was prodigiously dull, on rising from the table joined Moreau's party. These details we learned from M. Carbonnet, who left us for a few moments to see the General and Madame Moreau.

Page 11

Bonaparte's affectation in not inviting Moreau at the moment when the latter had returned a conqueror from the army of the Rhine, and at the same time the affectation of Moreau in going publicly the same day to dine at another restaurateur's, afforded ground for the supposition that the coolness which existed between them would soon be converted into enmity. The people of Paris naturally thought that the conqueror of Marengo might, without any degradation, have given the conqueror of Hohenlinden a seat at his table.

By the commencement of the year 1802 the Republic had ceased to be anything else than a fiction, or an historical recollection. All that remained of it was a deceptive inscription on the gates of the Palace. Even at the time of his installation at the Tuileries, Bonaparte had caused the two trees of liberty which were planted in the court to be cut down; thus removing the outward emblems before he destroyed the reality. But the moment the Senatorial decisions of the 2d and 4th of August were published it was evident to the dullest perceptions that the power of the First Consul wanted nothing but a name.

After these 'Consultes' Bonaparte readily accustomed himself to regard the principal authorities of the State merely as necessary instruments for the exercise of his power. Interested advisers then crowded round him. It was seriously proposed that he should restore the ancient titles, as being more in harmony with the new power which the people had confided to him than the republican forms. He was still of opinion, however, according to his phrase, that "the pear was not yet ripe," and would not hear this project spoken of for a moment. "All this," he said to me one day, "will come in good time; but you must see, Bourrienne, that it is necessary I should, in the first place, assume a title, from which the others that I will give to everybody will naturally take their origin. The greatest difficulty is surmounted. There is no longer any person to deceive. Everybody sees as clear as day that it is only one step which separates the throne from the Consulate for life. However, we must be cautious. There are some troublesome fellows in the Tribunate, but I will take care of them."

Whilst these serious questions agitated men's minds the greater part of the residents at Malmaison took a trip to Plombieres. Josephine, Bonaparte's mother, Madame Beauharnais-Lavallette, Hortense, and General Rapp, were of this party. It pleased the fancy of the jocund company to address to me a bulletin of the pleasant and unpleasant occurrences of the journey. I insert this letter merely as a proof of the intimacy which existed between the writers and myself. It follows, precisely as I have preserved it, with the exception of the blots, for which it will be seen they apologised.

*Anaccount of the journey to Plombieres.
To the Inhabitants of Malmaison.*



Page 12

The whole party left Malmaison in tears, which brought on such dreadful headaches that all the amiable persons were quite overcome by the idea of the journey. Madame Bonaparte, mere, supported the fatigues of this memorable day with the greatest courage; but Madame Bonaparte, Consulesse, did not show any. The two young ladies who sat in the dormouse, Mademoiselle Hortense and Madame Lavallette, were rival candidates for a bottle of Eau de Cologne; and every now and then the amiable M. Rapp made the carriage stop for the comfort of his poor little sick heart, which overflowed with bile: in fine, he was obliged to take to bed on arriving at Epernay, while the rest of the amiable party tried to drown their sorrows in champagne. The second day was more fortunate on the score of health and spirits, but provisions were wanting, and great were the sufferings of the stomach. The travellers lived on the hope of a good supper at Toul; but despair was at its height when, on arriving there, they found only a wretched inn, and nothing in it. We saw some odd-looking folks there, which indemnified us a little for spinach dressed in lamp-oil, and red asparagus fried with curdled milk. Who would not have been amused to see the Malmaison gourmands seated at a table so shockingly served!

In no record of history is there to be found a day passed in distress so dreadful as that on which we arrived at Plombieres. On departing from Toul we intended to breakfast at Nancy, for every stomach had been empty for two days; but the civil and military authorities came out to meet us, and prevented us from executing our plan. We continued our route, wasting away, so that you might, see us growing thinner every moment. To complete our misfortune, the dormouse, which seemed to have taken a fancy to embark on the Moselle for Metz, barely escaped an overturn. But at Plombieres we have been well compensated for this unlucky journey, for on our arrival we were received with all kinds of rejoicings. The town was illuminated, the cannon fired, and the faces of handsome women at all the windows give us reason to hope that we shall bear our absence from Malmaison with the less regret.

With the exception of some anecdotes, which we reserve for chit-chat on our return, you have here a correct account of our journey, which we, the undersigned, hereby certify.

Josephine Bonaparte.
Beauharnais-LAPALLETTE.
Hortense beauharnais.
Rapp.
Bonaparte, mere.

The company ask pardon for the blots.
21st Messidor.

It is requested that the person who receives this journal will show it to all who take an interest in the fair travellers.



Page 13

This journey to Plombieres was preceded by a scene which I should abstain from describing if I had not undertaken to relate the truth respecting the family of the First Consul. Two or three days before her departure Madame Bonaparte sent for me. I obeyed the summons, and found her in tears. "What a man-what a man is that Lucien!" she exclaimed in accents of grief. "If you knew, my friend, the shameful proposals he has dared to make to me! 'You are going to the waters,' said he; 'you must get a child by some other person since you cannot have one by him.' Imagine the indignation with which I received such advice. 'Well,' he continued, 'if you do not wish it, or cannot help it, Bonaparte must get a child by another woman, and you must adopt it, for it is necessary to secure an hereditary successor. It is for your interest; you must know that.'— 'What, sir!' I replied, 'do you imagine the nation will suffer a bastard to govern it? Lucien! Lucien! you would ruin your brother! This is dreadful! Wretched should I be, were any one to suppose me capable of listening, without horror, to your infamous proposal! Your ideas are poisonous; your language horrible!'—'Well, Madame,' retorted he, 'all I can say to that is, that I am really sorry for you!'"

The amiable Josephine was sobbing whilst she described this scene to me, and I was not insensible to the indignation which she felt. The truth is, that at that period Lucien, though constantly affecting to despise power for himself, was incessantly labouring to concentrate it in the hands of his brother; and he considered three things necessary to the success of his views, namely, hereditary succession, divorce, and the Imperial Government.

Lucien had a delightful house near Neuilly. Some days before the deplorable scene which I have related he invited Bonaparte and all the inmates at Malmaison to witness a theatrical representation. 'Alzire' was the piece performed. Elise played Alzire, and Lucien, Zamore. The warmth of their declarations, the energetic expression of their gestures, the too faithful nudity of costume, disgusted most of the spectators, and Bonaparte more than any other. When the play was over he was quite indignant. "It is a scandal," he said to me in an angry tone; "I ought not to suffer such indecencies—I will give Lucien to understand that I will have no more of it." When his brother had resumed his own dress, and came into the salon, he addressed him publicly, and gave him to understand that he must for the future desist from such representations. When we returned to Malmaison; he again spoke of what had passed with dissatisfaction. "What!" said he, "when I am endeavouring to restore purity of manners, my brother and sister must needs exhibit themselves upon the boards almost in a state of nudity! It is an insult!"

Page 14

Lucien had a strong predilection for theatrical exhibitions, to which he attached great importance. The fact is, he declaimed in a superior style, and might have competed with the best professional actors. It was said that the turban of Orosmane, the costume of America, the Roman toga, or the robe of the high priest of Jerusalem, all became him equally well; and I believe that this was the exact truth. Theatrical representations were not confined to Neuilly. We had our theatre and our company of actors at Malmaison; but there everything was conducted with the greatest decorum; and now that I have got behind the scenes, I will not quit them until I have let the reader into the secrets of our drama.

By the direction of the First Consul a very pretty little theatre was built at Malmaison. Our usual actors were Eugene *beauharnais*, Hortense, Madame Murat, Lauriston, M. Didelot, one of the prefects of the Palace, some other individuals belonging to the First Consul's household, and myself. Freed from the cares of government, which we confined as much as possible to the Tuileries, we were a very happy colony at Malmaison; and, besides, we were young, and what is there to which youth does not add charms? The pieces which the First Consul most liked to see us perform were, 'Le Barbier de Seville' and 'Defiance et Malice'. In *Le Barbier* Lauriston played the part of Count Almaviva; Hortense, Rosins; Eugene, Basil; Didelot, Figaro; I, Bartholo; and Isabey, l'Aveille. Our other stock pieces were, *Projets de Mariage*, *La Gageltre*, the *Dapit Anloureux*, in which I played the part of the valet; and *L'Impromptu de Campagne*, in which I enacted the Baron, having for my Baroness the young and handsome Caroline Murat.

Hortense's acting was perfection, Caroline was middling, Eugene played very well, Lauriston was rather heavy, Didelot passable, and I may venture to assert, without vanity, that I was not quite the worst of the company. If we were not good actors it was not for want of good instruction and good advice. Talma and Michot came to direct us, and made us rehearse before them, sometimes altogether and sometimes separately. How many lessons have I received from Michot whilst walking in the beautiful park of Malmaison! And may I be excused for saying, that I now experience pleasure in looking back upon these trifles, which are matters of importance when one is young, and which contrasted so singularly with the great theatre on which we did not represent fictitious characters? We had, to adopt theatrical language, a good supply of property. Bonaparte presented each of us with a collection of dramas very well bound; and, as the patron of the company, he provided us with rich and elegant dresses.



Page 15

—[While Bourrienne, belonging to the Malmaison company, considered that the acting at Neuilly was indecent, Lucien, who refused to act at Malmaison, naturally thought the Malmaison troupe was dull. “Hortense and Caroline filled the principal parts. They were very commonplace. In this they followed the unfortunate Marie Antoinette and her companions. Louis XVI., not naturally polite, when seeing them act, had said that it was royally badly acted” (see Madame Campan’s *Life of Marie Antoinette*, tome i. p. 299). “The First Consul said of his troupe that it was sovereignly badly acted”. . . Murat, Lannes, and even Caroline ranted. Elisa, who, having been educated at Saint Cyr, spoke purely and without accent, refused to act. Janot acted well the drunken parts, and even the others he undertook. The rest were decidedly bad. Worse than bad—ridiculous” (Lung’s *Lucien’s*, tome ii. p. 256). Rival actors are not fair critics. Let us hear Madame Junot (tome ii. p. 103). “The cleverest of our company was M. de Bourrienne. He played the more dignified characters in real perfection, and his talent was the more pleasing as it was not the result of study, but of a perfect comprehension of his part.” And she goes on to say that even the best professional actors might have learnt from him in some parts. The audience was not a pleasant one to face. It was the First Consul’s habit to invite forty persons to dinner, and a hundred and fifty for the evening, and consequently to hear, criticise, and banter us without mercy” (*Memoirs of Duchesse d’Abrantes*, tome ii. p. 108).]—

Bonaparte took great pleasure in our performances. He liked to see plays acted by persons with whom he was familiar. Sometimes he complimented us on our exertions. Although I was as much amused with the thing as others, I was more than once obliged to remind him that my occupations left me but little time to learn my parts. Then he would assume his coaxing manner and say, “Come, do not vex me! You have such a memory! You know that it amuses me. You see that these performances render Malmaison gay and animated; Josephine takes much pleasure in them. Rise earlier in the morning.—In fact, I sleep too much; is not that the case—Come, Bourrienne, do oblige me. You make me laugh so heartily! Do not deprive me of this pleasure. I have not over much amusement, as you well know.”—“All, truly! I would not deprive you of any pleasure. I am delighted to be able to contribute to your amusement.” After a conversation of this sort I could not do less than set about studying my part.



Page 16

At this period, during summer, I had half the Sunday to myself. I was, however, obliged to devote a portion of this precious leisure to pleasing Bonaparte by studying a new part as a surprise for him. Occasionally, however, I passed the time at Ruel. I recollect that one day, when I had hurried there from Malmaison, I lost a beautiful watch made by Breguet. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and the road was that day thronged with people. I made my loss publicly known by means of the crier of Ruel. An hour after, as I was sitting down to table, a young lad belonging to the village brought me my watch. He had found it on the high road in a wheel rut. I was pleased with the probity of this young man, and rewarded both him and his father, who accompanied him. I reiterated the circumstance the same evening to the First Consul, who was so struck with this instance of honesty that he directed me to procure information respecting the young man and his family. I learned that they were honest peasants. Bonaparte gave employment to three brothers of this family; and, what was most difficult to persuade him to, he exempted the young man who brought me the watch from the conscription.

When a fact of this nature reached Bonaparte's ear it was seldom that he did not give the principal actor in it some proof of his satisfaction. Two qualities predominated in his character—kindness and impatience. Impatience, when he was under its influence, got the better of him; it was then impossible for him to control himself. I had a remarkable proof of it about this very period.

Canova having arrived in Paris came to St. Cloud to model the figure of the First Consul, of whom he was about to make a colossal statue. This great artist came often, in the hope of getting his model to stand in the proper attitude; but Bonaparte was so tired, disgusted, and fretted by the process, that he very seldom put himself in the required attitude, and then only for a short time. Bonaparte notwithstanding had the highest regard for Canova. Whenever he was announced the First Consul sent me to keep him company until he was at leisure to give him a sitting; but he would shrug up his shoulders and say, "More modeling! Good Heavens, how vexatious!" Canova expressed great displeasure at not being able to study his model as he wished to do, and the little anxiety of Bonaparte on the subject damped the ardour of his imagination. Everybody agrees in saying that he has not succeeded in the work, and I have explained the reason. The Duke of Wellington afterwards possessed this colossal statue, which was about twice his own height.

CHAPTER XI.

1802.



Page 17

Bonaparte's principle as to the change of Ministers—Fouche—His influence with the First Consul—Fouche's dismissal—The departments of Police and Justice united under Regnier—Madame Bonaparte's regret for the dismissal of Fouche—Family scenes—Madame Louis Bonaparte's pregnancy—False and infamous reports to Josephine—Legitimacy and a bastard—Raederer reproached by Josephine—Her visit to Ruel—Long conversation with her—Assertion at St. Helena respecting a great political fraud.

It is a principle particularly applicable to absolute governments that a prince should change his ministers as seldom as possible, and never except upon serious grounds. Bonaparte acted on this principle when First Consul, and also when he became Emperor. He often allowed unjust causes to influence him, but he never dismissed a Minister without cause; indeed, he more than once, without any reason, retained Ministers longer than he ought to have done in the situations in which he had placed them. Bonaparte's tenacity in this respect, in some instances, produced very opposite results. For instance, it afforded M. Gaudin' time to establish a degree of order in the administration of Finance which before his time had never existed; and on the other hand, it enabled M. Decres to reduce the Ministry of Marine to an unparalleled state of confusion.

Bonaparte saw nothing in men but helps and obstacles. On the 18th Brumaire Fouche was a help. The First Consul feared that he would become an obstacle; it was necessary, therefore, to think of dismissing him. Bonaparte's most sincere friends had from the beginning been opposed to Fouche's having any share in the Government. But their disinterested advice produced no other result than their own disgrace, so influential a person had Fouche become. How could it be otherwise? Fouche was identified with the Republic by the death of the King, for which he had voted; with the Reign of Terror by his sanguinary missions to Lyons and Nevers; with the Consulate by his real though perhaps exaggerated services; with Bonaparte by the charm with which he might be said to have fascinated him; with Josephine by the enmity of the First Consul's brothers. Who would believe it? Fouche ranked the enemies of the Revolution amongst his warmest partisans. They overwhelmed him with eulogy, to the disparagement even of the Head of the State, because the cunning Minister, practising an interested indulgence, set himself up as the protector of individuals belonging to classes which, when he was proconsul, he had attacked in the mass. Director of public opinion, and having in his hands the means at his pleasure of inspiring fear or of entangling by inducements, it was all in his favour that he had already directed this opinion. The machinery he set in motion was so calculated that the police was rather the police of Fouche than that of the Minister of the General Police. Throughout Paris, and indeed throughout all France, Fouche obtained credit for extraordinary ability; and the popular opinion was correct in this respect, namely, that no man ever displayed such ability in making it be supposed that he really possessed talent. Fouche's secret in this particular is the whole secret of the greater part of those persons who are called statesmen.

Page 18

Be this as it may, the First Consul did not behold with pleasure the factitious influence of which Fouche had possessed himself. For some time past, to the repugnance which at bottom he had felt towards Fouche, were added other causes of discontent. In consequence of having been deceived by secret reports and correspondence Bonaparte began to shrug up his shoulders with an expression of regret when he received them, and said, "Would you believe, Bourrienne, that I have been imposed on by these things? All such denunciations are useless—scandalous. All the reports from prefects and the police, all the intercepted letters, are a tissue of absurdities and lies. I desire to have no more of them." He said so, but he still received them. However, Fouche's dismissal was resolved upon. But though Bonaparte wished to get rid of him, still, under the influence of the charm, he dared not proceed against him without the greatest caution. He first resolved upon the suppression of the office of Minister of Police in order to disguise the motive for the removal of the Minister. The First Consul told Fouche that this suppression, which he spoke of as being yet remote, was calculated more than anything else to give strength to the Government, since it would afford a proof of the security and internal tranquillity of France. Overpowered by the arguments with which Bonaparte supported his proposition, Fouche could urge no good reasons in opposition to it, but contented himself with recommending that the execution of the design, which was good in intention, should, however, be postponed for two years. Bonaparte appeared to listen favourably to Fouche's recommendation, who, as avaricious for money as Bonaparte of glory, consoled himself by thinking that for these two years the administration of the gaming tables would still be for him a Pactolus flowing with gold. For Fouche, already the possessor of an immense fortune, always dreamed of increasing it, though he himself did not know how to enjoy it. With him the ambition of enlarging the bounds of his estate of Pont-Carre was not less felt than with the First Consul the ambition of extending the frontier of France.

Not only did the First Consul not like Fouche, but it is perfectly true that at this time the police wearied and annoyed him. Several times he told me he looked on it as dangerous, especially for the possessor of power. In a Government without the liberty of the press he was quite right. The very services which the police had rendered to the First Consul were of a nature to alarm him, for whoever had conspired against the Directory in favour of the Consulate might also conspire against the Consulate in favour of any other Government. It is needless to say that I only allude to the political police, and not to the municipal police, which is indispensable for large towns, and which has the honourable mission of watching over the health and safety of the citizens.



Page 19

Fouche, as has been stated, had been Minister of Police since the 18th Brumaire. Everybody who was acquainted with, the First Consul's character was unable to explain the ascendancy which he had suffered Fouche to acquire over him, and of which Bonaparte himself was really impatient. He saw in Fouche a centre around which all the interests of the Revolution concentrated themselves, and at this he felt indignant; but, subject to a species of magnetism, he could not break the charm which enthralled him. When he spoke of Fouche in his absence his language was warm, bitter, and hostile. When Fouche was present, Bonaparte's tone was softened, unless some public scene was to be acted like that which occurred after the attempt of the 3d Nivose.

The suppression of the Ministry of Police being determined on, Bonaparte did not choose to delay the execution of his design, as he had pretended to think necessary. On the evening of the 12th of September we went to Mortfontaine. We passed the next day, which was Monday, at that place, and it was there, far removed from Fouche, and urged by the combined persuasions of Joseph and Lucien, that the First Consul signed the decree of suppression. The next morning we returned to Paris. Fouche came to Malmaison, where we were, in the regular execution of his duties. The First Consul transacted business with him as usual without daring to tell him of his dismissal, and afterwards sent Cambaceres to inform him of it. After this act, respecting which he had hesitated so long, Bonaparte still endeavoured to modify his rigour. Having appointed Fouche a Senator, he said in the letter which he wrote to the Senate to notify the appointment:

"Fouche, as Minister of Police, in times of difficulty, has by his talent, his activity, and his attachment to the Government done all that circumstances required of him. Placed in the bosom of the Senate, if events should again call for a Minister of Police the Government cannot find one more worthy of its confidence."

From this moment the departments of Justice and Police united were confided to the hands of Regnier.' Bonaparte's aversion for Fouche strangely blinded him with respect to the capabilities of his successor. Besides, how could the administration of justice, which rests on fixed, rigid, and unchangeable bases, proceed hand in hand with another administration placed on the quicksand of instantaneous decisions, and surrounded by stratagems and deceptions? Justice should never have anything to do with secret police, unless it be to condemn it.

—[M. Abrial, Minister of Justice, was called to the Senate at the same time as Fouche. Understanding that the assimilation of the two men was more a disgrace to Abrial than the mere loss of the Ministry, the First Consul said to M. Abrial: "In uniting the Ministry of Police to that of Justice I could not retain you in the Ministry, you are too upright



Page 20

a man to manage the police.” Not a flattering speech for Regnier.—Bourrienne.]—

What could be expected from Regnier, charged as he was with incompatible functions? What, under such circumstances, could have been expected even from a man gifted with great talents? Such was the exact history of Fouche’s disgrace. No person was more afflicted at it than Madame Bonaparte, who only learned the news when it was announced to the public. Josephine, on all occasions, defended Fouche against her husband’s sallies. She believed that he was the only one of his Ministers who told him the truth. She had such a high opinion of the way in which Fouche managed the police that the first time I was alone with her after our return from Mortfontaine she said to me, “My dear Bourrienne; speak openly to me; will Napoleon know all about the plots from the police of Moncey, Duroc, Junot, and of Davoust? You know better than I do that these are only wretched spies. Has not Savary also eventually got his police? How all this alarms me. They take away all my supports, and surround me only with enemies.”—“To justify your regrets we should be sure that Fouche has never been in agreement with Lucien in favour of the divorce.”—“Oh, I do not believe that. Bonaparte does not like him, and he would have been certain to tell me of it when I spoke favourably to him of Fouche. You will see that his brothers will end by bringing him into their plan.”

I have already spoken of Josephine’s troubles, and of the bad conduct of Joseph, but more particularly of Lucien, towards her; I will therefore describe here, as connected with the disgrace of Fouche, whom Madame Bonaparte regretted as a support, some scenes which occurred about this period at Malmaison. Having been the confidant of both parties, and an involuntary actor in those scenes, now that twenty-seven years have passed since they occurred what motive can induce me to disguise the truth in any respect?

Madame Louis Bonaparte was enceinte. Josephine, although she tenderly loved her children, did not seem to behold the approaching event which the situation of her daughter indicated with the interest natural to the heart of a mother. She had long been aware of the calumnious reports circulated respecting the supposed connection between Hortense and the First Consul, and that base accusation cost her many tears. Poor Josephine paid dearly for the splendour of her station! As I knew how devoid of foundation these atrocious reports were, I endeavoured to console her by telling her what was true, that I was exerting all my efforts to demonstrate their infamy and falsehood. Bonaparte, however, dazzled by the affection which was manifested towards him from all quarters, aggravated the sorrow of his wife by a silly vanity. He endeavoured to persuade her that these reports had their origin only in the wish of the public that he should have a child, so that these seeming consolations offered by self-love to Josephine’s grief gave force to existing conjugal alarms, and the fear of divorce returned with all its horrors. Under the foolish illusion of his vanity Bonaparte imagined

that France was desirous of being governed even by a bastard if supposed to be a child of his,—a singular mode truly of founding a new legitimacy!



Page 21

Josephine, whose susceptibility appears to me even now excusable, well knew my sentiments on the subject of Bonaparte's founding a dynasty, and she had not forgotten my conduct when two years before the question had been agitated on the occasion of Louis XVIII.'s letters to the First Consul. I remember that one day, after the publication of the parallel of Caesar, Cromwell, and Bonaparte, Josephine having entered our cabinet without being announced, which she sometimes did when from the good humour exhibited at breakfast she reckoned upon its continuance, approached Bonaparte softly, seated herself on his knee, passed her hand gently through his hair and over his face, and thinking the moment favourable, said to him in a burst of tenderness, "I entreat of you, Bonaparte, do not make yourself a King! It is that wretch Lucien who urges you to it. Do not listen to him!" Bonaparte replied, without anger, and even smiling as he pronounced the last words, "You are mad, my poor Josephine. It is your old dowagers of the Faubourg St. Germain, your Rochefoucaulds, who tell you all these fables!..... Come now, you interrupt me—leave me alone."

What Bonaparte said that day good-naturedly to his wife I have often heard him declare seriously. I have been present at five or six altercations on the subject. That there existed, too, an enmity connected with this question between the family of *beauharnais* and the family of Bonaparte cannot be denied.

Fouche, as I have stated, was in the interest of Josephine, and Lucien was the most bitter of her enemies. One day Raederer inveighed with so much violence against Fouche in the presence of Madame Bonaparte that she replied with extreme warmth, "The real enemies of Bonaparte are those who feed him with notions of hereditary descent, of a dynasty, of divorce, and of marriage!" Josephine could not check this exclamation, as she knew that Roederer encouraged those ideas, which he spread abroad by Lucien's direction. I recollect one day when she had been to see us at our little house at Ruel: as I walked with her along the high road to her carriage, which she had sent forward, I acknowledged too unreservedly my fears on account of the ambition of Bonaparte, and of the perfidious advice of his brothers. "Madame," said I, "if we cannot succeed in dissuading the General from making himself a King, I dread the future for his sake. If ever he re-establishes royalty he will in all probability labour for the Bourbons, and enable them one day to re-ascend the throne which he shall erect. No one, doubtless, without passing for a fool, can pretend to say with certainty what series of chances and events such a proceeding will produce; but common sense alone is sufficient to convince any one that unfavourable chances must long be dreaded. The ancient system being re-established, the occupation of the throne will then be only a family question, and not a question of government between liberty and despotic power.



Page 22

Why should not France, if it ceases to be free, prefer the race of her ancient kings? You surely know it. You had not been married two years when, on returning from Italy, your husband told me that he aspired to royalty. Now he is Consul for life. Would he but resolve to stop there! He already possesses everything but an empty title. No sovereign in Europe has so much power as he has. I am sorry for it, Madame, but I really believe that, in spite of yourself, you will be made Queen or Empress."

Madame Bonaparte had allowed me to speak without interruption, but when I pronounced the words Queen and Empress she exclaimed, "My God! Bourrienne, such ambition is far from my thoughts. That I may always continue the wife of the First Consul is all I desire. Say to him all that you have said to me. Try and prevent him from making himself King."—"Madame," I replied, "times are greatly altered. The wisest men, the strongest minds, have resolutely and courageously opposed his tendency to the hereditary system. But advice is now useless. He would not listen to me. In all discussions on the subject he adheres inflexibly to the view he has taken. If he be seriously opposed his anger knows no bounds; his language is harsh and abrupt, his tone imperious, and his authority bears down all before him."—"Yet, Bourrienne, he has so much confidence in you that of you should try once more!"—"Madame, I assure you he will not listen to me. Besides, what could I add to the remarks I made upon his receiving the letters of Louis XVIII., when I fearlessly represented to him that being without children he would have no one to whom to bequeath the throne—that, doubtless, from the opinion which he entertained of his brothers, he could not desire to erect it for them?" Here Josephine again interrupted me by exclaiming, "My kind friend, when you spoke of children did he say anything to you? Did he talk of a divorce?"—"Not a word, Madame, I assure you."—"If they do not urge him to it, I do not believe he will resolve to do such a thing. You know how he likes Eugene, and Eugene behaves so well to him. How different is Lucien. It is that wretch Lucien, to whom Bonaparte listens too much, and of whom, however, he always speaks ill to me."—"I do not know, Madame, what Lucien says to his brother except when he chooses to tell me, because Lucien always avoids having a witness of his interviews with your husband, but I can assure you that for two years I have not heard the word 'divorce' from the General's mouth."—"I always reckon on you, my dear Bourrienne; to turn him away from it; as you did at that time."—"I do not believe he is thinking of it, but if it recurs to him, consider, Madame, that it will be now from very different motives: He is now entirely given up to the interests of his policy and his ambition, which dominate every other feeling in him. There will not now be any question of scandal, or of a trial before a court, but of an act of authority which complaisant laws will justify and which the Church perhaps will sanction."—"That's true. You are right. Good God! how unhappy I am."



Page 23

—[When Bourrienne complains of not knowing what passed between Lucien and Napoleon, we can turn to Lucien's account of Bourrienne, apparently about this very time. "After a stormy interview with Napoleon," says Lucien, "I at once went into the cabinet where Bourrienne was working, and found that unbearable busybody of a secretary, whose star had already paled more than once, which made him more prying than ever, quite upset by the time the First Consul had taken to come out of his bath. He must, or at least might, have heard some noise, for enough had been made. Seeing that he wanted to know the cause from me, I took up a newspaper to avoid being bored by his conversation" (Lucien's Lucien, tome ii. p.156)]—

Such was the nature of one of the conversations I had with Madame Bonaparte on a subject to which she often recurred. It may not perhaps be uninteresting to endeavour to compare with this what Napoleon said at St. Helena, speaking of his first wife. According to the Memorial Napoleon there stated that when Josephine was at last constrained to renounce all hope of having a child, she often let fall allusions to a great political fraud, and at length openly proposed it to him. I make no doubt Bonaparte made use of words to this effect, but I do not believe the assertion. I recollect one day that Bonaparte, on entering our cabinet, where I was already seated, exclaimed in a transport of joy impossible for me to describe, "Well, Bourrienne, my wife is at last enceinte!" I sincerely congratulated him, more, I own, out of courtesy than from any hope of seeing him made a father by Josephine, for I well remembered that Corvisart, who had given medicines to Madame Bonaparte, had nevertheless assured me that he expected no result from them. Medicine was really the only political fraud to which Josephine had recourse; and in her situation what other woman would not have done as much? Here, then, the husband and the wife are in contradiction, which is nothing uncommon. But on which side is truth? I have no hesitation in referring it to Josephine. There is indeed an immense difference between the statements of a woman—trusting her fears and her hopes to the sole confidant of her family secrets, and the tardy declaration of a man who, after seeing the vast edifice of his ambition leveled with the dust, is only anxious, in his compulsory retreat, to preserve intact and spotless the other great edifice of his glory. Bonaparte should have recollected that Caesar did not like the idea of his wife being even suspected.

CHAPTER XII.

1802.



Page 24

Citizen Fesch created Cardinal Fesch—Arts and industry—Exhibition in the Louvre—Aspect of Paris in 1802—The Medicean Venus and the Velletrian Pallas—Signs of general prosperity—Rise of the funds—Irresponsible Ministers—The Bourbons—The military Government—Annoying familiarity of Lannes—Plan laid for his disgrace—Indignation of Lannes—His embassy to Portugal—The delayed despatch—Bonaparte's rage—I resign my situation—Duroc—I breakfast with Bonaparte—Duroc's intercession—Temporary reconciliation.

Citizen Fesch, who, when we were forced to stop at Ajaccio on our return from Egypt, discounted at rather a high rate the General-in-Chief's Egyptian sequins, became again the Abbe Fesch, as soon as Bonaparte by his Consular authority re-erected the altars which the Revolution had overthrown. On the 15th of August 1802 he was consecrated Bishop, and the following year received the Cardinal's hat. Thus Bonaparte took advantage of one of the members of his family being in orders to elevate him to the highest dignities of the Church. He afterwards gave Cardinal Fesch the Archbishopric of Lyons, of which place he was long the titular.

—[Like Cambaceres the Cardinal was a bit of a gourmet, and on one occasion had invited a large party of clerical magnates to dinner. By a coincidence two turbot of singular beauty arrived as presents to his Eminence on the very morning of the feast. To serve both would have appeared ridiculous, but the Cardinal was most anxious to have the credit of both. He imparted his embarrassment to his chef: "Be of good faith, your Eminence," was the reply, "both shall appear and enjoy the reception so justly their due." The dinner was served: one of the turbot relieved the soup. Delight was on every face—it was the moment of the 'eprouvette positive'. The 'maitre a'hotel' advances; two attendants raise the turbot and carry him off to cut him up; but one of them loses his equilibrium: the attendants and the turbot roll together on the floor. At this sad sight the assembled Cardinals became as pale as death, and a solemn silence reigned in the 'conclave'—it was the moment of the 'eprouvette negative'; but the 'maitre a'hotel' suddenly turns to one of the attendants, "Bring another turbot," said he, with the most perfect coolness. The second appeared, and the eprouvette positive was gloriously renewed." (Hayward's Art of Dining, P. 65.)—

The First Consul prided himself a good deal on his triumph, at least in appearance, over the scruples which the persons who surrounded him had manifested against the re-establishment of worship. He read with much self-satisfaction the reports made to him, in which it was stated that the churches were well frequented: Indeed, throughout the year 1802, all his attention was directed to the reformation of manners, which had become more dissolute under the Directory than even during the Reign of Terror.



Page 25

In his march of usurpation the First Consul let slip no opportunity of endeavouring to obtain at the same time the admiration of the multitude and the approbation of judicious men. He was very fond of the arts, and was sensible that the promotion of industry ought to be the peculiar care of the head of the Government. It must, however, at the same time be owned that he rendered the influence of his protection null and void by the continual violations he committed on that liberty which is the animating principle of all improvement.

During the supplementary days of the year X., that is to say, about the beginning of the autumn of 1802, there was held at the Louvre an exhibition of the products of industry. The First Consul visited the exhibition, and as even at that period he had begun to attribute every good result to himself, he seemed proud of the high degree of perfection the manufacturing arts had attained in France. He was, above all, delighted with the admiration this exhibition excited among the numerous foreigners who resorted to Paris during the peace.

In fact, throughout the year 1802 the capital presented an interesting and animating-spectacle. The appetite for luxury and pleasure had insinuated itself into manners—which were no longer republican, and the vast number of Russians and English who drove about everywhere with brilliant equipages contributed not a little to this metamorphosis. All Paris flocked to the Carrousel on review days, and regarded with eyes of delight the unusual sight of rich foreign liveries and emblazoned carriages. The parties at the Tuileries were brilliant and numerous, and nothing was wanting but the name of levees. Count Markoff, who succeeded M. de Kalitscheff as Russian ambassador; the Marquis de Lucchesini, the Prussian ambassador; and Lord Whitworth, the Minister from England, made numerous presentations of their countrymen to the First Consul, who was well pleased that the Court he was forming should have examples set by foreign courtiers. Never since the meeting of the States-General had the theatres been so frequented, or fetes so magnificent; and never since that period had Paris presented so cheering an aspect. The First Consul, on his part, spared no exertion to render the capital more and more worthy the admiration of foreigners. The statue of the Venus de Medicis, which had been robbed from the gallery of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, now decorated the gallery of the Louvre, and near it was placed that of the Velletrian Pallas, a more legitimate acquisition, since it was the result of the researches of some French engineers at Velletri. Everywhere an air of prosperity was perceptible, and Bonaparte proudly put in his claim to be regarded as the author of it all. With what heartfelt satisfaction did he likewise cast his eye upon what he called the grand thermometer of opinion, the price of the funds! For if he saw them doubled in value in consequence of the revolution of the 18th Brumaire, rising as they did at that period from seven to sixteen francs, this value was even more than tripled after the vote of Consulship for life and the 'Senates-consulte' of the 4th of August,—when they rose to fifty-two francs.

Page 26

While Paris presented so satisfactory an aspect the departments were in a state of perfect tranquillity; and foreign affairs had every appearance of security. The Court of the Vatican, which since the Concordat may be said to have become devoted to the First Consul, gave, under all circumstances, examples of submission to the wishes of France. The Vatican was the first Court which recognised the erection of Tuscany into the Kingdom of Etruria, and the formation of the Helvetic, Cisalpine, and Batavian Republics. Prussia soon followed the example of the Pope, which was successively imitated by the other powers of Europe.

The whole of these new states, realms, or republics were under the immediate influence of France. The Isle of Elba, which Napoleon's first abdication afterwards rendered so famous, and Piedmont, divided into six departments, were also united to France, still called it Republic. Everything now seemed to concur in securing his accession to absolute power. We were now at peace with all the world, and every circumstance tended to place in the hands of the First Consul that absolute power which indeed was the only kind of government he was capable of forming any conception of. Indeed, one of the characteristic signs of Napoleon's government, even under the Consular system, left no doubt as to his real intentions. Had he wished to found a free Government it is evident that he would have made the Ministers responsible to the country, whereas he took care that there should be no responsibility but to himself. He viewed them, in fact, in the light of instruments which he might break as he pleased. I found this single index sufficient to disclose all his future designs. In order to make the irresponsibility of his Ministers to the public perfectly clear, he had all the acts of his Government signed merely by M. Maret, Secretary of State. Thus the Consulship for life was nothing but an Empire in disguise, the usufruct of which could not long satisfy the First Consul's ambition. His brothers influenced him, and it was resolved to found a new dynasty.

It was not in the interior of France that difficulties were likely first to arise on Bonaparte's carrying his designs into effect, but there was some reason to apprehend that foreign powers, after recognising and treating with the Consular Government, might display a different feeling, and entertain scruples with regard to a Government which had resumed its monarchical form. The question regarding the Bourbons was in some measure kept in the background as long as France remained a Republic, but the re-establishment of the throne naturally called to recollection the family which had occupied it for so many ages. Bonaparte fully felt the delicacy of his position, but he knew how to face obstacles, and had been accustomed to overcome them: he, however, always proceeded cautiously, as when obstacles induced him to defer the period of the Consulship for life.



Page 27

Bonaparte laboured to establish in France not only an absolute government, but, what is still worse, a military one. He considered a decree signed by his hand possessed of a magic virtue capable of transforming his generals into able diplomatists, and so he sent them on embassies, as if to show the Sovereigns to whom they were accredited that he soon meant to take their thrones by assault. The appointment of Lannes to the Court of Lisbon originated from causes which probably will be read with some interest, since they serve to place Bonaparte's character in, its true light, and to point out, at the same time, the means he disdained not to resort to, if he wished to banish his most faithful friends when their presence was no longer agreeable to him.

Bonaparte had ceased to address Lannes in the second person singular; but that general continued the familiarity of thee and thou in speaking to Napoleon. It is hardly possible to conceive how much this annoyed the First Consul. Aware of the unceremonious candour of his old comrade, whose daring spirit he knew would prompt him to go as great lengths in civil affairs as on the field of battle, Bonaparte, on the great occasion of the 18th Brumaire, fearing his reproaches, had given him the command of Paris in order to ensure his absence from St. Cloud.

After that time, notwithstanding the continually growing greatness of the First Consul, which, as it increased, daily exacted more and more deference, Lannes still preserved his freedom of speech, and was the only one who dared to treat Bonaparte as a comrade, and tell him the truth without ceremony. This was enough to determine Napoleon to rid himself of the presence of Lannes. But under what pretext was the absence of the conqueror of Montebello to be procured? It was necessary to conjure up an excuse; and in the truly diabolical machination resorted to for that purpose, Bonaparte brought into play that crafty disposition for which he was so remarkable.

Lannes, who never looked forward to the morrow, was as careless of his money as of his blood. Poor officers and soldiers partook largely of his liberality. Thus he had no fortune, but plenty of debts when he wanted money, and this was not seldom, he used to come, as if it were a mere matter of course, to ask it of the First Consul, who, I must confess, never refused him. Bonaparte, though he well knew the general's circumstances, said to him one day, "My friend, you should attend a little more to appearances. You must have your establishment suitable to your rank. There is the Hotel de Noailles—why don't you take it, and furnish it in proper style?" Lannes, whose own candour prevented him from suspecting the artful designs of others, followed the advice of the First Consul. The Hotel de Noailles was taken and superbly fitted up. Odier supplied a service of plate valued at 200,000 francs.

General Lannes having thus conformed to the wishes of Bonaparte came to him and requested 400,000 francs, the amount of the expense incurred, as it were, by his order. "But," said the First Consul, "I have no money." —"You have no money! What the devil am I to do, then?"

Page 28

“But is there none in the Guard’s chest? Take what you require, and we will settle it, hereafter.”

Mistrusting nothing, Lannes went to the treasurer of the Guards, who made some objections at first to the advance required, but who soon yielded on learning that the demand was made with the consent of the First Consul.

Within twenty-four hours after Lannes had obtained the 400,000 francs the treasurer received from the head commissary an order to balance his accounts. The receipt for the 400,000 francs advanced to Lannes, was not acknowledged as a voucher. In vain the treasurer alleged the authority of the First Consul for the transaction. Napoleon’s memory had suddenly failed him; he had entirely forgotten all about it. In a word, it was incumbent on Lannes to refund the 400,000 francs to the Guards’ chest; and, as I have already said, he had no property on earth, but debts in abundance. He repaired to General Lefebvre, who loved him as his son, and to him he related all that had passed. “Simpleton,” said Lefebvre, “why did you not come to me? Why did you go and get into debt with that -----? Well, here are the 400,000 francs; take them to him, and let him go to the devil!”

Lannes hastened to the First Consul. “What!”—he exclaimed, “is it possible you can be guilty of such baseness as this? To treat me in such a manner! To lay such a foul snare for me after all that I have done for you; after all the blood I have shed to promote your ambition! Is this the recompense you had in store for me? You forget the 13th Vendemiaire, to the success of which I contributed more than you! You forget Millesimo: I was colonel before you! For whom did I fight at Bassano? You were witness of what I did at Lodi and at Governolo, where I was wounded; and yet you play me such a trick as this! But for me, Paris would have revolted on the 18th Brumaire. But for me, you would have lost the battle of Marengo. I alone, yes, I alone, passed the Po, at Montebello, with my whole division. You gave the credit of that to Berthier, who was not there; and this is my reward—humiliation. This cannot, this shall not be. I will ——” Bonaparte, pale with anger, listened without stirring, and Lannes was on the point of challenging him when Junot, who heard the uproar, hastily entered. The unexpected presence of this general somewhat reassured the First Consul, and at the same time calmed, in some degree, the fury of Lannes. “Well,” said Bonaparte, “go to Lisbon. You will get money there; and when you return you will not want any one to pay your debts for you.” Thus was Bonaparte’s object gained. Lannes set out for Lisbon, and never afterwards annoyed the First Consul by his familiarities, for on his return he ceased to address him with thee and thou.

Having described Bonaparte’s ill-treatment of Lannes I may here subjoin a statement of the circumstances which led to a rupture between the First Consul and me. So many false stories have been circulated on the subject that I am anxious to relate the facts as they really were.



Page 29

Nine months had now passed since I had tendered my resignation to the First Consul. The business of my office had become too great for me, and my health was so much endangered by over-application that my physician, M. Corvisart, who had for a long time impressed upon me the necessity of relaxation, now formally warned me that I should not long hold out under the fatigue I underwent. Corvisart had no doubt spoken to the same effect to the First Consul, for the latter said to me one day, in a tone which betrayed but little feeling, "Why, Corvisart says you have not a year to live." This was certainly no very welcome compliment in the mouth of an old college friend, yet I must confess that the doctor risked little by the prediction.

I had resolved, in fact, to follow the advice of Corvisart; my family were urgent in their entreaties that I would do so, but I always put off the decisive step. I was loath to give up a friendship which had subsisted so long, and which had been only once disturbed: on that occasion when Joseph thought proper to play the spy upon me at the table of Fouché. I remembered also the reception I had met with from the conqueror of Italy; and I experienced, moreover, no slight pain at the thought of quitting one from whom I had received so many proofs of confidence, and to whom I had been attached from early boyhood. These considerations constantly triumphed over the disgust to which I was subjected by a number of circumstances, and by the increasing vexations occasioned by the conflict between my private sentiments and the nature of the duties I had to perform.

I was thus kept in a state of perplexity, from which some unforeseen circumstance alone could extricate me. Such a circumstance at length occurred, and the following is the history of my first rupture with Napoleon:

On the 27th of February 1802, at ten at night, Bonaparte dictated to me a despatch of considerable importance and urgency, for M. de Talleyrand, requesting the Minister for Foreign Affairs to come to the Tuileries next morning at an appointed hour. According to custom, I put the letter into the hands of the office messenger that it might be forwarded to its destination.

This was Saturday. The following day, Sunday, M. de Talleyrand came as if for an audience about mid-day. The First Consul immediately began to confer with him on the subject of the letter sent the previous evening, and was astonished to learn that the Minister had not received it until the morning. He immediately rang for the messenger, and ordered me to be sent for. Being in a very bad humour, he pulled the bell with so much fury that he struck his hand violently against the angle of the chimney-piece. I hurried to his presence. "Why," he said, addressing me hastily, "why was not my letter delivered yesterday evening?"—"I do not know: I put it at once into the hands of the person whose duty it was to see that it was



Page 30

sent.”—“Go and find the cause of the delay, and come back quickly.” Having rapidly made my inquiries, I returned to the cabinet. “Well?” said the First Consul, whose irritation seemed to have increased. “Well, General, it is not the fault of anybody, M. de Talleyrand was not to be found, either at the office or at his own residence, or at the houses of any of his friends where he was thought likely to be.” Not knowing with whom to be angry, restrained by the coolness of M. de Talleyrand, yet at the same time ready to burst with rage, Bonaparte rose from his seat, and proceeding to the hall, called the messenger and questioned him sharply. The man, disconcerted by the anger of the First Consul, hesitated in his replies, and gave confused answers. Bonaparte returned to his cabinet still more irritated than he had left it.

I had followed him to the hall, and on my way back to the cabinet I attempted to soothe him, and I begged him not to be thus discomposed by a circumstance which, after all, was of no great moment. I do not know whether his anger was increased by the sight of the blood which flowed from his hand, and which he was every moment looking at; but however that might be, a transport of furious passion, such as I had never before witnessed, seized him; and as I was about to enter the cabinet after him he threw back the door with so much violence that, had I been two or three inches nearer him, it must infallibly have struck me in the face. He accompanied this action, which was almost convulsive, with an appellation, not to be borne; he exclaimed before M. de Talleyrand, “Leave me alone; you are a fool.” At an insult so atrocious I confess that the anger which had already mastered the First Consul suddenly seized on me. I thrust the door forward with as much impetuosity as he had used in throwing it back, and, scarcely knowing what I said, exclaimed, “You are a hundredfold a greater fool than I am!” I then banged the door and went upstairs to my apartment, which was situated over the cabinet.

I was as far from expecting as from wishing such an occasion of separating from the First Consul. But what was done could not be undone; and therefore, without taking time for reflection, and still under the influence of the anger that had got the better of me, I penned the following positive resignation:

General—The state of my health no longer permits me to continue in your service. I therefore beg you to accept my resignation.

Bourrienne.

Some moments after this note was written I saw Bonaparte’s saddle-horses brought up to the entrance of the Palace. It was Sunday morning, and, contrary to his usual custom on that day, he was going to ride out.



Duroc accompanied him. He was no sooner done than I, went down into his cabinet, and placed my letter on his table. On returning at four o'clock with Duroc Bonaparte read my letter. "Ah! ah!" said he, before opening it, "a letter from Bourrienne." And he almost immediately added, for the note was speedily perused, "He is in the sulks.— Accepted." I had left the Tuileries at the moment he returned, but Duroc sent to me where I was dining the following billet:



Page 31

The First Consul desires me, my dear Bourrienne, to inform you that he accepts your resignation, and to request that you will give me the necessary information respecting your papers.—Yours,

Duroc.

P.S.:—I will call on you presently.

Duroc came to me at eight o'clock the same evening. The First Consul was in his cabinet when we entered it. I immediately commenced giving my intended successor the necessary explanations to enable him to enter upon his new duties. Piqued at finding that I did not speak to him, and at the coolness with which I instructed Duroc, Bonaparte said to me in a harsh tone, "Come, I have had enough of this! Leave me." I stepped down from the ladder on which I had mounted for the purpose of pointing out to Duroc the places in which the various papers were deposited and hastily withdrew. I too had quite enough of it!

I remained two more days at the Tuileries until I had suited myself with lodgings. On Monday I went down into the cabinet of the First Consul to take my leave of him. We conversed together for a long time, and very amicably. He told me he was very sorry I was going to leave him, and that he would do all he could for me. I pointed out several places to him; at last I mentioned the Tribunate. "That will not do for you," he said; "the members are a set of babblers and phrasemongers, whom I mean to get rid of. All the troubles of States proceed from such debates. I am tired of them." He continued to talk in a strain which left me in no doubt as to his uneasiness about the Tribunate, which, in fact, reckoned among its members many men of great talent and excellent character.

—[In 1802 the First Consul made a reduction of fifty members of the Tribunate, and subsequently the whole body was suppressed.
—Bourrienne.]—

The following day, Tuesday, the First Consul asked me to breakfast with him. After breakfast, while he was conversing with some other person, Madame Bonaparte and Hortense pressed me to make advances towards obtaining a re-installment in my office, appealing to me on the score of the friendship and kindness they had always shown me. They told me that I had been in the wrong, and that I had forgotten myself. I answered that I considered the evil beyond remedy; and that, besides, I had really need of repose. The First Consul then called me to him, and conversed a considerable time with me, renewing his protestations of goodwill towards me.

At five o'clock I was going downstairs to quit the Tuileries for good when I was met by the office messenger, who told me that the First Consul wished to see me. Duroc; who was in the room leading to the cabinet, stopped me as I passed, and said, "He wishes



you to remain. I beg of you not to refuse; do me this favour. I have assured him that I am incapable of filling your office. It does not suit my habits; and besides, to tell you the truth, the business is too irksome for me." I proceeded to the cabinet without replying to Duroc. The First Consul came up to me smiling, and pulling me by the ear, as he did when he was in the best of humours, said to me, "Are you still in the sulks?" and leading me to my usual seat he added, "Come, sit down."



Page 32

Only those who knew Bonaparte can judge of my situation at that moment. He had at times, and when he chose, a charm in his manners which it was quite impossible to resist. I could offer no opposition, and I resumed my usual office and my accustomed labours. Five minutes afterwards it was announced that dinner was on table. "You will dine with me?" he said. "I cannot; I am expected at the place where I was going when Duroc called me back. It is an engagement that I cannot break."—"Well, I have nothing to say, then. But give me your word that you will be here at eight o'clock."—"I promise you." Thus I became again the private secretary of the First Consul, and I believed in the sincerity of our reconciliation.

CHAPTER XIII.

1802-1803.

The Concordat and the Legion of Honour—The Council of State and the Tribunalate—Discussion on the word 'subjects'—Chenier—Chabot de l'Allier's proposition to the Tribunalate—The marked proof of national gratitude—Bonaparte's duplicity and self-command—Reply to the 'Senatus-consulte'—The people consulted—Consular decree—The most, or the least—M. de Vanblanc's speech—Bonaparte's reply—The address of the Tribunalate—Hopes and predictions thwarted.

It may truly be said that history affords no example of an empire founded like that of France, created in all its parts under the cloak of a republic. Without any shock, and in the short space of four years, there arose above the ruins of the short-lived Republic a Government more absolute than ever was Louis XIV.'s. This extraordinary change is to be assigned to many causes; and I had the opportunity of observing the influence which the determined will of one man exercised over his fellow-men.

The great object which Bonaparte had at heart was to legitimate his usurpations by institutions. The Concordat had reconciled him with the Court of Rome; the numerous erasures from the emigrant list gathered round him a large body of the old nobility; and the Legion of Honour, though at first but badly received, soon became a general object of ambition. Peace, too, had lent her aid in consolidating the First Consul's power by affording him leisure to engage in measures of internal prosperity.

The Council of State, of which Bonaparte had made me a member, but which my other occupations did not allow me to attend, was the soul of the Consular Government. Bonaparte felt much interest in the discussions of that body, because it was composed of the most eminent men in the different branches of administration; and though the majority evinced a ready compliance with his wishes, yet that disposition was often far from being unanimous. In the Council of State the projects of the Government were discussed from the first with freedom and sincerity, and when once adopted they were transmitted to the Tribunalate, and to the Legislative Body. This latter body might be



Page 33

considered as a supreme Legislative Tribunal, before which the Tribunes pleaded as the advocates of the people, and the Councillors of State, whose business it was to support the law projects, as the advocates of the Government. This will at once explain the cause of the First Consul's animosity towards the Tribunate, and will show to what the Constitution was reduced when that body was dissolved by a sudden and arbitrary decision.

During the Consulate the Council of State was not only a body politic collectively, but each individual member might be invested with special power; as, for example, when the First Consul sent Councillors of State on missions to each of the military divisions where there was a Court of Appeal, the instructions given them by the First Consul were extensive, and might be said to be unlimited. They were directed to examine all the branches of the administration, so that their reports collected and compared together presented a perfect description of the state of France. But this measure, though excellent in itself, proved fatal to the State. The reports never conveyed the truth to the First Consul, or at least if they did, it was in such a disguised form as to be scarcely recognisable; for the Councillors well knew that the best way to pay their court to Bonaparte was not to describe public feeling as it really was, but as he wished it to be. Thus the reports of the councillors of State only furnished fresh arguments in favour of his ambition.

I must, however, observe that in the discussions of the Council of State Bonaparte was not at all averse to the free expression of opinion. He, indeed, often encouraged it; for although fully resolved to do only what he pleased, he wished to gain information; indeed, it is scarcely conceivable how, in the short space of two years, Bonaparte adapted his mind so completely to civil and legislative affairs. But he could not endure in the Tribunate the liberty of opinion which he tolerated in the Council; and for this reason—that the sittings of the Tribunate were public, while those of the Council of State were secret, and publicity was what he dreaded above all things. He was very well pleased when he had to transmit to the Legislative Body or to the Tribunate any proposed law of trifling importance, and he used then to say that he had thrown them a bone to gnaw.

Among the subjects submitted to the consideration of the Council and the Tribunate was one which gave rise to a singular discussion, the ground of which was a particular word, inserted in the third article of the treaty of Russia with France. This word seemed to convey a prophetic allusion to the future condition of the French people, or rather an anticipated designation of what they afterwards became. The treaty spoke of "the subjects of the two Governments." This term applied to those who still considered themselves citizens, and was highly offensive to the Tribunate.



Page 34

Chenier most loudly remonstrated against the introduction of this word into the dictionary of the new Government. He said that the armies of France had shed their blood that the French people might be citizens and not subjects. Chenier's arguments, however, had no effect on the decision of the Tribunate, and only served to irritate the First Consul. The treaty was adopted almost unanimously, there being only fourteen dissentient voices, and the proportion of black balls in the Legislative Body was even less.

Though this discussion passed off almost unnoticed, yet it greatly displeased the First Consul, who expressed his dissatisfaction in the evening. "What is it," said he, "these babblers want? They wish to be citizens—why did they not know how to continue so? My government must treat on an equal footing with Russia. I should appear a mere puppet in the eyes of foreign Courts were I to yield to the stupid demands of the Tribunate.. Those fellows tease me so that I have a great mind to end matters at once with them." I endeavoured to soothe his anger, and observed, that one precipitate act might injure him. "You are right," he continued; "but stay a little, they shall lose nothing by waiting."

The Tribunate pleased Bonaparte better in the great question of the Consulate for life, because he had taken the precaution of removing such members as were most opposed to the encroachments of his ambition. The Tribunate resolved that a marked proof of the national gratitude should be offered to the First Consul, and the resolution was transmitted to the Senate. Not a single voice was raised against this proposition, which emanated from Chabot de l'Allier, the President of the Tribunate. When the First Consul came back to his cabinet after receiving the deputation of the Tribunate he was very cheerful, and said to me, "Bourrienne, it is a blank cheque that the Tribunate has just offered me; I shall know how to fill it up. That is my business."

The Tribunate having adopted the indefinite proposition of offering to the First Consul a marked proof of the national gratitude, it now only remained to determine what that proof should be. Bonaparte knew well what he wanted, but he did not like to name it in any positive way. Though in his fits of impatience, caused by the lingering proceedings of the Legislative Body and the indecision of some of its members, he often talked of mounting on horseback and drawing his sword, yet he so far controlled himself as to confine violence to his conversations with his intimate friends. He wished it to be thought that he himself was yielding to compulsion; that he was far from wishing to usurp permanent power contrary to the Constitution; and that if he deprived France of liberty it was all for her good, and out of mere love for her. Such deep-laid duplicity could never have been conceived and maintained in any common mind; but Bonaparte's was not a mind of the ordinary cast. It must have required extraordinary self-command to have restrained so long as he did that daring spirit which was so natural to him, and which was rather the result of his temperament than his character.

For my part, I confess that I always admired him more for what he had the fortitude not to do than for the boldest exploits he ever performed.



Page 35

In conformity with the usual form, the proposition of the Tribunate was transmitted to the Senate. From that time the Senators on whom Bonaparte most relied were frequent in their visits to the Tuileries. In the preparatory conferences which preceded the regular discussions in the Senate it has been ascertained that the majority was not willing that the marked proof of gratitude should be the Consulate for life; it was therefore agreed that the reporter should limit his demand to a temporary prolongation of the dignity of First Consul in favour of Bonaparte. The reporter, M. de Lacepede, acted accordingly, and limited the prolongation to ten years, commencing from the expiration of the ten years granted by the Constitution. I forget which of the Senators first proposed the Consulate for life; but I well recollect that Cambaceres used all his endeavours to induce those members of the Senate whom he thought he could influence to agree to that proposition. Whether from flattery or conviction I know not, but the Second Consul held out to his colleague, or rather his master, the hope of complete success Bonaparte on hearing him shook his head with an air of doubt, but afterwards said to me, "They will perhaps make some wry faces, but they must come to it at last!"

It was proposed in the Senate that the proposition of the Consulate for life should take the priority of that of the decennial prolongation; but this was not agreed to; and the latter proposition being adopted, the other, of course, could not be discussed.

There was something very curious in the 'Senatus-consulte' published on the occasion. It spoke in the name of the French people, and stated that, "in testimony of their gratitude to the Consuls of the Republic," the Consular reign was prolonged for ten years; but that the prolongation was limited to the First Consul only.

Bonaparte, though much dissatisfied with the decision of the Senate, disguised his displeasure in ambiguous language. When Tronchet, then President of the Senate, read to him, in a solemn audience, at the head of the deputation, the 'Senatus-consulte' determining the prorogation, he said in reply that he could not be certain of the confidence of the people unless his continuance in the Consulship were sanctioned by their suffrages. "The interests of my glory and happiness," added he, "would seem to have marked the close of my public life at the moment when the peace of the world is proclaimed. But the glory and the happiness of the citizen must yield to the interests of the State and wishes of the public. You, Senators, conceive that I owe to the people another sacrifice. I will make it if the voice of the people commands what your suffrage authorises."

The true meaning of these words was not understood by everybody, and was only manifest to those who were initiated in the secret of Bonaparte's designs. He did not accept the offer of the Senate, because he wished for something more. The question was to be renewed and to be decided by the people only; and since the people had the right to refuse what the Senate offered, they possessed, for the same reason, the right to give what the Senate did not offer.

Page 36

The moment now arrived for consulting the Council of State as to the mode to be adopted for invoking and collecting the suffrages of the people. For this purpose an extraordinary meeting of the Council of State was summoned on the 10th of May. Bonaparte wished to keep himself aloof from all ostensible influence; but his two colleagues laboured for him more zealously than he could have worked for himself, and they were warmly supported by several members of the Council. A strong majority were of opinion that Bonaparte should not only be invested with the Consulship for life, but that he should be empowered to nominate his successor. But he, still faithful to his plan, affected to venerate the sovereignty of the people, which he held in horror, and he promulgated the following decree, which was the first explanation of his reply to the Senate

The Consuls of the Republic, considering that the resolution of the First Consul is an homage rendered to the sovereignty of the People, and that the People, when consulted on their dearest interests, will not go beyond the limits of those interests, decree as follows:- First, that the French people shall be consulted on the question whether Napoleon Bonaparte is to be made Consul for life, *etc.*

The other articles merely regulated the mode of collecting the votes.

This decree shows the policy of the First Consul in a new point of view, and displays his art in its fullest extent. He had just refused the less for the sake of getting the greater; and now he had contrived to get the offer of the greater to show off his moderation by accepting only the less. The Council of State sanctioned the proposition for conferring on the First Consul the right of nominating his successor, and, of his own accord, the First Consul declined this. Accordingly the Second Consul, when he, the next day, presented the decree to the Council of State, did not fail to eulogise this extreme moderation, which banished even the shadow of suspicion of any ambitious after-thought. Thus the Senate found itself out-manoeuvred, and the decree of the Consuls was transmitted at once to the Legislative Body and to the Tribunal.

In the Legislative Body, M. de Vaublanc was distinguished among all the deputies who applauded the conduct of the Government; and it was he who delivered the apologetic harangue of the deputation of the Legislative Body to the First Consul. After having addressed the Government collectively he ended by addressing the First Consul individually—a sort of compliment which had not hitherto been put in practice, and which was far from displeasing him who was its object. As M. de Vaublanc's speech had been communicated beforehand to the First Consul, the latter prepared a reply to it which sufficiently showed how much it had gratified him. Besides the flattering distinction which separated him from the Government, the plenitude of praise was not tempered by anything like advice



Page 37

or comment. It was not so with the address of the Tribunate. After the compliments which the occasion demanded, a series of hopes were expressed for the future, which formed a curious contrast with the events which actually ensued. The Tribunate, said the address, required no guarantee, because Bonaparte's elevated and generous sentiments would never permit him to depart from those principles which brought about the Revolution and founded the Republic;—he loved real glory too well ever to stain that which he had acquired by the abuse of power;—the nation which he was called to govern was free and generous he would respect and consolidate her liberty; he would distinguish his real friends, who spoke truth to him, from flatterers who might seek to deceive him. In short, Bonaparte would surround himself with the men who, having made the Revolution, were interested in supporting it.

To these and many other fine things the Consul replied, “This testimony of the affection of the Tribunate is gratifying to the Government. The union of all bodies of the State is a guarantee of the stability and happiness of the nation. The efforts of the Government will be constantly directed to the interests of the people, from whom all power is derived, and whose welfare all good men have at heart.”

So much for the artifice of governments and the credulity of subjects! It is certain that, from the moment Bonaparte gained his point in submitting the question of the Consulate for life to the decision of the people, there was no longer a doubt of the result being in his favour. This was evident, not only on account of the influential means which a government always has at its command, and of which its agents extend the ramifications from the centre to the extremities, but because the proposition was in accordance with the wishes of the majority. The Republicans were rather shy in avowing principles with which people were now disenchanted;—the partisans of a monarchy without distinction of family saw their hopes almost realised in the Consulate for life; the recollection of the Bourbons still lived in some hearts faithful to misfortune but the great mass were for the First Consul, and his external acts in the new step he had taken towards the throne had been so cautiously disguised as to induce a belief in his sincerity. If I and a few others were witness to his accomplished artifice and secret ambition, France beheld only his glory, and gratefully enjoyed the blessings of peace which he had obtained for her. The suffrages of the people speedily realised the hopes of the First Consul, and thus was founded the *consulate for life*.

CHAPTER XIV

1802-1803.



Page 38

Departure for Malmaison—Unexpected question relative to the Bourbons—Distinction between two opposition parties—New intrigues of Lucien—Camille Jordan's pamphlet seized—Vituperation against the liberty of the press—Revisal of the Constitution—New 'Senatus- consulte—Deputation from the Senate—Audience of the Diplomatic Body—Josephine's melancholy—The discontented—Secret meetings—Fouche and the police agents—The Code Napoleon—Bonaparte's regular attendance at the Council of State—His knowledge of mankind, and the science of government—Napoleon's first sovereign act—His visit to the Senate—The Consular procession—Polite etiquette—The Senate and the Council of State—Complaints against Lucien—The deaf and dumb assembly—Creation of senatorships.

When nothing was wanting to secure the Consulate for life but the votes of the people, which there was no doubt of obtaining, the First Consul set off to spend a few days at Malmaison.

On the day of our arrival, as soon as dinner was ended, Bonaparte said to me, "Bourrienne, let us go and take a walk." It was the middle of May, so that the evenings were long. We went into the park: he was very grave, and we walked for several minutes without his uttering a syllable. Wishing to break silence in a way that would be agreeable to him, I alluded to the facility with which he had nullified the last 'Senatus- consulte'. He scarcely seemed to hear me, so completely was his mind absorbed in the subject on which he was meditating. At length, suddenly recovering from his abstraction, he said, "Bourrienne, do you think that the pretender to the crown of France would renounce his claims if I were to offer him a good indemnity, or even a province in Italy?" Surprised at this abrupt question on a subject which I was far from thinking of, I replied that I did not think the pretender would relinquish his claims; that it was very unlikely the Bourbons would return to France as long as he, Bonaparte, should continue at the head of the Government, though they would look forward to their ultimate return as probable. "How so?" inquired he. "For a very simple reason, General. Do you not see every day that your agents conceal the truth from you, and flatter you in your wishes, for the purpose of ingratiating themselves in your favour? are you not angry when at length the truth reaches your ear?"—"And what then?"—"why, General, it must be just the same with the agents of Louis XVIII. in France. It is in the course of things, in the nature of man, that they should feed the Bourbons with hopes of a possible return, were it only to induce a belief in their own talent and utility."—"That is very true! You are quite right; but I am not afraid. However, something might perhaps be done—we shall see." Here the subject dropped, and our conversation turned on the Consulate for life, and Bonaparte spoke in unusually mild terms of the persons who had opposed the proposition. I was



Page 39

a little surprised at this, and could not help reminding him of the different way in which he had spoken of those who opposed his accession to the Consulate. "There is nothing extraordinary in that," said he. "Worthy men may be attached to the Republic as I have made it. It is a mere question of form. I have nothing to say against that; but at the time of my accession to the Consulate it was very different. Then, none but Jacobins, terrorists, and rogues resisted my endeavours to rescue France from the infamy into which the Directory had plunged her. But now I cherish no ill-will against those who have opposed me."

During the intervals between the acts of the different bodies of the State, and the collection of the votes, Lucien renewed his intrigues, or rather prosecuted them with renewed activity, for the purpose of getting the question of hereditary succession included in the votes. Many prefects transmitted to M. Chaptal anonymous circulars which had been sent to them: all stated the ill effect produced by these circulars, which had been addressed to the principal individuals of their departments. Lucien was the originator of all this, though I cannot positively say whether his brother connived with him, as in the case of the pamphlet to which I have already alluded. I believe, however, that Bonaparte was not entirely a stranger to the business; for the circulars were written by Raederer at the instigation of Lucien, and Raederer was at that time in favour at the Tuileries. I recollect Bonaparte speaking to me one day very angrily about a pamphlet which had just, been published by Camille Jordan on the subject of the national vote on the Consulate for life. Camille Jordan did not withhold his vote, but gave it in favour of the First Consul; and instead of requiring preliminary conditions, he contented himself, like the Tribunate, with enumerating all the guarantees which he expected the honour of the First Consul would grant. Among these guarantees were the cessation of arbitrary imprisonments, the responsibility of the agents of Government, and the independence of the judges. But all these demands were mere peccadilloes in comparison with Camille Jordan's great crime of demanding the liberty of the press.

The First Consul had looked through the fatal pamphlet, and lavished invectives upon its author. "How!" exclaimed he, "am I never to have done with these fire brands?—These babblers, who think that politics may be shown on a printed page like the world on a map? Truly, I know not what things will come to if I let this go on. Camille Jordan, whom I received so well at Lyons, to think that he should—ask for the liberty of the press!

Were I to accede to this I might as well pack up at once and go and live on a farm a hundred leagues from Paris." Bonaparte's first act in favour of the liberty of the press was to order the seizure of the pamphlet in which Camille Jordan had extolled the advantages of that measure. Publicity, either by words or writing, was Bonaparte's horror. Hence his aversion to public speakers and writers.



Page 40

Camille Jordan was not the only person who made unavailing efforts to arrest Bonaparte in the first steps of his ambition. There were yet in France many men who, though they had hailed with enthusiasm the dawn of the French Revolution, had subsequently been disgusted by its crimes, and who still dreamed of the possibility of founding a truly Constitutional Government in France. Even in the Senate there were some men indignant at the usual compliance of that body, and who spoke of the necessity of subjecting the Constitution to a revisal, in order to render it conformable to the Consulate for life.

The project of revising the Constitution was by no means unsatisfactory to Bonaparte. It afforded him an opportunity of holding out fresh glimmerings of liberty to those who were too shortsighted to see into the future. He was pretty certain that there could be no change but to his advantage. Had any one talked to him of the wishes of the nation he would have replied, "3,577,259 citizens have voted. Of these how many were for me? 3,368,185. Compare the difference! There is but one vote in forty-five against me. I must obey the will of the people!" To this he would not have failed to add, "Whose are the votes opposed to me? Those of ideologists, Jacobins, and peculators under the Directory." To such arguments what could have been answered? It must not be supposed that I am putting these words into Bonaparte's mouth. They fell from him oftener than once.

As soon as the state of the votes was ascertained the Senate conceived itself under the necessity of repairing the only fault it had committed in the eyes of the First Consul, and solemnly presented him with a new 'Senatus-consulte', and a decree couched in the following terms:

Article I. The French people nominate and the Senate proclaim Napoleon Bonaparte Consul for life.

Article ii. A statue representing Peace, holding in one hand the laurel of victory, and in the other the decree of the senate, shall commemorate to posterity the gratitude of the Nation.

Article iii. The Senate will convey to the First Consul the expression of the confidence, the love, and the admiration of the French people.

Bonaparte replied to the deputation from the Senate, in the presence of the Diplomatic Body, whose audience had been appointed for that day in order that the ambassadors might be enabled to make known to their respective Courts that Europe reckoned one King more. In his reply he did not fail to introduce the high-sounding words "liberty and equality." He commenced thus: "A citizen's life belongs to his country. The French people wish that mine should be entirely devoted to their service. I obey."



On the day this ceremony took place, besides the audience of the Diplomatic Body there was an extraordinary assemblage of general officers and public functionaries. The principal apartments of the Tuileries's presented the appearance of a fete. This gaiety formed a striking contrast with the melancholy of Josephine, who felt that every step of the First Consul towards the throne removed him farther from her.



Page 41

She had to receive a party that evening, and though greatly depressed in spirits she did the honours with her usual grace.

Let a Government be what it may, it can never satisfy everyone. At the establishment of the Consulate for life, those who were averse to that change formed but a feeble minority. But still they met, debated, corresponded, and dreamed of the possibility of overthrowing the Consular Government.

During the first six months of the year 1802 there were meetings of the discontented, which Fouche, who was then Minister of the Police, knew and would not condescend to notice; but, on the contrary, all the inferior agents of the police contended for a prey which was easily seized, and, with the view of magnifying their services, represented these secret meetings as the effect of a vast plot against the Government. Bonaparte, whenever he spoke to me on the subject, expressed himself weary of the efforts which were made to give importance to trifles; and yet he received the reports of the police agents as if he thought them of consequence. This was because he thought Fouche badly informed, and he was glad to find him at fault; but when he sent for the Minister of Police the latter told him that all the reports he had received were not worth a moment's attention. He told the First Consul all, and even a great deal more than had been revealed to him, mentioning at the same time how and from whom Bonaparte had received his information.

But these petty police details did not divert the First Consul's attention from the great object he had in view. Since March 1802 he had attended the sittings of the Council of State with remarkable regularity. Even while we were at the Luxembourg he busied himself in drawing up a new code of laws to supersede the incomplete collection of revolutionary laws, and to substitute order for the sort of anarchy which prevailed in the legislation. The man who were most distinguished for legal knowledge had cooperated in this laborious task, the result of which was the code first distinguished by the name of the Civil Code, and afterwards called the Code Napoleon. The labours of this important undertaking being completed, a committee was appointed for the presentation of the code. This committee, of which Cambaceres was the president, was composed of *mm.* Portalis, Merlin de Douai, and Tronchet. During all the time the discussions were pending, instead of assembling as usual three times a week, the Council of State assembled every day, and the sittings, which on ordinary occasions only lasted two or three hours, were often prolonged to five or six. The First Consul took such interest in these discussions that, to have an opportunity of conversing upon them in the evening, he frequently invited several members of the Council to dine with him. It was during these conversations that I most admired the inconceivable versatility of Bonaparte's genius, or rather, that superior instinct which enabled him to comprehend at a glance, and in their proper point of view, legislative questions to which he might have been supposed a stranger. Possessing as he did, in a supreme degree, the knowledge of mankind, ideas important to the science of government flashed upon his mind like sudden inspirations.

Page 42

Some time after his nomination to the Consulate for life, anxious to perform a sovereign act, he went for the first time to preside at the Senate. Availing myself that day of a few leisure moments I went out to see the Consular procession. It was truly royal. The First Consul had given orders that the military should be ranged in the streets through which he had to pass. On his first arrival at the Tuileries, Napoleon had the soldiers of the Guard ranged in a single line in the interior of the court, but he now ordered that the line should be doubled, and should extend from the gate of the Tuileries to that of the Luxembourg. Assuming a privilege which old etiquette had confined exclusively to the Kings of France, Bonaparte now for the first time rode in a carriage drawn by eight horses. A considerable number of carriages followed that of the First Consul, which was surrounded by generals and aides de camp on horseback. Louis XIV. going to hold a bed of justice at the Parliament of Paris never displayed greater pomp than did Bonaparte in this visit to the Senate. He appeared in all the parade of royalty; and ten Senators came to meet him at the foot of the staircase of the Luxembourg.

The object of the First Consul's visit to the Senate was the presentation of five plans of 'Senatus-consultes'. The other two Consuls were present at the ceremony, which took place about the middle of August.

Bonaparte returned in the same style in which he went, accompanied by M. Lebrun, Cambaceres remaining at the Senate, of which he was President. The five 'Senatus-consultes' were adopted, but a restriction was made in that which concerned the forms of the Senate. It was proposed that when the Consuls visited the Senate they should be received by a deputation of ten members at the foot of the staircase, as the First Consul had that day been received; but Bonaparte's brothers Joseph and Lucien opposed this, and prevented the proposition from being adopted, observing that the Second and Third Consuls being members of the Senate could not be received with such honours by their colleagues. This little scene of political courtesy, which was got up beforehand, was very well acted.

Bonaparte's visit to the Senate gave rise to a change of rank in the hierarchy of the different authorities composing the Government. Hitherto the Council of State had ranked higher in public opinion; but the Senate, on the occasion of its late deputation to the Tuileries, had for the first time, received the honour of precedency. This had greatly displeased some of the Councillors of State, but Bonaparte did not care for that. He instinctively saw that the Senate would do what he wished more readily than the other constituted bodies, and he determined to augment its rights and prerogatives even at the expense of the rights of the Legislative Body. These encroachments of one power upon another, authorised by the First Consul, gave rise to reports of changes



Page 43

in ministerial arrangements. It was rumoured in Paris that the number of the ministers was to be reduced to three, and that Lucien, Joseph, and M. de Talleyrand were to divide among them the different portfolios. Lucien helped to circulate these reports, and this increased the First Consul's dissatisfaction at his conduct. The letters from Madrid, which were filled with complaints against him, together with some scandalous adventures, known in Paris, such as his running away with the wife of a 'limonadier', exceedingly annoyed Bonaparte, who found his own family more difficult to govern than France.

France, indeed, yielded with admirable facility to the yoke which, the First Consul wished to impose on her. How artfully did he undo all that the Revolution had done, never neglecting any means of attaining his object! He loved to compare the opinions of those whom he called the Jacobins with the opinions of the men of 1789; and even them he found too liberal. He felt the ridicule which was attached to the mute character of the Legislative Body, which he called his deaf and dumb assembly. But as that ridicule was favourable to him he took care to preserve the assembly as it was, and to turn it into ridicule whenever he spoke of it. In general, Bonaparte's judgment must not be confounded with his actions. His accurate mind enabled him to appreciate all that was good; but the necessity of his situation enabled him to judge with equal shrewdness what was useful to himself.

What I have just said of the Senate affords me an opportunity of correcting an error which has frequently been circulated in the chit-chat of Paris. It has erroneously been said of some persons that they refused to become members of the Senate, and among the number have been mentioned M. Ducis, M. de La Fayette, and the Marechal de Rochambeau. The truth is, that no such refusals were ever made. The following fact, however, may have contributed to raise these reports and give them credibility. Bonaparte used frequently to say to persons in his salon and in his cabinet; "You should be a Senator—a man like you should be a Senator." But these complimentary words did not amount to a nomination. To enter the Senate certain legal forms were to be observed. It was necessary to be presented by the Senate, and after that presentation no one ever refused to become a member of the body, to which Bonaparte gave additional importance by the creation of "Senatoreries."—[Districts presided over by a Senator.]—This creation took place in the beginning of 1803.

CHAPTER XV

1802.



Page 44

The intoxication of great men—Unlucky zeal—*mm.* Maret, Champagne, and Savary—M. de Talleyrand's real services—Postponement of the execution of orders—Fouche and the Revolution—The Royalist committee—The charter first planned during the Consulate—Mission to Coblenz—Influence of the Royalists upon Josephine—The statue and the pedestal—Madame de Genlis' romance of Madame de la Valliere—The Legion of Honour and the carnations—Influence of the Faubourg St. Germain—Inconsiderate step taken by Bonaparte—Louis XVIII's indignation—Prudent advice of the Abbe Andre—Letter from Louis XVIII. to Bonaparte—Council held at Neuilly—The letter delivered—Indifference of Bonaparte, and satisfaction of the Royalists.

Perhaps one of the happiest ideas that ever were expressed was that of the Athenian who said, "I appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober." The drunkenness here alluded to is not of that kind which degrades a man to the level of a brute, but that intoxication which is occasioned by success, and which produces in the heads of the ambitious a sort of cerebral congestion. Ordinary men are not subject to this excitement, and can scarcely form an idea of it. But it is nevertheless true that the fumes of glory and ambition occasionally derange the strongest heads; and Bonaparte, in all the vigour of his genius, was often subject to aberrations of judgment; for though his imagination never failed him, his judgment was frequently at fault.

This fact may serve to explain, and perhaps even to excuse the faults with which the First Consul has been most seriously reproached. The activity of his mind seldom admitted of an interval between the conception and the execution of a design; but when he reflected coolly on the first impulses of his imperious will, his judgment discarded what was erroneous. Thus the blind obedience, which, like an epidemic disease, infected almost all who surrounded Bonaparte, was productive of the most fatal effects. The best way to serve the First Consul was never to listen to the suggestions of his first ideas, except on the field of battle, where his conceptions were as happy as they were rapid. Thus, for example, *mm.* Maret, de Champagne, and Savary evinced a ready obedience to Bonaparte's wishes, which often proved very unfortunate, though doubtless dictated by the best intentions on their part. To this fatal zeal may be attributed a great portion of the mischief which Bonaparte committed. When the mischief was done, and past remedy, Bonaparte deeply regretted it. How often have I heard him say that Maret was animated by an unlucky zeal! This was the expression he made use of.



Page 45

M. de Talleyrand was almost the only one among the ministers who did not flatter Bonaparte, and who really served both the First Consul and the Emperor. When Bonaparte said to M. de Talleyrand, "Write so and so, and send it off by a special courier," that minister was never in a hurry to obey the order, because he knew the character of the First Consul well enough to distinguish between what his passion dictated and what his reason would approve: in short, he appealed from Philip drunk to Philip sober. When it happened that M. de Talleyrand suspended the execution of an order, Bonaparte never evinced the least displeasure. When, the day after he had received any hasty and angry order, M. de Talleyrand presented himself to the First Consul, the latter would say, "Well, did you send off the courier?"—"No," the minister would reply, "I took care not to do so before I showed you my letter." Then the First Consul would usually add, "Upon second thoughts I think it would be best not to send it." This was the way to deal with Bonaparte. When M. de Talleyrand postponed sending off despatches, or when I myself have delayed the execution of an order which I knew had been dictated by anger, and had emanated neither from his heart nor his understanding, I have heard him say a hundred times, "It was right, quite right. You understand me: Talleyrand understands me also. This is the way to serve me: the others do not leave me time for reflection: they are too precipitate." Fouche also was one of those who did not on all occasions blindly obey Bonaparte's commands. His other ministers, on the other hand, when told to send off a courier the next morning, would have more probably sent him off the same evening. This was from zeal, but was not the First Consul right in saying that such zeal was unfortunate?

Of Talleyrand and Fouche, in their connections with the First Consul, it might be said that the one represented the Constituent Assembly, with a slight perfume of the old regime, and the other the Convention in all its brutality. Bonaparte regarded Fouche as a complete personification of the Revolution. With him, therefore, Fouche's influence was merely the influence of the Revolution. That great event was one of those which had made the most forcible impression on Bonaparte's ardent mind, and he imagined he still beheld it in a visible form as long as Fouche continued at the head of his police. I am now of opinion that Bonaparte was in some degree misled as to the value of Fouche's services as a minister. No doubt the circumstance of Fouche being in office conciliated those of the Revolutionary party who were his friends. But Fouche cherished an undue partiality for them, because he knew that it was through them he held his place. He was like one of the old Condottieri, who were made friends of lest they should become enemies, and who owed all their power to the soldiers enrolled under their banners.

Page 46

Such was Fouche, and Bonaparte perfectly understood his situation. He kept the chief in his service until he could find an opportunity of disbanding his undisciplined followers. But there was one circumstance which confirmed his reliance on Fouche. He who had voted the death of the King of France, and had influenced the minds of those who had voted with him, offered Bonaparte the best guarantee against the attempts of the Royalists for raising up in favour of the Bourbons the throne which the First Consul himself had determined to ascend. Thus, for different reasons, Bonaparte and Fouche had common interests against the House of Bourbon, and the master's ambition derived encouragement from the supposed terror of the servant.

The First Consul was aware of the existence in Paris of a Royalist committee, formed for the purpose of corresponding with Louis XVIII. This committee consisted of men who must not be confounded with those wretched intriguers who were of no service to their employers, and were not unfrequently in the pay of both Bonaparte and the Bourbons. The Royalist committee, properly so called, was a very different thing. It consisted of men professing rational principles of liberty, such as the Marquis de Clermont Gallerande, the Abbe de Montesquiou, M. Becquet, and M. Royer Collard. This committee had been of long standing; the respectable individuals whose names I have just quoted acted upon a system hostile to the despotism of Bonaparte, and favourable to what they conceived to be the interests of France. Knowing the superior wisdom of Louis XVIII., and the opinions which he had avowed and maintained in the Assembly of the Notables, they wished to separate that Prince from the emigrants, and to point him out to the nation as a suitable head of a reasonable Constitutional Government. Bonaparte, whom I have often heard speak on the subject, dreaded nothing so much as these ideas of liberty, in conjunction with a monarchy. He regarded them as reveries, called the members of the committee idle dreamers, but nevertheless feared the triumph of their ideas. He confessed to me that it was to counteract the possible influence of the Royalist committee that he showed himself so indulgent to those of the emigrants whose monarchical prejudices he knew were incompatible with liberal opinions. By the presence of emigrants who acknowledged nothing short of absolute power, he thought he might paralyse the influence of the Royalists of the interior; he therefore granted all such emigrants permission to return.

About this time I recollect having read a document, which had been signed, purporting to be a declaration of the principles of Louis XVIII. It was signed by M. d'Andre, who bore evidence to its authenticity. The principles contained in the declaration were in almost all points conformable to the principles which formed the basis of the charter. Even so early as 1792, and consequently previous to the fatal 21st



Page 47

of January, Louis XVI., who knew the opinions of M. de Clermont Gallerande, sent him on a mission to Coblenz to inform the Princes from him, and the Queen, that they would be ruined by their emigration. I am accurately informed, and I state this fact with the utmost confidence. I can also add with equal certainty that the circumstance was mentioned by M. de Clermont Gallerande in his Memoirs, and that the passage relative to his mission to Coblenz was cancelled before the manuscript was sent to press.

During the Consular Government the object of the Royalist committee was to seduce rather than to conspire. It was round Madame Bonaparte in particular that their batteries were raised, and they did not prove ineffectual. The female friends of Josephine filled her mind with ideas of the splendour and distinction she would enjoy if the powerful hand which had chained the Revolution should raise up the subverted throne. I must confess that I was myself, unconsciously, an accomplice of the friends of the throne; for what they wished for the interest of the Bourbons I then ardently wished for the interest of Bonaparte.

While endeavours were thus made to gain over Madame Bonaparte to the interest of the royal family, brilliant offers were held out for the purpose of dazzling the First Consul. It was wished to retemper for him the sword of the constable Duguesclin; and it was hoped that a statue erected to his honour would at once attest to posterity his spotless glory and the gratitude of the Bourbons. But when these offers reached the ears of Bonaparte he treated them with indifference, and placed no faith in their sincerity. Conversing on the subject one day with M. de La Fayette he said, "They offer me a statue, but I must look to the pedestal. They may make it my prison." I did not hear Bonaparte utter these words; but they were reported to me from a source, the authenticity of which may be relied on.

About this time, when so much was said in the Royalist circles and in the Faubourg St. Germain, of which the Hotel de Luynes was the headquarters, about the possible return of the Bourbons, the publication of a popular book contributed not a little to direct the attention of the public to the most brilliant period of the reign of Louis XIV. The book was the historical romance of Madame de la Valloire, by Madame de Genlis, who had recently returned to France. Bonaparte read it, and I have since understood that he was very well pleased with it, but he said nothing to me about it. It was not until some time after that he complained of the effect which was produced in Paris by this publication, and especially by engravings representing scenes in the life of Louis XIV., and which were exhibited in the shop-windows. The police received orders to suppress these prints; and the order was implicitly obeyed; but it was not Fouché's police. Fouché saw the absurdity of interfering with trifles. I recollect that immediately after

Page 48

the creation of the Legion of Honour, it being summer, the young men of Paris indulged in the whim of wearing a carnation in a button-hole, which at a distance had rather a deceptive effect. Bonaparte took this very seriously. He sent for Fouche, and desired him to arrest those who presumed thus to turn the new order into ridicule. Fouche merely replied that he would wait till the autumn; and the First Consul understood that trifles were often rendered matters of importance by being honoured with too much attention.

But though Bonaparte was piqued at the interest excited by the engravings of Madame de Genlis' romance he manifested no displeasure against that celebrated woman, who had been recommended to him by *mm.* de Fontanes and Fiegee and who addressed several letters to him. As this sort of correspondence did not come within the routine of my business I did not see the letters; but I heard from Madame Bonaparte that they contained a prodigious number of proper names, and I have reason to believe that they contributed not a little to magnify, in the eyes of the First Consul, the importance of the Faubourg St. Germain, which, in spite of all his courage, was a scarecrow to him.

Bonaparte regarded the Faubourg St. Germain as representing the whole mass of Royalist opinion; and he saw clearly that the numerous erasures from the emigrant list had necessarily increased dissatisfaction among the Royalists, since the property of the emigrants had not been restored to its old possessors, even in those cases in which it had not been sold. It was the fashion in a certain class to ridicule the unpolished manners of the great men of the Republic compared with the manners of the nobility of the old Court. The wives of certain generals had several times committed themselves by their awkwardness. In many circles there was an affectation of treating with contempt what are called the parvenus; those people who, to use M. de Talleyrand's expression, do not know how to walk upon a carpet. All this gave rise to complaints against the Faubourg St. Germain; while, on the other hand, Bonaparte's brothers spared no endeavours to irritate him against everything that was calculated to revive the recollection of the Bourbons.

Such were Bonaparte's feelings, and such was the state of society during the year 1802. The fear of the Bourbons must indeed have had a powerful influence on the First Consul before he could have been induced to take a step which may justly be regarded as the most inconsiderate of his whole life. After suffering seven months to elapse without answering the first letter of Louis XVIII., after at length answering his second letter in the tone of a King addressing a subject, he went so far as to write to Louis, proposing that he should renounce the throne of his ancestors in his, Bonaparte's, favour, and offering him as a reward for this renunciation a principality in Italy, or a considerable revenue for himself and his family.



Page 49

—[Napoleon seems to have always known, as with Cromwell and the Stuarts, that if his dynasty failed the Bourbons must succeed him. “I remember,” says Metternich, “Napoleon said to me, ‘Do you know why Louis XVIII. is not now sitting opposite to you? It is only because it is I who am sitting here. No other person could maintain his position; and if ever I disappear in consequence of a catastrophe no one but a Bourbon could sit here.’” (Metternich, tome i. p. 248). Farther, he said to Metternich, “The King overthrown, the Republic was master of the soil of France. It is that which I have replaced. The old throne of France is buried under its rubbish. I had to found a new one. The Bourbons could not reign over this creation. My strength lies in my fortune. I am new, like the Empire; there is, therefore, a perfect homogeneity between the Empire and myself.”—“However,” says Metternich, “I have often thought that Napoleon, by talking in this way, merely sought to study the opinion of others, or to confuse it, and the direct advance which he made to Louis XVIII., in 1804 seemed to confirm this suspicion. Speaking to me one day of this advance he said, ‘Monsieur’s reply was grand; it was full of fine traditions. There is something in legitimate rights which appeals to more than the mere mind. If Monsieur had consulted his mind only he would have arranged with me, and I should have made for him a magnificent future’” (Metternich, tome i, p. 276). According to lung’s Lucien (tome ii. p. 421), the letter written and signed by Napoleon, but never sent, another draft being substituted, is still in the French archives. Metternich speaks of Napoleon making a direct advance to Louis XVIII. in 1804. According to Colonel lung (Lucien Bonaparte, tome ii. pp. 4211-426) the attempt was made through the King of Prussia in 1802, the final answer of Louis being made on the 28th February 1803, as given in the text, but with a postscript of his nephew in addition, “With the permission of the King, my uncle, I adhere with heart and soul to the contents of this note.

“(signed) *Louis Antoine*, Duc d’Angouleme.”The reader will remark that there is no great interval between this letter and the final break with the Bourbons by the death of the Duc d’Enghien. At this time, according to Savory (tome iii. p. 241), some of the Bourbons were receiving French pensions. The Prince de Conti, the Duchesse de Bourbon, and the Duchesse d’Orleans, when sent out of France by the Directory, were given pensions of from 20,000 to 26,000 francs each. They lived in Catalonia. When the French troops entered Spain in 1808 General Canclaux, a friend of the Prince de Conti, brought to the notice of Napoleon that the tiresome formalities insisted on by the pestilent clerks of all nations were observed towards these regal personages. Gaudin, the Minister of Finance, apparently on his own initiative, drew up a decree



Page 50

increasing the pensions to 80,000 francs, and doing away with the formalities. "The Emperor signed at once, thanking the Minister of Finance." The reader, remembering the position of the French Princes then, should compare this action of Napoleon with the failure of the Bourbons in 1814 to pay the sums promised to Napoleon, notwithstanding the strong remonstrances made at Vienna to Talleyrand by Alexander and Lord Castlereagh. See Talleyrand's Correspondence with Louis XVIII., tome ii. pp. 27, 28; or French edition, pp. 285, 288.]—

The reader will recollect the curious question which the First Consul put to me on the subject of the Bourbons when we were walking in the park of Malmaison. To the reply which I made to him on that occasion I attribute the secrecy he observed towards me respecting the letter just alluded to. I am indeed inclined to regard that letter as the result of one of his private conferences with Lucien; but I know nothing positive on the subject, and merely mention this as a conjecture. However, I had an opportunity of ascertaining the curious circumstances which took place at Mittau, when Bonaparte's letter was delivered to Louis XVIII.

That Prince was already much irritated against Bonaparte by his delay in answering his first letter, and also by the tenor of his tardy reply; but on reading the First Consul's second letter the dethroned King immediately sat down and traced a few lines forcibly expressing his indignation at such a proposition. The note, hastily written by Louis XVIII. in the first impulse of irritation, bore little resemblance to the dignified and elegant letter which Bonaparte received, and which I shall presently lay before the reader. This latter epistle closed very happily with the beautiful device of Francis I., "All is lost but honour." But the first letter was stamped with a more chivalrous tone of indignation. The indignant sovereign wrote it with his hand supported on the hilt of his sword; but the Abbe Andre, in whom Louis XVIII. reposed great confidence, saw the note, and succeeded, not without some difficulty, in soothing the anger of the King, and prevailing on him to write the following letter:

I do not confound M. Bonaparte with those who have preceded him. I esteem his courage and his military talents. I am grateful for some acts of his government; for the benefits which are conferred on my people will always be prized by me.

But he errs in supposing that he can induce me to renounce my rights; so far from that, he would confirm them, if they could possibly be doubtful, by the step he has now taken.

I am ignorant of the designs of Heaven respecting me and my subjects; but I know the obligations which God has imposed upon me. As a Christian, I will fulfil my duties to my last breath—as the son of St. Louis, I would, like him, respect myself even in chains—as the successor of Francis I., I say with him—"Tout est perdu fors l'honneur".

Mittau, 1802. Louis.



Page 51

Louis XVIII.'s letter having reached Paris, the Royalist committee assembled, and were not a little embarrassed as to what should be done. The meeting took place at Neuilly. After a long deliberation it was suggested that the delivery of the letter should be entrusted to the Third Consul, with whom the Abby de Montesquiou had kept up acquaintance since the time of the Constituent Assembly. This suggestion was adopted. The recollections of the commencement of his career, under Chancellor Maupeou, had always caused M. Lebrun to be ranked in a distinct class by the Royalists. For my part, I always looked upon him as a very honest man, a warm advocate of equality, and anxious that it should be protected even by despotism, which suited the views of the First Consul very well. The Abbe de Montesquiou accordingly waited upon M. Lebrun, who undertook to deliver the letter. Bonaparte received it with an air of indifference; but whether that indifference were real or affected, I am to this day unable to determine. He said very little to me about the ill success of the negotiation with Louis XVIII. On this subject he dreaded, above all, the interference of his brothers, who created around him a sort of commotion which he knew was not without its influence, and which on several occasions had excited his anger.

The letter of Louis XVIII. is certainly conceived in a tone of dignity which cannot be too highly admired; and it may be said that Bonaparte on this occasion rendered a real service to Louis by affording him the opportunity of presenting to the world one of the finest pages in the history of a dethroned King. This letter, the contents of which were known in some circles of Paris, was the object of general approbation to those who preserved the recollection of the Bourbons, and above all, to the Royalist committee. The members of that committee, proud of the noble spirit evinced by the unfortunate monarch, whose return they were generously labouring to effect, replied to him by a sort of manifesto, to which time has imparted interest, since subsequent events have fulfilled the predictions it contained.

CHAPTER XVI

1802.

The day after my disgrace—Renewal of my duties—Bonaparte's affected regard for me—Offer of an assistant—M. de Meneval—My second rupture with Bonaparte—The Due de Rovigo's account of it— Letter from M. de Barbe Marbois—Real causes of my separation from the First Consul—Postscript to the letter of M. de Barbe Marbois— The black cabinet—Inspection of letters dining the Consulate— I retire to St. Cloud— Communications from M. de Meneval—A week's conflict between friendship and pride—My formal dismissal—Petty revenge—My request to visit England—Monosyllabic answer—Wrong suspicion—Burial of my papers—Communication from Duroc—My letter to the First Consul—The truth acknowledged.

I shall now return to the circumstances which followed



Page 52

my first disgrace, of which I have already spoken. The day after that on which I had resumed my functions I went as usual to awaken the First Consul at seven in the morning. He treated me just the same as if nothing had happened between us; and on my part I behaved to him just as usual, though I really regretted being obliged to resume labours which I found too oppressive for me. When Bonaparte came down into his cabinet he spoke to me of his plans with his usual confidence, and I saw, from the number of letters lying in the basket, that during the few days my functions had been suspended Bonaparte had not overcome his disinclination to peruse this kind of correspondence. At the period of this first rupture and reconciliation the question of the Consulate for life was yet unsettled. It was not decided until the 2d of August, and the circumstances to which I am about to refer happened at the end of February.

I was now restored to my former footing of intimacy with the First Consul, at least for a time; but I soon perceived that, after the scene which M. de Talleyrand had witnessed, my duties in the Tuileries were merely provisional, and might be shortened or prolonged according to circumstances. I saw at the very first moment that Bonaparte had sacrificed his wounded pride to the necessity (for such I may, without any vanity, call it) of employing my services. The forced preference he granted to me arose from the fact of his being unable to find any one able to supply my place; for Duroc, as I have already said, showed a disinclination to the business. I did not remain long in the dark respecting the new situation in which I stood. I was evidently still under quarantine; but the period of my quitting the port was undetermined.

A short time after our reconciliation the First Consul said to me, in a cajoling tone of which I was not the dupe, "My dear Bourrienne, you cannot do everything. Business increases, and will continue to increase. You know what Corvisart says. You have a family; therefore it is right you should take care of your health. You must not kill yourself with work; therefore some one must be got to assist you. Joseph tells me that he can recommend a secretary, one of whom he speaks very highly. He shall be under your direction; he can make out your copies, and do all that can consistently be required of him. This, I think, will be a great relief to you."—"I ask for nothing better," replied I, "than to have the assistance of some one who, after becoming acquainted with the business, may, some time or other, succeed me." Joseph sent M. de Meneval, a young man who, to a good education, added the recommendations of industry and prudence. I had every reason to be satisfied with him.

It was now that Napoleon employed all those devices and caresses which always succeeded so well with him, and which yet again gained the day, to put an end to the inconvenience caused to him by my retirement, and to retain me. Here I call every one who knew me as witnesses that nothing could equal my grief and despair to find myself obliged to again begin my troublesome work. My health had suffered much from it.

Corvisart was a clever counsellor, but it was only during the night that I could carry out his advice. To resume my duties was to renounce all hope of rest, and even of health.



Page 53

—[There is considerable truth in this statement about the effect on his health. His successor, Meneval, without the same amount of work, broke down and had to receive assistance (Meneval, tome i. p. 149).]—

I soon perceived the First Consul's anxiety to make M. de Meneval acquainted with the routine of business, and accustomed to his manner. Bonaparte had never pardoned me for having presumed to quit him after he had attained so high a degree of power; he was only waiting for an opportunity to punish me, and he seized upon an unfortunate circumstance as an excuse for that separation which I had previously wished to bring about.

I will explain this circumstance, which ought to have obtained for me the consolation and assistance of the First Consul rather than the forfeiture of his favour. My rupture with him has been the subject of various misstatements, all of which I shall not take the trouble to correct; I will merely notice what I have read in the Memoirs of the Duc de Rovigo, in which it is stated that I was accused of peculation. M. de Rovigo thus expresses himself:

Ever since the First Consul was invested with the supreme power his life had been a continued scene of personal exertion. He had for his private secretary M. de Bourrienne, a friend and companion of his youth, whom he now made the sharer of all his labours. He frequently sent for him in the dead of the night, and particularly insisted upon his attending him every morning at seven. Bourrienne was punctual in his attendance with the public papers, which he had previously glanced over. The First Consul almost invariably read their contents himself; he then despatched some business, and sat down to table just as the clock struck nine. His breakfast, which lasted six minutes, was no sooner over than he returned to his cabinet, only left it for dinner, and resumed his close occupation immediately after, until ten at night, which was his usual hour for retiring to rest. Bourrienne was gifted with a most wonderful memory; he could speak and write many languages, and would make his pen follow as fast as words were uttered. He possessed many other advantages; he was well acquainted with the administrative departments, was versed in the law of nations, and possessed a zeal and activity which rendered his services quite indispensable to the First Consul. I have known the several grounds upon which the unlimited confidence placed in him by his chief rested, but am unable to speak with equal assurance of the errors which occasioned his losing that confidence. Bourrienne had many enemies; some were owing to his personal character, a greater number to the situation which he held. Others were jealous of the credit he enjoyed with the Head of the Government; others, again, discontented at his not making that credit subservient to their personal advantage. Some even imputed to him the



Page 54

want of success that had attended their claims. It was impossible to bring any charge against him on the score of deficiency of talent or of indiscreet conduct; his personal habits were watched—it was ascertained that he engaged in financial speculations. An imputation could easily be founded on this circumstance. Peculation was accordingly laid to his charge. This was touching the most tender ground, for the First Consul held nothing in greater abhorrence than unlawful gains. A solitary voice, however, would have failed in an attempt to defame the character of a man for whom he had so long felt esteem and affection; other voices, therefore, were brought to bear against him. Whether the accusations were well founded or otherwise, it is beyond a doubt that all means were resorted to for bringing them to the knowledge of the First Consul. The most effectual course that suggested itself was the opening a correspondence either with the accused party direct, or with those with whom it was felt indispensable to bring him into contact; this correspondence was carried on in a mysterious manner, and related to the financial operations that had formed the grounds of a charge against him.—Thus it is that, on more than one occasion, the very channels intended for conveying truth to the knowledge of a sovereign have been made available to the purpose of communicating false intelligence to him. To give an instance. Under the reign of Louis XV., and even under the Regency, the Post Office was organized into a system of minute inspection, which did not indeed extend to every letter, but was exercised over all such as afforded grounds for suspicion. They were opened, and, when it was not deemed safe to suppress them, copies were taken, and they were returned to their proper channel without the least delay. Any individual denouncing another may, by the help of such an establishment, give great weight to his denunciation. It is sufficient for his purpose that he should throw into the Post Office any letter so worded as to confirm the impression which it is his object to convey. The worthiest man may thus be committed by a letter which he has never read, or the purport of which is wholly unintelligible to him. I am speaking from personal experience. It once happened that a letter addressed to myself, relating to an alleged fact which had never occurred, was opened. A copy of the letter so opened was also forwarded to me, as it concerned the duties which I had to perform at that time; but I was already in possession of the original, transmitted through the ordinary channel. Summoned to reply to the questions to which such productions had given rise, I took that opportunity of pointing out the danger that would accrue from placing a blind reliance upon intelligence derived from so hazardous a source. Accordingly, little importance was afterwards attached to this means



Page 55

of information; but the system was in operation at the period when M. de Bourrienne was disgraced; his enemies took care to avail themselves of it; they blackened his character with M. de Barbe Marbois, who added to their accusations all the weight of his unblemished character. The opinion entertained by this rigid public functionary, and many other circumstances, induced the First Consul to part with his secretary (tome i. p. 418).

Peculation is the crime of those who make a fraudulent use of the public money. But as it was not in my power to meddle with the public money, no part of which passed through my hands, I am at loss to conceive how I can be charged with peculation! The Due de Rovigo is not the author, but merely the echo, of this calumny; but the accusation to which his Memoirs gave currency afforded M. de Barbe Marbois an opportunity of adding one more to the many proofs he has given of his love of justice.

I had seen nothing of the Memoirs of the Due de Rovigo except their announcement in the journals, when a letter from M. de Barbe Marbois was transmitted to me from my family. It was as follows:

Sir—My attention has been called to the enclosed article in a recent publication. The assertion it contains is not true, and I conceive it to be a duty both to you and myself to declare that I then was, and still am, ignorant of the causes of the separation in question:—I am, *etc.*

(Signed) *Marbois*

I need say no more in my justification. This unsolicited testimony of M. de Marbois is a sufficient contradiction to the charge of peculation which has been raised against me in the absence of correct information respecting the real causes of my rupture with the First Consul.

M. le Due de Rovigo also observes that my enemies were numerous. My concealed adversaries were indeed all those who were interested that the sovereign should not have about him, as his confidential companion, a man devoted to his glory and not to his vanity. In expressing his dissatisfaction with one of his ministers Bonaparte had said, in the presence of several individuals, among whom was M. Maret, "If I could find a second Bourrienne I would get rid of you all." This was sufficient to raise against me the hatred of all who envied the confidence of which I was in possession.

The failure of a firm in Paris in which I had invested a considerable sum of money afforded an opportunity for envy and malignity to irritate the First Consul against me. Bonaparte, who had not yet forgiven me for wishing to leave him, at length determined to sacrifice my services to a new fit of ill-humour.



Page 56

A mercantile house, then one of the most respectable in Patna, had among its speculations undertaken some army contracts. With the knowledge of Berthier, with whom, indeed, the house had treated, I had invested some money in this business. Unfortunately the principals were, unknown to me, engaged in dangerous speculations in the Funds, which in a short time so involved them as to occasion their failure for a heavy amount. This caused a rumour that a slight fall of the Funds, which took place at that period, was occasioned by the bankruptcy; and the First Consul, who never could understand the nature of the Funds, gave credit to the report. He was made to believe that the business of the Stock Exchange was ruined. It was insinuated that I was accused of taking advantage of my situation to produce variations in the Funds, though I was so unfortunate as to lose not only my investment in the bankrupt house, but also a sum of money for which I had become bound, by way of surety, to assist the house in increasing its business. I incurred the violent displeasure of the First Consul, who declared to me that he no longer required my services. I might, perhaps have cooled his irritation by reminding him that he could not blame me for purchasing an interest in a contract, since he himself had stipulated for a gratuity of 1,500,000 francs for his brother Joseph out of the contract for victualling the navy. But I saw that for some time past M. de Meneval had begun to supersede me, and the First Consul only wanted such an opportunity as this for coming to a rupture with me.

Such is a true statement of the circumstances which led to my separation from Bonaparte. I defy any one to adduce a single fact in support of the charge of speculation, or any transaction of the kind; I fear no investigation of my conduct. When in the service of Bonaparte I caused many appointments to be made, and many names to be erased from the emigrant list before the 'Senatus-consulte' of the 6th Floreal, year X.; but I never counted upon gratitude, experience having taught me that it was an empty word.

The Duc de Rovigo attributed my disgrace to certain intercepted letters which injured me in the eyes of the First Consul. I did not know this at the time, and though I was pretty well aware of the machinations of Bonaparte's adulators, almost all of whom were my enemies, yet I did not contemplate such an act of baseness. But a spontaneous letter from M. de Barbe Marbois at length opened my eyes, and left little doubt on the subject. The following is the postscript to that noble peer's letter:

I recollect that one Wednesday the First Consul, while presiding at a Council of Ministers at St. Cloud, opened a note, and, without informing us what it contained, hastily left the Board, apparently much agitated. In a few minutes he returned and told us that your functions had ceased.

Whether the sudden displeasure of the First Consul

Page 57

was excited by a false representation of my concern in the transaction which proved so unfortunate to me, or whether Bonaparte merely made that a pretence for carrying into execution a resolution which I am convinced had been previously adopted, I shall not stop to determine; but the Due de Rovigo having mentioned the violation of the secrecy of letters in my case, I shall take the opportunity of stating some particulars on that subject.

Before I wrote these Memoirs the existence in the Post Office of the cabinet, which had obtained the epithet of black, had been denounced in the chamber of deputies, and the answer was, that it no longer existed, which of course amounted to an admission that it had existed. I may therefore, without indiscretion, state what I know respecting it.

The “black cabinet” was established in the reign of Louis XV., merely for the purpose of prying into the scandalous gossip of the Court and the capital. The existence of this cabinet soon became generally known to every one. The numerous postmasters who succeeded each other, especially in latter times, the still more numerous Post Office clerks, and that portion of the public who are ever on the watch for what is held up as scandalous, soon banished all the secrecy of the affair, and none but fools were taken in by it. All who did not wish to be committed by their correspondence chose better channels of communication than the Post; but those who wanted to ruin an enemy or benefit a friend long continued to avail themselves of the black cabinet, which, at first intended merely to amuse a monarch’s idle hours, soon became a medium of intrigue, dangerous from the abuse that might be made of it.

Every morning, for three years, I used to peruse the portfolio containing the bulletins of the black cabinet, and I frankly confess that I never could discover any real cause for the public indignation against it, except inasmuch as it proved the channel of vile intrigue. Out of 30,000 letters, which daily left Paris to be distributed through France and all parts of the world, ten or twelve, at most, were copied, and often only a few lines of them.

Bonaparte at first proposed to send complete copies of intercepted letters to the ministers whom their contents might concern; but a few observations from me induced him to direct that only the important passages should be extracted and sent. I made these extracts, and transmitted them to their destinations, accompanied by the following words: “The First Consul directs me to inform you that he has just received the following information,” *etc.* Whence the information came was left to be guessed at.

The First Consul daily received through this channel about a dozen pretended letters, the writers of which described their enemies as opponents of the Government, or their friends as models of obedience and fidelity to the constituted authorities. But the secret purpose of this vile correspondence was soon discovered, and Bonaparte gave orders

that no more of it should be copied. I, however, suffered from it at the time of my disgrace, and was well-nigh falling a victim to it at a subsequent period.

Page 58

The letter mentioned by M. de Marbois, and which was the occasion of this digression on the violation of private correspondence, derived importance from the circumstance that Wednesday, the 20th of October, when Bonaparte received it, was the day on which I left the Consular palace.

I retired to a house which Bonaparte had advised me to purchase at St. Cloud, and for the fitting up and furnishing of which he had promised to pay. We shall see how he kept this promise! I immediately sent to direct Landoire, the messenger of Bonaparte's cabinet, to place all letters sent to me in the First Consul's portfolio, because many intended for him came under cover for me. In consequence of this message I received the following letter from M. de Meneval:

My dear Bourrienne—I cannot believe that the First Consul would wish that your letters should be presented to him. I presume you allude only to those which may concern him, and which come addressed under cover to you. The First Consul has written to citizens Lavallette and Mollien directing them to address their packets to him. I cannot allow Landoire to obey the order you sent.

The First Consul yesterday evening evinced great regret. He repeatedly said, "How miserable I am! I have known that man since he was seven years old." I cannot but believe that he will reconsider his unfortunate decision. I have intimated to him that the burden of the business is too much for me, and that he must be extremely at a loss for the services of one to whom he was so much accustomed, and whose situation, I am confident, nobody else can satisfactorily fill. He went to bed very low-spirited. I am, *etc.*

(Signed) *Meneval.*

19 Vendemiaire, an X.
(21st October 1802.)

Next day I received another letter from M. Meneval as follows:—

I send you your letters. The First Consul prefers that you should break them open, and send here those which are intended for him. I enclose some German papers, which he begs you to translate.

Madame Bonaparte is much interested in your behalf; and I can assure you that no one more heartily desires than the First Consul himself to see you again at your old post, for which it would be difficult to find a successor equal to you, either as regards fidelity or fitness. I do not relinquish the hope of seeing you here again.

A whole week passed away in conflicts between the First Consul's friendship and pride. The least desire he manifested to recall me was opposed by his flatterers. On the fifth



day of our separation he directed me to come to him. He received me with the greatest kindness, and after having good-humouredly told me that I often expressed myself with too much



Page 59

freedom—a fault I was never solicitous to correct—he added: “I regret your absence much. You were very useful to me. You are neither too noble nor too plebeian, neither too aristocratic nor too Jacobinical. You are discreet and laborious. You understand me better than any one else; and, between ourselves be it said, we ought to consider this a sort of Court. Look at Duroc, Bessieres, Maret. However, I am very much inclined to take you back; but by so doing I should confirm the report that I cannot do without you.”

Madame Bonaparte informed me that she had heard persons to whom Bonaparte expressed a desire to recall me observe, “What would you do? People will say you cannot do without him. You have got rid of him now; therefore think no more about him: and as for the English newspapers, he gave them more importance than they really deserved: you will no longer be troubled with them.” This will bring to mind a scene—which occurred at Malmaison on the receipt of some intelligence in the ‘London Gazette’.

I am convinced that if Bonaparte had been left to himself he would have recalled me, and this conviction is warranted by the interval which elapsed between his determination to part with me and the formal announcement of my dismissal. Our rupture took place on the 20th of October, and on the 8th of November following the First Consul sent me the following letter:

Citizen Bourrienne, minister of state—I am satisfied with the services which you have rendered me during the time you have been with me; but henceforth they are no longer necessary. I wish you to relinquish, from this time, the functions and title of my private secretary. I shall seize an early opportunity of providing for you in a way suited to your activity and talents, and conducive to the public service.

(Signed) *Bonaparte*.

If any proof of the First Consul’s malignity were wanting it would be furnished by the following fact:—A few days after the receipt of the letter which announced my dismissal I received a note from Duroc; but, to afford an idea of the petty revenge of him who caused it to be written, it will be necessary first to relate a few preceding circumstances.

When, with the view of preserving a little freedom, I declined the offer of apartments which Madame Bonaparte had prepared at Malmaison for myself and my family, I purchased a small house at Ruel: the First Consul had given orders for the furnishing of this house, as well as one which I possessed in Paris. From the manner in which the orders were given I had not the slightest doubt but that Bonaparte intended to make me a present of the furniture. However, when I left his service he applied to have it

returned. As at first I paid no attention to his demand, as far as it concerned the furniture at Ruel, he directed Duroc to write the following letter to me:



Page 60

The First Consul, my dear Bourrienne, has just ordered me to send him this evening the keys of your residence in Paris, from which the furniture is not to be removed.

He also directs me to put into a warehouse whatever furniture you may have at Ruel or elsewhere which you have obtained from Government.

I beg of you to send me an answer, so as to assist me in the execution of these orders. You promised me to have everything settled before the First Consul's return. I must excuse myself in the best way I can.

(Signed) *Duroc*.

24 Brumaire, an X.
(15th November 1802.)

Believing myself to be master of my own actions, I had formed the design of visiting England, whither I was called by some private business. However, I was fully aware of the peculiarity of my situation, and I was resolved to take no step that should in any way justify a reproach.

On the 11th of January I therefore wrote to Duroc:

My affairs require my presence in England for some time. I beg of you, my dear Duroc, to mention my intended journey to the First Consul, as I do not wish to do anything inconsistent with his views. I would rather sacrifice my own interest than displease him. I rely on your friendship for an early answer to this, for uncertainty would be fatal to me in many respects.

The answer, which speedily arrived, was as follows:—

My dear Bourrienne—I have presented to the First Consul the letter I just received from you. He read it, and said, "No!"

That is the only answer I can give you. (Signed) *Duroc*.

This monosyllable was expressive. It proved to me that Bonaparte was conscious how ill he had treated me; and, suspecting that I was actuated by the desire of vengeance, he was afraid of my going to England, lest I should there take advantage of that liberty of the press which he had so effectually put down in France. He probably imagined that my object was to publish statements which would more effectually have enlightened the public respecting his government and designs than all the scandalous anecdotes, atrocious calumnies, and ridiculous fabrications of Pelletier, the editor of the 'Ambigu'. But Bonaparte was much deceived in this supposition; and if there can remain any



doubt on that subject, it will be removed on referring to the date of these Memoirs, and observing the time at which I consented to publish them.

I was not deceived as to the reasons of Bonaparte's unceremonious refusal of my application; and as I well knew his inquisitorial character, I thought it prudent to conceal my notes. I acted differently from Camoens. He contended with the sea to preserve his manuscripts; I made the earth the depository of mine. I carefully enclosed my most valuable notes and papers in a tin box, which I buried under ground. A yellow tinge, the commencement of decay, has in some places almost obliterated the writing.



Page 61

It will be seen in the sequel that my precaution was not useless, and that I was right in anticipating the persecution of Bonaparte, provoked by the malice of my enemies. On the 20th of April Duroc sent me the following note:

I beg, my dear Bourrienne, that you will come to St. Cloud this morning. I have something to tell you on the part of the First Consul.

(Signed) *Duroc*.

This note caused me much anxiety. I could not doubt but that my enemies had invented some new calumny; but I must say that I did not expect such baseness as I experienced.

As soon as Duroc had made me acquainted with the business which the First Consul had directed him to communicate, I wrote on the spot the subjoined letter to Bonaparte:

At General Duroc's desire I have this moment waited upon him, and he informs me that you have received notice that a deficit of 100,000 francs has been discovered in the Treasury of the Navy, which you require me to refund this day at noon. Citizen First Consul, I know not what this means! I am utterly ignorant of the matter. I solemnly declare to you that this charge is a most infamous calumny. It is one more to be added to the number of those malicious charges which have been invented for the purpose of destroying any influence I might possess with you.

I am in General Duroc's apartment, where I await your orders.

Duroc carried my note to the First Consul as soon as it was written. He speedily returned. "All's right!" said he. "He has directed me to say it was entirely a mistake!—that he is now convinced he was deceived! that he is sorry for the business, and hopes no more will be said about it."

The base flatterers who surrounded Bonaparte wished him to renew his Egyptian extortions upon me; but they should have recollected that the fusillade employed in Egypt for the purpose of raising money was no longer the fashion in France, and that the days were gone by when it was the custom to 'grease the wheels of the revolutionary car.'

CHAPTER XVII.

1803.

The First Consul's presentiments respecting the duration of peace— England's uneasiness at the prosperity of France—Bonaparte's real wish for war—Concourse of foreigners in Paris—Bad faith of England—Bonaparte and Lord Whitworth—Relative



position of France and England—Bonaparte's journey to the seaboard departments—
Breakfast at Compiègne—Father Berton—Irritation excited by the presence of Bouquet
—Father Berton's derangement and death—Rapp ordered to send for me—Order
countermanded.

The First Consul never anticipated a long peace with England. He wished for peace
merely because, knowing it to be ardently desired by the people, after ten years of war
he thought it would increase his

Page 62

popularity and afford him the opportunity of laying the foundation of his government. Peace was as necessary to enable him to conquer the throne of France as war was essential to secure it, and to enlarge its base at the expense of the other thrones of Europe. This was the secret of the peace of Amiens, and of the rupture which so suddenly followed, though that rupture certainly took place sooner than the First Consul wished. On the great questions of peace and war Bonaparte entertained elevated ideas; but in discussions on the subject he always declared himself in favour of war. When told of the necessities of the people, of the advantages of peace, its influence on trade, the arts, national industry, and every branch of public prosperity, he did not attempt to deny the argument; indeed, he concurred in it; but he remarked, that all those advantages were only conditional, so long as England was able to throw the weight of her navy into the scale of the world, and to exercise the influence of her gold in all the Cabinets of Europe. Peace must be broken; since it was evident that England was determined to break it. Why not anticipate her? Why allow her to have all the advantages of the first step? We must astonish Europe! We must thwart the policy of the Continent! We must strike a great and unexpected blow. Thus reasoned the First Consul, and every one may judge whether his actions agreed with his sentiments.

The conduct of England too well justified the foresight of Bonaparte's policy; or rather England, by neglecting to execute her treaties, played into Bonaparte's hand, favoured his love for war, and justified the prompt declaration of hostilities in the eyes of the French nation, whom he wished to persuade that if peace were broken it would be against his wishes. England was already at work with the powerful machinery of her subsidies, and the veil beneath which she attempted to conceal her negotiations was still sufficiently transparent for the lynx eye of the First Consul. It was in the midst of peace that all those plots were hatched, while millions who had no knowledge of their existence were securely looking forward to uninterrupted repose.

Since the Revolution Paris had never presented such a spectacle as during the winter of 1802-3. At that time the concourse of foreigners in the French capital was immense. Everything wore the appearance of satisfaction, and the external signs of public prosperity. The visible regeneration in French society exceedingly annoyed the British Ministry. The English who flocked to the Continent discovered France to be very different from what she was described to be by the English papers. This caused serious alarm on the other side of the Channel, and the English Government endeavoured by unjust complaints to divert attention from just dissatisfaction, which its own secret intrigues excited. The King of England sent a message to Parliament, in which he spoke of armaments preparing in the ports of France, and of the necessity of adopting precautions against meditated aggressions. This instance of bad faith highly irritated the First Consul, who one day, in a fit of displeasure, thus addressed Lord Whitworth in the salon, where all the foreign Ambassadors were assembled:



Page 63

“What is the meaning of this? Are you then tired of peace? Must Europe again be deluged with blood? Preparations for war indeed! Do you think to overawe us by this? You shall see that France may be conquered, perhaps destroyed, but never intimidated—never!”

The English Ambassador was astounded at this unexpected sally, to which he made no reply. He contented himself with writing to his Government an account of an interview in which the First Consul had so far forgotten himself,—whether purposely or not I do not pretend to say.

That England wished for war there could be no doubt. She occupied Malta, it is true, but she had promised to give it up, though she never had any intention of doing so. She was to have evacuated Egypt, yet there she still remained; the Cape of Good Hope was to have been surrendered, but she still retained possession of it. England had signed, at Amiens, a peace which she had no intention of maintaining. She knew the hatred of the Cabinets of Europe towards France, and she was sure, by her intrigues and subsidies, of arming them on her side whenever her plans reached maturity. She saw France powerful and influential in Europe, and she knew the ambitious views of the First Consul, who, indeed, had taken little pains to conceal them.

The First Consul, who had reckoned on a longer duration of the peace of Amiens, found himself at the rupture of the treaty in an embarrassing situation. The numerous grants of furloughs, the deplorable condition of the cavalry, and the temporary absence of artillery, in consequence of a project for refounding all the field-pieces, caused much anxiety to Bonaparte. He had recourse to the conscription to fill up the deficiencies of the army; and the project of refounding the artillery was abandoned. Supplies of money were obtained from the large towns, and Hanover, which was soon after occupied, furnished abundance of good horses for mounting the cavalry.

War had now become inevitable; and as soon as it was declared the First Consul set out to visit Belgium and the seaboard departments to ascertain the best means of resisting the anticipated attacks of the English. In passing through Compiègne he received a visit from Father Berton, formerly principal of the military school of Brienne. He was then rector of the school of arts at Compiègne, a situation in which he had been placed by Bonaparte. I learned the particulars of this visit through Josephine. Father Berton, whose primitive simplicity of manner was unchanged since the time when he held us under the authority of his ferule, came to invite Bonaparte and Josephine to breakfast with him, which invitation was accepted. Father Berton had at that time living with him one of our old comrades of Brienne, named Bouquet; but he expressly forbade him to show himself to Bonaparte or any one of his suite, because Bouquet, who had been a commissary at headquarters in Italy, was in disgrace with the First Consul.



Page 64

Bouquet promised to observe Father Berton's injunctions, but was far from keeping his promise. As soon as he saw Bonaparte's carriage drive up, he ran to the door and gallantly handed out Josephine. Josephine, as she took his hand, said, "Bouquet,—you have ruined yourself!" Bonaparte, indignant at what he considered an unwarrantable familiarity, gave way to one of his uncontrollable fits of passion, and as soon as he entered the room where the breakfast was laid, he seated himself, and then said to his wife in an imperious tone, "Josephine, sit there!" He then commenced breakfast, without telling Father Becton to sit down, although a third plate had been laid for him. Father Becton stood behind his old pupil's chair apparently confounded at his violence. The scene produced such an effect on the old man that he became incapable of discharging his duties at Compiègne. He retired to Rheims, and his intellect soon after became deranged. I do not pretend to say whether this alienation of mind was caused by the occurrence I have just related, and the account of which I received from Josephine. She was deeply afflicted at what had passed. Father Berton died insane. What I heard from Josephine was afterwards confirmed by the brother of Father Becton. The fact is, that in proportion as Bonaparte acquired power he was the more annoyed at the familiarity of old companions; and, indeed, I must confess that their familiarity often appeared very ridiculous.

The First Consul's visit to the northern coast took place towards the end of the year 1803, at which time the English attacked the Dutch settlements of Surinam, Demerara, and Essequibo, and a convention of neutrality was concluded between France, Spain, and Portugal. Rapp accompanied the First Consul, who attentively inspected the preparations making for a descent on England, which it was never his intention to effect, as will be shortly shown.

On the First Consul's return I learned from Rapp that I had been spoken of during the journey, and in the following way:—Bonaparte, being at Boulogne, wanted some information which no one there could give, him. Vexed at receiving no satisfactory answer to his inquiries he called Rapp, and said, "Do you know, Rapp, where Bourrienne is?"—"General, he is in Paris."—"Write to him to come here immediately, and send off one of my couriers with the letter." The rumour of the First Consul's sudden recollection of me spread like lightning, and the time required to write the letter and despatch the courier was more than sufficient for the efforts of those whom my return was calculated to alarm. Artful representations soon checked these spontaneous symptoms of a return to former feelings and habits. When Rapp carried to the First Consul the letter he had been directed to write the order was countermanded. However, Rapp advised me not to leave Paris, or if I did, to mention the place where I might be found, so that Duroc might have it in his power to seize on any favourable circumstance without delay. I was well aware of the friendship of both Rapp and Duroc, and they could as confidently rely on mine.



Page 65

CHAPTER XVIII.

1803.

Vast works undertaken—The French and the Roman soldiers—Itinerary of Bonaparte's journeys to the coast—Twelve hours on horseback— Discussions in Council— Opposition of Truguet—Bonaparte's opinion on the point under discussion—Two divisions of the world—Europe a province—Bonaparte's jealousy of the dignity of France—The Englishman in the dockyard of Brest—Public audience at the Tuilleries—The First Consul's remarks upon England—His wish to enjoy the good opinion of the English people—Ball at Malmaison— Lines on Hortense's dancing—Singular motive for giving the ball.

At the time of the rupture with England Bonaparte was, as I have mentioned, quite unprepared in most branches of the service; yet everything was created as if by magic, and he seemed to impart to others a share of his own incredible activity. It is inconceivable how many things had been undertaken and executed since the rupture of the peace. The north coast of France presented the appearance of one vast arsenal; for Bonaparte on this occasion employed his troops like Roman soldiers, and made the tools of the artisan succeed to the arms of the warrior.

On his frequent journeys to the coast Bonaparte usually set off at night, and on the following morning arrived at the post office of Chantilly, where he breakfasted. Rapp, whom I often saw when he was in Paris, talked incessantly of these journeys, for he almost always accompanied the First Consul, and it would have been well had he always been surrounded by such men. In the evening the First Consul supped at Abbeville, and arrived early next day at the bridge of Brique. "It would require constitutions of iron to go through what we do," said Rapp. "We no sooner alight from the carriage than we mount on horseback, and sometimes remain in our saddles for ten or twelve hours successively. The First Consul inspects and examines everything, often talks with the soldiers. How he is beloved by them! When shall we pay a visit to London with those brave fellows?"

Notwithstanding these continual journeys the First Consul never neglected any of the business of government, and was frequently present at the deliberations of the Council. I was still with him when the question as to the manner in which the treaties of peace should be concluded came under the consideration of the Council. Some members, among whom Truguet was conspicuous, were of opinion that, conformably with an article of the Constitution, the treaties should be proposed by the Head of the Government, submitted to the Legislative Body, and after being agreed to promulgated as part of the laws. Bonaparte thought differently. I was entirely of his opinion, and he said to me, "It is for the mere pleasure of opposition that they appeal to the Constitution, for if the Constitution says so it is absurd. There are some things which



Page 66

cannot become the subject of discussion in a public assembly; for instance, if I treat with Austria, and my Ambassador agrees to certain conditions, can those conditions be rejected by the Legislative Body? It is a monstrous absurdity! Things would be brought to a fine pass in this way! Lucchesini and Markow would give dinners every day like Cambaceres; scatter their money about, buy men who are to be sold, and thus cause our propositions to be rejected. This would be a fine way to manage matters!”

When Bonaparte, according to his custom, talked to me in the evening of what had passed in the Council, his language was always composed of a singular mixture of quotations from antiquity, historical references, and his own ideas. He talked about the Romans, and I remember when Mr. Fox was at Paris that he tried to distinguish himself before that Foreign Minister, whom he greatly esteemed. In his enlarged way of viewing the world Bonaparte divided it into two large states, the East and the West: “What matters,” he would often say, “that two countries are separated by rivers or mountains, that they speak different languages? With very slight shades of variety France, Spain, England, Italy, and Germany, have the same manners and customs, the same religion, and the same dress. In them a man can only marry one wife; slavery is not allowed; and these are the great distinctions which divide the civilised inhabitants of the globe. With the exception of Turkey, Europe is merely a province of the world, and our warfare is but civil strife. There is also another way of dividing nations, namely, by land and water.” Then he would touch on all the European interests, speak of Russia, whose alliance he wished for, and of England, the mistress of the seas. He usually ended by alluding to what was then his favourite scheme—an expedition to India.

When from these general topics Bonaparte descended to the particular interests of France, he still spoke like a sovereign; and I may truly say that he showed himself more jealous than any sovereign ever was of the dignity of France, of which he already considered himself the sole representative. Having learned that a captain of the English navy had visited the dockyard of Brest passing himself off as a merchant, whose passport he had borrowed, he flew into a rage because no one had ventured to arrest him.—[see James’ Naval History for an account of Sir Sidney Smith’s daring exploit.]—Nothing was lost on Bonaparte, and he made use of this fact to prove to the Council of State the necessity of increasing the number of commissary-generals of police. At a meeting of the Council he said, “If there had been a commissary of police at Brest he would have arrested the English captain and sent him at once to Paris. As he was acting the part of a spy I would have had him shot as such. No Englishman, not even a nobleman, or the English Ambassador, should be admitted into our dockyards. I will soon regulate all this.” He afterwards said to me, “There are plenty of wretches who are selling me every day to the English without my being subjected to English spying.”



Page 67

—[During the short and hollow peace of Amiens Bonaparte sent over to England as consuls and vice-consuls, a number of engineers and military men, who were instructed to make plans of all the harbours and coasts of the United Kingdom. They worked in secrecy, yet not so secretly but that they were soon suspected: the facts were proved, and they were sent out of the country without ceremony.— Editor of 1836 edition.]—

He had on one occasion said before an assemblage of generals, senators, and high officers of State, who were at an audience of the Diplomatic Body, “The English think that I am afraid of war, but I am not.” And here the truth escaped him, in spite of himself. “My power will lose nothing by war. In a very short time I can have 2,000,000 of men at my disposal. What has been the result of the first war? The union of Belgium and Piedmont to France. This is greatly to our advantage; it will consolidate our system. France shall not be restrained by foreign fetters. England has manifestly violated the treaties! It would be better to render homage to the King of England, and crown him King of France at Paris, than to submit to the insolent caprices of the English Government. If, for the sake of preserving peace, at most for only two months longer, I should yield on a single point, the English would become the more treacherous and insolent, and would enact the more in proportion as we yield. But they little know me! Were we to yield to England now, she would next prohibit our navigation in certain parts of the world. She would insist on the surrender of our ships. I know not what she would not demand; but I am not the man to brook such indignities. Since England wishes for war she shall have it, and that speedily!”

On the same day Bonaparte said a great deal more about the treachery of England. The gross calumnies to which he was exposed in the London newspapers powerfully contributed to increase his natural hatred of the liberty of the press; and he was much astonished that such attacks could be made upon him by English subjects when he was at peace with the English Government.

I had one day a singular proof of the importance which Bonaparte attached to the opinion of the English people respecting any misconduct that was attributed to him. What I am about to state will afford another example of Bonaparte’s disposition to employ petty and roundabout means to gain his ends. He gave a ball at Malmaison when Hortense was in the seventh month of her pregnancy.

—[This refers to the first son of Louis and of Hortense, Napoleon Charles, the intended successor of Napoleon, who was born 1802, died 1807, elder brother of Napoleon *iii.*]—

I have already mentioned that he disliked to see women in that situation, and above all could not endure to see them dance. Yet, in spite of this antipathy, he himself asked Hortense to dance at the ball at Malmaison. She at first declined, but Bonaparte was exceedingly importunate, and said to her in a tone of good-humoured persuasion, “Do, I



beg of you; I particularly wish to see you dance. Come, stand up, to oblige me.”
Hortense at last consented. The motive for this extraordinary request I will now explain.



Page 68

On the day after the ball one of the newspapers contained some verses on Hortense's dancing. She was exceedingly annoyed at this, and when the paper arrived at Malmaison she expressed, displeasure at it. Even allowing for all the facility of our newspaper wits, she was nevertheless at a loss to understand how the lines could have been written and printed respecting a circumstance which only occurred the night before. Bonaparte smiled, and gave her no distinct answer. When Hortense knew that I was alone in the cabinet she came in and asked me to explain the matter; and seeing no reason to conceal the truth, I told her that the lines had been written by Bonaparte's direction before the ball took place. I added, what indeed was the fact, that the ball had been prepared for the verses, and that it was only for the appropriateness of their application that the First Consul had pressed her to dance. He adopted this strange contrivance for contradicting an article which appeared in an English journal announcing that Hortense was delivered. Bonaparte was highly indignant at that premature announcement, which he clearly saw was made for the sole purpose of giving credit to the scandalous rumours of his imputed connection with Hortense. Such were the petty machinations which not unfrequently found their place in a mind in which the grandest schemes were revolving.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Ability in making it be supposed that he really possessed talent
Absurdity of interfering with trifles
Admired him more for what he had the fortitude not to do
Animated by an unlucky zeal
Ideologues
Put some gold lace on the coats of my virtuous republicans
Trifles honoured with too much attention
Were made friends of lest they should become enemies
Would enact the more in proportion as we yield