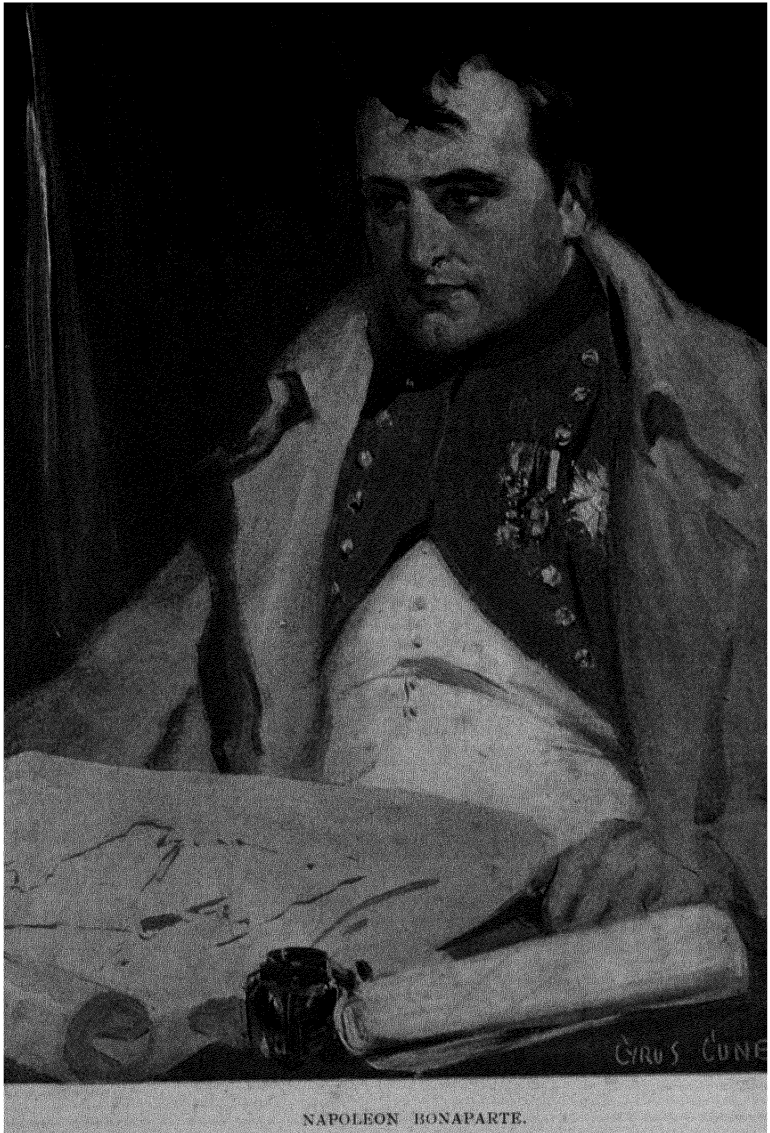


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NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.



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The
STORY of
NAPOLEON
BONAPARTE

BY
ARTHUR O
COOKE



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INTRODUCTION

THE story of Napoleon is that of a man perhaps more wonderful than any other whom the world has seen. He was not even a Frenchman, though we seem to think of him as such ; he was a Corsican, a man of the Italian race. Though he came of an old family his parents were quite undistinguished and comparatively poor. Yet by the time that he was thirty years of age he had restored order in France, which for many years had been distracted by the atrocities and terrors of the Revolution. Five years later he was chosen as her Emperor.

It is not altogether an easy task to write his life in a small book like this ; there is, if anything, too much to say. Napoleon fought so many battles, did so much for France in other ways. It is impossible to speak of all that he did as General, as First Consul, finally as Emperor.

Moreover it is very difficult for us to know what kind of man Napoleon really was. It is true that plenty of people are ready to tell us ; during the last century numberless volumes have been written which describe the whole or portions of his life. There are books by historians, books by his generals, by his secretaries, even by his servants ; books by both men

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and women who lived near him and who met him constantly in daily life. Some of these writers loved him, others hated him ; and, as might be expected, the two kinds of writers differ widely in their views.

Few men who knew Napoleon felt indifferent to him ; they either admired or detested him. To the Royalists of France, to all those who sorrowed for the death of Louis the Sixteenth and wished to see his brother reign, Napoleon was an upstart and usurper who still kept the exiled monarch from his rightful throne. To the more ardent Republicans the great Emperor was a tyrant who had grasped in his own hands that power which belonged by right to the people and their representatives. But by the soldiers of his armies he was looked upon as being almost a demi-god.

We English people were of those who hated him ; we welcomed to our shores the exiled King of France and gave him shelter here. For twenty years England was waging almost ceaseless war with Bonaparte ; his name was one of terror to most English minds—mothers told naughty children that the wicked “ Boney ” would be sure to get them if they were not good ! Only some thoughtful people—the great statesman Charles James Fox among them—felt convinced that “ Boney ” was not quite so black as Englishmen believed.

And now at last, a century after the great Emperor was overthrown at Waterloo, we are beginning gradually to know a little better what he really was—not altogether good, but just as certainly not wholly

bad. France is perhaps to-day the very best of all our Continental friends ; we understand and love her better year by year, and we should therefore try to understand her famous hero too.

So, though it is impossible to tell you much about Napoleon in so short a book, yet from the following chapters may be gleaned some general notion of the life of that great man. The reader will there find him pictured as a child and boy ; as a young officer, and later as the greatest European General ; will see him conquering, working, and at last defeated, banished, captive, dying.

CHAPTER I

THE CHILD

“I WAS born when my country was dying.” So said Napoleon when he was some twenty years of age.

The country of which he spoke was the island of Corsica, lying in the Mediterranean Sea, with its most northerly point some fifty miles from Italy and twice that distance from the coast of France. Hills rise up in the centre of the island to the height of seven or eight thousand feet, and on those lofty peaks the snow lies white throughout the year. Thick forests clothe some portions of the lower slopes ; forests of beech, oak, pine, with chestnuts, on the fruit of which a large proportion of the mountain-dwellers live. There are some olive-groves, but otherwise there is compara-

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tively little cultivation, for the islanders are somewhat indolent.

To strangers they are hospitable and courteous, but for any enemy of their own race they cherish an undying hate ; a quarrel breaking out between two families endures for many generations, and much blood is shed. Such quarrels or blood feuds are called "vendettas."

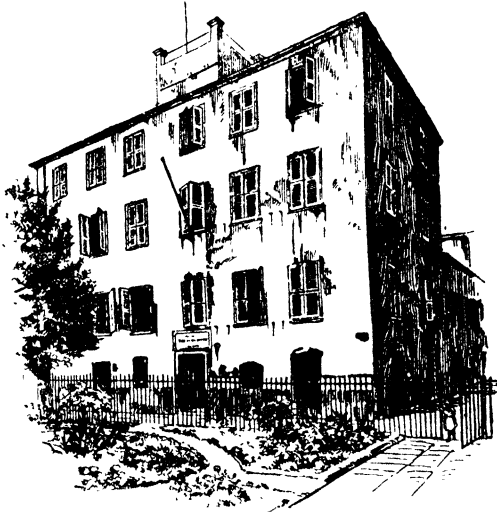
Until the latter half of the eighteenth century Corsica had for some four hundred years belonged to Genoa. But the Italian city found a growing difficulty in keeping her hold upon the island's wild and turbulent population, and she sought at last the aid of France. Finally, in 1768, while Louis the Fifteenth still reigned on the French throne, Corsica was made over to the French.

This change of masters provoked the greatest indignation among the islanders. They had at one time almost succeeded in ridding themselves of the yoke of Genoa, and for a short period had possessed a king—King Theodore. But he had soon been forced to flee to London, where he died. Then other patriots arose to carry on the fight for liberty—Gaffori and the famous Paoli. It was not until 1774 that France ruled fairly peaceably in Corsica, and even then the people hated the French yoke.

Napoleon was born in the midst of this hatred, and for a long time he shared it, loathing the land of France, which by and by he came to love so well.

His father was Carlo Buonaparte, a lawyer of good

family and some estate, but idle, fond of pleasure and extravagance, and always running into debt. Our hero's mother was Letizia Ramolino, who, very



NAPOLEON'S BIRTHPLACE : THE MAISON BONAPARTE, AJACCIO.

The actual building in which Napoleon was born was destroyed in 1793. The building shown above stands on the site, and Napoleon spent several days there in 1799.

different from her husband, had the virtues of economy and strong good sense.

It was in Ajaccio, the chief town of Corsica, that Nabulione Buonaparte—let me here give him his Italian name—was born, upon the 15th day of August, 1769. He had an elder brother, Joseph, about twelve months old. Two other children had died young.

Little Nabulione was a puny, sickly child. Only

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a week or two before his birth his parents had been living in a mountain cave as fugitives. Then, having at last decided to accept the rule of France, they rode on horseback through wild storms and flooded rivers; for Letizia was most eager to regain once more the place where little Joseph had been left in charge of friends.

Napoleon, to call him henceforth by the name he was to make well known throughout the world, was not, it seems, a very pleasant child, perhaps owing in great part to his early weakness and ill-health. Every one spoiled him and gave way to him; every one save his mother, though he was long the dearest of her sons. She alone had the wisdom to correct him and oppose his headstrong ways.

In 1771 was born a sister, Marie-Anne Elisa. Napoleon was present at her christening. As the priest sprinkled holy water on the infant's face the two-year-old boy grew indignant and tried to strike the priest. I know a little English boy who, looking at his baby brother's christening, also grew angry when he saw the water falling on the tiny face!

Little Napoleon was intelligent, but did not choose to learn. There seemed one class of story only that he cared to hear—stories of battle and of war. To hear such tales, or to be shown the sword of a relative of his mother's, Captain Fesch, he would do anything that he was asked.

He loved to see a company of soldiers pass along the street; he would run out and place himself beside

them, carrying his wooden sword and little gun. One thing, however, troubled him as he walked side by side with the tall grenadiers ; they had moustaches. What could he do, he asked, to make moustaches grow on his own face ?

It seems most likely that he learnt the alphabet at home or from a friendly priest ; then, being too young for the boys' college of Ajaccio, he was sent for some time to a school for little girls. He was by now too rough and troublesome to be allowed to spend all day at home.

His parents thought that he would look upon attendance at a girls' school as humiliating, and with some boys this might perhaps have been the case. But Napoleon was not ill-pleased with the arrangement, for he found the girls did all he wished, and looked upon him as a kind of lord. But if a fellow-pupil showed resistance to his small authority he beat her. It was one of his great faults through life that he despised all women, looking down upon them with contempt.

When he was six years old his mother made for him a little costume like a general's uniform, and this he was allowed to wear when his behaviour had been good. When thus attired he was in a seventh heaven of delight, marching with pride about Ajaccio's streets.

Sometimes on such occasions a small friend marched with him—Giaccominetta, one of the girl pupils at the school. This child admired him and loved him ; and if, perhaps, Napoleon did not greatly

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love her in return, yet still he always took her part in small disputes.

As he grew older he became the leader of the younger boys about the town. Gathering them in a band, he led them to the ramparts or upon the beach. There they divided into two opposing armies and played soldiers ; and Napoleon would return at night, muddy and wet, his clothes in tatters, from these mimic fights.

His mother scolded him and even punished him, but it was all without effect. When punished he would neither cry nor say that he was sorry, and the same things would occur upon the following day.

His easy-going father looked upon his conduct with amusement rather than with anger :

“ He will be a true Corsican,” he used to say.

For some years only did that prophecy prove true. The father little guessed how wholly young Napoleon was one day to be identified with France.

At length the time came for the boy to go with others to the college of Ajaccio. He vowed he would not go, and it was only by a bribe that his consent was bought. An uncle caused a fine toy cannon to be sent from Paris.

“ You shall play with this cannon,” he said to the child, “ when you have entered the college. When you become the first boy in your class it shall be your own.”

It is only fair to Napoleon to explain one great reason of his reluctance to go to school.

We have already seen that it was several years before the island grew contented with French rule. The Buonapartes especially were much dissatisfied. The father had received a small post under government; but he spent far more than he earned, and his family was growing larger. Napoleon often overheard the conversation of his father and his friends; always they spoke with sorrowful remembrance of the days when Corsica had been comparatively free.

So there grew up in the boy's heart a hatred of the French. Why should he go to college to learn science, mathematics and such things as those? All he desired was to fight for Corsica and set her free. It seemed to him that he would need but little education to do that.

He loved to talk to shepherds and old peasants who could tell him stories of the bygone days, and legends of the forests and the lofty hills.

Naughty and troublesome as young Napoleon was, he had good qualities, as a tale often told of him will show.

When seven years old he was accused of stealing some fine fruit, sent from an uncle's garden to his mother's house. This he denied, though told that he should not be punished if he would confess. He would not speak, and for three days was fed only on bread and cheese. Then it was found to be his sister and a little friend of hers who were the guilty ones. Napoleon had known this all the time, but would not save himself from punishment by saying so.

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The family affairs grew somewhat brighter. Carlo Buonaparte had gained the favour of the Comte de Marbeuf, the French Governor of Corsica. Marbeuf found fresh employment for his protégé.

And he did more than this. Good-natured Louis the Sixteenth of France was anxious to conquer Corsica by kindness rather than by force. It was arranged that some young Corsicans should be admitted to important schools in France—both to the ordinary seminaries and to the military schools. Marbeuf obtained this favour for both Joseph and Napoleon Buonaparte. They were to go first to the college of Autun. Thence Joseph, who was to become a priest, would pass to Aix; Napoleon was to enter the Military School at Brienne.

Napoleon was well pleased to take the first step towards being made a soldier, the ambition of his heart. He showed himself most eager to be gone, and in spite of all attempts to hide his joy, he did not quite conceal it from his family. His mother was much hurt at what she thought indifference.

“He does not love us—he loves nothing,” she said more than once.

“But I am not going for ever,” was Napoleon’s reply. “I will return to Corsica often, and when once I am a general I will never quit it any more.”

He said the same to his little friend Giacominetta—“La Netto” as he called her—when she cried as the time for his departure drew near. But Giacominetta had a thought which cheered her.

"I am so glad I learned to read and write," she said, for she had been as studious as Napoleon was idle. "I shall be able to read your letters and reply to them."

Napoleon laughed, telling her that he should have small time to spare to write to little girls.

Giaccominetta was not discouraged.

"His mother will be often busy," she said to herself; "then I shall write to him for her."

So in December 1778 Carlo Buonaparte, with his sons Joseph and Napoleon, crossed over to Marseilles. On January 1, 1779, the brothers entered upon their career in France; their father left them at the college of Autun, a small town in the north-east.

So, at the age of nine, and with a brother a year older than himself, Napoleon found himself in a strange land. He had looked forward to going, and, if he shed some tears on parting from his family and friends, his heart was full of hope. Here he would learn to be a soldier, and as a soldier he would fight for his beloved Corsica. He little thought that it was for a greater nation he would one day fight.

He was soon disappointed if he had expected to find pleasure at the school. The first few days of a new boy at school are rarely very happy ones, and the two lads from Corsica found special reasons which soon made them long for home.

They had been used to freedom, to the pleasant little town and sunny sea, and to the talk of peasants and of mountaineers. At Autun they were kept almost continually within the college walls.

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Nor were their new companions to their taste. Napoleon and his brother found themselves looked down upon as foreigners. They spoke only Italian; it was indeed, in a great measure, to learn French that they had come. This added to their misery; when their companions wearied of the usual games and looked about for some fresh sport, one cry was always well received—

“Let’s tease the Corsicans.”

Poor Joseph Bonaparte, a timid and good-natured boy, submitted as best he might to the unkind treatment shown to him. He was soon left in peace; it was poor fun to tease a boy who would not fight, but took the earliest opportunity to run away.

But with Napoleon it was very different. He felt a bitter hatred for his school-fellows; were they not members of the race that ruled in conquered Corsica? *He* did not run away, but faced his persecutors with indignant scorn.

“Why did you come to France?” he would be asked.

“Because I was brought here, and to learn French.”

“Learn French! Why, you can’t even pronounce your own name,” sneered one.

“Yes, I can. My name is Nabulione Buonaparte.”

No doubt his French pronunciation was not very good; at all events, the boys around him cried that he said “Paille-au-Nez” (Straw Nose). And “Paille-au-Nez” they called him from that time.

A prudent boy would have endured the joke, hoping that it would be forgotten by and by. But the sensitive young Corsican trembled with anger.

“Cowards!” he cried; “you are a hundred against one, just as your fathers were thirty thousand against ten thousand Corsicans.”

“Yes, so the conquered always say,” came from one boy the taunting shout.

Conquered! That word was too much for Napoleon, and he threw himself in fury, eyes blazing and fists clenched, upon the jeering crowd. Napoleon—and, most likely, not Napoleon alone—was presently found bruised and bleeding by a master of the school.

On another occasion a boy who passed a tie around Napoleon’s neck and made pretence of strangling him received a heavy ink-pot at his head. For this piece of violence Napoleon was sentenced to solitary confinement for some days.

“So much the better; for that time at least I shall see no one,” was his remark.

When, unexpectedly, some man grows great and famous, there will be many people who are glad to call to mind that they remember him in former days—have been at school with him or worked with him. But in the years to come not one of those French boys at Autun ever dared to claim Napoleon as a friend.

It was a solitary life the brothers led. Alone they spent their leisure hours, talking in their own tongue of the loved home, of Corsica, its mountains, rocks, and sea. Other boys welcomed friends who came to

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visit them ; others might go home now and then for a few days. There were no friends who visited the Bonapartes.

But letters came—welcomed with who knows what yearning for the writers.

“Make haste and write another letter,” Joseph wrote one day to his mother ; “Napoleon has worn out your last one with re-reading it so many times. I can no longer see the writing, and the paper is all torn.”

And one of those unhappy lonely boys was to become an emperor, and was to make his elder brother a king.

Happily for Napoleon, his stay at Autun was but short. Disgusted with the school, the boy strained every nerve to learn sufficient French to pass on to Brienne. Within four months he had mastered the language sufficiently to pass the necessary examination, and the hated walls of Autun were then left behind. On April 25, 1779, he took his place within the Military College of Brienne.

CHAPTER II

BRIENNE

BRIENNE is a small pleasant town in the department of Aube, not far from Troyes. A statue of Napoleon as he was when sixteen years of age stands there to-day.

The pupils of the college were about one hundred

and fifty in number. They wore a uniform : cocked hats, knee-breeches, military coats. The teachers were not soldiers ; they were monks.

The boy now found himself almost entirely alone, for Joseph, not being destined for a military life, was left behind. Napoleon hardly got on better with his fellow-pupils than at Autun ; many were rich men's sons, whose pockets were well stocked with money, and who looked down scornfully upon the needy Corsican. They laughed at his strange accent, at his poverty, and at his foreign birth. They even taunted him with lack of friends.

“My friends are far away,” he said.

“But if you had some influence at Court you could obtain permission to come out with us.”

“Then it is fortunate that I have none, for that permission I should certainly refuse.”



STATUE OF NAPOLEON AT BRIENNE.

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Yet in this loneliness the boy consoled himself with certain pride. His French companions laughed at him ; he seemed shut out from sharing their school life. Well, then, he told himself, if he must be alone he would see to it that he was *above* his fellow-pupils, not below. And so he set himself to study hard. He threw his whole soul into work, especially into the study of mathematics, in which he soon excelled. This passion for work, created perhaps in the first place by loneliness, became one of the leading passions of Napoleon's life.

There was a garden at the college, and this garden was divided into plots of which the pupils each had one. Some planted flowers ; others left their plots untilled.

Two such neglected plots adjoined Napoleon's. He took possession of them ; but it was not for the purpose of growing flowers. He formed a hedge of shrubs around his triple plot, and in this snug retreat he studied during his spare time.

Such books as Plutarch's *Lives* of famous Greeks and Romans interested him much. Geography and history too attracted him. Latin and German he liked less ; even in later life he learned no foreign tongues till, in his exile at St. Helena, he tried to pick up a few English words.

He remained for five years at Brienne, and by degrees grew more contented with his lot. He made at least one friend, named Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne. This boy was just Napoleon's age, and

had come to the school at the same time. Bourrienne seems never to have joined in jeering at the lonely Corsican.

“Ah, Bourrienne, I like you; you do not make fun of me,” Napoleon said one day.



NAPOLEON AT BRIENNE. (AFTER THE PAINTING BY VERNET.)

The two boys met again in after life. Bourrienne became the private secretary of Napoleon when the latter was the greatest man in France. It is from Bourrienne's *Memoirs* that we can learn much about his famous school-fellow.

As the months passed away some of the other boys grew friendlier too. Napoleon even came to

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be a leader in the games, as he had been among the boys of Ajaccio. He instituted battles in the college hall: Romans against Carthaginians, Trojans against Greeks.

One winter came a heavy fall of snow. Napoleon made this fall the opportunity for doing battle on a large and realistic scale. A fort was built of snow; one party of the boys defended it, the rest attacked. Snowballs were naturally the missiles, and one boy received a scar upon his forehead from a sharp-edged ball that Napoleon threw. Years afterwards he showed his scar to the great Emperor, and was at once rewarded for his pains.

For, somewhat strange to say, Napoleon always had a pleasant recollection of the years spent at the college of Brienne. He was not vindictive; he forgot the sneers and teasing, and remembered only pleasant things.

In 1783 the years of school life seemed about to end. In September of that year Napoleon underwent the examination necessary to be passed before he could move on to a military college at Paris, and he passed it with success.

This was the report of his examiner—

“Monsieur de Bonaparte (Napoleon), born 15th of August 1769, height four feet ten inches ten lines, is in the fourth class, has a good constitution, excellent health, character obedient, upright, grateful, conduct very regular; has always been distinguished by his application to mathematics. He knows history and geography very passably. He is not well up in ornamental studies or in Latin, in which he is only in the fourth class. He

will be an excellent sailor. He deserves to be passed on to the Military School of Paris."

But a great disappointment was in store for young Napoleon. He should have left Brienne in three months from that time; instead of doing so he was forced to stay there for another year.

The kindly examiner who had given him so good a "pass" had died. Other boys, whose relations perhaps possessed more influence than he, went to the school at Paris, but Napoleon was left behind. It was October 1784 before at last he reached the capital. He only did so after passing a second examination; and on the report his character was given as "overbearing, imperious and headstrong."

Meanwhile the circumstances of the Buonapartes had been growing worse. The father's employment yielded next to nothing; and a lawsuit which was being carried on against the Jesuits for the restitution of some property was ending badly. Besides the brothers Joseph and Napoleon there were now three other boys—Lucien, Louis and Jerome; and three girls—Elisa, Pauline and Caroline.

Joseph was giving trouble. He disliked the prospect of the Church, and wished to be a soldier like Napoleon. And, to crown all, Carlo Buonaparte himself was very ill.

The first impressions of Napoleon at Paris were no pleasanter than those he had received on entering Autun and Brienne. Here, as before, his fellow-pupils, many of them proud and rich, looked on the

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awkward foreign youth with scorn. No wonder perhaps; the swarthy, lank-haired boy stared at the sights of that gay city, Paris, open-mouthed. He was ill-clothed and badly shod; his manners were uncouth and shy.

All through his life, to some extent, this awkward manner clung to him. Especially was he ill at ease in the company of ladies. He could talk to them on serious subjects; he could scold and lecture them, as, when he became Emperor, he often did. But he had no small talk; he could not "chat."

It was twelve months before he was transferred from the Military School of Paris to the army. During that year, in February 1785, his father died. Already on several occasions Napoleon had shown himself prudent and thoughtful beyond his years; but on his father's death he seemed to take upon himself the care, not only of his widowed mother but of the whole family. Here is the letter which he wrote his mother on his father's death :-

"Now that time has somewhat calmed the first transports of my grief, let me hasten to assure you of the gratitude inspired by the kindnesses you have ever shown us. Console yourself, my dear mother; circumstances require it. We will redouble our cares and our gratitude; happy if we can, by our obedience, recompense you somewhat for the loss of a cherished husband. My grief forces me to conclude with praying that you will calm your own. My health is perfect, and I pray daily that heaven may grant you the same. . . .

"Your very humble and affectionate son,
"NAPOLEONE DE BUONAPARTE."

Here also is the report upon him, when at last he left the Paris school :—

“A Corsican by nationality and by character. He will go far if circumstances favour him.

“He is granite heated red-hot. He prefers study to all amusement ; fond of abstract science, he knows thoroughly mathematics and geography. Haughty, capricious, silent, inclined to egoism ; energetic in reply, prompt and severe in repartee.

“This young man aspires to everything, and deserves to be pushed forward.”

The character of him who was one day to be the Emperor of France was thus already formed.

Napoleon joined a regiment of artillery, the arm of war he was to make especially his own. He had originally thought of the navy, but that idea had been abandoned. The navy, it may be mentioned, was not then in France a separate “service” as it is with us. It was regarded as a branch of the army.

It is needful that we now pass quickly over several years of young Napoleon’s life ; over eight years in fact. On leaving the Paris school he went to join his regiment, and moved with it here and there from time to time ; he was at Valence, Lyons and Douai. He also received frequent leave of absence, and these absences he spent in Corsica. In 1789 his regiment had been quartered at Auxonne. There are some details of his life while at Auxonne which it is well worth our while to know.

After a long visit to Corsica he returned to Auxonne in the early spring of 1791, but not alone.

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He brought with him his little brother Louis, who was twelve years old ; he did so to relieve their mother of the burden of his brother's maintenance.

Napoleon was still only sub-lieutenant, and his pay was small ; it amounted to no more than about half-a-crown a day. True, half-a-crown went somewhat farther in those days than it does now ; but it was a small sum on which to feed and clothe a man of twenty-two and boy of twelve.

But young Napoleon felt this step to be his duty, and he did not hesitate. Before his brother's coming he had lived a very frugal life. He wrote : " I go to bed at ten o'clock, and get up at four in the morning. I only eat one meal a day—at three o'clock."

When Louis came Napoleon often cooked their meals with his own hands ; it was most generally of bread and broth alone. His room contained a table, two chairs and a pallet bed. Louis slept in a little closet close at hand.

"Do you know how I managed it ?" Napoleon said long afterwards. "It was by never setting foot in society or in a café ; by eating dry bread, and by brushing my clothes myself, so that they should last longer."

Thus, upon half-a-crown a day, the brothers lived, Napoleon never getting into debt. Once only, at the last, he did so ; for when he was appointed first-lieutenant he had to buy a sword and a new uniform. On leaving Auxonne for Valence he owed five pounds ; that debt he paid some few years afterwards, as soon as circumstances would permit.

All through his life Napoleon had a horror of extravagance and debt. He could be very lavish when he thought it right ; he would spend millions on his army, on improving cities, and would order all the ladies of his court to be dressed richly so as to encourage trade. But all foolish, useless squandering of money made him very angry, and he had no mercy for dishonesty or debt.

Years afterwards a gentleman complained to him how difficult it was to live on some five hundred pounds a year. Napoleon cut short these complaints :

“I know all about it, sir. When I had the honour to be a sub-lieutenant I breakfasted off dry bread, but I bolted the door on my poverty. In public I did not disgrace my comrades.”

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST SUCCESS

IN the autumn of 1791 Napoleon was again in Corsica. He had been given leave of absence from his regiment for three months, but he did not return to France until May 1792.

While he was paying this long visit to his native isle, something occurred in Europe of which he no doubt thought little at the time. A little daughter was born to the Emperor Francis of Austria, and was named Marie-Louise.

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What would that emperor have said, one wonders, if some fortune-teller had told him that his daughter's future husband was a Corsican, a poor obscure lieutenant in a regiment of artillery in France? The Austrian monarch would have laughed at such a thought; Napoleon himself, ambitious as he was, would not have dreamed of such a thing. Yet so it



NAPOLEON AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-TWO. (AFTER THE PAINTING BY GREUZE.)

was to be; eighteen years later that young princess was Napoleon's wife and Empress of the French.

The Revolution had now broken out in France; on this and other visits which he paid to Corsica Napoleon joined in trying to raise his countrymen against the monarchy. Early in 1792 he was elected lieutenant-colonel of a regiment of Corsican volunteers. He still loved Corsica and hated

France; and he made some attempts to aid the island in freeing itself not only from the monarchy but from the rule of France.

Returning once more to France in the month of May, he was dismissed from his regiment for being so long absent without leave. He went to Paris for a time.

Strange things were happening there. On June 20,

1792, the Paris mob attacked the royal palace of the Tuileries. Bourrienne was then in Paris, and Napoleon renewed the friendship formed with him while they were at Brienne. The two friends happened to be in the streets that day and saw the rabble, clothed in tatters, armed with weapons of all kinds, as it rushed shouting towards the palace gates.

“Let us follow the mob,” said Napoleon.

The young men did so, and soon stood upon the river bank where they could see the sight. King Louis, who had then but a few months to live, stood at a window of the palace, wearing the red Cap of Liberty upon his head.

Napoleon looked on with disgust.

“What blockheads,” he exclaimed, as the vast mob poured through the palace gates. “Why have they let the rabble in? They should have swept some hundreds of them off with cannon, and the rest would soon have fled.” The day was not far distant when he was to prove the use of such a plan.

Two months later, on August 10, the Tuileries was once more mobbed and sacked; the soldiers of the King’s Swiss Guard were slain. Within another month France had been declared a Republic, and upon January 21, 1793, the most unfortunate King Louis died upon the scaffold of the guillotine.

Napoleon had felt no great sympathy for the unhappy monarch. “Most kings deserve to be dethroned,” he had once said. But he looked with horror and disgust upon the wild doings of the Paris

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rabble, and upon the feebleness of those who should have kept it in control. He saw the need for a strong government in France, and perhaps already felt that he could govern strongly if he had the power.

Meanwhile he had no power and was very poor. Together he and Bourrienne roamed about the streets. Of the two, Bourrienne was, perhaps, a little richer than the man whose secretary he would one day be. The two friends dined at "six-sou" (threepenny) restaurants, and often it was Bourrienne who paid for both. Napoleon, upon one occasion, had to pawn his watch.

He was again in Corsica during the autumn of 1792 and the first half of 1793. But he now quarrelled with the patriot Paoli; and when he left the island he brought with him to France his mother and the younger members of his family. He had already given what was deemed a satisfactory explanation of his conduct in Corsica upon various occasions and of his long absence without leave; and he had been restored to the army with the rank of captain. Henceforth it was for France, and France alone, that he would fight.

And now the chance to do so came to him, for France was being attacked on every side. When Louis the Sixteenth was put to death, Danton, one of the leaders of the Revolution, had exclaimed: "Kings threaten us; we hurl at their feet, as gage of battle, the Head of a King." Britain, for one, had taken up that gage.



THE MOB INVADES THE TUILERIES.

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Britain held Toulon, in the south of France. There were many Royalists in the town, and in their natural horror at King Louis' death they had surrendered the place to the British. It was strongly garrisoned, partly by British troops brought from Gibraltar; in its spacious harbour was a British fleet.

The Convention—the Revolutionary government—had armies fighting on all sides of France. One was upon the Rhine, another was in Italy, while a third force of 25,000 men besieged Toulon.

Napoleon applied for employment, first with the Army of the Rhine and then with that engaged in Italy. He had even gone as far as Marseilles on his way to join this latter army, when it was suggested to him that he might find opportunities of being useful at Toulon. He reached that place about the 12th of September 1793.

It was a somewhat curious army that he found outside Toulon. Its commander-in-chief was Carteaux, who was not a soldier by profession, having been brought up as a painter! Most of the officers of the old French army were now fighting on the Royalist side or else had fled from France. Commands in the Republican forces were often given to good "Patriots"—that is Revolutionists—whatever their original profession might have been.

Though Carteaux was the nominal commander-in-chief, there were also present Commissioners of the Convention. These men interfered with the command

in many ways, and often their advice and interference were disastrous to success.

Napoleon arrived at an opportune moment; for, only a few days previously, a captain of artillery had been killed. Artillery was young Napoleon's special work, and he now took the dead man's place.

Up to this time the siege had not been carried on with skill. Carteaux and the Commissioners had been firing on Toulon from the land side; their cannon balls fell short, the British fleet lying in the harbour was but little harmed.

There are two harbours at Toulon, an outer and an inner one. On the west these harbours are divided by a jutting point of land upon which stood a fort called by the French the Fort de l'Aiguillette. A little distance from it stands the Fort Napoleon, known by the English at that time as Fort Mulgrave or Little Gibraltar.

Napoleon clearly saw that it was useless to bombard the town and harbour from the landward side; it was these forts between the harbours which were the important points to seize. If that were done the British fleet would then be at his mercy; no supplies of food or ammunition could arrive by sea, and so the town must yield.

It was some little time before Carteaux and the Commissioners would share his views, for they were inclined to be jealous of the young new-comer. But presently orders were received from the War Office at Paris that his plan was to be tried. Carteaux was

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recalled; a doctor of the name of Doppet took his place. But Doppet soon gave place to Dugommier, a more capable soldier. In November Napoleon was made Acting Commander of the Artillery.

Already, ever since his coming, he had been most active in the work. He caused more cannon to be brought from Lyons and Marseilles; he established workshops for repairing muskets, and for the manufacture and repair of other things.

He toiled both day and night, and seldom left his post for needful rest. If he lay down it was beside his guns, wrapped in his cloak, he slept.

One of the gunners suffered from an irritating skin disease; the man was killed while firing his gun. Napoleon seized the rammer from the dead man's hand, and for some minutes worked the gun himself. He caught the skin disease and suffered from it more or less for several years.

The British frequently attacked the batteries he built. During the weeks spent at Toulon he had three horses killed beneath him; he received a sword-thrust in the thigh, of which the scar was visible for the remainder of his life.

While acting at Toulon Napoleon met for the first time a man for whom he did great things in after years. That man was Andoche Junot; later, under Napoleon's rule, he was made Governor of Paris, Governor of Portugal, and finally a duke. He was a fearless fighter and was often at Napoleon's side; he had some faults, but he remained for life a true

and loving servant of the Emperor. The story of their meeting is worth telling, for it shows us how Napoleon's eyes were always looking out for brave, deserving men.

Napoleon had one day to send a message to a distant post—a post so situated that the messenger might very likely fall into British hands. He called for some one who would carry it, and Sergeant Junot, a young man of twenty-two, was sent to him.

“Remove your uniform coat,” said Napoleon, “and carry this order there.” He pointed with his hand to the dangerous spot.

Junot's eyes flashed.

“I am no *spy*,” he said; “seek some one else to do such work.” So saying he turned upon his heel.

“You refuse to obey!” exclaimed Napoleon. “Do you know the consequences of disobedience?”

“I am ready to obey,” answered Junot proudly; “but I will go in my uniform or I will not go at all.”

“But the English will kill you.”

“What matter? I have my sword and these sweetmeats”—here he pointed to the bullets in his pouch. “If the gentlemen over there wish to talk, at least the conversation shall be lively.”



JUNOT.

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And Junot went upon his dangerous errand, singing as he went.

“What is that young man’s name?” Napoleon asked.

“Junot.”

“Well, he will make his way ;” and in his pocket-book Napoleon wrote Junot’s name.

A few days afterward Napoleon had another note to send. His own handwriting was most difficult to read.

“Fetch me a man who can write well,” he said.

It was young Sergeant Junot who was brought.

“Seat yourself there, and write what I dictate.”

Junot spread out his paper on the wall of the battery in which they were, and wrote. Just as he had finished, a bomb from Toulon burst close by, enveloping Napoleon, Junot and the letter in a cloud of dust.

“Good!” exclaimed Junot with a smile ; “they seem to know we had no sand to dry the ink.”

There was no blotting-paper in those days ; fine sand was shaken on the paper of a letter to dry up the ink.

Napoleon looked at Junot with keen, searching eyes. The sergeant had not trembled, had not changed the calmness of his features at the sudden danger of the bursting shell. He was the sort of man Napoleon wanted at his side. A few weeks later the young sergeant with the good handwriting had become the future Emperor’s aide-de-camp.

Napoleon knew not only how to recognize and

use a brave man when he saw him; he knew also how to *make* men brave. One of the batteries he built was much exposed to British shells; the men began to shun the dangerous post. Napoleon soon found a way of filling it with volunteers. One morning, written in large letters, there appeared this notice on its walls—

“The Battery of Those who are not Afraid.”

That was enough for Frenchmen, and henceforth it was a post greatly coveted.

On November 30 the British made a sally against the French batteries, but unsuccessfully; the British commander, General O'Hara, was made prisoner. About midnight on December 17, in pouring rain, the French attacked Fort Mulgrave and the Fort de l'Aiguillette. They were at first repulsed, but fresh troops rushed on eagerly to the attack. Fort Mulgrave was taken.

The siege of Toulon was over. In a few days the British vessels sailed away, taking on board some fourteen thousand of the Royalists of the town. Toulon was set on fire, and a dreadful slaughter of the remaining Royalists ensued; for the Revolutionists were enraged at their having surrendered the place.

Napoleon took no part in that cruel slaughter—would indeed have stopped it had he had the power, which as yet he lacked. Still those three months before Toulon had brought him to the front. General

Duteil, who was nominally chief in command of the artillery, but had interfered little with his capable sub-officer, wrote of him to the Minister of War in Paris in the following terms—

“He has a great deal of science, as much intelligence, and too much bravery. It rests with you, Minister, to retain them for the glory of the Republic.”

Napoleon had thus taken his first step upon that upward path which was to lead so far.

CHAPTER IV

THE GENERAL

IN February 1794 Napoleon, as a reward for his great services at Toulon, was appointed General of Brigade. During a few months both before and after that promotion he was employed in various ways; as an inspector of the coast, with the French army then in Italy, and also in preparing plans.

Like almost everyone in those unsettled times he had his enemies. By some of these he was accused of meditating treachery, and was thrown into prison for a time. But it was not long before he was released.

Even in prison and in some danger of being put to death, Napoleon kept cool and calm. Hot-headed, warm-hearted Junot had formed a plan for attacking the prison and releasing him.

“Do nothing,” wrote Napoleon to him; “you would only compromise me.”

Meanwhile Britain had seized Corsica. Napoleon was placed at the head of an expedition to re-take the island ; but the French fleet was defeated and the expedition failed.

Early in the summer of 1795 he was ordered to join the army of General Hoche, which was then fighting the French Royalists in the west. Such work was little to Napoleon's taste ; it was against the foreign foes of France, not against Frenchmen, that he wished to fight. He refused to go, and for this disobedience was struck off the list of generals.

But he was not left unemployed for long. The 5th of October 1795 was the "Day of Sections," and it brought Napoleon work.

More than one "Section" of the Paris populace had grown dissatisfied with the Convention, and on the 4th there were clear signs that a revolt was near. The Government prepared to defend its power, and Barras was placed in supreme command. Some one was needed who would act as his assistant ; Barras said : "I have precisely the man we want. It is a little Corsican officer who will not stand on ceremony." Needless to say Napoleon was the officer of whom he spoke.

Cannon were quickly brought from Sablons, a short distance off ; Napoleon placed them so as to command the chief streets leading to the Tuileries. His orders were sharp, clear, decided, and he seemed to foresee everything.

All through that day—October 5—he moved about

beside his guns ; the insurgent Sections thronged the neighbourhood with muskets in their hands. Not till towards evening did the outbreak finally explode. Some one then fired a musket ; others quickly did the same. With an unchanging countenance Napoleon gave the order for his guns to speak. Against artillery the Sections with their muskets had no chance ; in a few hours the fight was at an end.



THE EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE.

Forthwith the Sections were disarmed, an act which was to have a great effect upon Napoleon's future life. The search for arms was made in the houses of many who had taken no part in the revolt ; and one house thus searched was that of Joséphine de Beauharnais, the widow of a French officer and gentleman. She was a Creole—not a coloured person, but a French-

woman born in the West Indies. If not exactly beautiful, she was an elegant and graceful woman, with a winning smile and a soft, silvery voice. She had a son and daughter, Eugène and Hortense.

During this search for arms the sword of her dead husband had been carried off. Eugène came to Napoleon the next day, and begged to have his father's sword returned. The general received him kindly, and gave him back the sword. The next day Madame de

Beauharnais came herself to thank Napoleon for his courtesy. She was two years his senior, but he fell in love with her at once.

A week later Napoleon was appointed second-in-command of the Army of the Interior. Within a fortnight Barras had resigned his position as chief commander, and Napoleon took his place.

There was dissatisfaction and unrest in Paris still, but the young general held the mob in check by various means. When force was needed he used force, but he knew also how to disarm anger with a smile. The following story of him is well known.

A stout and angry fishwife was engaged in stirring up a crowd against the Government. Napoleon and some soldiers came upon the scene.

“Don’t mind those dandies in uniform,” shouted the angry woman; “don’t disperse. They care not if the poor starve, so long as they grow fat.”

Napoleon looked at her, then at the people who stood round. Although no longer poor, he was still thin.

“Madame,” he said, “pray look at me. Which of us is the fatter?”

The fat fishwife stood speechless, and the mob broke out into a laugh at her expense. All danger of a riot in that quarter disappeared.

Early in 1796 Schérer, commander of the French “Army of Italy,” resigned; Napoleon, aged only twenty-six, was made its general in his stead. On March 11 he left Paris to join his troops; two days

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previously he had been married to the charming Joséphine.

The other generals of the army were inclined to be indignant at being placed at the orders of a younger man. But Napoleon knew well how to make himself obeyed. Henceforth he wore an air of dignity and reserve which kept familiarity at a distance and made insubordination impossible. His smile could, when he chose to show it, win all hearts; his frown could make the bravest man afraid.

“That little General frightened me,” said the bluff Augereau, as he came out from interviewing Napoleon in his tent.

The army itself was in the most impoverished state, as indeed too was the Directory which governed France. The soldiers had no proper clothes and hardly any food. Yet it was intimated to Napoleon that he must expect no money, no supplies of any sort from home. His army was to live on the country in which it fought.

These hard conditions he accepted cheerfully, and made his soldiers do the same; it was in these words that he addressed his men—

“Soldiers! You are naked, badly fed. The Government owes you much; it can give you nothing. Your endurance, and the courage you have shown, do you credit, but gain you no advantage, get you no glory. I will lead you into the most fertile plains in the world. Rich provinces, great cities, will be in



NAPOLÉON LEADING THE ATTACK ON THE BRIDGE AT ARCOLA.
(AFTER AN OLD PRINT.)

your power ; and there you will find honour, glory and riches. Soldiers of Italy, can you be found wanting in courage ? ”

There is no space to speak of the great battles which he fought in Italy that year—Montenotte, Lodi, Arcola ; in later chapters I shall show a little of Napoleon as he was upon the battle-field. But one incident of Lodi must be briefly told.

It was against the Austrians, who had long held Italy, that the French were fighting. Napoleon drove them from the town of Lodi ; they had crossed the river Adda and were strongly posted on the further bank—infantry, cavalry, artillery, in all an army of some fifteen thousand men. A narrow wooden bridge was the one road across the river, and on this were trained the Austrian guns. Even the brave French soldiers for a time held back

But not for long. Napoleon spoke to them and chose six thousand grenadiers. At the word of command the men rushed from the shelter of the walls of Lodi and dashed forward for the bridge. A hail of shot, shell, and bullets rained upon it ; yet still the Frenchmen gained the pathway ; then they hesitated, faltered, seemed about to turn.

Napoleon, Masséna, Lannes, Berthier, rallied them. Lannes, one of the very bravest, best, and truest of Napoleon's famous generals, was the first man to cross the bridge. Napoleon, hard upon his heels, came next. In a few minutes the opposing Austrian army was in full retreat.

That night, around the fires of their camp, Napoleon's soldiers christened him "The Little Corporal."

The war between France and Austria was brought to a close on October 17, 1797, by the Treaty of Campo Formio. On May 19 in the following year Napoleon sailed from Toulon in the flag-ship *Orient* as commander of an expedition against Egypt.

Bourrienne, who was now his private secretary, went with him. It is well for us that he did so, for his *Memoirs* give us many interesting details of the voyage. It was the only long sea-voyage Napoleon took, until he went upon that last sad voyage to the far distant island of St. Helena.

There is much time to spare during a long sea-voyage, but Napoleon was not the man to waste it. He furnished his small cabin with a library of books of many kinds. There were the volumes he had loved so well in boyhood—Plutarch's *Lives*; there were the *Voyages* of the famous English seaman, Captain Cook; together with the Bible, forty English novels, Ossian's poems, and many more.

Napoleon spent much time in his cabin, lying in his bunk while Bourrienne read aloud to him. When it was rough—and it is very rough at times in the blue waters of the Mediterranean—he suffered a good deal from sea-sickness.

He was a soldier, and in battle he took small account of human life. But yet at heart he was a humane, kindly man. No sooner was a battle over than he would set off upon the field to see that wounded soldiers, both his own men and the enemy's,

were given aid. He visited the military hospitals and saw to the condition of the wounded there.

Once he observed a wounded soldier, and was told the man was in a hopeless state; he could not live, the doctor said. "Try your utmost, nevertheless," said Napoleon; "it is always something to have saved a single life."

He showed this care for human life while on the voyage to Egypt. There were about two thousand people on the ship, and more than once it happened that some man fell overboard. When this occurred Napoleon's anxiety until the man had been picked up was very great, and he rewarded liberally the efforts that the sailors of the *Orient* made to save a life.

One night, long after dark had fallen, a loud splash was heard; some one had fallen overboard. A boat was put off quickly from the ship, and presently the men in her picked up—no *man*, but a large, heavy piece of beef which had fallen from the hook on which it had been hanging in the rigging!

The would-be rescuers, on returning to the ship, were somewhat laughed at by their friends. But Napoleon did not share in the laughter, and he ordered the sailors a larger reward than on previous occasions.

"It *might* have been a sailor," he explained; "at any rate these brave men thought it was, and did their best."

Capturing the island of Malta on his way, Napoleon landed with his troops near Alexandria on July 1.

The following day he took that town; on the 21st he gained the Battle of the Pyramids, and Cairo was entered on the 23rd. There we will leave Napoleon for a moment and go back to the French fleet.

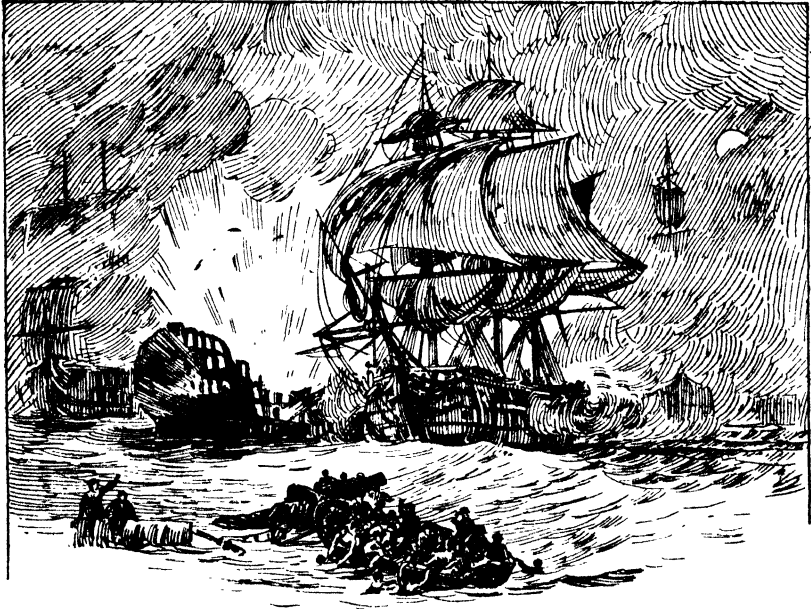
There was a little boy of ten years old on board the flag-ship *Orient*, and his name will, I feel sure, be quite familiar to most readers of this book, for it was *Casa-Bianca*. His father was commander of the *Orient*, and had taken his young son with him upon this voyage. Father and son alike were doomed to meet a dreadful fate; both perished in the famous Battle of the Nile.

Nelson came up with the French fleet as it was lying in Aboukir Bay. He appeared at sunset, and the French admiral, Brueys, did not think that Nelson would attack him till the following day. But Nelson was not fond of waiting when he thought it possible to act at once. Some of his ships stole in between the French fleet and the land, others attacked it from the side which faced the sea.

The British were victorious, and the cry soon rose that the French flag-ship was on fire. She had recently been freshly painted, and the new paint caused her timbers to blaze furiously. Brueys, the admiral, was dead, but *Casa-Bianca* and his little son still lived. Presently, with a loud roar like that of heavy guns, the ship blew up.

Nelson, on board his ship the *Vanguard*, had been wounded, and was being tended by a surgeon below-decks. Hearing the noise he rushed on deck, saw

what had happened, and gave orders for the lowering of boats to save the *Orient's* drowning crew. But only seventy were saved ; Casa-Bianca and his son, with many more, were drowned. That is the story told in



THE BLOWING UP OF THE "ORIENT."
(FROM AN OLD PAINTING.)

Mrs. Hemans' poem which many of us know by heart, beginning with the line—

"The boy stood on the burning deck."

The loss of his fleet was a heavy blow to Napoleon ; well might he say in after years, " I could go nowhere on the sea without finding English ships in my way."

But still he went forward, conquering difficulties in that sandy desert land, till in the spring of 1799 he was checked before the walls of Acre. In vain he tried to take it, and on May 22 the French army was retreating towards the sea.

The men were weary and disheartened, and the plague had broken out among their ranks. Again their commander showed himself considerate for sick and wounded men. All officers and mounted soldiers were commanded to give up their horses for the use of sufferers. Napoleon's groom came to him, asking him which horse he meant to ride. "Begone," Napoleon said, with sudden violence; "everyone goes on foot, and I the first."

Bad news reached him from Europe. The French had been driven from Italy by the Austrians whom he had vanquished with such glory three years previously. Once more he saw that a strong hand was needed at the helm. "I must return to France," he said.

He resigned the army in Egypt to the command of General Kléber, and on August 24 sailed from Alexandria. On October 6, after narrowly escaping capture by the British, he landed safely at Fréjus and found himself once more in France.

CHAPTER V

NAPOLEON AT HOME

A FEW weeks after his return to France Napoleon seized the reins of power in his own strong hands.

He turned out the feeble Directorate and established in its place a Consulate of three men. Napoleon was First Consul; and, as usually happens when a committee has one outstanding member, his colleagues did little else than assent to his measures.

In May 1800 Napoleon once more marched an army into Italy, crossing the Alps by the St. Bernard Pass. A month later he gained the glorious victory of Marengo, fought on June 14. Early in 1801 the Treaty of Lunéville made peace between Germany and France, and in March 1802 war with Britain ended by the Peace of Amiens. In August Napoleon was made First Consul for life. On December 2, 1804, he was crowned in Paris as the Emperor of the French.

I mean to show him to you presently upon the battle-field. But, though he was essentially a soldier, Napoleon was many other things as well: a law-giver, an organizer, a restorer of order and trade in the hitherto distracted land. Nothing was too great for him to undertake; he revised the laws, revived French education, undertook the making of good roads and new canals.

Yet, on the other hand, no detail was too small to be beneath his notice, and petitions from the poorest, humblest people came before him and were attended to. Of his attention to small things the following story shows the value which he placed on order and method even in the most trifling matters.

He was one day visiting a hospital for invalid

soldiers, and was inquiring into every detail in his usual way.

“How do you place in the drawers the clean shirts brought from the laundress?” he asked the matron. Not receiving a very definite answer he went on—

“They should be placed underneath the others. Then, if clean shirts are always given out from the top of the pile, all will be worn equally in turn. That is the correct way.”

All that he did for France during the time that he was First Consul and then Emperor cost him a vast amount of work, even when he was not at war. You may, perhaps, like to know how the great Emperor spent a day of peace; I will attempt to show him as he lived in his palace of the Tuileries in Paris. That palace is no longer in existence; it was, as we saw, attacked by the mob during the Revolution, and again in later days, and was at last burned down in 1871. Only its splendid gardens still remain.

You must, then, picture to yourself Napoleon as a man about five feet three inches tall. He perhaps looked at his best on horseback, for his legs were rather short. He was broad-shouldered, with a short, thick neck. His feet were very small, his hands were delicate and plump. He had a noble forehead, beautiful grey eyes, a smooth pale face. His hair, in colour chestnut brown, had been worn very long in younger days; later he had it cut comparatively short. The dress in which he was most often seen when out of doors consisted of a small cocked hat with tricolour

cockade, and a grey overcoat ; he usually wore the uniform of colonels of the Guard.

Between six and seven o'clock in the morning Constant, the Emperor's chief valet, entered his master's chamber and aroused him from his sleep. "Open the windows and let me breathe God's air," would often be Napoleon's first words. His private secretary—Bourrienne till 1802, then Méneval—handed him letters, which he glanced through rapidly. Some were important ; these he put aside to be considered later. Others of little interest he would throw upon the carpet round his chair ; that was his "answer" to them, as he said. Then he looked through the morning newspapers, and asked the names of people who were waiting in the ante-room.

Twice a week came the famous doctor, Corvisart, the one in whom Napoleon had most faith. Often the Emperor would receive him while still seated in his bed, a muslin handkerchief wound round his head. And even Corvisart did not escape the teasing which Napoleon gave to all with whom he was on friendly terms ; the Emperor professed to have but little faith in doctors or their drugs.

"So there you are, you quack," he would exclaim as Corvisart was ushered in ; "how many people have you killed to-day ?" Then he would pull the doctor's ears, a habit which he had with almost everyone he liked. Meanwhile he sipped a cup of orange-flower water or of tea.

Napoleon then took his bath, a thing he passion-

ately loved. Sometimes he lay in the warm water for an hour or more, turning the hot tap on from time to time to keep the temperature high. And presently he shaved himself.

He had some difficulty in learning to do this, it being thought undesirable that so dangerous a weapon as a razor should be placed in other hands than his. He always lathered one cheek first, then shaved that clean before the other one was touched. Meanwhile Constant stood before him with a basin of hot water and the shaving-soap, while Roustan held a mirror to the level of his master's face. Roustan was an Egyptian who had been presented to Napoleon in Egypt.

The razor laid aside, Napoleon washed his hands, often with English "Windsor" soap; plunged his head several times in water, then paid great attention to his fine white teeth. He also had his skin rubbed vigorously with brushes.

Soon he was dressed; most usually in white silk stockings, white cashmere breeches and white waistcoat, and gold-buckled shoes. His coat was usually the blue uniform coat of a grenadier, or the green one of a cavalry officer.

When he was fully dressed his valets handed him his pocket-handkerchief, scented with eau de Cologne; a sweetmeat box containing liquorice; his snuff-box, hat and watch. Napoleon could not bear tight clothes, or stiff new hats or shoes. Both hats and shoes were "broken" for him—worn by a valet for some days—before he put them on for the first time.

He took snuff constantly, but more from habit than because he liked it, for he hardly put the powder to his nose. Once only did he try to smoke. At the first whiff of a large Turkish pipe he coughed and choked. "Faugh! take away this filthy stuff," he cried, and never tried to smoke again.

At nine o'clock the Emperor issued from his private room and joined those who were awaiting him outside. It was the moment of the "lever," a French word meaning "getting up."

Now the "lever" in the time of previous French monarchs was the hour for gossip, witty sayings and idle talk. All this Napoleon changed; he had no time for play. Men came no longer to the Tuileries to make themselves agreeable or to say smart things; they came to take his orders or to make reports to him. If anyone had very much to say he was received in private audience when the "lever" had been held.

Such private audiences were not invariably entirely agreeable to the man—or woman—whom Napoleon received. The Emperor stood usually with his back to the fireplace, leaning against the mantel-piece, and, in winter, kicking the logs upon the hearth with his boot-heel. On no mouth was there to be seen a sweeter or more gracious smile when he was satisfied and pleased; but anger brought a fierce gleam to his eyes. As Augereau had done in Italy when in the presence of the "little General," so great men often trembled at the Emperor's frown.

The strictest punctuality in coming to an audience

must be kept. Once, when Napoleon had reached the summit of his power, some gentleman was late ; but he brought forward an acceptable excuse. "I was delayed by meeting with a crowd of kings," he said ; kings who, like others, had to wait the pleasure of the Emperor of France.

The breakfast-hour was at half-past nine ; but always business was of more importance to Napoleon than his meals, and often breakfast was delayed an hour or more and was half cold.

Nor did that breakfast take Napoleon very long to eat—seven or eight minutes at the most ! He took some soup ; roast meat, choosing the part best cooked ; some fowl, with perhaps a little pastry, fruit and cheese. A cup of coffee finished the repast. It must be owned that he was an untidy eater, putting his fingers sometimes in the dish, and making many spots upon his clothes. He drank but little wine, and what he took was freely mixed with water.

He always breakfasted alone ; no other person shared that meal with him. But artists, men of letters, often stood around ; and children too—nephews and nieces—were sometimes brought in, with whom Napoleon laughed and joked. And in his later years his little son, the King of Rome, would often sit upon his knee, while the great father smeared the baby face with gravy or with wine and laughed as gaily as the child.

After his breakfast Napoleon paid a visit to the Empress Joséphine, who had taken her meal with her

ladies in another room. He stayed for a few minutes only, laughing, teasing, sometimes scolding. Joséphine, gracious and amiable as she was, had one great fault ; she was extravagant, and this we know Napoleon could not bear.

The Emperor then retired to his cabinet and set to work. This cabinet, or study, where he worked, looked out upon the gardens of the Tuileries. A splendid writing-table was almost the only object of importance in the room. Napoleon seldom sat before it, being more often on a green settee, upon a table by the side of which letters and papers had been laid. When he sat at the large table it was to sign the documents and letters which his secretaries had prepared for signature.

SIGNATURE OF NAPOLEON.

Except when taking special pains, Napoleon wrote a dreadful hand. He left out letters, misspelt words, and could not read what he had written when he looked at it again. That was because the thoughts flew through his brain much more quickly than his pen could set them down.

Entering his cabinet he threw his sword and hat upon a chair ; then he would seat himself for a few minutes upon the green settee, examining the papers at his side. Then rising, he commenced dictating

letters to the secretary, who was already seated pen in hand.

As he dictated he walked up and down the room ; his nature was too active to permit him to be still. And, as his thoughts began to flow more freely, as what he had to say grew clearer in his mind, his pace increased ; he walked still faster, spoke more rapidly. His right hand tugged the lapel of his coat.

The secretary's pen flew swiftly, but it hardly kept pace with Napoleon's tongue. It was necessary to leave out needless words, to write a kind of shorthand, and to use initials in the place of names.

The letters thus written were on subjects of all kinds. There were letters to his marshals and generals ; to heads of the universities ; letters about public works in France—bridges and roads ; orders about the ceremonial at some grand reception of his court. Details of all such things and many more were in Napoleon's active brain.

After dictating in his private cabinet the Emperor passed to the Council of State, where all important subjects were discussed. The Council might last one hour, or perhaps two or three—sometimes as much as seven or eight. Sometimes the hour for dinner sounded, but Napoleon took no notice of the time. What mattered rest and food to him ? Why was he Emperor if not to work ?

“ I have found the limit of my strength in eye and limb. I have never found the limit of my capacity for work,” so he once said.

That was what he asked from all his servants—hard, untiring work. He paid them well, but he would hardly understand that they could ever tire.

“I worked all day,” was the excuse once given him by one whose task was still undone.

“All day! But had you not the night as well?” was the reply. Napoleon did not see that his secretaries and others had anything to complain of if, as was sometimes the case, they passed three nights together without taking any rest.

Yet he would sometimes feel the need of rest himself. He compared his mind to a cabinet of drawers, in which each subject occupied a separate drawer which could be opened when he wanted what it held. Sometimes, though seldom, all those drawers were closed. Then he would loiter through the palace; taking up a book and glancing at it, but soon throwing it down; singing snatches of songs in a most unmusical voice; or, seating himself upon the arm of Méneval’s chair, he would pat his shoulder and pull his ears. At times he hunted, nearly always riding at a furious rate.

He found it difficult to sit quite still. At the head of the Council table he took snuff rapidly, or would dig his pen-knife in the table or his chair. He habitually wiped his pen on his white breeches, so that a clean pair was needed almost every day.

Six o’clock was the time appointed for the Emperor’s dinner, but the Empress often waited for him a good hour and more. It was very difficult

for the cooks to prevent the dinner from being wholly spoilt.

All French people like fowls, and Napoleon shared this taste. Finding how often the dinner was kept waiting, the cooks devised the plan of setting a fresh fowl to roast every quarter of an hour, so that at least one should be fit to eat when Napoleon was ready for it. One day he had been greatly occupied with business, and it was eleven at night before he came to dine. Twenty-three fowls had been put down to roast for him that day!

The dinner, though more elaborate than the luncheon, was still simple, and it lasted but a quarter of an hour. Yet, even in that short time, Napoleon did not wholly rest. Pamphlets or newspapers were read aloud to him; officers, summoned to receive his orders, came and went.

He then joined the Empress in the drawing-room, took from her hands a cup of coffee sweetened to his taste, and chatted for a little with the "circle" there. His conversation with the ladies of that circle was not always to their taste; for he had no idea of small talk or of exerting himself to be agreeable in a general way.

To one lady he would remark that her dress suited her very badly; to another that she had grown to look extremely old! When ladies who were strangers were presented to him, there were two questions that he almost always asked: "How many children have you?" and "How old are you?" So with the ladies

who expected to be treated with the courtesy and great politeness of the old French courts, he was not popular.

He sometimes played awhile at cards; but generally he left the drawing-room soon, and, mounting to his cabinet, would set himself once more to work. A little before midnight he would go to bed; sometimes the Empress came and read aloud to him until he was asleep.

But often after some three hours of sleep he woke and rose; wrapped in a dressing-gown he sat down at his table and wrote busily for an hour and more. Or else he caused his secretary to be called, and, pacing up and down, once more dictated to the flying pen.

His secretary had one order upon which he was invariably to act: "Never wake me to hear good news; that will wait," Napoleon said; "but in case of bad news wake me at once, for there is no time to be lost." Napoleon had the useful power of taking an hour or half-hour's sleep at any time he chose.

Such is a fair example of Napoleon's daily life. Often he was away conducting his campaigns; at other times a portion of his day was spent reviewing his troops; sometimes he travelled through the different parts of France.

Many things have been said against him; people will tell you that he was ambitious, over-bearing, fond of war. One thing it is quite clear they cannot say; they cannot say he was an idle man.

What had he, personally, to gain by such untiring

work? He had few pleasures; those he had were for the most part simple ones. He liked to see a woman, dressed in white, walking beneath the shadow of an avenue of trees; he liked to hear the sound of evening bells.

His ceaseless work, and much at least of his ambition, were for France. He wished to see her powerful and great, a queen among the nations of the world. Surely some faults may be forgiven to the man who worked so hard for his adopted land.

CHAPTER VI

AT RATISBON

WE must again pass over several years; there is no space to speak of the great victory Napoleon gained against the Austrians and Russians on the battle-field of Austerlitz in the year 1805. Still you must see Napoleon as he was in war, for it was there that he was really most at home. We must remember that he was a soldier by profession; of all his many occupations, war was the one which he best understood.

Hostilities had broken out again with Austria in 1809; the Archduke Charles, the Austrian commander, took the field. The campaign, or series of battles, included those of Abenberg, Eckmühl, Essling and Wagram; the last resulted in a splendid

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victory for France, and brought about the Treaty of Schoenbrunn by which Austria yielded much.

Long chapters might be written on each battle of this great campaign ; but we will look rather at the



NAPOLEON AT AUSTERLITZ.
(AFTER THE PAINTING BY GÉRARD.)

short and comparatively unimportant siege of Ratisbon, for we shall there see Napoleon clearly, also the character of those who fought for him. There, too, the Emperor received what has been often spoken of as being his only wound ; but, as we saw, he had been wounded at the taking of Toulon.

Ratisbon is a town in Bavaria, lying on the right or south bank of the river Danube. Upon some maps you may find it marked as Regensburg.

The Austrian army had advanced into Bavaria, and at first Napoleon was not on the spot. The French forces were too scattered to be altogether safe; there was some danger that the Archduke might attack them separately, and they might be defeated one by one.

Napoleon, fearing this, hastened to head-quarters. On such occasions, when travelling from Paris or elsewhere to join his troops, he usually took with him in his carriage a good stock of books to read upon the way—novels and other volumes which had recently appeared. He treated books with small respect; he would not use a paper-knife, but cut their pages open roughly with his hand. Those that appeared worth keeping would be marked with ink or pencil here or there; others of less importance were thrown from the carriage window to the road as he swept on!

The Emperor fought and gained the battle of Eckmühl on April 22. It was night before the fight was ended, and his army was too weary to pursue. The Archduke Charles fell back on Ratisbon, some nine miles to the north.

Ratisbon, as we have seen, stands on the south bank of the Danube. The Archduke led his Austrians through it, crossed the bridge to the left bank, and left a garrison of some six thousand men

to hold the town. Napoleon was marching towards Vienna, but he could not well leave Ratisbon in Austrian hands. Had he done so the Archduke would have crossed the bridge again to the right bank, pursued Napoleon, and attacked him in the rear.

The town must, therefore, be taken, but this was not altogether an easy task. It was a strong place, well walled and well defended; moreover, reinforcements and supplies could be brought to it from the left bank of the Danube by means of the bridge.

Napoleon rode along the old town's southern side a little distance from the walls, to view the place and think what could be done. The ditch outside the wall had long been dry; gardens were planted in it. But it was still deep; the French would have to cross it if they stormed the walls, and in doing so they would be open to a heavy fire. Moreover the walls were very high.

The Emperor's practised eyes soon saw the place best suited for attack. One solitary house stood in the ditch, outside the wall. Napoleon ordered guns to play upon it till it was in ruins. Upon the débris it would not be difficult to plant the scaling-ladders and gain access to the summit of the wall.

Near where Napoleon stood was a large barn or storehouse built of stone. Ladders were sent for, and a company of soldiers were meanwhile ordered forward to the shelter of this barn.

The Emperor had dismounted from his horse and stood on foot, chatting with Marshal Lannes—one of

the bravest soldiers France has ever had. He was the same age as Napoleon, and had fought with him in many battles of his past campaigns; he had been first across the bridge of Lodi in that first campaign in Italy. Lannes never flattered the great Emperor as many of his generals did, but spoke out boldly, often roughly, what he thought.

While they were standing talking, waiting for the ladders to be brought, a bullet reached Napoleon from the walls of Ratisbon. It struck him on the ankle, and at the first shock the Emperor reeled with pain, leaning for a few moments heavily on Lannes.

Larrey, a famous army surgeon, was at once sent for, and he hurried up to dress the wound.

The news had spread like fire among the French; the Emperor was wounded! Officers galloped up; men broke their ranks and hurried, pale-faced, to the spot. Napoleon was in a few moments surrounded by a crowd of many thousand men.

So dense a mass made a fine mark for Austrian gunners on the walls of Ratisbon, and they fired on it with redoubled eagerness. Napoleon saw the danger to his soldiers, and the moment that the wound was



MARSHAL LANNES.

dressed he mounted his horse. Riding along the whole line of the French, that all might see he was but slightly hurt, the Emperor was greeted with cheer after cheer.

He was very clever at seizing any suitable moment to stir up enthusiasm among his soldiers, and he did so now. He took this opportunity of creating several specially brave men Knights of the Empire, of awarding them pensions, and of decorating them with the much-coveted distinction of the Cross of the Legion of Honour.

Some of the soldiers were presented to him for this purpose by their officers. But he also caused it to be known that any other man who thought himself deserving of distinction was at liberty to speak.

On hearing this, an old and grizzled soldier stepped out from the ranks and asked that he might have the Cross.

“What have you done to deserve it?” asked the Emperor.

“It was I, Sire, who, in the desert of Joppa, when it was so terribly hot, gave you a water-melon.”

“I thank you for it again,” said Napoleon, smiling; “but a gift of fruit hardly merits the Cross of the Legion of Honour.”

Then the old soldier, who had spoken steadily and coolly hitherto, burst out—

“Well, and don’t you reckon seven wounds, received at Arcola, Lodi, Castiglione, the Pyramids,

Acre, Austerlitz, Friedland ; eleven campaigns in Italy, Egypt, Austria, Prussia, Poland——”

But here Napoleon, laughing, cut him short—

“There, there ! How excited you are ! That is where you should have begun ; all that is worth much more than your melon. You are a Knight of the Empire, with a pension of twelve hundred francs (forty-eight pounds).”

But the old man received this news with evident dissatisfaction.

“I prefer the Cross,” he said.

Napoleon explained to him that his being made a Knight of the Empire meant that he would have the Cross as well. But the old soldier did not seem to understand ; the Emperor had to pin the Cross upon his breast with his own hands. When the man saw the longed-for decoration on his coat he seemed entirely indifferent to the knighthood and the pension he had just received.

By this time ladders had been brought ; Napoleon promptly turned to serious work again. He mounted to a little hill from which to view the coming struggle to gain entrance to the town.

It was a difficult and dangerous task that had to be accomplished, and Marshal Lannes, who was in charge of the affair, now called for fifty volunteers from the men standing in the shelter of the barn. Of course he might have *ordered* fifty of them to take ladders and march towards the wall ; but he well knew that men would go with all the greater courage and

enthusiasm if they volunteered. Far more than fifty answered ; the brave Marshal picked out the required number, and the others fell back discontentedly.

Taking the ladders the small party issued from behind the barn. The Austrians on the walls saw what was coming, and they concentrated their whole fire on the gallant band. Almost at once the greater number of the fifty fell. Only a few men struggled forward to the ditch ; there more were killed or badly wounded, and some two or three alone came back

A second time the Marshal called for fifty men. A second fifty volunteered, set forward, and were all mown down. To Lannes' third call there was no answer from the ranks ; the task seemed hopeless, certain death the only possible result.

In vain the Marshal urged them, told them that their Emperor's eyes were on them from the neighbouring hill. Still there was no response.

“Well,” exclaimed Lannes, “I was a grenadier before I was a Marshal ; I will show you that I am one still.” With his own hands he seized a ladder and began to drag it towards the deadly ditch.

His aides-de-camp rushed forward and implored him not to risk his life. One, a young man named Marbot, grasped the ladder, and wrenched it from the Marshal's hands ; another officer, De Viry, took its other end. By two and two the aides-de-camp seized the remaining ladders and marched with them towards the ditch.

Such an example was enough. The soldiers broke

from their ranks, rushed at the ladders, struggled for them with the aides-de-camp. But Marbot, De Viry, and the other officers still held them, and went forward, followed by the men.

Marbot assumed command of the attack. The two previous parties had kept close together, making a large mass on which the Austrians could train their guns. Now, by young Marbot's orders, he and De Viry, carrying the first ladder, set out first; the others followed with an interval of twenty paces between each pair of men. Moving thus separately, they were more difficult to hit. No one was injured when the ditch was reached.

There the ladders were arranged five feet apart. When the first members of the party had descended they rushed on with half the ladders to the wall, while half were left that others might climb down them to the ditch. Against the wall the ladders were placed one foot only distant from each other, so that the garrison would be attacked by a dense mass of men.

Marbot was the first to mount upon his ladder, with an officer named Labédoyère on the next. As the two heads appeared above the level of the wall Napoleon and the whole French army, watching, cheered. The grenadiers pushed up behind their officers, and Ratisbon was taken. Marbot, with fifty men, marched to the nearest gate and let Lannes and a strong force in.

Marbot, by the Marshal's orders, took a company of soldiers and marched through the streets to find the

bridge which linked the town with the left bank of the river, where the Austrian army lay. It was no



RATISBON : OLD GUILD HOUSE.

easy task, it being the first time Marbot had set foot in Ratisbon ; but he received unexpected aid.

Bullets were flying thickly, both from the victorious French and from the Austrian garrison still in the town. Suddenly a house-door burst open, and

a woman fled with cries of terror to the little company of Marbot's men.

"Oh, save me! save me! I am French!" she shrieked.

She was a young Parisian milliner who had a shop in Ratisbon. The thought immediately occurred to Marbot that this Frenchwoman might serve his turn.

"Show me the bridge, madame," he said.

"What! with this firing going on around! I want some of your soldiers to defend my house, where I am going back instantly."

"Sorry, madame," said Marbot coolly; "you must first show me the bridge."

And show it him the terrified Parisian milliner soon found she had to do. He placed her between two of the foremost grenadiers, and, held fast and supported by their arms, she guided Marbot towards the bridge. One of the two with whom she walked was wounded by a bullet, and his blood gushed out upon her arm. At this her courage failed her altogether, and it was needful that she should be carried the remainder of the way. When the bridge came at last in sight Marbot consigned her to a little chapel, where she hid herself behind an image of the Virgin Mary, terrified to death.

However, later, she had her reward. Marbot related the adventure to Marshal Lannes, who, in his turn, informed the Emperor. Next day Napoleon met the lady, joked and complimented her upon her "courage," and; before long sent her a fine ring.

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This flattering attention somewhat turned her head ; she allowed people to believe that she had boldly volunteered to lead young Marbot's party to their goal.

Not many more brave deeds was gallant Marshal Lannes to do ; only a few short weeks had he to live. On May 30 Napoleon lost this faithful friend.

After having taken Ratisbon the French marched on along the right bank of the Danube towards Vienna, with the Austrians keeping pace with them for some time on the river's farther bank. Napoleon reached the Austrian capital on May 10, its feeble garrison being quickly overpowered. He then took up his quarters in the neighbouring palace of Schoenbrunn.

On the following night he had what might have been a very serious accident. Going back by moonlight from his army to the palace he was galloping upon a handsome horse which he was riding then for the first time. The creature fell, throwing the Emperor, who lay upon the ground for several moments without sign of life. But he had only fainted ; a fresh horse was brought and he rode on again. He forbade all who had witnessed the accident to speak a word of it, and strange to say the secret was well kept.

Napoleon had secured Vienna, but he wished to fight the Austrian force. The difficulty was to reach it ; for the Danube, always a broad river, was now swollen by melting winter snow. The bridge had been destroyed, and so could not be crossed. A little

way below the town islands divided the broad current, and it was by means of bridges upon boats secured between these islands that Napoleon led his troops across.

The French were thus enabled to seize Aspern and Essling, villages on the farther bank; but a serious disaster soon occurred. Large trees, swept down the river by the flood, broke through the bridge of boats; no food, no reinforcements could come to the French troops' aid. The Austrians attacked them vigorously; at last the French retreated to the largest island—Lobau—and for some time suffered great privations there. Then, after heavy loss, they reached the right bank of the stream again.

It was in this attack upon the left bank that the gallant Lannes received his fatal wound. A much-loved friend had been struck down while walking at the Marshal's side. Lannes, much affected by this loss, seated himself beside a ditch, covered his eyes and crossed his knees. As he sat there a cannon-ball struck both his legs, inflicting fearful wounds.

Marbot, who happened to be near, ran up to him.

"Give me your hand to help me up," the Marshal said; "I am wounded, but it's nothing much."

On a rude stretcher made of boughs torn from the trees that stood around, Marbot and others carried him to a place of shelter. The surgeon, Larrey, soon decided that one leg could not be saved. Just as it had been amputated Napoleon, who had heard the news, came hurrying up. He knelt beside the Marshal and

put both his arms about him, careless that his white waistcoat was becoming deeply stained with blood.

“You will live, my friend, you will live,” he cried.

“I trust I may, if I can still be of use to France and to your Majesty.”

But Lannes was not to live. A week he lingered, suffering terribly from fever and from pain, but yet inquiring anxiously for news of victory and of his wounded friends. Then, just before daybreak on the 30th, with his head on Marbot's shoulder, he expired.

An hour later Marbot met Napoleon, who was coming, as he did each day, for news of his old friend. Hearing the worst he entered and knelt down beside the Marshal's lifeless body, bathing it with tears. More than an hour he knelt there, and was only led away at last because his presence was being waited for upon the field. Yet there are those who tell us that Napoleon had no heart.

It was July 4, before the Austrians and French at length stood face to face. Napoleon had at length succeeded in crossing the Danube, and at Wagram, twelve miles north-east of Vienna, the last battle of this great campaign was fought. Two days—July 5 and 6—the armies fought amidst the fields of ripening corn, and victory was with the French.

CHAPTER VII

DISASTER

WE have had glimpses of Napoleon climbing steadily and surely to the summit of his power. That power was not to be his for very long ; disaster came, and it is one particular scene of disaster that you are now to see.

Napoleon in his great ambition—whether that great ambition was for France or for himself—had tried to do too much. In 1806 he had made his brother Louis King of Holland ; and when, some four years later, Louis resigned the throne, Holland was annexed to France. In 1807 Jerome Bonaparte became King of Westphalia ; in the following year Murat, a dashing and handsome cavalry soldier who had married Caroline Bonaparte, was made King of Naples. Madame Letizia had been splendidly provided for. She, like a prudent woman, saved much money, feeling sure that all this splendour could not last.

In 1807 Napoleon sent an army into Portugal, and the Portuguese royal family were forced to flee abroad. From Portugal the Emperor's troops spread into Spain ; in 1808 he placed his elder brother Joseph, who had for two years past been King of Naples, on the Spanish throne.

But the Spaniards rose against their new sovereign with a courage and determination which Napoleon had not foreseen ; they were helped by the British, and

the Emperor found himself with a disastrous Franco-Spanish war upon his hands. Thousands of his best officers and troops poured into Spain.

In December 1809 Napoleon had, with much regret and for reasons of state, divorced the Empress Joséphine; and in the following March her place upon the throne was taken by Marie-Louise, the eighteen-year-old daughter of the Emperor of Austria. So the high-born princess had married the obscure officer of French artillery. The little King of Rome, Napoleon's dearly loved and only child, was born the following year.



MARIE-LOUISE.

Peace with Britain had long since been at an end, and she was now Napoleon's most inveterate foe, one whom he found unconquerable. Nelson had al-

most annihilated the French fleet at the great Battle of Trafalgar in October 1805. Napoleon had projected an invasion of our country from Boulogne, but the command of the Channel was necessary to the success of his plans, and the victory of Nelson shattered this dream.

He tried another method to induce us to acknowledge his wide rule. We were then, as now, a great trading nation, exporting goods for sale abroad. Napoleon established the "Continental System," by which neither into France nor any other European

country under his control might British goods be brought. This system, had it been successful, would have ruined our trade.

Most countries professed to submit to it, although British goods were smuggled into every port. But the Czar of Russia, Alexander, soon announced that he would not continue to enforce the prohibition in his country, and Napoleon determined upon war against Russia. No open declaration of hostilities was made, but in the early summer of 1812 Napoleon collected a great army of about six hundred thousand men. About a third of this vast force were Frenchmen, while the rest were Austrians, Germans and Italians, with some Spaniards and Portuguese.

Lovers of glory as the French had always been, they were at last becoming weary of Napoleon's never-ending wars. The common people wearied of them, for recruits were called upon to march as soldiers one or two years before their proper time for serving in the ranks. Boys of sixteen and seventeen were forced to don the uniform of France and fight.

Even the marshals and great generals wearied of the constant strife. Napoleon led them on to glory, gave them wealth and great estates ; one thing he did not give them—leisure to enjoy that wealth or live on those estates. Always they were at war in distant lands ; a discontented saying was heard among them with a growing frequency : “Toujours Vienne, toujours Berlin, jamais Paris” (Always Vienna, always Berlin, never Paris). They wearied of the constant

sojourn in these conquered foreign capitals, and longed to be at rest in their own well-loved land.

But there were no signs of coming disaster when, in May 1812, Napoleon and Marie-Louise reached Dresden, the chief city of Napoleon's ally, the King of Saxony. Never had the French Emperor's power seemed so great. He was met there by his allies, the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, and by many rulers of the smaller German states. It is of this great meeting of crowned heads that a tale is told to illustrate Napoleon's mighty power at that time. Some one remarked upon a crowd he noticed in the street, and asked the cause.

"Pooh," said a friend beside him, "that is nothing; it is nothing but a king going by."

Napoleon reviewed the army gathered there to march on Russia. As he passed down the lines of troops he often stopped and called a soldier from the ranks. Did he receive his money punctually? he asked. Was his food good, and had he everything he needed for the march? Now and again he made some soldier show the contents of his knapsack, and so satisfied himself that all was as it ought to be.

With a commander such as this the men's enthusiasm knew no bounds.

"He is our Emperor," they said: "his armies are scattered all over Europe. Kings are gathered here to do him homage. Yet he finds time to think of each of us, to see that we are fairly treated, promptly paid, well fed."

The march began; Russia was entered, and the river Niemen crossed. The towns of Vitepsk and Smolensk were taken; and on September 7 was fought the Battle of Borodino, where, though Napoleon was victorious, he lost thirty thousand men.

Seven days later the French Emperor halted on an eminence. Below him lay the shining pinnacles and domes of Moscow, the ancient capital of Russia.

“Here at last is that famous city,” he exclaimed. Then, in a lower voice, he added: “It was time.”

For, though Napoleon had reached his goal, the march to Moscow had been most disastrous. Not only had he suffered heavy loss in battle, but the heat of the short Russian summer had been very great; both men and horses were exhausted by fatigue. Thousands of men fell sick, more than ten thousand horses died. Whenever possible the Russian army had moved back before the invaders, rarely offering the pitched battles which Napoleon loved. And as the Russians thus retreated they laid waste the land, burning provisions, burning everything. Already the “Grand Army” of Napoleon was in want of food.

But surely that would now be at an end. In Moscow the French army would find everything of which it stood in need. Moscow would have provisions, Moscow would send out deputations of her citizens to meet the conquering force. It was with thoughts like these Napoleon looked upon the famous city on that early autumn afternoon.

No deputations came; no sound was heard, no

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smoke rose up from the great town. All was silent ; the place seemed deserted.

And deserted it indeed was. Acting under the orders of Rostopchin, the governor of the town, the entire population of three hundred thousand souls had left the place. They carried with them all the goods they valued most and could remove. Men who could find no horses harnessed themselves to carts in which they placed their wives and little children, aged parents and sick friends. Moscow was empty ; only some prowling beggars could be found.

It was a terrible blow to Napoleon, but worse still was to follow. He rode on and entered the city, taking up his quarters in the great palace of the Kremlin. On the next night a fire broke out in several quarters of the town.

Who set Moscow on fire is a point that was long disputed. The French said it was the Russians, while the Russians said it was the French ; but it was most probably the Russians, for it was soon found that all the fire-engines had been carefully removed.

The fire spread, and soon the Kremlin was itself involved in flames. Only with difficulty did Napoleon escape ; he left the town and camped outside.

He had reached Moscow, as had been his aim, but of what use to him could be the conquest of a silent, empty town ? Reluctantly he sent proposals for peace to Alexander at St. Petersburg, but there came no reply.

Napoleon was not used to failure or inaction, and



RETREAT FROM MOSCOW. (AFTER THE PAINTING BY YVON,
VERSAILLES GALLERY.)

he waited with impatience for the answer that was not to come. He found it hard to pass the time away ; he spent long hours at his usually short meals ; he lay in silence on a couch, or wandered to and fro, taking up books he did not read. Moreover he was ill and suffering pain ; but greater than any pain of body was the keen anxiety which he began to feel.

Each day detachments of the army had to scour the surrounding country farther and farther off in search of food. The time was passing ; it was needful to decide what course to take. Either his force must pass the winter months in Moscow or it must retreat. At last the latter plan was chosen. On the 19th of October the much diminished remnant of the army set out on its backward journey, taking the route by which it had reached Moscow five weeks previously.

It had then suffered greatly from the heat ; but now the summer and brief autumn had passed and the long Russian winter was fast setting in. Snow fell, and chilling rain ; a bitter wind cut through the men's thin clothing to their skin ; frost settled down upon the land with a severity unknown in France.

Never were the great hardships of retreat more terrible, and never have they been more bravely borne. The frozen roads were slippery as glass, and it was difficult for men to keep their feet. Constantly they would slip and fall. Sometimes they rose no more ; sometimes one cried out to a passing comrade :

“ Give me your hand, my friend.”

“ But I have none to give,” that comrade would

reply, exhibiting the stumps from which his hands had dropped off frost-bitten. "However, take hold of my coat;" and so the fallen man was dragged once more upon his feet.

Each night around the fires which they made men would lie down and drop into a sleep, which, before morning, had become the sleep of death. More prudent ones would fear to stretch themselves upon the ground or close their eyes, but crouched about the fires with their hands and feet spread towards the blaze.

Food could scarcely be found, for they were passing through the country which both the Russian army and their own laid bare some weeks previously. The villages through which they passed were empty of inhabitants; lucky the men who scraped together from the floors of barns and granaries small quantities of flour mixed with dirt and straw. Meat, indeed, was not altogether lacking, for the horses fell and died by thousands owing to want of food, and these were eaten greedily.

Nor was the army suffered to retreat in peace. The Russians hovered upon its heels; hosts of fierce Cossacks, wild, half-savage mounted soldiers, lurked in the woods and constantly attacked. Napoleon himself was almost captured by one band.

It was hardly an army that was retreating, but a weary, hopeless and unregulated mass of men. But still about Napoleon marched his veteran soldiers—the Old Guard. Sometimes he rode in his own

carriage in the centre of a solid square of men, sometimes he was on horseback, and again he marched on foot, depressed and thoughtful, steadying his steps on the frozen roadway with an iron-shod staff. Most bitterly he must have regretted that he had allowed his vast ambition to bring both his soldiers and himself to such a hapless state.

Yet, spite of all their suffering, French officers and soldiers showed that *sang-froid*, that high courage and determination not to be cast down, which Frenchmen have in such a high degree. An officer of good family was to be seen each morning, seated on the snowy ground, combing his hair as carefully as though he had been sitting in his own snug dressing-room at home. Men froze to death upon the road each night; but those who lived examined and discussed with interest the peculiar shapes of the frost-crystals hanging from the trees.

At length, during the last days of November, the French army saw the river Beresina, which it had to cross. A portion of the Russian force had reached the spot already and had burnt the bridge; a further Russian army was approaching in the rear. Nor was the river frozen hard enough for the retreating French to cross upon the ice.

There was thus only one course open, bridges must be built. All night French engineers worked bravely, standing to their arm-pits in the ice-cold water, that the remnant of the army might be saved. By the next morning bridges spanned the stream.

They had no parapets, no hand-rails even, and were hardly safe. Disorderly and panic-stricken the French crowded forward ; infantry, cavalry, artillery, with women, even children—all the followers of an army of those days. The guns and baggage-wagons were soon jammed upon the narrow track ; horses and men slipped off into the rushing stream. And now the Russians had come up from behind ; they fired on the bridges and upon the masses pressing forward to escape.

Weakened by a far greater weight than it could bear, the larger bridge gave way, and those upon it were flung down into the stream. Twenty-five thousand persons perished at this crossing of the Beresina.

The horrors of this terrible retreat seemed to be greater than Napoleon could bear. While he sat waiting for the rebuilding of the bridges he shed tears.

“How are we to get out of this ?” he said. Yet when two teams of guns became entangled on the bridge he seized the horses’ heads and cleared the way. But now his old untiring energy showed only at intervals, he soon fell back into a silent gloom and lethargy.

Troubles were gathering round him swiftly from all sides. His allies were already beginning to forsake him ; presently news came from Paris of a conspiracy against his throne. At last he reached Smorgoni, a small village lying a few leagues eastward of the

Beresina, and he here made up his mind that he must leave his men. He wished to be himself in Paris when the news of his disasters reached that town; he wished, too, to make arrangements for the raising of another army in the following year. Accompanied by Roustan and four officers he drove away in haste, leaving the army in charge of Murat.

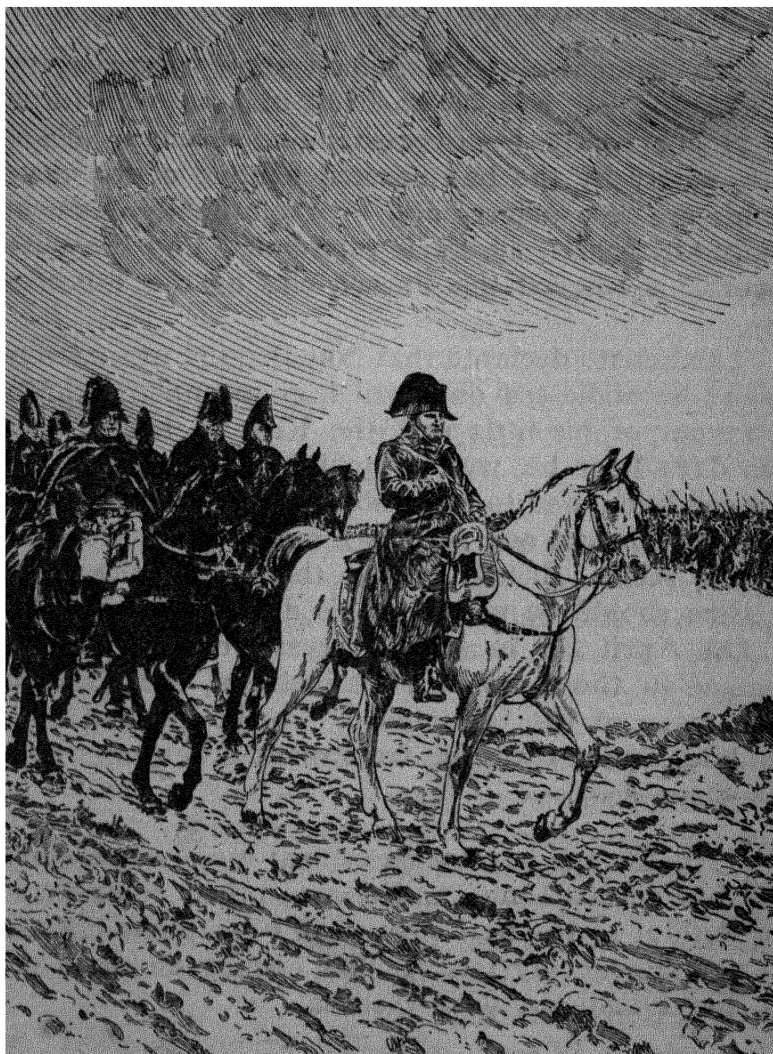
CHAPTER VIII

DEFEAT, CAPTIVITY, AND DEATH

THIS terrible retreat from Russia may be looked upon as the beginning of the end. But Napoleon's spirit was still unconquered; early in 1813 he raised another army and marched once more against his foes. These foes were soon to be in overwhelming numbers; Prussia had now gone over to the side of Russia; Austria was about to do the same.

In May Napoleon gained a victory at Lutzen and again at Bautzen. He was successful too at Dresden towards the end of August; but he was routed at Leipzig in October, and his forces were soon in full retreat. Wellington too was driving the French armies out of Spain; soon he had crossed the Spanish frontier into France.

Early in 1814 the allied Austrians, Russians, and Prussians were in France. Never did the Emperor show greater courage, greater skill, than in that



"1814." (FROM THE PAINTING BY MEISSONIER.)

French campaign. He gained some victories, but in the end all was of no avail and he was forced to yield ; partly by overwhelming strength against him, partly by the half-hearted fighting of too many of his greatest officers and by their finally deserting him. On March 30, Paris capitulated, and the allied sovereigns entered the French city on the following day.

The Senate declared that Napoleon must no longer reign ; he abdicated on April 4, giving up the throne in favour of his little son, the King of Rome. But two days later he was compelled to abandon even this condition, and to renounce all claim to the throne, both for himself and for his family. It was decided by the Allies, Britain among them, that the island of Elba should be placed at his disposal for his life.

On April 20, in the courtyard of the splendid château in the town of Fontainebleau, the Emperor took leave of the Old Guard. As he walked down the line of men tears fell from many a veteran's eyes. Napoleon spoke—

“All Europe has armed against me. France herself has deserted me, and chosen other rulers. . . . Be faithful to the new sovereign France has chosen ; do not lament my fate. . . . I cannot embrace you all, but I embrace your General.”

The General stepped forward, and Napoleon pressed him to his breast. He then called for the regiment's

Eagle—the French standard—which he kissed. His last words were—

“Adieu, my children! Adieu, my brave comrades! Do not forget me. Adieu!”

He stepped into the waiting carriage, and drove away. On May 4 he landed in Elba; on the previous day Louis the Eighteenth, who had for many years been resident in England, entered Paris and regained his throne.

But he was not to sit upon it long in peace. The people as a whole welcomed him with some relief; but the army was dissatisfied—it longed for the great soldier who had led it on to many a glorious fight. Napoleon learnt of this dissatisfaction and prepared to act. Among his veterans it was soon whispered that he would return. From one hand to another there would pass a bunch of violets, the fragrant flowers of the spring. “When violets come again he will return!” his soldiers said.

And in the following spring Napoleon came; he slipped away safely from Elba, and landed at Cannes on March 1. He had some excuse for doing so; not only was the discontent in France increasing, but the pension which he had been promised was not paid.

His march towards Paris was a march of triumph; towns flung their gates open to him, soldiers joined him from all sides. Late on the evening of March 20 he found himself once more within the palace of the Tuileries. Louis had fled on the previous day.

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But this success was brief. There came, on June 18, the famous fight of Waterloo; Napoleon lost the battle, fled to Paris, thence retired to Malmaison, a pleasant country house a few miles off. It had once been the favourite residence of Joséphine, who was now dead. Marie-Louise had



MALMAISON.

entirely deserted her husband, taking with her the young King of Rome.

What was Napoleon now to do? His life was in no little danger; Blücher, the Prussian general, said that if he caught him he would shoot him like a dog. He had some thought of flying to America, and went from Malmaison to Rochefort with that purpose in his mind.

But he found Rochefort strongly guarded ; British ships of war were off the coast. One of these was the *Bellerophon*, commanded by Captain Maitland. Napoleon sent a message to the captain, asking if he would be allowed to sail in a small vessel for America.

But this request was one which Captain Maitland had no power to grant ; and finally the Emperor decided that it would be best to place himself in British hands. He had a high opinion of the honour, justice, and good faith of the enemy whom he had been fighting for nearly twenty years. On July 15 Napoleon and a portion of his suite arrived on board the ship.

Maitland received him as he came on deck.

“ I come to throw myself on the protection of your Prince and laws,” Napoleon said. He had already written a letter to the Prince Regent to the same effect.

During the three weeks and more that he spent on this ship he was agreeable and polite to all. He talked quite freely with the officers who could speak French, greatly admired the neatness and good order of the vessel, praised the conduct and appearance of the men. He also asked many questions about England and our English habits, for he hoped that it was in this country that he would henceforth live.

In a few days the vessel sailed for England. Early one morning, just as she was passing Ushant. Napoleon chanced to come on deck. Sadly and long he looked

at the receding coast of France, the land for which he had done so much, and which he felt that he would never see again.

The warship anchored in Torbay for a few days, then moved to Plymouth Sound. At neither place was the French Emperor allowed to come on shore; but all day long boat-loads of people rowed about the ship, thousands of English folk being eager to obtain a glimpse of the fallen monarch. Napoleon looked on from his cabin window or the deck, smiling and bowing now and then. But as the days passed he grew anxious to receive permission from the British Government to land.

Never was he to set his foot on English soil. After some days there came an order which he looked upon as most unjust and cruel. He, with a little band of officers and servants, was to be exiled to St. Helena, a lonely island lying far distant from the western coast of Africa.

Against this exile he protested most indignantly. He had, as he truly said, surrendered himself voluntarily to Captain Maitland, in the expectation of being kept in honourable imprisonment in England—of being confined in some great castle or large country-house, with liberty to walk and ride for some short distance round. His brother Lucien had been captured by us in the year 1810, and had been for some time confined in this way at Ludlow, a small Shropshire town. It is quite likely that Napoleon had this in his mind.

Moreover, it was Captain Maitland who had first suggested to Napoleon that he should come to England, if he wished to live in quiet as a private gentleman. But Maitland also told Napoleon's messenger that he could only promise him a passage to an English port ; he could not tell him what the British Government would do.

Our Government was in a very difficult position. The previous year it had confined Napoleon in Elba, whence he had escaped. Unless he were now sent to some far distant prison he might perhaps escape again.

For Napoleon was a man who, when he wished it, could win every heart. We had long looked upon him as a tyrant, a usurper, a most wicked man. Yet when a British vessel carried him to Elba he so pleased the crew that, as he went ashore, they wished him "better luck next time !" It was the same with almost everyone who met him face to face.

If he were kept in England it would not be long before he heard of discontent in France. His old ambitions would be roused, and, aided by his pleasing manners, he would soon escape to cause another European war. No ; he must be kept at a long distance from his well-loved land.

But these considerations did not make it easier for Napoleon to bear his fate ; nor is the matter one on which we can look back to-day with satisfaction. Even at that time there were not a few distinguished English people who protested loudly against the treatment which he was receiving at our hands.

On August 8 he set sail in the *Northumberland*, with Admiral Sir George Cockburn in command. Even at the last bitter moment Napoleon exhibited the same courtesy of manners ; as he was leaving the *Bellerophon* he talked to Captain Maitland for ten minutes, thanking him warmly for his treatment of him while on board. As the boat pulled away to the *Northumberland* all eyes were turned upon the fallen Emperor from Maitland's ship.

The voyage to St. Helena was hardly agreeable ; the *Northumberland* was overcrowded, and Napoleon had but a small cabin to himself. Strict orders had been given that he should be addressed, not as "Your Majesty," but "General Bonaparte."

Nor were things made more pleasant for him when, in the middle of October, he reached his future home. After a few weeks spent in a private mansion in the town of Jamestown, he was taken to a house called Longwood, situated upon high ground in the centre of the island.

The house was draughty and dilapidated, and terribly infested with rats. Nor could Napoleon find much happiness outside its walls. When he rode out a British officer must follow him ; by night a chain of British sentinels was placed around the house.

To-day we are inclined to think so strict a watch was hardly necessary. St. Helena was a British island, and it lies eight hundred miles from any land. More than one British vessel was kept cruising constantly around the coast ; a garrison of British soldiers

was maintained. It seemed impossible that Napoleon could escape.

The governor, Sir Hudson Lowe, was hardly a well-chosen man to be his guardian there. His



NAPOLEON AT LONGWOOD.

manners were not courteous; he was suspicious, irritable and fussy. He was constantly receiving from the British Government minute orders as to the treatment of his prisoner, and he had no skill or tact in softening the great man's hard fate.

But Napoleon made the best of things upon the

whole. He had soon quarrelled with Sir Hudson, and he only saw him half-a-dozen times in several years. He gave up riding, even walking to a great extent, and spent his time in reading, talking, doing a little gardening now and then.

He had of course a staff of servants, and a little group of officers and friends; and there were ladies also, for some members of his suite had brought their wives. Among this little company of exiles quarrels not infrequently broke out; often it was Napoleon's task to soothe the ruffled spirits and make peace again.

He had grown very stout, and was afflicted with a painful and incurable disease. Gradually this disease grew worse, and on the evening of May 5, 1821, he died. Those who were watching by his bedside in the morning fancied that they heard him murmur: "Armée—tête d'armée" (Army—head of the army).

Then he lay scarcely breathing till, while a furious gale was raging, he expired. He was a little more than fifty-one years old.

His suite stood round while British soldiers bore him to his grave beside a spring; the spring lay in a valley, and beside it stood two willow-trees. Over his coffin there arose dispute and strife; his followers wished it to be marked "Napoleon" only, but Sir Hudson Lowe insisted upon "Bonaparte" being added to the single name. And in the end the coffin bore no name at all.

Nineteen years later, on October 15, 1840, the great

Emperor's body was removed from its lone island grave, borne in a French ship of war to France, carried to Paris and there laid in state beneath the dome of the Hôtel des Invalides. And in that splendid tomb it rests to-day, surrounded by disabled soldiers of those armies which Napoleon so often led.

If you read more about Napoleon you will find that he did many things that cannot be approved. In dealing with both men and nations he too often acted on the principle that "might is right." He had great faults, but he had splendid virtues too, chief among them courage, resolution, industry. And, as a soldier, he was the greatest general that the world has known.

