

so worthy of compassion; and these kind words which Marie Antoinette had spoken to her were the last which Josephine was ever to hear from her lips.

A few days after this visit to Trianon, Josephine received from her parents in Martinique letters which had for their object to persuade her with the tenderness of love, with all the reasons of wisdom, to return to her home, to the house of her parents, to withdraw with bold resolution from all the inconveniences and humiliations of her precarious and dangerous situation, and, instead of living in humble solitude as a divorced, despised woman, sooner to come to Martinique, and there in her parents' home be again the beloved and welcomed daughter.

Josephine hesitated still. She could not come to the resolution of abandoning the hope of a reunion with Alexandre de Beauharnais; she dreamt yet of the happiness of seeing the beloved wanderer return to his wife, to his children.

But her aunt and her father-in-law knew better than she that there was no prospect of such an event; they knew that the viscount was still the impassioned lover of the beautiful Madame de Gisard; that she held him too tightly in her web to look for a possibility of his returning to his legitimate affection.

If any thing could rouse him from this love-spell, and bring him back to duty and reason, it would be that sudden, unexpected departure; it would be the conviction which would necessarily be impressed upon him, that Josephine desired to be forever separated from him; that she was conscious of being divorced from him forever, and that, in the pride of her insulted womanhood, she wished to withdraw herself and her daughter from his approaches, and from the scandal which his passion for Madame de Gisard was giving.

Such were the reasons with which her relatives, even the grandfather of her two children, sought to persuade her to

a voyage to Martinique—bitter though the anguish would be for them to be deprived of the presence of the gentle, lovely young woman, whose youthful freshness and grace had like sunshine cheered the lonely house in Fontainebleau; to see also part from them the little Hortense, whose joyous voice of childhood had now and then recalled the faithless son to the father's house, and which was still a bond which united Josephine with her husband and with his family.

Josephine had to give way before these arguments, however much her heart bled. She had long felt how much of impropriety and of danger there was in the situation of a young woman divorced from her husband, and how much more dignified and expedient it would be for her to return to her father's home and to the bosom of her family. She therefore took a decided resolution; she tore herself away from her relatives, from her beloved son, whom she could not take with her, for he belonged to the father. With a stream of painful tears she bade farewell to the love of youth, to the joys of youth, from which naught remained but the wounds of a despised heart, and the children who gazed at her with the beloved eyes of their father.

In the month of July of the year 1788, Josephine, with her little five-year-old daughter Hortense, left Fontainebleau, went to Havre, whence she embarked for Martinique.

CHAPTER VII.

LIEUTENANT NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

WHILE the Viscountess Josephine de Beauharnais was, during long years of resignation, enduring all the anguish, humiliations, and agonies of an unhappy marriage, the first pain and sorrow had also clouded the days of the young

Corsican boy who, in the same year as Josephine, had embarked from his native land for France.

In the beginning of the year 1785, Napoleon Bonaparte had lost his father. In Montpellier, whither he had come for the cure of his diseased breast, he died, away from home, from his Letitia and his children. Only his eldest son Joseph stood near his dying couch, and, moreover, a fortunate accident had brought to pass that the poor, lonely sufferer should meet there a friendly home, where he was received with the most considerate affection. Letitia's companion of youth, the beautiful Panonia Commène, now Madame de Permont, resided in Montpellier with her husband, who was settled there, and with all the faithfulness and friendship of a Corsican, she nursed the sick husband of her Letitia.

But neither the skill of the renowned physicians of Montpellier, nor the tender care of friends, nor the tears of the son, could keep alive the unfortunate Charles de Bonaparte. For three days long he struggled with death; for three days long his youth, his manhood's powers, resisted the mighty foe, which already held him in its chains; then he had to submit to the conqueror. Exhausted with death's pallor, Charles de Bonaparte sank back on his couch, and as Death threw his dark shadows on his face bathed in cold perspiration, Charles de Bonaparte, with stammering tongue, in the last paroxysms of fancy, exclaimed: "It is in vain! Nothing can save me! Even Napoleon's sword, which one day is to triumph over all Europe, even that sword cannot frighten away the dragon of death which crouches on my breast!"*

Wonderful vision of a dying man! The dimmed eye of the dying father saw his son Napoleon's sword, "which one day was to triumph over all Europe;" as he prophesied its power, he sighed at the same time over the impotency

* See "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 29.

which holds all mankind in its bands, and leaves even the hero as a powerless child in the hands of fate. The sword which was to be a yoke to all Europe could not terrify from the breast of his father the dragon of death!

Napoleon received the news of his father's decease whilst at the military school of Paris, where he had been placed for the last six months, to the joy and satisfaction of his teachers as well as to that of his schoolmates in Brienne. For the reserved, taciturn, proud boy, who, rugged and blunt, stood aloof from his comrades, who even dared speak rude and bitter words against his teachers and against the whole military institution at Brienne, was oftentimes an inconvenience and a burden as well to teachers as to schoolmates; and all felt relieved, as from a depressing weight, when they no more feared the flaming eyes of the boy who observed every thing, who criticised every thing, and passed judgment upon every thing.

But if he was not loved, it was impossible to refuse esteem to his capacity, to his desire for learning; and the testimony which Monsieur de Heralio, the principal of the institution of Brienne, sent with the young Napoleon to Paris, was a tribute of respect and an acknowledgment of merit. He portrayed him "as having an extremely capacious head, especially skilled in mathematics, and of great powers and talents." As to his character, one of the professors of the institution had in the testimonial written the remark: "A Corsican by birth and character. He will do great things, if circumstances are favorable."

But circumstances did not appear favorable, but contrariwise seemed to be roused in enmity against the poor Corsican boy. He had been scarcely half a year in Paris when he lost his father, and this grief, of which not a murmur escaped, which he kept within, devouring his heart, as every thing else which affected him, made his existence still more reserved, still more retired, and isolated him more and more.

Moreover, death had not only taken away the father, but also the support which Napoleon received from him. The means of the Bonaparte family were very meagre, and barely sufficed to the support of Signora Letitia and her seven children. Napoleon could not and dared not require or accept any help from his mother, on whom and on his brother Joseph it became incumbent to educate and support the young family. He had to be satisfied to live upon the bounty which the royal treasury furnished to the young men at the military school.

But these limited means were to the ambitious boy a source of humiliation and pain. The majority of his comrades consisted of young aristocrats, who, provided with ample means, led a gay, luxurious, dissipated life, had horses, servants, equipages, kept up one with another expensive dinner-parties and *déjeuners*, and seized every opportunity to organize a festivity or a pleasure-party. Every departure, every admission of a scholar, was celebrated with brilliant display; every birthday furnished the opportunity of a feast, and every holiday became the welcomed occasion for a pleasure excursion which the young men on horseback, and followed by their servants in livery, made in the vicinity of Paris.

Napoleon could take no part in all these feasting and dissipations; and as his proud heart could not acknowledge his poverty, he put on the mask of a stoic, who, with contemptuous disregard, cast away vain pleasures and amusements, and scorned those who with unrestrained zest abandoned themselves to them.

He had scarcely been half a year in the military school when he gave loud expression to his jealousy and envy; the young Napoleon, nearly sixteen years old, undertook boldly to censure in the very presence of the teachers the regulations of the institution. In a memorial which he had composed, and which he presented to the second director of the

establishment, M. Berton, he gave utterance to his own views in the most energetic and daring manner, imposing upon the professors the duty of making a complete change in the institution; of limiting the number of servants, so that the military pupils might learn to wait upon themselves; of simplifying the noonday meal, so as to accustom them to moderation; of forbidding banquets, *déjeuners*, and pleasure-excursions, so that they might not become inured to a frivolous, extravagant mode of life.

This mask of a censoring stoic, which he put on in the presence of teachers and school-mates, he retained also with his few friends. Madame de Permont, a short time after the death of Napoleon's father, came with her family to Paris, where her husband had obtained an important and lucrative office; her son Albert attended the military school, and was soon the friend of Napoleon, as much as a friendship could be formed between the young, lively M. de Permont, the son of wealthy and distinguished parents, and the reserved, proud Napoleon Bonaparte, the son of a poor, lonely widow.

However, Napoleon this time acquiesced in the wishes of his true friend, and condescended to pass his holidays with Albert in the house of Madame de Permont, the friend of his mother; and oftentimes his whole countenance would brighten into a smile, when speaking with her of the distant home, of the mother, and of the family. But as many times also that countenance would darken when, gazing round, he tacitly compared this costly, tastefully decorated mansion with the poor and sparingly furnished house in which his noble and beautiful mother lived with her six orphans, and who in her household duties had to wait upon herself; when again he noticed with what solicitude and love Madame de Permont had her children educated by masters from the court, by governesses and by teachers at enormous salaries, whilst her friend Letitia had to content

herself with the very deficient institutions of learning to be found in Corsica, because her means were not sufficient to bring to Paris, to the educational establishment of St. Cyr, her young daughters, like the parents of the beautiful Pauline.

The young Napoleon hated luxury, because he himself had not the means of procuring it; he spoke contemptuously of servants, for his position allowed him not to maintain them; he spoke against the expensive noonday meal, because he had to be content with less; he scorned the amusements of his school-mates, because, when they arranged their picnics and festivities, his purse allowed him not to take a part in them.

One day in the military school, as one of the teachers was to bid it farewell, the scholars organized a festivity, toward which each of them was to contribute a tolerably large sum. It was perhaps not all accident that precisely on that day M. de Permont, the father of Albert, came to the military school to visit his son, and Napoleon, his son's friend.

He found all the scholars in joyous excitement and motion; his son Albert was, like the rest, intently busy with the preparations of the feast, which was to take place in the garden, and to end in a great display of fireworks. All faces beamed with delight, all eyes were illumined, and the whole park re-echoed with jubilant cries and joyous laughter.

But Napoleon Bonaparte was not among the gay company. M. de Permont found him in a remote, lonesome path. He was walking up and down with head bent low, his hands folded behind his back; as he saw M. de Permont, his face became paler and gloomier, and a look nearly scornful met the unwelcomed disturber.

"My young friend," said M. de Permont, with a friendly smile, "I come to bring you the small sum which you need

to enable you to take a part in the festivity. Here it is; take it, I pray you."

But Napoleon, with a vehement movement of the hand, waved back the offered money, a burning redness for a moment covered his face, then his cheeks assumed that yellowish whiteness which in the child had always indicated a violent emotion.

"No," cried he, vehemently, "no, I have nothing to do with this meaningless festivity. I thank you—I receive no alms."

M. de Permont gazed with emotions of sympathizing sorrow in the pale face of the poor young man for whom poverty was preparing so many griefs, and in the generosity of his heart he had recourse to a falsehood.

"This is no alms I offer you, Napoleon," said he, gently, "but this money belongs to you, it comes from your father. At his dying hour he confided to me a small sum of money, with the express charge to keep it for you and to give you a portion of it in pressing circumstances, when your personal honor required it. I therefore bring you to-day the fourth part of this sum, and retain the rest for another pressing occasion."

With a penetrating, searching look, Napoleon gazed into the face of the speaker, and the slight motions of a sarcastic smile played for an instant around his thin, compressed lips.

"Well, then," said he, after a pause, "since this money comes from my father, I can use it; but had you simply wished to lend it to me, I could not have received it. My mother has already too much responsibility and care; I cannot increase them by an outlay, especially when such an outlay is imposed upon me by the sheer folly of my school-mates." *

* Napoleon's words.—See "Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Abrantes," vol. i., p. 81.

He then took the offered sum for which, as he thought, he was indebted to no man, and hastened to pay his contribution to the festivity. But, in respect to his principles, he took no part in the festivity, but declaimed all the louder, and in a more biting tone, against the criminal propensities for pleasure in the young men who, instead of turning their attention to their studies, lavished away their precious time in dissipation and frivolities.

These anxieties and humiliations of poverty Napoleon had doubly to endure, not only for himself, but also for his sister Marianne (who afterward called herself Elise). She had been, as already said, at her father's intercession and application, received in the royal educational institute of St. Cyr, and there enjoyed the solid and brilliant education of the pupils of the king. But the spirit of luxury and the desire for pleasure had also penetrated into this institution, founded by the pious and high-minded Madame de Maintenon, and the young ladies of St. Cyr had among themselves picnics and festivals, as well as the young men of the military school.

Napoleon, whose means, as long as he was in Brienne, never allowed him to visit his beloved sister at St. Cyr, had now frequent opportunities of seeing her, for Madame de Permont, in her royal friendship to the Bonaparte family, took as lively an interest in the daughter as in the son of her friend Letitia, and often drove to St. Cyr to visit the young and beautiful Marianne.

A few days after the festival in the military school, a short vacation had followed, and Napoleon passed it with his friend Albert in the house of the family of Permont. To please young Napoleon, it was decided to go to St. Cyr, and the glowing cheeks and the lively manner with which Napoleon, during the journey, conversed with M. and Madame de Permont, proved what satisfaction he anticipated in meeting his sister.

But Marianne Bonaparte did not seem to share this satisfaction. With downcast countenance and sad mien she entered the reception-room and saluted M. and Madame Permont, and even her brother, with a gloomy, despairing look. As she was questioned about the cause of her sadness, she broke into tears, and threw herself with vehement emotion into the arms of Madame de Permont.

Vain were the prayers and expostulations of her mother's friend to have her reveal the cause of her sadness. Marianne only shook her head in a negative manner, and ever a fresh flow of tears started from her eyes, but she remained silent.

Napoleon, who at first, pale and silent, had looked on this outbreak of sorrow, now excitedly approached his sister, and, laying his hand upon her arm, said in angry tones: "Since you cry, you must also confess the cause of your tears, or else we are afraid that you weep over some wrong of which you are guilty. But woe to you if it is so! I am here in the name of our father, and I will be without pity!"*

Marianne trembled, and cast a timid, anxious look upon her young brother, whose voice had assumed such a peculiar, imperious expression—whose eyes shone with the expression of a proud, angry master.

"I am in no wise guilty, my brother," murmured she, "and yet I am sad and unhappy."

And blushing, trembling, with broken words, interrupted by tears and sighs, Marianne related that next day, a farewell festival was to take place in the institution in honor of one of the pupils about to leave. The whole class was taking a part in it, and each of the young ladies had already paid her contribution.

"But I only am not able," exclaimed Marianne, with a

* "Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Abrantes."

loud burst of anguish, "I have but six francs; if I give them, nothing is left me, and my pension is not paid until six weeks. But even were I to give all I have, my miserable six francs would not be enough."

Very unwillingly indeed had Napoleon, whilst Marianne thus spoke, put his hand into his pocket, as if to draw out the money which his sorrowing sister needed, but remembering his own poverty, his hand dropped at his side; a deep glow of anger overspread his cheeks, and wildly stamping down with the foot he turned away and walked to the window, perhaps to allow none to notice the nervous agitation of his countenance and his tears of vexation and shame.

But what Napoleon could not do, that did Madame de Permont. She gave to the weeping young girl the twelve francs she needed to take a part in the festivity, and Marianne, less proud and less disdainful than her brother, accepted gladly, without opposition and without the need of a falsehood, the little sum offered.

Napoleon allowed this to take place without contradiction, and hindered not his sister to receive from Madame de Permont the alms which he himself had so arrogantly refused.

But they had barely left the reception-room and entered the carriage, than his suffering heart burst into a sarcastic philippic against the contemptible administration of such royal establishments as St. Cyr and the military school.

M. de Permont, who had at first patiently and with a smile listened to these raving invectives, felt himself at last wounded by them; and the supercilious and presumptuous manner in which the young man of barely seventeen years spoke of the highest offices of the state, and of the king himself, excited his anger.

"Hush, Napoleon!" said he, reluctantly. "It does not

beseem you, who are educated upon the king's bounty, to speak thus."

Napoleon shrank within himself as if he had been bitten by a serpent, and a deadly pallor overspread his cheeks.

"I am not the pupil of the king, but of the state!" exclaimed he, in a boisterous voice, trembling with passion.

"Ah, that is indeed a fine distinction which you have made there, Napoleon," said M. de Permont, laughing. "It is all the same whether you are the pupil of the state or of the king; moreover, is not the king the state also? However it may be, it beseems you not to speak of your benefactor in such inappropriate terms."

Napoleon concentrated all his efforts into self-control, and mastered himself into a grave, quiet countenance.

"I will be silent," said he, with an appearance of composure; "I will no more say what might excite your displeasure. Only allow me to say, were I master here, had I to decide upon the regulations of these institutions, I would have them very different, and for the good of all."

"Were I master here!" The pupil of the military school, for whom poverty was preparing so much humiliation, who had just now experienced a fresh humiliation through his sister in the reception-room of St. Cyr, was already thinking what he would do were he the ruler of France; and, strange enough, these words seemed natural to his lips, and no one thought of sneering or laughing at him when he thus spoke.

Meanwhile his harsh and repulsive behavior, his constant fault-finding and censoriousness were by no means conducive to the friendship and affection of those around him; he was a burden to all, he was an inconvenience to all; and the teachers as well as the pupils of the military school were all anxious to get rid of his presence.

As nothing else could be said to his reproach; as there was no denying his assiduity, his capacities, and progress,

there was but one means of removing him from the institution—he had to be promoted. It was necessary to recognize the young pupil of the military school as competent to enter into the practical, active military service; it was necessary to make a lieutenant out of the pupil.

Scarcely had one year passed since Napoleon had been received into the military school of Paris, when he was nominated by the authorities of the school for a vacancy in the rank of lieutenant; and he was promoted to it in the artillery regiment of La Fère, then stationed at Valence.

In the year 1786 Napoleon left the military school to serve his country and his king as second lieutenant, and to take the oath of allegiance.

Radiant with happiness and joy, proud alike of his promotion and of his uniform, the young lieutenant went to the house of M. de Permont to show himself to his friends in his new dignity and in his new splendors, and, at their invitation, to pass a few days in their house before leaving for Valence.

But, alas! his appearance realized not the wished-for result. As he entered the saloon of Madame de Permont the whole family was gathered there, and at the sight of Napoleon the two daughters, girls of six and thirteen years, broke out into loud laughter. None are more alive than children to the impression of what is ridiculous, and there was indeed in the appearance of the young lieutenant something which well might excite the laughing propensities of the lively little maidens. The uniform appeared much too long and wide for the little meagre figure of Napoleon, and his slender legs vanished in boots of such height and breadth that he seemed more to swim than to walk with them.

These boots especially had excited the laughter of the little maidens; and at every step which Napoleon, embarrassed as he was by the terrible cannon-boots, made for-

ward, the laughter only increased, so that the expostulations and reproaches of Madame de Permont could not procure silence.

Napoleon, who had entered the drawing-room with a face radiant with joy, felt wounded by the children's joyousness at his own cost. To be the subject of scorn or sarcasm was then, as it was afterward, entirely unbearable to him, and when he himself also tried to jest he knew not how to receive the jests directed at him. After having saluted M. and Madame de Permont, Napoleon turned to the eldest daughter Cecilia, who, a few days before, had come from the boarding-school to remain a short time at home, and who, laughing, had placed herself right before monsieur the lieutenant.

"I find your laughter very silly and childish," said he, eagerly.

The young maid, however, continued to laugh.

"M. Lieutenant," said she, "since you carry such a mighty sword, you no doubt wish to carry it as a lady's knight, and therefore you must consider it an honor when ladies jest with you."

Napoleon gave a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders.

"It is evident," said he, scornfully, "that you are but a little school-girl."

These sarcastic words wounded the vanity of the young maiden, and brought a glow of anger on her face.

"Well, yes," cried she, angrily, "I am a school-girl, but you—you are nothing else than a puss in boots!"

A general laugh followed; even Madame de Permont, ordinarily so good and so considerate, could not suppress laughter. The witty words of the little school-girl were too keen and too applicable that she should be subjected to reproach.

Napoleon's wrath was indescribable. His visage was overspread with a yellow-greenish pallor, his lips were con-

tracted nervously, and already opened for a word of anger. But he suppressed that word with an effort; for though not yet familiar with all the forms and usages of society, his fine tact and the instinct of what was becoming told him that when the conversation ran into personalities the best plan was to be silent, and that he must not return personal remarks, since his opponent was one of the fair sex. He therefore remained silent, and so controlled himself as to join in the general laughter and to show himself heartily amused at the unfortunate nickname of the little Cecilia.

And that every one might be convinced how much he himself had been amused at this little scene, he brought, a few days afterward, to the youngest daughter of Madame de Permont, a charming little toy which he had had made purposely for her. This toy consisted of a small gilt and richly-ornamented carriage of *papier-maché*, before which leaped along a very lovely puss in boots.

To this present for the little Lolotte (afterward Duchess d'Abrantes), was added for Cecilia an elegant and interesting edition of the tales of "Puss in Boots," and when Napoleon politely presented it to the young maid he begged her to receive kindly this small souvenir from him.

"That is too much," said Madame de Permont, shaking her head. "The toy for Loulou would have been quite enough. But this present to Cecilia shows that you took her jest in earnest, and were hurt by it."

Napoleon, however, affirmed that he had not taken the jest in earnest, that he had been no wise hurt by it; that he himself when he put on his uniform had to laugh at the nickname of "puss in boots" which dear Cecilia had given him.

He had, however, endeavored no more to deserve this nickname, and the unlucky boots were replaced by much smaller and closer-fitting ones.

A few days after this little incident the young second lieutenant left Paris and went to meet his regiment La Fère at Valence.

A life of labor and study, of hopes and dreams, now began for the young lieutenant. He gave himself up entirely to his military service, and pursued earnest, scientific studies in regard to it. Mathematics, the science of war, geometry, and finally politics, were the objects of his zeal; but alongside of these he read and studied earnestly the works of Voltaire, Corneille, Racine, Montaigne, the Abbé Raynal, and, above all, the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau, whose passionate and enthusiastic disciple Napoleon Bonaparte was at that time.*

Amid so many grave occupations of the mind it would seem that the heart with all its claims had to remain in the background. The smiling boy Cupid, with his gracious raillery and his smarting griefs, seemed to make no impression on that pale, grave, and taciturn artillery lieutenant, and not to dare shoot an arrow toward that bosom which had mailed itself in an impenetrable cuirass of misanthropy, stoicism, and learning.

But yet between the links of this coat-of-mail an arrow must have glided, for the young lieutenant suddenly became conscious that there in his bosom a heart did beat, and that it was going in the midst of his studies to interrupt his dreams of misanthropy. Yes, it had come to this, that he abandoned his study to pay his court to a young lady, that at her side he lost his gravity of mien, his gloomy taciturnity, and became joyous, talkative, and merry, as be seemed a young man of his age.

The young lady who exercised so powerful an influence upon the young Bonaparte was the daughter of the commanding officer at Valence, M. de Colombier. He loved

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 33.

her, but his lips were yet too timid to confess it, and of what need were words to these young people to understand one another and to know what the one felt for the other?

In the morning they took long walks through the beautiful park; they spoke one to another of their childhood, of their brothers and sisters, and when the young maid with tears in her eyes listened to the descriptions which Napoleon made to her of his country, of his father's house, and, above all things, of his mother—when she with animation and enthusiasm declared that Letitia was a heroine greater than whom antiquity had never seen, then Napoleon would take her two hands in his and thank her with tremulous voice for the love which she consecrated to his noble mother.

If in the morning they had to separate, as an indemnification an evening walk in the light of the moon was agreed upon, and the young maid promised heroically to come without uncertainty, however imperative was her mother's prohibition. And truly, when her mother was asleep, she glided down into the park, and Napoleon welcomed her with a happy smile, and arm in arm, happy as children, they wandered through the paths, laughing at their own shadows, which the light of the moon in wondrous distortion made to dance before them. They entered into a small bower, which stood in the shadow of trees, and there the young Napoleon had prepared for the young maid a very pleasing surprise. There on the table was a basket full of her favorite fruit—full of the sweetest, finest cherries. Louise thanked her young lover with a hand-pressure for the tender attention, but she declared that she would touch none of the cherries unless Napoleon enjoyed them with her, and to please his beloved he had to obey.

They sat down on the seat before the bower and enjoyed the golden light of the moon, the night air amid the lime-trees, the joy of being thus secretly together, and with infinite delight they ate of the sweet juicy cherries. But when

the last cherry was eaten, the moon became darkened, a rude night breeze shook the trees, and made the young maid tremble with cold. She must not remain from home any longer, she must not expose herself to the dangerous night air; thus argued the considerate tenderness of the young lieutenant, and, kissing her hand, he bade farewell to Louise, and watched until the tender ethereal figure had vanished behind the little door which led from the park into the house.*

The sweet idyl of his first love had, however, come to a sudden and unexpected end. The young Second-Lieutenant Bonaparte was ordered to Lyons with his regiment, and the first innocent romance of his heart was ended.

But he never forgot the young maid, whom he then had so tenderly loved, and in the later days of his grandeur he remembered her, and when he learned that she had lost her husband, a M. de Bracieux, and lived in very depressing circumstances, he appointed her maid of honor to his sister Elise, and secured her a very handsome competency.

The dream of his first love had been dreamed away; and, perhaps to forget it, Napoleon again in Lyons gave himself up with deepest earnestness to study. The Academy of Sciences in Lyons had offered a prize for the answer to the question: "What are the sentiments and emotions which are to be instilled into men, so as to make them happy?"

Napoleon entered the lists for this prize, and, if his work did not receive the prize, it furnished the occasion for the Abbé Raynal, who had answered the question successfully, to become acquainted with the young author, and to encourage him to persevere in his literary pursuits, for which he had exhibited so much talent.

Napoleon then, with all the fire of his soul, began a new

* "Mémorial de St. Hélène," p. 30.

work, the history of the revolutions in Corsica; and, in order to make accurate researches in the archives of Ajaccio, he obtained leave of absence to go thither. In the year 1788, Napoleon returned to his native isle to his mother, to his brothers and sisters, all of whom he had not seen for nine years, and was welcomed by them with the tenderest affection.

But the joys of the family could draw away the young man but little from his studies and researches; and, however much he loved his mother, brothers and sisters, now much grown up, yet he preferred being alone with his elder brother Joseph, making long walks with him, and in solemn exchange of thoughts and sentiments, communicating to him his studies, his hopes, his dreams for the future.

To acquire distinction, fame, reputation with the actual world, and immortality with the future—such was the object on which all the wishes, all the hopes of Napoleon were concentrated; and in long hours of conversation with Joseph he spoke of the lofty glory to carve out an immortal name, to accomplish deeds before which admiring posterity would bow.

Did Napoleon then think of purchasing for himself an immortal name as writer, as historian? At least he studied very earnestly the archives of Ajaccio, and sent a preliminary essay of his history of the revolutions of Corsica to Raynal for examination. This renowned savant of his day warmly congratulated the young author on his work, and asked him to send a copy that he might show it to Mirabeau.

Napoleon complied with these wishes; and when, a few weeks after, he received a letter from Raynal, after reading it, he, with radiant eyes and a bright smile, handed it to his brother Joseph.

In this letter of Raynal were found these words: "Monsieur de Mirabeau has in this little essay found traits which

announce a genius of the first rank. He entreats the young author to come to him in Paris."*

But the young author could not at once obey the call of the Count de Mirabeau. A sad family bereavement delayed him at the time in Corsica. The brother of his grandfather, the aged Archdeacon Lucian, the faithful counsellor and friend of Letitia and of her young family, was seized with a mortal disease; the gout, which for years had tormented him, was now to give him the fatal blow, and the whole family of the Bonapartes was called to the bedside of the old man to receive his parting words.

Weeping, they all stood around his couch; weeping, Letitia bent over the aged man, whose countenance was already signed with the hand of death. Around kneeled the younger children of Letitia, for their great-uncle had long been to them a kind father and protector; and on the other side of the couch, facing Letitia and her brother, the Abbé Fesch, stood Joseph and Napoleon, gazing with sad looks on their uncle.

His large, already obscured eyes wandered with a deep, searching glance upon all the members of the Bonaparte family, and then at last remained fixed with a wondrous brilliancy of expression on the pale, grave face of Napoleon.

At this moment, the Abbé Fesch, with a voice trembling with emotion and full of holy zeal, began to intone the prayers for the dead. But the old priest ordered him with a voice full of impatience to be silent.

"I have prayed long enough in my life," said he; "I have now but a few moments to live, and I must give them to my family."

The loud sobbings of Letitia and of her children interrupted him, and called forth a last genial smile upon the already stiffening features.

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 33.

"Letitia," said he, in a loud, friendly tone, "Letitia, cease to shed tears; I die happy, for I see you surrounded by all your children. My life is no longer necessary to the children of my dear Charles; I can therefore die. Joseph is at the head of the administration of the country, and he will know how to take care of what belongs to his family. You, Napoleon," continued he, with a louder voice, "you will be a great and exalted man."*

His eyes turned on Napoleon, he sank back on the cushions, and his dying lips murmured yet once more, "*Tu serai unomone!*"

After the body of the worthy great-uncle had been laid in the grave, Napoleon left Corsica to return to France and to his regiment, for the time of his leave of absence had expired.

For the second time the lips of a dying man had prophesied him a great and brilliant future. His dying father had said that one day the sword of his son Napoleon would make all Europe bow under the yoke; his great-uncle had prophesied he would be a great and exalted personage.

To these prophecies of the dying is to be added Mirabeau's judgment, which called Napoleon a genius of the first stamp.

But this great and glorious future was yet screened under dark clouds from the eyes of the young lieutenant of artillery, and the blood-dripping hand of the Revolution was first needed to tear away these clouds and to convert the king's lieutenant of artillery into the Emperor of France!

* "*Tu poi, Napoleon, serai unomone,*" such were the words of the dying man, assures us King Joseph in his memoirs; whilst Las Casas, in his memorial of St. Helena, makes Napoleon relate that his uncle had told him, "You, Napoleon, will be the head of the family."

CHAPTER VIII.

A PAGE FROM HISTORY.

THE dark clouds which hung yet over the future of Napoleon Bonaparte, the lieutenant of artillery, were gathering in heavier and heavier masses over all France, and already were overshadowing the throne of the lilies.

Marie Antoinette had already abandoned the paradise of innocency in Trianon, and when she came there now it was to weep in silence, to cast away the mask from her face, and under the garb of the proud, imperious, ambitious queen to exhibit the pallid, anxious countenance of the woman.

Alas! they were passed away, those days of festivity, those innocent joys of Trianon; the royal farmer's wife had no more the heart to carry the spindle, to gather eggs from the hens' nests, and to perform with her friends the joyous idyls of a pastoral life.

The queen had procured for herself a few years of freedom and license by banishing from Versailles and from the Tuileries the burdensome Madame Etiquette, who hitherto had watched over every step of a Queen of France, but in her place Madame Politique had entered into the palace, and Marie Antoinette could not drive her away as she had done with Madame Etiquette.

For Madame Politique came into the queen's apartments, ushered in by a powerful and irresistible suite. The failure of the crops throughout the land, want, the cries of distress from a famishing people, the disordered finances of the state—such was the suite which accompanied Politique before the queen; pamphlets, pasquinades, sarcastic songs on Marie Antoinette, whom no more the people called their queen, but already the foreigner, *L'Autrichienne*—such were the gifts which Politique brought for the queen.