

BOOK II.

THE WIFE OF GENERAL BONAPARTE.

CHAPTER XVI.

BONAPARTE IN CORSICA.

THE civil war which for four years had devastated France had also with its destruction and its terrors overspread the French colonies, and in Martinique as well as in Corsica two parties stood opposed to each other in infuriated bitterness—one fighting for the rights of the native land, the other for the rights of the French people, for the “liberty, equality, and fraternity” which the Convention in Paris had adopted for its motto, since it delivered to the guillotine, on the *Place de la Révolution*, the heads of those who dared lay claim for themselves to this liberty of thought so solemnly proclaimed.

In Corsica both parties fought with the same eagerness as in France, and the execution of Louis XVI. had only made the contest more violent and more bitter.

One of these parties looked with horror on this guillotine which had drunk the blood of the king, and this party desired to have nothing in common with this French republic, with this blood-streaming Convention which had made of terror a law, and which had destroyed so many lives in the name of liberty.

At the head of this party stood the General Pascal Paoli, whom the revolution had recalled to his native isle from his exile of twenty years, and who objected that Corsica should

bend obediently under the blood-stained hand of the French Convention, and whose wish it was that the isle should be an independent province of the great French republic.

To exalt Corsica into a free, independent republic had been the idea of his whole life. For the sake of this idea he had passed twenty years in exile; for, after having made Corsica independent of Genoa, he had not been able to obtain for his native isle that independence for which he had fought with his brave Genoese troops. During eight years he had perseveringly maintained the conflict—during eight years he had been the ruler of Corsica, but immovable in his republican principles; he had rejected the title of king, which the Corsican people, grateful for the services rendered to their fatherland, had offered him. He had been satisfied to be the first and most zealous servant of the island, which, through his efforts, had been liberated from the tyrannical dominion of Genoa. But Genoa's appeal for assistance had brought French troops to Corsica; the Genoese, harassed and defeated everywhere by Paoli's brave troops, had finally transferred the island to France. This was not what Paoli wanted—this was not for what he had fought!

Corsica was to be a free and independent republic; she was to bow no more to France than to Genoa; Corsica was to be free.

In vain did the French government make to General Paoli the most brilliant offers; he rejected them; he called the Corsicans to the most energetic resistance to the French occupation; and when he saw that opposition was in vain, that Corsica had to submit, he at least would not yield, and he went to England.

The cry for liberty which, in the year 1790, resounded from France, and which made the whole world tremble, brought him back from England to Corsica, and he took the oath of allegiance to free, democratic France. But the

blood of the king had annulled this oath, the Convention's reign of terror had filled his soul with horror; and, after solemnly separating himself from France, he had, in the year 1793, convoked a *Consulta*, to decide whether Corsica was to submit to the despotism of the French republic, or if it was to be a free and independent state. The *Consulta* chose the latter position, and named Paoli for president as well as for general-in-chief of the Corsicans.

The National Convention at once called the culprit to its bar, and ordered him to Paris to justify his conduct, or to receive the punishment due. But General Paoli paid no attention to the imperious orders of the Convention, which, as the chief appeared not at its bar, declared him, on the 15th of May, 1793, a traitor to his country, and sent commissioners to Corsica to arrest the criminal.

This traitor to the state, the General Pascal Paoli, was then at the head of the Moderate party in Corsica, and he loudly and solemnly declared that, in case of absolute necessity, it would be preferable to call England to their assistance than to accept the yoke of the French republic, which had desecrated her liberty, since she had soiled it with the blood of so many innocent victims.

But in opposition to General Paoli rose up with wild clamor the other party, the party of young, enthusiastic heads, who were intoxicated with the democratic ideas which had obtained the sway in France, and which they imagined, so great was their impassioned devotedness to them, possessed the power and the ability to conquer the whole world.

At the head of this second party, which claimed unconditional adherence to France, to the members of the Convention—at the head of this fanatical, Corsican, republican, and Jacobin party, stood the Bonaparte family, and above them all the two brothers Joseph and Napoleon.

Joseph was now, in the year 1793, chief justice of the tribunal of Ajaccio; Napoleon, who was captain of artillery

in the French army of Italy, had then obtained leave of absence to visit his family. Both brothers had been hitherto the most affectionate and intimate admirers of Paoli, and especially Napoleon, who, from his earliest childhood, had cherished the most unbounded admiration for the patriot who preferred exile to a dependent grandeur in Corsica. Even now, since Paoli's return to Corsica, and Napoleon had had many opportunities to see him, his admiration for the great chief had lost nothing of its force or vitality. Paoli seemed sincerely to return this inclination of Napoleon and of his brother, and in the long evening walks, which both brothers made with him, Napoleon's mind opened itself, before his old, experienced companion, the great general, the noble republican, with a freedom and a candor such as he had never manifested to others. With subdued admiration Paoli listened to his short, energetic explanations, to his descriptions, to his war-schemes, to his warm enthusiasm for the republic; and one day, carried away by the warmth of the young captain of artillery, the general, fixing his glowing eyes upon him, exclaimed: "Young man, you are modelled after the antique; you belong to Plutarch!"

"And to General Paoli!" replied Napoleon, eagerly, as he pressed his friend's hand affectionately in his own.

But now this harmonious concord between General Paoli and the young men was destroyed by the passion of party views. Joseph as well as Napoleon belonged to the French party; they soon became its leaders; they were at the head of the club which they had organized according to the maxims and principles of the Jacobin Club in Paris, and to which they gave the same name.

In this Jacobin Club at Ajaccio Napoleon made speeches full of glowing enthusiasm for the French republic, for the ideas of freedom; in this club he enjoined on the people of Corsica to adhere loyally to France, to keep fast and to defend with life and blood the acquired liberty of republican

France, to regard and drive away as traitors to their country all those who dared guide the Corsican people on another track.

But the Corsican people were not there to hear the enthusiastic speeches about liberty and to follow them. Only a few hundred ardent republicans of the same sentiment applauded the republican Napoleon, and cried aloud that the republic must be defended with blood and life. The majority of the Corsican people flocked to Paoli, and the commissioners sent by the Convention from Paris to Corsica, to depose and arrest Paoli, found co-operation and assistance only among the inhabitants of the cities and among the French troops. Paoli, the president of the *Consulta*, was located at Corté; the messengers of the Convention gathered in Bastia the adherents of France, and excited them to strenuous efforts against the rebellious *Consulta* and the insurgent Paoli.

Civil war with all its horrors was there; the raging conflicts of the parties tore apart the holy bonds of family, friendship, and love. Brother fought and argued against brother; friend rose up against friend, and whole families were destroyed, rent asunder by the impassioned rivalries of sentiment and partisanship. Denunciations and accusations, suspicions and enmities, followed. Every one trembled at his own shadow; and, to turn aside the peril of death, it was necessary to strike.*

The Bonaparte brothers opposed General Paoli with violent bitterness; bloody conflicts took place, in which the national Corsican party remained victorious. Irritated and embittered by the opposition which some of the natives themselves were making to his patriotic efforts, Paoli persecuted with zealous activity the conquered, whom he resolved to destroy, that they might not imperil the young Corsican

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 51.

independence. Joseph and Napoleon Bonaparte were the leaders of this party, and Paoli knew too well the energy and the intellectual superiority of Napoleon not to dread his influence. Him, above all things, him and his family, must he render harmless, so as to weaken and to intimidate the French party. He sent agents to Ajaccio, to arrest the whole Bonaparte family, and at the same time his troops approached the town to occupy it and make the French commissioners prisoners. But these latter, informed in time of the danger, had gained time and saved themselves on board the French frigate lying in the harbor, and with them the whole Bonaparte family had embarked. Napoleon, on whom the attention of Paoli's agents had been specially directed, was more than once in danger of being seized by them, and it was due to the advice of a friend that, disguised as a sailor, he saved himself in time on board the French frigate and joined his family.* The commissioners of the Convention at once ordered the anchor to be weighed, and to steer toward France.

This frigate, on board of which the Bonaparte family in its flight had embarked, carried to France the future emperor and his fortune.

The house, the possessions of the Bonaparte family, fell a prey to the conquerors, and on them they gave vent to their vengeance for the successful escape of the fugitives. A witness of these facts is a certificate which Joseph Bonaparte a few months later procured from Corsica, and which ran as follows:

"I, the undersigned, Louis Conti, procurator-syndic of the district of Ajaccio, department of Corsica, declare and certify: in the month of May of this year, when General Paoli and the administration of the department had sent into the city of Ajaccio armed troops, in concert with other

* "Mémoires de la Duchess d'Abrantes," vol. i.

traitors in the city, took possession of the fortress, drove away the administration of the district, incarcerated a large portion of the patriots, disarmed the republican forces, and, when these refused to give up the commissioners of the National Convention, Paoli's troops fired upon the vessel which carried these commissioners :

"That these rebels endeavored to seize the Bonaparte family, which had the good fortune to elude their pursuit :

"That they destroyed, plundered, and burnt every thing which belonged to this family, whose sole crime consisted in their unswerving fidelity to the republicans, and in their refusal to take any part in the scheme of isolation, rebellion, and disloyalty, of which Paoli and the administration of the department had become guilty.

"I moreover declare and certify that this family, consisting of ten individuals, and who stood high in the esteem of the people of the island, possessed the largest property in the whole department, and that now they are on the continent of the republic.

"(Signed) CONTI, Proc.-Synd. Delivered on the 5th of September, 1793, Year II. of the republic."*

Paoli, the conqueror of the French republic, the patriotic enemy of the Bonaparte family, drove Napoleon Bonaparte from his native soil! The cannon of the Corsican patriots fired upon the ship on which the future emperor of the French was steering toward his future empire!

But this future lay still in an invisible, cloudy distance —of one thing, however, was the young captain of artillery fully conscious: from this hour he had broken with the past, and, by his dangers and conflicts, by the sacrifice of his family's property, by his flight from Corsica, given to the world a solemn testimony that he recognized no other country, that he owed allegiance to no other nation than to

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 52.

France. He had proved that his feelings were not Corsican, but French.

The days of his childhood and youth sank away behind him, with the deepening shadows of the island of Corsica, and the shores which rose before him on the horizon were the shores of France. There lay his future—his empire!

CHAPTER XVII.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE BEFORE TOULON.

WHILST Paris, yet trembling, bowed under the bloody rule of the Convention, a spirit of opposition and horror began to stir in the provinces; fear of the terrorists, of the Convention, began to kindle the courage, to make defiance to these men of horror, and to put an end to terrorism. The province of Vendée, in her faithfulness and loyalty to the royal family, arose in deadly conflict against the republicans; the large cities of the south, with Toulon at their head, had shielded themselves from the horrors which the home government would have brought them, by uniting with the enemies who now from all sides pressed upon France.

Toulon gave itself up to the combined fleet of England and Spain. Marseilles, Lyons, and Nismes, contracted an alliance together, and declared their independence of the Convention and of the terrorists. Everywhere in all the cities and communities of the south the people rose up, and seditions and rebellions took place. Everywhere the Convention had to send its troops to re-establish peace by force, and to compel the people to submit to its rule. Whole army corps had to be raised to win back to the republic the rebellious cities, and only after hard fighting did General Carteaux subdue Marseilles.

But Toulon held out still, and within its protecting walls had the majority of the inhabitants of Marseilles taken refuge before the wrath of the Convention, which had already sent to the latter some of its representatives, to establish there the destructive work of the guillotine. Toulon offered them safety; it seemed impregnable, as much by its situation as by the number and strength of its defenders. It could also defy any siege, since the sea was open, and it could by this channel be provisioned through the English and Spanish fleet.

No one trembled before the little army of seventeen thousand men which, under General Carteaux, had invested Toulon.

But in this little army of the republicans was a young soldier whom yet none knew, none feared, but whose fame was soon to resound throughout the world, and before whom all Europe was soon tremblingly to bow.

This young man was Napoleon Bonaparte, the captain of artillery. He had come from Italy (where his regiment was) to France, to make there, by order of his general, some purchases for the park of artillery of the Italian army. But some of the people's representatives had had an opportunity of recognizing the sharp eye and the military acquirements of the young captain of artillery; they interceded in his favor, and he was promoted to the army corps which was before Toulon, and at once sent in the capacity of assistant to General Carteaux, with whom also was Napoleon's brother Joseph, as chief of the general's staff.

From this moment the siege, which until now had not progressed favorably, was pushed on with renewed energy, and it was due to the cautious activity, the daring spirit of the captain of artillery, that marked advantages were gained over the English, and that from them many redoubts were taken, and the lines of the French drawn closer and closer to the besieged city.

But yet, after many months of siege, Toulon held out still. From the sea came provisions and ammunition, and on the land-side Toulon was protected against capture by a fort occupied by English troops, and which, on account of its impregnable position, was called "Little Gibraltar." From this position hot-balls and howitzers had free range all over the seaboard, for this fort stood between the two harbors of the city and immediately opposite Toulon. The English, fully appreciating the importance of the position, had occupied it with six thousand men, and surrounded it with intrenchments.

It came to this, as Napoleon in a council of war declared to the general, that the English must be driven out of their position; then, when this fort was taken, in two days Toulon must yield.

The plan was decided upon, and from this moment the besiegers directed all their strength no more against Toulon, but against the important fort, "Little Gibraltar," "for there," as Napoleon said, "there was the key to Toulon."

All Europe now watched with intense anxiety the events near Toulon; all France, which hitherto with divided sentiments had wished the victory to side now with the besieged, now with the besiegers, forgot its differences of opinion, and was united in the one wish to expel the hated enemy and rival, the English, from the French city, and to crown the efforts of the French army with victory.

The Convention, irritated that its orders should not have been immediately carried out, had in its despotic power recalled from his command General Carteaux, who could not succeed in capturing Toulon, and had appointed as chief of battalion the young captain of artillery, Napoleon Bonaparte, on account of his bravery in capturing some dangerous redoubts. The successor of Carteaux, the old General Dugommier, recognizing the superior mind of the young chief of battalion, willingly followed his plans,

and was readily guided and led by the surer insight of the young man.

The position of new Gibraltar had to be conquered so as to secure the fall of Toulon; such was, such remained Napoleon's unswerving judgment. No effort, no cost, no blood, was to be spared to attain this result. He placed new batteries against the fort; stormed the forts Malbosquet and Ronge; a terrible struggle ensued, in which the English General O'Hara was taken prisoner by the French, and the English had to leave the fort and retreat into the city.

The first great advantage was won, but Little Gibraltar remained still in the hands of the English, and Napoleon desired, and felt it as an obligation, to subdue it at any price.

But already the Convention began to be discouraged, and to lose energy, and the deputies of the people, Barras and Fréron, who until now had remained with the besieging army, hastened to Paris to implore the Convention to give up the siege, and to recall the army from Toulon.

But before they reached Paris the matter was to be decided before Toulon. The fate of the Little Gibraltar was to be fulfilled; it was to be taken, or in the storming of it the French army was to perish.

Thousands of shells were thrown into the fort, thirty cannon thundered against it. Napoleon Bonaparte mixed with the artillerymen, encouraged by his bold words their activity, their energy, and their bravery, and pointed to them the spots where to direct their balls. Whilst he was in conversation with one of the cannoneers near whom he stood, a cannon-ball from the English tore away the head of the artilleryman who had just lifted up the match to fire his cannon.

Napoleon quietly took up the burning match out of the hand of the dead man, and discharged the gun. Then, with all the zeal and tact of an experienced cannoneer, he began to load the piece, to send forth its balls against the enemy;

and for many hours he remained at this post, until another artilleryman was found to relieve the chief of division.*

But whilst Napoleon made himself a cannoneer in the service of his country, he remained at the same time the chief of division, whose attention was everywhere, whose eagle glance nothing escaped, and who knew how to improve every advantage.

A body of troops was at a distant point, and Bonaparte wanted to send them an important order. Whilst loading his cannon, he called aloud to an under-officer to whom he might dictate the dispatch. A young man hastened to the call, and said he was ready to write. Upon a mound of sand he unfolded his pocket-book, drew out of it a piece of paper, and began to write what Napoleon, with a voice above the cannon's roar, was dictating to him. At this very moment, as the order was written, a cannon-ball fell quite near the officer, burrowing the ground, and scattering some of the light sand over the written paper. The young man raised his hat and made a bow to the cannon-ball, that buried itself in the sand.

* This brave action of Napoleon was to have for him evil results. The cannoneer, from whose hand he took the match, was suffering from the most distressing skin-disease, generally breaking out with the greatest violence in the hand. The match which the cannoneer had for hours held in his hand was yet warm with its pressure, and imparted to Napoleon's hand the poison of the contagious disease. For years he had to endure the eruption, which he could not conquer, as he had conquered nations and princes, but to its destructive and painful power he had to subdue his body. The nervous agitations to which he was subject, the shrugging of his right shoulder, the white-greenish complexion of his face, the leanness of his body, were all consequences of this disease. It was only when Napoleon had become emperor, that Corvisart succeeded, by his eloquence, in persuading him to follow a regular course of treatment. This treatment cured him; his white-greenish complexion and his leanness disappeared. The nervous movement of the shoulder remained, and became a habit.
—See "Mémoires de Constant," vol. i.

"I thank you," said he, "you have saved me sand for my paper."

Napoleon smiled, and looked with a joyous, sympathizing glance at the young officer, whose handsome pleasing countenance was radiant with bold daring and harmless merriment.

"Now, I need a brave messenger to carry this order to that exposed detachment," said Napoleon.

"I will be the messenger," cried out the officer, eagerly.

"Well, I accept you, but you must remove your uniform, and put on a blouse, so as not to be too much exposed."

"That I will not do," exclaimed the young man. "I am no spy."

"What! you refuse to obey?" asked Napoleon, threateningly.

"No, I refuse to assume a disguise," answered the officer. "I am ready to obey, and even to carry the order into the very hands of the devil. But with my uniform I go, otherwise those cursed Englishmen might well imagine that I am afraid of them."

"But you imperil your life if you go in your glittering uniform."

"My life does not belong to me," cried out gayly the young soldier. "Who cares if I risk it? You will not be sorry about it, for you know me not, citizen-officer, and it is all the same to me. Shall I not go in my uniform? I should be delighted to encounter those English gentlemen, for, with my sword and the sprightly grains in my patron's pocket, the conversation will not sleep, I vow. Now, then, shall I go, citizen-officer?"

"Go," said Napoleon, smiling. "But you are wrong if you think I will not be sorry in case you pay this duty with your life. You are a brave fellow, and I love the brave. Go; but first tell me your name, that when you return I

may tell General Dugommier what name he has to inscribe in his papers of recommendation for officers; that will be the reward for your message."

"My name is Junot, citizen-officer," exclaimed the young man as, swinging the paper in his hand, he darted away eagerly.

The roar of the cannon was still heard, when Napoleon's messenger returned, after a few hours, and reported to him. The chief of division received him with a friendly motion of his head.

"Welcome, Junot," said he. "I am glad to see you back, and that you have successfully accomplished your task. I must now make a change of position in yonder battallion. To-morrow I will give you your commission of lieutenant, citizen-soldier."

"And to-day grant me a nobler reward, citizen-officer," said the young man, tenderly; "give me your hand, and allow me to press it in mine."

Napoleon, smiling, gave him his hand. The eyes of both young men met in radiant looks, and with these looks was sealed the covenant which united them both in a friendship enduring to the tomb. For not one of his companions-in-arms remained attached to Napoleon with so warm, true, nearly impassioned tenderness as Junot, and none of them was by the general, the consul, the emperor, more implicitly trusted, more heartily beloved than his Junot, whom he exalted to the ranks of general, governor of Lisbon, Duke d'Abrantes, who was one of the few to whom in his days of glory he allowed to speak to him in all truth, in all freedom, and without reserve.

But whilst the two young men were sealing this covenant of friendship with this look of spiritual recognition, the cannon was thundering forth on all sides. The earth trembled from the reports of the pieces; all the elements seemed unloosed; the storm howled as if to mingle the noise of

human strife with the uproar of Nature; the sea dashed its frothy, mound-like waves with terrible noise on the shore; the rain poured down from the skies in immense torrents, and everything around was veiled in mists of dampness and smoke. And amid all this, crackled, thundered, and hissed the shells which were directed against Little Gibraltar, or whizzed from Toulon, to bring death and destruction among the besiegers.

Night sank down, and yet Little Gibraltar was not taken. "I am lost," sighed General Dugommier. "I shall have to pay with my head, if we are forced to retreat."

"Then we must go forward," cried Bonaparte; "we must have Little Gibraltar."

An hour after, a loud cry of victory announced to General Dugommier that the chief of division had reached his aim, that Little Gibraltar was captured by the French.

As the day began to dawn, the French had already captured two other forts; and Bonaparte roused all his energies to fire from Little Gibraltar upon the enemy's fleet. But the English admiral, Lord Hood, knew very well the terrible danger to which he was exposed if he did not at once weigh anchor.

The chief of division had prophesied correctly: in Little Gibraltar was the key of Toulon; and since the French had now seized the keys, the English ships could no longer close the city against them. Toulon was lost—it had to surrender to the conquerors.*

It is true, defensive operations were still carried on, but Napoleon's balls scattered death and ruin into the city; the bursting of shells brought destruction and suffering everywhere, and in the city as well as in the harbor columns of flames arose from houses and ships.

Toulon was subdued; and the chief of division, Napo-

* Toulon fell on the 18th of December, 1793.

leon Bonaparte, had achieved his first brilliant pass of arms before jubilant France and astonished Europe; he had made his name shine out from the obscurity of the past, and placed it on the pages of history.

The Convention showed itself thankful to the daring soldier, who had won such a brilliant victory alike over the foreign as well as over the internal enemies of the republic; and Napoleon Bonaparte, the chief of division, was now promoted to the generalship of division.

He accepted the nomination with a quiet smile. The wondrous brilliancy of his eyes betrayed only to a few friends and confidants the important resolves and thoughts which moved the soul of the young general.

In virtue of the order of the Convention, the newly-appointed General Bonaparte was to go to the army of the republic which was now stationed in Italy; and he received secret instructions from the Directory concerning Genoa. Bonaparte left Paris, to gather, as he hoped, fresh laurels and new victories.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BONAPARTE'S IMPRISONMENT.

ON the 25th day of March, 1794, General Bonaparte entered the headquarters of the French army in Nice. He was welcomed with joy and marks of distinction, for the fame of his heroic deeds before Toulon had preceded him; and on Bonaparte's pale, proud face, with its dark, brilliant eyes, was written that he was now come into Italy to add fresh laurels to the victor's crown won before Toulon.

The old commander-in-chief of the French army, General Dumberion, confined oftentimes to his bed through sickness, was very willing to be represented by General