

an improvement, he replied, "Do you attend to your duty as National Commissioners, and I will answer for mine with my head." His eye was on Little Gibraltar, the possession of whose promontory, he assured the general-in-chief, would give them the sweeping fire of the harbor, and compel the naval force to retire. A few weeks earlier the stronghold would have been taken with easy conquest. But now it frowned upon them with solid walls, and lines of silent cannon, behind which were brave men from the invading armies, confident of victory. At one extremity of the town was the small fort Malbosquet, in a plantation of olives, behind which Bonaparte, unobserved by the enemy, erected a battery, from which he determined to open a fire, to divert attention from the grand assault. With sleepless energy, snatching a short repose at night, wrapped in his cloak beside his guns, he multiplied batteries toward the fortress. One day during the progress of the siege, the deputies performing their accustomed survey of the works, discovered the battery near Malbosquet, and when told it had been ready for action eight days, ordered an immediate cannonade. It had not entered their minds, that a prospective and not a present use was the reason for inaction. The English made an effective onset, and spiked the guns. Napoleon hastened to the scene of conflict. "On his arrival on the eminence behind, he perceived a long, deep ditch, fringed with brambles and willows, which he thought might be turned to advantage. He caused a regiment of foot to creep along the ditch, which they did without being discovered, until they were close upon the enemy. General O'Hara, the English commander, mistook them when they appeared for some of his own allies, and rushing out to give them some orders, was wounded and made prisoner. The English

were dispirited when they lost their general; they retreated; and the French were at liberty to set about the repair of their battery. In this affair much blood was shed. Napoleon himself received a bayonet-thrust in the thigh, and fell into the arms of Muiron, who carried him off the field. Such was the commencement of their brotherly friendship."

It was after this slaughter that Napoleon is said to have remarked to Louis, his brother, who visited him in camp, "All these men have been needlessly sacrificed. Had intelligence commanded here, none of these lives need have been lost. Learn from this how indispensable it is that those should possess knowledge who aspire to assume command over others." While constructing a battery under the fire of the allies, he had a despatch to prepare, and called for a soldier who could write. A youthful sergeant sprang out of the ranks and leaning upon the breast-works, wrote at the dictation of Napoleon. As he made the last stroke of the pen, a ball struck the ground so near, the dust fell in a cloud upon him and the paper. With a laugh, he exclaimed, "Good, this time we shall do without sand." This plesantry indicating the greatest coolness and self-command arrested the attention of Napoleon. The amanuensis was Junot, soon afterward promoted to command, and subsequently Duke of Abrantes; and who profanely said, "I love Napoleon as my God. To him I am indebted for all that I am."

At another time a cavalcade of carriages arrived at Toulon, bringing more than fifty men, dressed in flaunting uniform, who desired an interview with the general. When admitted to his presence, one of the company presented this address: "Citizen-general, we come from Paris. The patriots are indignant at your inactivity and delay. The soil of the republic has been

violated. She trembles to think that the insult is still unavenged. She asks why is Toulon not taken? Why is the English fleet not yet destroyed? In her indignation she has appealed to her brave sons. We have obeyed her summons, and burn with impatience to fulfil her expectations. We are volunteer gunners from Paris. Furnish us with arms. To-morrow we will march against the enemy."

Napoleon aside, said to Dugommier, "Turn those gentlemen over to me, I will take care of them!"

He gave them the control of a park of artillery near the sea-shore, and bade them sink an English frigate whose swarming decks lay within range of the guns. Suddenly a broadside came like a hail-storm about their heads. The recruits fled, and trouble with them was over.

Then came the decisive day; the 19th of December, 1793, when the general assault was ordered; and the terrific conflict opened. Napoleon, in accordance with his original tactics, poured a storm of shells on different points of the fortress, to confuse the enemy, while they fell incessantly also upon the devoted city. In an astonishingly brief time, eight thousand bombshells had exploded in the enemy's works, and laid them in a heap of ruins. The soldiers rushed through the storm of rain and fire into the embrasures, and cut down the garrison with the sword. The streets of Toulon ran blood, when the tricolor waved on the shattered ramparts, and Napoleon said to General Dugommier, "Go and sleep. We have taken Toulon." It was taken, but with carnage, through which the name of Bonaparte rose toward the zenith of that glory which flooded a hundred battle-fields, of which Toulon was the sanguinary sample.

The blow was struck which decided the conflict; but

conflagration and slaughter continued. Lord Howe, the English commander, saw that the city must follow the surrender of the fortress, and prepared to abandon it to the foe. When the inhabitants beheld the long processions of the sick and wounded moving toward the ships, they knew their doom was sealed. The vessels which could not be employed with safety, were collected and a fire-ship sent among them. Beneath the lurid flames of their burning, the explosion of shells and magazines, and the shrieks of the dying, whose homes were pierced by the ceaseless cannonade, twenty thousand of the royalists gathered on the shore imploring deliverance from the exasperated enemy.

The fleet at length moved out of harbor, and the Republicans rushed into Toulon. A double vengeance burned in their bosoms; rage because of the rebellion against Jacobin reign, and revenge for having invited a foreign alliance to strengthen and shield their revolt. A hundred and fifty poor working men were summoned together under the impression that they were to be employed in repairing the demolished forts, when a volley of musketry cut them down. A wealthy old merchant was executed to obtain his millions. For these excesses, neither Dugommier nor Napoleon were responsible. Their authority was in vain, while the madness of vengeance and lust ruled the hour. By this victory insurrection was quelled, and the control of the army secured.

Bonaparte, whose agency in the achievement was concealed as far as possible by the jealous representatives of the people, made an impression that reached the government; and he was appointed to survey and put in order of defense the entire coast of France, lying on the Mediterranean sea. With characteristic energy he accomplished in a few weeks his responsible

and extensive work, and immediately joined the army at Nice, with an additional promotion to the post of chief of battalion. He infused his enthusiasm and self-reliance into the army of Italy, and soon General Dumberbion with Massena and Napoleon were leading the troops to conquest.

[Possession of the maritime Alps was gained, and the way prepared for advancing into Italy. Still was the genius of Napoleon kept in comparative obscurity by the silence of his superior officers, who assumed the honors of victory. He was superseded in command, and soon after, July 28, 1794, arrested upon the charge of interest in measures hostile to the policy of the dominant party, which had taken the reins of government from the bloody hands of that prince of homicides, Robespierre.]

Albitti and Salicetti, who succeeded the terrorists as representatives of the people, influenced by the misrepresentations of his enemies, or jealous of the young Corsican, whose rapid advancement astonished them, ordered the arrest. Had it occurred a few weeks earlier, it would doubtless have added him to the myriads despatched by the guillotine. He made his statement, affirming his innocence, and was immediately released from confinement. The officer who opened his prison door, found him intensely engaged with the map of Lombardy, evidently conscious of work yet to do on the pictured plains, whence came to his fancy's ear the tramp of moving battalions. The prejudice attending this unjust incarceration, was manifest in the attempt to change his rank in the army; and he indignantly resigned his position, and returned to the family residence in Marseilles. The resources of the Bonapartes were small, and destitution cast its shadows about their home. But while there, he again fell in

love. Eugénie Désirée Clery, an attractive and accomplished young lady, a merchant's daughter, became the object of reciprocated affection. But circumstances did not permit him to marry, and the affair was broken off. She subsequently became the wife of Bernadotte, and was the queen of Sweden; her sister married Joseph, the brother of Napoleon.

The youthful soldier seems to have been honorable in all matters of friendship, and without the vices of the times. He had raised his aspirations above the effeminate pleasures of sensual indulgence, and the destructive vortex of atheistical debauchery.

After a brief enjoyment of his attachment, he turned away from the seclusion of his destitute dwelling, and went to Paris to seek employment. Referring to these months of inactivity, in the last years of his life, he gives us a glimpse of the darkness which eclipsed the rising sun of his glory, and well-nigh quenched its light:

“I was at this period, on one occasion, suffering from that extreme depression of spirit which suspends the faculties of the brain, and renders life a burden too heavy to be borne. I had just received a letter from my mother revealing to me the utter destitution into which she was plunged. She had been compelled to flee from the war with which Corsica was desolated, and was then at Marseilles, with no means of subsistence, and having naught but her heroic virtues to defend the honor of her daughters against the misery and corruption of all kinds existing in the manners of the epoch of social chaos. I also, deprived of my salary, and with exhausted resources, had but one single dollar in my pocket. Urged by animal instinct to escape from prospects so gloomy, and from sorrows so unendurable, I wandered along the banks

of the river, feeling that it was unmanly to commit suicide, and yet unable to resist the temptation to do so. In a few more moments I should have thrown myself into the water, when I ran against an individual dressed like a simple mechanic, who, recognizing me, threw himself upon my neck, and cried, 'Is it you, Napoleon? How glad I am to see you again.' It was Démasis, an old friend and former comrade of mine in the artillery regiment. He had emigrated, and afterward had returned to France in disguise, to see his aged mother. He was about to leave me, when stopping, he exclaimed, 'But what is the matter, Napoleon? You do not listen to me! You do not seem glad to see me. What misfortune threatens you? You look to me like a madman about to kill himself. This direct appeal to the feelings which had seized upon me produced such an effect upon my mind, that without hesitation I revealed to him everything. 'Is that all?' said he, unbuttoning his coarse waistcoat and detaching a belt which he placed in my hands. 'Here are six thousand dollars in gold, which I can spare without any inconvenience. Take them and relieve your mother.' I cannot to this day explain how I could have been willing to receive the money, but I seized the gold as by a convulsive movement, and I ran to send it to my distressed mother.'

The deed was scarcely done before Napoleon repented, and tried to find the generous Démasis, but in vain. He was afterward repaid with a royal gift of sixty thousand dollars, and an office worth six thousand more.

[Napoleon was disappointed in his efforts to obtain honorable activity. When Aubury, the president of the military committee, objected to his youth, when his request for an appointment was presented, Na-

oleon replied, "Presence in the field of battle might be reckoned in place of years." The flash of independence was resented as an insult, and increased the difficulties between him and his desired position in the army.]

A few of his letters written about this time, will possess great interest, because they are the confidential expressions of his experience and plans.

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

PARIS, June 25, 1795.

"I will execute your wife's commissions immediately. Désirée asks me for your portrait; I am going to have it painted; you will give it to her if she still wishes for it; if not, keep it for yourself. In whatever circumstances you may be placed by fortune, you know well, my friend, that you cannot have a better or a dearer friend than myself, or one who wishes more sincerely for your happiness. Life is a flimsy dream, soon to be over. If you are going away, and you think that it may be for some time, send me your portrait; we have lived together for so many years, so closely united, that our hearts have become one, and you know best how entirely mine belongs to you. While I write these lines I feel an emotion which I have seldom experienced. I fear it will be long before we see each other again, and I can write no more."

We have here evidences of deep despondency, and warm affections toward his family friends. In the next communication quoted, the scene is changed.

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

July 25, 1795.

"I am appointed General in the Army of the West; but my illness keeps me here. I expect more detailed

accounts from you. I suppose that you purposely avoid telling me any thing of Désirée; I do not know whether she is still alive.

"All goes on well here. In the south alone there has been a little disturbance, got up by the young people; it is mere childish folly.

"On the 15th the Committee of Public Safety is to be partially renewed; I hope that they will choose good people. Reinforcements are being sent to the Army of Italy; would you like me to go there?

"Your letters are very dry: you are so prudent and laconic that you tell me nothing. When will you return? I do not think that your affairs need keep you away beyond the month of Thermidor.

"It is not certain that Lanjuinais' motion will pass; it is possible that no change may be made with respect to the retrospective effect. It would be committing the same fault in principle. I sent to you at the time, Lanjuinais' report.* Good-by, my dear friend; health, gaiety, happiness, and pleasure to you."

Soon after, he closed a letter with these words of lively hope, and kindling ambition for distinction:

"Good-by, my dear friend; be cautious as to the future, and satisfied with the present; be gay, and learn to amuse yourself. As for me I am happy. I only want to find myself on the battle-field; a soldier must either win laurels or perish gloriously."

Again he writes, "Fesch seems to wish to return to Corsica after the peace; he is always the same, living in the future, sending me letters of six pages about

* The motion and the report of Lanjuinais were in favor of the repeal of the law of the 17th Nivôse, which applied the rule of equal partition to all successions which had occurred since the 14th July, 1789, without regard to any intermediate acts or settlements. Lanjuinais denounced the injustice of this retrospective legislation. His report here alluded to is to be found in the *Moniteur* of the 7th August, 1795.

some subtlety, no broader than a needle's point; the present no more to him than the past, the future is everything. As for me, little attached to life, contemplating it without much solicitude, constantly in the state of mind in which one is on the day before battle, feeling that, while death is always amongst us to put an end to all, anxiety is folly—everything joins to make me defy fortune and fate; in time I shall not get out of the way when a carriage comes. I sometimes wonder at my own state of mind. It is the result of what I have seen, and what I have risked."

Sadness will rest upon the contemplative reader, in view of the total absence of religious feeling; that fine sense of moral responsibility, which subdues within the limits of pure and elevated action, the loftiest intellect, and invests the life and the death of the humblest individual with solemn interest. He afterward alludes to the expedition, respecting which he is said to have remarked jestingly to a friend, "How singular it would be if a little Corsican officer were to become king of Jerusalem."

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

"PARIS, August 20, 1795.

"I am attached for the present to the topographical board of the Committee of Public Safety for the direction of the armies; I replace Carnot. If I ask for it, I can be sent to Turkey as general of artillery, commissioned by the Government to organize the Grand Seigneur's artillery, with a good salary and a very flattering diplomatic title. I would have you appointed consul, and Villeneuve* accompany me as engineer; you say that Danthoine is there already; therefore,

* M. Villeneuve was Postmaster-General under the Empire, and brother-in-law to King Joseph, having married one of the demoiselles Clery.

before a month is over I should arrive in Genoa; we should go together to Leghorn, where we should embark: considering all this, will you purchase an estate?

"We are quiet here, but perhaps storms may be brewing; the primary assemblies will meet in a few days. I shall take with me five or six officers; I will write to you more in detail to-morrow.

"Vado will soon be retaken.

"The resolutions of the Committee of Public Safety appointing me director of the armies, and of the plans of the campaign, have been so flattering to me, that I fear that they will not let me go to Turkey; we shall see. I am to look at a villa to-day. I embrace you. Continue to write to me as if I were going to Turkey."

The abandonment of a foreign field of action, with a hint at the spell which love threw over his restless heart, are given in the subjoined letter:

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

"PARIS, September 5, 1795.

"The Committee have decided that it is impossible for me to leave France during the war. I am to be reappointed to the artillery, and I shall probably continue to attend the Committee. The elections and the primary assemblies take place on the day after to-morrow: the peace with Hesse-Cassel is concluded.

"National property and emigrants' estates are not dear, but those belonging to individuals go for extravagant prices.

"If I stay here it is possible that I may be fool enough to marry; I wish for a few words from you on

the subject. Perhaps it would be well to speak to Eugénie's brother. Let me know the result, and all shall be settled.

"Chauvet, who is going to Nice in ten days, will take you the books which you asked for.

"The celebrated Bishop of Autun* and General Montesquieu are allowed to return; they are struck out of the list of emigrants."

Bonaparte's career up to this time, had prepared him for his mission. In Corsica, he was cradled in the midst of political agitation; and hostile from his boyhood to the subjugation of the island, he became meditative and reserved, nourishing that self-reliance and independence of character, which made him at Brienne a sullen *solitaire*, and target of raillery to his fellow-students. While this strengthened his sublime decision, and quickened his keen observation of human nature, it gave him that appearance of severity and contempt for man, which distinguished his manner when mingling with promiscuous society.

He was at this date, twenty-six. The dark complexion of early years had worn off under the mild sky of France; but a contagious disease he had taken at Toulon, from a soldier, and which penetrated his system with malignant power, so reduced his frame that his flashing eye seemed set in the sockets of a skeleton. He was soon to be an actor in the drama of European revolutions.

The Convention had lost favor with the multitude, and a new step was demanded in the march of revolution. A constitution was formed, securing a Directory of five, the executive; a Council of five hundred, the House of Commons; and the Council of Ancients, answering

*Talleyrand.

to the English Peers. The Convention, unwilling to part with authority, made it a condition of acceptance, that the second division should include two thirds of their members. This excited the Parisians, especially the superior classes, who were indignant because it disclosed an arbitrary and selfish tenacity of power. The city was divided into ninety-six sections or wards, forty-eight of which were in favor of the constitution, and the other half rejected it, including the Royalists and Jacobins. The extremes thus made common cause against the new order of things.

With these insurrectionary sections, the National Guard united, and the forces prepared to attack the Tuilleries, and compel the assembly to meet the wishes of the majority, and change their measures. With five hundred regular troops, and the remnant of Robespierre's ruffian army, the Convention prepared to resist the onset. Menou assumed the command, and failed to fill the perilous position. While his indecision alarmed the body still in session, Barras exclaimed, as if a sudden revelation had aroused him, "I have the man whom you want: it is a little Corsican officer, *who will not stand upon ceremony.*" This expression determined the destiny of Napoleon. He was soon in command, and the 13th Vendémiaire (October 5th), planted his cannon at the cross-streets and bridges, sweeping with his hail of death the advancing columns of the insurgents, till the pavements were covered with the slain, and the flame of rebellion extinguished in blood. The new order of things was established, and Barras, the presiding spirit, obtained for Bonaparte the generalship of the Army of the Interior, and the office of commandant of Paris. He was now no longer a unit among the many, but the military chieftain of a kingdom.

He thus communicates the intelligence to Joseph:

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

PARIS, night of the 13-14 Vendémiaire, 2 in the morning [October 6], 1796.

"At last all is over. My first impulse is to think of you, and to tell you my news. The royalists, organized in their sections, became every day more insolent. The Convention ordered the section Lepelletier to be disarmed. It repulsed the troops. Menou, who was in command, is said to have betrayed us. He was instantly superseded. The Convention appointed Barras to command the military force; the committees appointed me second in command. We made our dispositions; the enemy marched to attack us in the Tuilleries. We killed many of them; they killed thirty of our men, and wounded sixty. We have disarmed the factions, and all is quiet. As usual, I was not wounded.

"P. S. Fortune favors me. My respects to Eugénie and to Julie."

Charged with the work of disarming the conquered citizens, he obtained the sword of the Viscount De Beauharnais, a blade its moldering possessor never dishonored. Eugene, in his boyish enthusiasm, resolved to have the weapon wielded by a father he loved and lamented. Presenting himself to Napoleon he made his request—the general was struck with his earnestness and manly bearing, and restored the relic, which he bore away bathed with tears. The next day Josephine called at the commandant's head-quarters, to thank him in person for his kindness. This increased the interest Napoleon had entertained for her since through the friendship of Barras he formed her acquaintance in the social circles of Paris. It is related that before he indulged serious intentions of marrying

Madame Beauharnais he offered himself to Madame De Permon, an old family friend, and an interesting widow, but was rejected. However this may be, he was deeply smitten with the charms of the lovely woman, whose son had given assurance of her excellent qualities in his own admirable behavior. The increasing attachment was every way favorable to Napoleon's plans and advancement, but a subject of painful solicitude to her, which is well expressed in a letter of some length, affording also further insight into a heart cultivated no less than her genius :

"My dear friend, I am urged to marry again; my friends counsel the measure, my aunt almost lays her injunctions to the same effect, and my children entreat my compliance. Why are you not here to give me your advice in this important conjuncture? to persuade me that I ought to consent to a union which must put an end to the irksomeness of my present position? Your friendship, in which I have already experienced so much to praise, would render you clear-sighted for my interests; and I should decide without hesitation as soon as you had spoken. You have met General Bonaparte in my house. Well!—he it is who would supply a father's place to the orphans of Alexander de Beauharnais, and a husband's to his widow.

"'Do you love him?' you will ask. Not exactly. 'You then dislike him?' Not quite so bad; but I find myself in that state of indifference which is anything but agreeable, and which to devotees in religion gives more trouble than all their other peccadilloes. Love, being a species of worship, also requires that one feel very differently from all this; and hence the need I have of your advice, which might fix the perpetual irresolution of my feeble character. To assume a determination has ever appeared fatiguing to my Creole

supineness, which finds it infinitely more convenient to follow the will of others.

"I admire the general's courage, the extent of his information—for on all subjects he talks equally well—and the quickness of his judgment, which enables him to seize the thoughts of others almost before they are expressed; but, I confess it, I shrink from the despotism he seems desirous of exercising over all who approach him. His searching glance has something singular and inexplicable, which imposes even on our Directors: judge if it may not intimidate a woman! Even, what ought to please me, the force of a passion, described with an energy that leaves not a doubt of his sincerity, is precisely the cause which arrests the consent I am often on the point of pronouncing.

"Being now past the heyday of youth, can I hope long to preserve that ardor of attachment which, in the general resembles a fit of delirium? If, after our union, he should cease to love me, will he not reproach me with what he will have sacrificed for my sake?—will he not regret a more brilliant marriage which he might have contracted? What shall I then reply?—what shall I do? I shall weep. Excellent resource! you will say. Good heavens! I know that all this can serve no end; but it has ever been thus; tears are the only resources left me when this poor heart, so easily chilled, has suffered. Write quickly, and do not fear to scold me, should you judge that I am wrong. You know that whatever comes from your pen will be taken in good part.

"Barras gives assurance, that if I marry the general, he will so contrive as to have him appointed to the command of the army of Italy. Yesterday, Bonaparte, speaking of this favor, which already excites murmuring among his fellow-soldiers, though it be as yet only a