

seen in his familiarity with every department of human progress, and perfect self-possession on all occasions. At Pavia, amid the excitements of his conquering presence, he entered its celebrated university, and passed from class to class with the rapidity of untamed enthusiasm, and with the precision and directness of a philosopher.

Napoleon, having subdued the Austrian and Catholic revolutionists, pressed forward toward the Mincio, Beaulieu was again deceived by the strategy of his enemy. He thought Napoleon would cross the river at Peschiera, while he was preparing to make the passage further down at Borghetto. The Austrian garrison demolished an arch of the bridge, which he soon supplied with planks, and in an hour was on the opposite bank. Regarding the immediate work accomplished, he was refreshing himself, and about to dine in the inn of which he took possession, when his attendants rushed into his presence, shouting, "To arms!" Bonaparte mounted a charger, and through a retired gateway made his escape. A detachment of the Austrian force, stationed below Mincio, hearing the cannonade, had hastened to assist their comrades; but arriving too late, came near capturing the head and soul of the French army, while quietly resting in the rear of the marching columns of the pursued and the pursuing. Napoleon from this startling hint, formed a corps of picked men called *guides* to guard his person.

From this affair at Valleggio, sprang the Imperial Guard of Napoleon, whose fame will be indissolubly associated with that of their chief. Napoleon now laid siege upon Mantua, into which Beaulieu had poured fifteen thousand soldiers, and whose walls frowned defiantly upon the hitherto resistless enemy. The Austrian general waited for further reinforcements to garrison

this fortress, around which the hopes of millions gathered, while Napoleon beleaguered it without delay.

The city and fortress is situated on an island, from which diverge five causeways, the only avenues of access, and these were guarded with intrenched camps, gates, drawbridges and batteries. With his usual precipitate and well directed action, Bonaparte secured immediately by storm, four of the causeways, leaving the Austrians in possession of one, but that the most impregnable, called *La Favorita*, after a grand palace near it. To strengthen his position, he determined further, regardless of the rule of neutrality, to conquer the domain of Venice, stretching away from Mantua. Embracing the pretext of a *reluctant* refusal by Venice to let the Count of Provence, brother of Louis XVI., find a refuge in her territory—an act of inhospitality demanded by the Directory—he sent garrisons to Verona and similar points of defense. He raised the tricolor at the Tyrolese passes, and returned to Milan to finish his work there. Serrurier remained at Mantua. Naples was under the reign of an inefficient Bourbon, who was an ally of the English in the siege of Toulon, and now of the Austrians in the same cause. He was amazed and terrified with the victories of Napoleon, and sent proposals of peace. Napoleon was glad to consider them, both because he had other employment for his troops than war upon Naples, and a treaty would divert a strong force from the Austrian ranks. An armistice was soon succeeded by peace, which virtually placed in the power of the French the King of the Sicilies. The path toward the Vatican was now cleared, and the Pope himself trembled before the young Napoleon, who occupied Bologna and Ferrara, including four hundred prisoners in the latter town, and the cardinal who commanded the troops. The Pope in haste sent an ambas-

sador to Bologna, to arrange the terms of an armistice. With the surrender of the two cities already seized, and Ancona, Napoleon demanded a million of pounds sterling, a hundred paintings and statues, and five hundred ancient manuscripts for the museum of Paris. For a more definite treaty, he referred the Pontiff to the Directory. Tuscany, whose Duke had remained neutral in the contest with France, and even recognized cordially the Republic, next arrested the attention of Napoleon. At Leghorn, English vessels were riding in harbor under the eye of the governor. He was taken prisoner by Napoleon, and sent to the Grand Duke, on the charge of violating the neutrality. The prince was brother of the Emperor of Austria, and this was evidence against his sincerity to the mind of the French commander, who consulted, under every pretext, the consummation of his stupendous plans. Referring to these abuses of power, he once remarked with apologetic truthfulness: "It is a sad case when the dwarf comes into the embrace of the giant, he is like enough to be suffocated; but it is the giant's nature to squeeze hard."

Thus Napoleon, setting aside even the wishes of the central government, which was imbued with the most fiery republicanism, instead of forming with revolutionary rapidity, republics of the submissive kingdoms, more wisely preferred to use them under the safer influence of the established order of things. There is a strange and fascinating pre-eminence in a mind, not in the maturity of manhood, treating with sublime indifference the opinions and scepters of a continent, and crowning all by an independence, which dared to act without the approval of the authority which gave him his high command.

"The cabinet of Vienna had at last resolved upon sending efficient aid to the Italian frontier. Beaulieu

had been too often unfortunate to be trusted longer. Wurmser, who enjoyed a reputation of the highest class, was sent to replace him: thirty thousand men were drafted from the armies on the Rhine to accompany the new general; and he carried orders to strengthen himself further on his march, by whatever recruits he could raise among the warlike and loyal population of the Tyrol.

"Wurmser's army when he fixed his headquarters at Trent, mustered in all eighty thousand; while Bonaparte had but thirty thousand to hold a wide country in which abhorrence of the French cause was now prevalent, to keep up the blockade of Mantua, and to oppose this fearful odds of numbers in the field. He was now, moreover, to act on the defensive, while his adversary assumed the more inspiriting character of invader. He awaited the result with calmness.

"Wurmser might have learned from the successes of Bonaparte the advantages of compact movement; yet he was unwise enough to divide his great force into three separate columns, and to place one of these upon a line of march which entirely separated it from the support of the others. He himself with his center, came down on the left bank of the Lago di Guarda, with Mantua before him as his mark; his left wing, under Melas, was to descend the Adige, and drive the French from Verona; while his right wing, under Quasdanovich, was ordered to keep down the valley of the Chiese, in the direction of Brescia, and so to cut off the retreat of Bonaparte upon the Milanese—in other words, to interpose the waters of the Lago di Guarda between themselves and the march of their friends—a blunder not likely to escape the eagle eye of Napoleon.

"He immediately determined to march against Quas-

danovich, and fight him where he could not be supported by the other two columns. This could not be done without abandoning for the time the blockade of Mantua, which was accordingly done. The guns were buried in the trenches during the night of the 31st July, and the French quitted the place with a precipitation which the advancing Austrians considered as the result of terror.

“Napoleon, meanwhile, rushed against Quasdanovich, who had already come near the bottom of the lake of Guarda. At Salo, close to the lake, and further from it, at Lonato, two divisions of the Austrian column were attacked and overwhelmed. Augereau and Massena, leaving merely rear-guards at Borghetto and Peschiera, now marched also upon Brescia. The whole force of Quasdanovich must inevitably have been ruined by these combinations had he stood his ground; but by this time the celerity of Napoleon had overawed him, and he was already in full retreat upon his old quarters in the Tyrol. Augereau and Massena, therefore, countermarched their columns, and returned toward the Mincio.

“In the mean time Wurmser had forced their rear-guards from their posts, and flushed with these successes, he now resolved to throw his whole force upon the French, and resume at the point of the bayonet his communication with the scattered column of Quasdanovich. He was so fortunate as to defeat a French division at Lonato, and to occupy that town. But this new success was fatal to him. In the exultation of victory he extended his line too much toward the right; and this over-anxiety to open the communication with Quasdanovich had the effect of so weakening his center, that Massena, boldly and skilfully seizing the opportunity, poured two strong columns on Lonato and

regained the position; whereon the Austrian, perceiving that his army was cut in two, was thrown into utter confusion. Some of his troops, marching to the right, were met by those of the French who had already defeated Quasdanovich in that quarter, and obliged to surrender: the most retreated in great disorder. At Castiglione alone a brave stand was made; but this position was at length forced by Augereau. Such was the battle of Lonato. Thenceforth nothing could surpass the discomfiture and disarray of the Austrians. They fled in all directions upon the Mincio, where Wurmser himself, meanwhile, had been employed in revictualing Mantua.

“A mere accident had once almost saved them. One of the many defeated divisions of the army, wandering about in anxiety to find some means of reaching the Mincio, came suddenly on Lonato, the scene of the late battle, at a moment when Napoleon was there with only his staff and guards about him. He knew not that any considerable body of Austrians remained together in the neighborhood; and but for his presence of mind must have been their prisoner. The Austrian had not the skill to profit by what fortune threw in his way; his enemy was able to turn even a blunder into an advantage. The officer sent to demand the surrender of the town was brought blindfolded, as is the custom, to his headquarters; Bonaparte, by a secret sign, caused his whole staff to draw up around him, and when the bandage was removed from the messenger's eyes, saluted him thus: ‘What means this insolence? Do you beard the French general in the middle of his army?’ The German recognized the person of Napoleon, and retreated stammering and blushing. He assured his commander that Lonato was occupied by the French in numbers that made resistance impossi-

ble; four thousand men laid down their arms; and then discovered, that if they had used them, nothing could have prevented Napoleon from being their prize.

“Wurmser collected together the whole of his remaining force, and advanced to meet the conqueror. He, meanwhile, had himself determined on the assault, and was hastening to the encounter. They met between Lonato and Castiglione. Wurmser was totally defeated, and narrowly escaped being a prisoner; nor did he without great difficulty regain Trent and Roveredo, those frontier positions from which his noble army had so recently descended with all the confidence of conquerors. In this disastrous campaign the Austrians lost forty thousand men; Bonaparte probably understated his own loss at seven thousand. During the seven days which the campaign occupied, he never took off his boots, nor slept except by starts. The exertions which so rapidly achieved this signal triumph were such as to demand some repose; yet Napoleon did not pause until he saw Mantua once more completely invested. The reinforcement and revictualing of that garrison were all that Wurmser could show, in requital of his lost artillery, stores, and forty thousand men.”

Napoleon was fond of incidents that tested or developed character. Not a few officers in his army owed their elevation to events which occurred, naturally enough, among the varieties of life in the camp and field; but to his observant eye, revealed the character and capacity of the men. One night he went the rounds of the sentinels in disguise, to see if they were acting with fidelity in the hour of peril. Encountering a soldier, whose post was at the junction of two roads, he was ordered back at the point of the bayonet. Napoleon replied, “I am a general officer going the

rounds to ascertain if all is safe.” “I care not,” said the sentinel, “my commands are to let no one go by, and if you were the little corporal himself, you should not pass.” Napoleon retired, and soon after gave the faithful soldier an officer’s epaulet.

He wrote a letter about this date to Joseph, which is a brief outline of his position, an evidence of an interest still lingering around the place of his birth, to which he had despatched a force, to aid in the struggle against English dominion.

“I have your letter of the 30th, without any details from Corsica. You will find with this letter my answer to one from the administrators of the Department du Liamone. Such being the law, the organization of the two departments must be retained.

“We have made peace with Naples, and a treaty with Genoa, and we are going to enter into an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Prussia.

“Things are somewhat better on the Rhine. Moreau has gained a victory. Kleber replaces Beurnonville. All looks well.

“I am anxious for regular news from Corsica, and to know the state of Ajaccio. My health is fair; nothing new in the army.”

In the beginning of September the Austrian troops were again moving toward Mantua. Wurmser, with national defiance at disaster, determined to save Mantua, and reconquer Lombardy.

He had now an army of thirty thousand; and Davidowich at Roveredo, twenty thousand more, to protect the Tyrol. Of these, twenty thousand were fresh troops. Napoleon was delighted with this division of an immense force, a fact, to his comprehensive view of the campaign, portending another ruinous defeat. And

no sooner had Wurmser reached Bassano, entirely separated from Davidowich, than he turned his force with the celerity of a tempest upon Roveredo. The entrenchments of the enemy were strong, and in their rear stood the castle of Calliano, on the brow of a precipice leaning over the Adige, whose waters flowed between shattered mountains; a fortress which seemed to scorn the roar of artillery, and the clash of arms. September 4th, with burning ardor, the French rushed upon the foe. The Austrians wavered and fell back; height after height was swept by the impetuous battalions, until the victorious tricolor waved over the ruins, the dying and the dead. Fifteen field-pieces, and seven thousand prisoners, were in the hands of the French. The victory, for rapidity and precision in the assault, the fearless impetuosity of the soldiers, and the decisive results, was one of the most brilliant in Napoleon's career, and was so regarded by him.

The following day he marched into Trent. Issuing a proclamation to the Tyrolese, declaring himself their friend, who came to lift from their necks the heavy yoke of Austrian oppression, he pressed forward through the defiles of Brenta, to fall upon Wurmser's division. This general had heard with dismay of Davidowich's overthrow, but prepared with thirty thousand men to meet Napoleon with twenty thousand elated troops, who was impatient to deal a final blow upon the scattered army of Austria. A march of sixty miles, from Trent to Primolano, was accomplished in the incredibly short period of two days. At dawn of day, Wurmser was aroused by Napoleon's cannon, and on September 8th, was fought the bloody battle of Bassano. Six thousand Austrians laid down their arms; Quasdonovich escaped with four thousand soldiers to Friuli; while Wurmser with but sixteen

thousand of his grand army, retreated toward Mantua, the stronghold of security and hope, till Vienna might send reinforcements for their deliverance.

"To reach that fortress it was necessary to force a passage somewhere on the Adige; and the Austrian, especially as he had lost all his pontoons, would have had great difficulty in doing so, but for a mistake on the part of the French commander at Legnago, who, conceiving the attempt was to be made at Verona, marched to reinforce the corps stationed there, and so left his own position unguarded. Wurmser, taking advantage of this, passed with his army at Legnago, and after a series of bloody skirmishes, in which fortune divided her favors pretty equally, at length was enabled to throw himself into Mantua. Napoleon made another narrow escape, in one of these skirmishes, at Arcola. He was surrounded for a moment, and had just galloped off, when Wurmser, coming up, and learning that the prize was so near, gave particular directions to bring him in alive!"

Napoleon's impromptu replies, when they were demanded, and action when needed, were so timely and often sublime, that the camp continually rang with the enthusiastic repetition of them. When at this period a soldier in the discontented ranks of the scantily supplied army, pointing to his tattered apparel, said, "Notwithstanding our victories we are clothed with rags;" Napoleon answered, "You forget, my brave friend, that with a new coat, your honorable scars would no longer be visible." These words satisfied the man, and went from rank to rank of his comrades. Another incident after the battle of Bassano, is related, which illustrated the moral defects in Napoleon's character, and the cool contempt of life, with all the manly sympathies and impulses of his nature.

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"ALFONSO REYES"
Apdo. 1625 MONTERREY, MEXICO

Riding over the ensanguined plain amid heaps of the ghastly sleepers, beneath the moonlight of the midnight hour, he was startled by the piteous howls of a dog, watching the bloody corpse of his master. He silently paused on his steed, and his meditations he afterward thus expressed: "I know not how it was, but no incident upon any field of battle ever produced so deep an impression upon my feelings. This man, thought I, must have had among his comrades friends, yet here he lies forsaken by all except his faithful dog. What a strange being is man! How mysterious are his impressions! I had, without emotion, ordered battles which had decided the fate of armies. I had, with tearless eye, beheld the execution of these orders, in which thousands of my countrymen were slain, and yet here my sympathies were most deeply and resistlessly moved by the mournful howling of a dog! Certainly at that moment I should have been unable to refuse any request of a suppliant enemy."

Napoleon now wrote most appealingly to the Directory for promised recruits. "Troops," he exclaimed, "or Italy is lost!" He at the same time animated his battalions, and prepared for conflict with the calm confidence of easy victory. "After making himself master of some scattered corps which had not been successful in keeping up with Wurmser, he reappeared once more before Mantua. The battle of St. George—so called from one of the suburbs of the city—was fought on the 13th of September; and after a prodigious slaughter, the French remained in possession of all the causeways; so that the blockade of the city and fortress was thenceforth complete. The garrison, when Wurmser shut himself up, amounted to twenty-six thousand: ere October was far advanced, the pestilential air of the place, and the scarcity and badness

of provisions had filled his hospitals, and left him hardly half the number in fighting condition. The misery of the besieged town was extreme; and if Austria meant to rescue Wurmser, there was no time to be lost."

With characteristic energy, another, the fourth great army was raised, and Alvinzi, an experienced and able general, placed at its head. With only twelve new battalions, Napoleon prepared to meet these sixty thousand troops, fresh from barracks and quiet homes. General Vaubois at Trent, and Massena at Bassano, were compelled to yield to the advancing enemy. Napoleon marched to the aid of Massena, and met the Austrians at Vicenza in a short, fierce, and indecisive battle; both armies claimed the victory. The condition of the French was becoming critical.

The extensive region between Brenta and the Adige was in the hands of Alvinzi, and Mantua was still the mighty bulwark of defense. Napoleon saw the necessity of rousing at once the courage of the defeated troops of Vaubois, and guard against a future disaster of a similar kind. He appeared before them surrounded by his staff, with imposing severity of command, and thus addressed them: "Soldiers! I am displeased with you. You have evinced neither discipline nor valor. You have allowed yourselves to be driven from positions where a handful of resolute men might have arrested an army. You are no longer French soldiers! Chief of the staff, cause it to be written on their standards, '*They are no longer of the army of Italy!*'" This rebuke had its intended effect. The proudest veterans wept, and begged for another opportunity to test their heroism. They were restored to favor, and became his most daring soldiers. Napoleon now directed his forces toward the heights of Caldiero,