

achieved by the energies of the populace alone, immediately brought France to the aid of Genoa, and Austria was baffled in all her attempts to regain the city—though aided by the army of Sardinia. The peace of Aix la Chapelle, which soon followed, left Genoa to independence, but still under the sway of its degraded and debased aristocracy.

The island of Corsica had belonged to Genoa. It is situated about one hundred miles south of the city, and contained a population of nearly thirty thousand, spread over a mountainous region one hundred miles long and forty-four miles broad. The tyranny of the Genoese oligarchy had driven the Corsicans to insurrection. For many years a war of exceeding barbarity devastated the island. But the Corsicans, in campaign after campaign, repelled their assailants with heroism, which gave them world-wide renown. At length Genoa applied to France for help; and in the course of negotiations agreed to cede Corsica to France for a valuable pecuniary consideration. Still three campaigns of the troops of Louis XV. were found necessary to bring the island in subjection to France. Paoli was the illustrious leader who was at the head of the Corsican troops in their battles for independence.

Among the most distinguished of the families of Corsica at that time, was that of the Bonapartes. Charles Bonaparte, the father of Napoleon, then a young lawyer, fought heroically in these wars until, overwhelmed by superior forces, the island surrendered itself to the government of France. The Genoese ceded this island to France in the year 1768; but a few months after this, on the fifteenth of August, 1769, Napoleon Bonaparte was born, in the city of Ajaccio.

Twelve hundred thousand people, inhabiting the rich and beautiful plains of Lombardy, had been organized into a duchy, embracing an area of nearly eight thousand square miles, being about the size of the state of Massachusetts. Milan was its enlightened capital. The state belonged to Austria, and was governed by an archduke.

Venice, despoiled alternately by Turk, Spaniard, Frenchman, and Austrian, had fallen into weakness and disgrace. It was called a republic, since, instead of having one ruler, it was governed by a senate of hereditary nobles, under the presidency of a doge or duke. Though the Venetian territory at this time embraced a population of three millions, there were but twenty-five hundred entitled to rights of citizenship.

Such was the condition of Italy when the French revolution roused the hopes of the masses of the people all over Europe, that the hour had arrived for throwing off the yoke of aristocratic domination. The enslaved Italians, hating their foreign masters, watched with peculiar interest the progress of events in France, and were eager for an opportunity to grasp their arms and strike for independence. But disarmed, shackled, overawed by foreign troops, and watched with the utmost vigilance, that they might have no opportunity to confer upon united action, their case was manifestly hopeless without some foreign aid. Nearly the whole of the Italian peninsula was at that time directly or indirectly subject to Austria or to Spain; not one state of Italy being held by France.

As soon as the French people had thrown off the intolerable yoke of the Bourbons, and established a free government under a written constitution, all the despotisms in Europe combined for the overthrow of that constitutional liberty, the reestablishment of the Bourbons, and the reenslavement of the French people. Austria was naturally very prominent in this coalition, for the reigning emperor was brother of Marie Antoinette. Naples and Tuscany were also eager to march upon France, for the queen of Naples and the duchess of Tuscany were sisters of the French queen. Austria, consequently, not only put all the armies of the empire in motion, but called into requisition all her resources in Italy. The Austrian rulers of Naples, Tuscany, and Lombardy, with all

those who gather around the dispensers of place and power, were eager to put down all the advocates of popular liberty. But the masses of the Italian people were equally eager to call the French to their aid, that they might drive out their Austrian oppressors, and establish, in beautiful Italy also, free institutions.

Five separate armies were soon organized to force the Bourbon despotism upon the French people. One of these was collected on the plains of Piedmont. The little province of Savoy, cut off from Piedmont by the Alps, seemed naturally to belong to France. Joyfully the Savoyards availed themselves of this opportunity of escaping from Sardinia, and throwing themselves into the arms of the great republic. The court of Turin, which was the capital of the Sardinian kingdom, cordially espoused the cause of the despots of Europe against French freedom. The National Assembly in Paris welcomed Savoy in a decree which forcibly states :

“That all considerations, physical, moral, and political, call for the incorporation of Savoy. All attempts to connect it with Piedmont are fruitless. The Alps eternally force it back into the domains of France. The order of nature would be violated if they were to live under different laws.”

An army of forty thousand Piedmontese and Austrians, was posted along the summits of the Alps, menacing France with invasion so soon as the Austrians and Prussians on the Rhine should so engage the attention of the republican forces as to prepare the way for their march. A few French battalions, poorly organized and provided, watched their foe, with occasional skirmishes on those arid heights. The French, however, succeeded in wresting from Sardinia a small province of Piedmont, called Nice, situated on the southwestern declivity of the maritime Alps. It embraced about thirteen hundred square miles, and contained one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants. Gradually the French drove the Austro-Sardinians back, and gained command of the ridge of the Alps, and of

the two renowned passes of Mt. Cenis and of the Little St. Bernard. The counsel of the young general, Napoleon Bonaparte, led to these important movements.

Early in the year 1795, Austria sent fifteen thousand troops to strengthen the Piedmontese army, thus raising an effective force of fifty thousand men. The French, scattered along the ridges of the Alps, freezing and starving, amounted to forty-five thousand. The Austrians were encamped in the warm and fertile valleys which descend into the Italian plains. Some fierce battles were fought, in which the French gradually drove the Austrians back, and made some little progress toward the plains of Piedmont.

On the twenty-seventh of March, 1796, Napoleon Bonaparte was placed in command of the army of Italy. He was then in the twenty-sixth year of his age. The army consisted of forty-two thousand men, with sixty pieces of artillery. Perched on the summits of the mountains, they were in a state of extreme exhaustion, having for some time existed on half a ration a day. The officers were receiving a dollar and sixty cents a month; the cavalry horses were nearly all dead, and the staff was entirely on foot. Napoleon, with beardless cheek and fragile frame, presenting an aspect of almost girlish beauty, hastened to head-quarters and thus addressed his ragged and starving veterans :

“Soldiers! you are almost naked; half starved. The government owes you much and can give you nothing. Your patience, your courage, in the midst of these rocks are admirable; but they reflect no splendor on your arms. I am to conduct you into the most fertile plains on earth. Fertile provinces, opulent cities will soon be in your power. There you will find rich harvests, honor and glory. Soldiers of Italy! will you fail in courage?”

On the twelfth of April, he commenced his triumphant campaign, which still excites the wonder of the world. By the first of May the Austrians were driven out of Piedmo

and the king of Sardinia entered into a treaty, by which he renounced the coalition against France; surrendered, as indemnity for the war, Nice and Savoy to France, and granted Napoleon a free passage through his territories, to pursue his foes, the Austrians, into the duchy of Lombardy. Sweeping all opposition before him, he marched through the duchy of Parma to Milan, the capital of Lombardy, which he entered on the fifteenth of May, in triumph, greeted with the most enthusiastic acclaim of the people. The proclamation which Napoleon addressed to his soldiers, rang, like bugle peals through Europe.

"Soldiers," said he, "you have descended like a torrent from the Apennines. You have overwhelmed everything which has opposed you. Piedmont, delivered from the tyranny of Austria, has felt at liberty to indulge its natural inclination for peace and for a French alliance. Milan is in your hands, and the republican standards wave over the whole of Lombardy. The dukes of Parma and Modena owe their existence only to your generosity. . . ."

"The hour of vengeance has struck; but the *people* of all nations may rest in peace. We are the friends of every people, and especially of the descendants of Brutus, Scipio, and the other great men whom we have taken for examples. To restore the capital; to replace there the statues of the heroes who have rendered it immortal; to rouse the Romans from centuries of slavery,—such will be the fruit of our victories. To you will belong the glory of having changed the face of the most beautiful part of Europe."

The Italian people panting for liberty and independence, greeted these words with unbounded joy. To them Napoleon appeared as the regenerator of Italy, and the enthusiasm with which the patriots from all parts of Italy crowded around him, has, perhaps, never been paralleled. The Austrians retreated into the Venetian territory, and Napoleon pursued them.

The king of Naples, who had taken up arms against France, alarmed by the progress of Napoleon, solicited an armistice. Napoleon consented, and the Neapolitan troops were withdrawn from the coalition. Naples had furnished five sail of the line, a large number of frigates, and two thousand four hundred horsemen to aid in the iniquitous war against the right of the French people to establish their own form of government.

Venice, while assuming neutrality, was in warm sympathy with the allies. They had allowed the Austrians to take refuge in their territory, and even to seize the fortress of Peschiera, which had exposed the French army to the loss of a great number of valuable lives. They had even granted an asylum in Verona to the brother of Louis XVI., who, assuming the title of Louis XVIII., claimed to be monarch of France, and issued his decrees accordingly to the army he was collecting for the invasion of the French territory.

"Venice," said Napoleon to the commissioners sent to implore his clemency, "by daring to give an asylum to the Count de Lille, a pretender to the throne of France, has declared war against the republic. I know not why I should not reduce Verona to ashes—a town which has had presumption to esteem itself the capital of France."

The Austrians had now fled through the Venetian territory into the Tyrol, and were driven out of Italy. The Venetian senate professed their inability to prevent the Austrians from taking refuge in their territory, and, seizing one of their fortresses, begged to be allowed to remain neutral. Napoleon, knowing full well that they would stab him in the back if possible, consented to their neutrality, saying:

"Be neutral, then. You ought, however, to be pleased to see us here. What France sends me to do is entirely for the interests of Venice. I am come to drive the Austrians beyond the Alps; perhaps to constitute Lombardy an independent state. Can anything more advantageous be done for your

republic? If she would unite with us, no doubt she would be handsomely rewarded for that service. We are not making war upon any government. We are the friends of all those who shall assist us to confine the Austrian power within its proper limits.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

N A P O L E O N I N I T A L Y .

FROM A. D. 1796 TO A. D. 1809.

ITALY IN 1796.—MEASURES OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.—MESSAGE TO THE POPE.—THE CISPADANE REPUBLIC.—TROUBLES IN GENOA.—STATE OF SOUTHERN ITALY.—CAPTIVITY OF PIUS VI.—PIEDMONT ANNEXED TO FRANCE.—ATROCITIES OF LORD NELSON.—NAPOLEON'S RETURN FROM EGYPT.—CAMPAIGN OF MARENGO.—LETTER TO THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA.—LETTER TO THE KING OF ENGLAND.—IMPERIAL FRANCE.—THE KINGDOM OF ITALY.—THE BOURBONS OF NAPLES DETHRONED.—POPE PIUS VII. A CAPTIVE.—NAPOLEON'S DESIGNS FOR ITALY.

[N a letter to the French directory, Napoleon thus describes the political state of Italy during his first Italian campaign. The letter is dated December, 1796 :

“At present there are in Lombardy three parties; one which allows itself to be guided by the French; another which is anxious, and impatiently anxious, to obtain liberty; a third friendly to the Austrians and hostile to us. I support and encourage the first. The second I keep in check. The third I repress.

“The Cispadane provinces are likewise divided into three parties; the friends of their ancient governments; those who wish for a constitution, independent, but a little aristocratic; and the partisans of the French constitution, or of pure democracy. I repress the first, I support the second, and I moderate the third. I support, I say, the second because it is the party of the rich land-holders and the priests, whom it is essential to rally around the French cause. The last party is composed of young men, literary persons, and people who in France, and in all countries, change governments and love liberty, with no other view than the mere thirst for revolution.”