

# PRIVATE LIFE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE - V12

CONSTANT\*

PREMIER VALET DE CHAMBRE

TRANSLATED BY WALTER CLARK

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#### CHAPTER XXIV.

After the brilliant successes obtained by the Emperor in such a short time, and with forces so exceedingly inferior to the great masses of the enemy, his Majesty, realizing the necessity of allowing his troops to take a rest of some days at Troyes, entered into negotiations for an armistice with the Prince von Schwarzenberg.

At this juncture it was announced to the Emperor that General Blucher, who had been wounded at Mery, was descending along both banks of the Maine, at the head of an army of fresh troops, estimated at not less than one hundred thousand men, and that he was marching on Meaux. The Prince von Schwarzenberg, having been informed of this movement of Blucher's, immediately cut short the negotiations, and assumed the offensive at Bar-sur-Seine. The Emperor, whose genius followed by a single glance all the marches and operations of the enemy, though he could not be everywhere at once, resolved to confront Blucher in person, while by means of a stratagem he made it appear that he was present opposite Schwarzenberg; and two army corps, commanded, one by Marshal Oudinot, the other by Marshal Macdonald, were then sent to meet the Austrians. As soon as the troops approached the enemy's camp they made the air resound with the

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shouts of confidence and cheers with which they usually announced the presence of his Majesty, though at this very moment he was repairing in all haste to meet General Blucher.

We halted at the little village of Herbisse, where we passed the night in the manse; and the curate, seeing the Emperor arrive with his marshals, aides-de-camp, ordnance officers, service of honor, and the other services, almost lost his wits. His Majesty on alighting said to him, "Monsieur le Cure, we come to ask your hospitality for a night. Do not be frightened by this visit; we shall disturb you as little as possible." The Emperor, conducted by the good curate, beside himself with eagerness and embarrassment, established himself in the only apartment the house contained, which served at the same time as kitchen, diningroom, bedroom, cabinet, and reception-room. In an instant his Majesty had his maps and papers spread out before him, and prepared himself for work with as much ease as in his cabinet at the Tuileries. But the persons of his suite needed somewhat more time to install themselves, for it was no easy thing for so many persons to find a place in a bakehouse which, with the room occupied by his Majesty, composed the entire manse of Herbisse; but these gentlemen, although there were among them more than one dignitary and prince of the Empire, were uncomplaining, and readily disposed to accommodate themselves to circumstances. The gay good humor of these gallant soldiers, in spite of all the combats they had to sustain each day, while events every instant took a more alarming turn, was most noteworthy, and depicts well the French character.

The youngest officers formed a circle around the curate's niece, who sang to them the songs of the country. The good curate, in the midst of continual comings and goings, and the efforts he made to play worthily his role of master of the mansion, found himself attacked on his own territory, that is to say, on his breviary, by Marshal Lefebvre, who had studied in his youth to be a priest, and said that he had preserved nothing from his first vocation except the shaven head, because it was so easy to comb. The worthy marshal intermingled his Latin quotations with those military expressions he so freely used, causing those present to indulge in bursts of laughter, in which even the curate himself joined, and said, "Monseigneur, if you had continued your studies for the priesthood you would have become a cardinal at least."—"Very likely," observed one of the officers; and if the Abbe Maury had been a sergeant-major in '89, he might to-day be marshal of France."—"Or dead," added the Duke of Dantzic, using a much more energetic expression; "and so much the better for him, since in that case he would not see the Cossacks twenty leagues from Paris."—"Oh, bah! Monseigneur, we will drive them away," said the same officer. "Yes," the marshal muttered between his clinched teeth; "we shall see what we shall see."

At this moment the mule arrived bearing the sutler's supplies, which had been long and impatiently expected. There was no table; but one was made of a door placed on casks, and seats were improvised with planks. The chief officers seated themselves, and the others ate standing. The

curate took his place at this military table on which he had himself placed his best bottles of wine, and with his native bonhomie continued to entertain the guests. At length the conversation turned on Herbisse and its surroundings, and the host was overcome with astonishment on finding that his guests knew the country so thoroughly.

"Ah, I have it!" exclaimed he, considering them attentively one after the other; "you are Champenois!" And in order to complete his surprise these gentlemen drew from their pockets plans on which they made him read the names of the very smallest localities. Then his astonishment only changed its object, for he had never dreamed that military science required such exact study. "What labor!" replied the good curate, "what pains! and all this in order the better to shoot cannon-balls at each other!" The supper over, the next thought was the arrangements for sleeping; and for this purpose we found in the neighboring barns a shelter and some straw. There remained outside, and near the door of the room occupied by the Emperor, only the officers on duty, Roustan and myself, each of whom had a bundle of straw for his bed. Our worthy host, having given up his bed to his Majesty, remained with us, and rested like us from the fatigues of the day, and was still sleeping soundly when the staff left the manse; for the Emperor arose, and set off at break of day. The curate when he awoke expressed the deepest chagrin that he had not been able to make his adieux to his Majesty. A purse was handed him containing the sum the Emperor was accustomed to leave private individuals of limited means at whose residences he halted as indemnity for their expense and trouble; and we resumed our march in the steps of the Emperor, who hastened to meet the Prussians.

The Emperor wished to reach Soissons before the allies; but although they had been obliged to traverse roads which were practically impassable, they had arrived before our troops, and as he entered La Ferte his Majesty saw them retiring to Soissons. The Emperor was rejoiced at this sight. Soissons was defended by a formidable garrison, and could delay the enemy, while Marshals Marmont and Mortier and his Majesty in person attacked Blucher in the rear and on both flanks, and would have inclosed him as in a net. But this time again the enemy escaped from the snare the Emperor had laid for him at the very moment he thought he had seized him, for Blucher had hardly presented himself in front of Soissons before the gates were opened. General Moreau, commandant of the place, had already surrendered the town to Billow, and thus assured to the allies the passage of the Aisne. On receiving this depressing news the Emperor exclaimed, "The name of Moreau has always been fatal to me!"

Meanwhile his Majesty, continuing his pursuit of the Prussians, was occupied in delaying the passage of the Aisne. On the 5th of March he sent General Nansouty in advance, who with his cavalry took the bridge, drove the enemy back as far as Corbeny, and made a Russian colonel prisoner. After passing the night at Bery-au-Bac, the Emperor was marching towards Laon when it was announced to him that the enemy was coming to meet us; these were not Prussians, but an army corps of

Russians commanded by Sacken. On advancing farther, we found the Russians established on the heights of Craonne, and covering the road to Laon in what appeared to be an impregnable position; but nevertheless the advance guard of our army, commanded by Marshal Ney, rushed forward and succeeded in taking Craonne. That was enough glory for this time, and both sides then passed the night preparing for the battle of next day. The Emperor spent it at the village of Corbeny, but without sleeping, as inhabitants of the neighboring villages arrived at all hours to give information as to the position of the enemy and the geography of the country. His Majesty questioned them himself, praised them or recompensed their zeal, and profited by their information and services. Thus, having recognized in the mayor of one of the communes in the suburbs of Craonne one of his former comrades in the regiment of La Fere, he placed him in the number of his aides-de-camp, and arranged that he should serve as guide through this country, which no one knew better than he. M. de Bussy (that was the officer's name) had left France during the reign of terror, and on his return had not re-entered the army, but lived in retirement on his estates.

The Emperor met again this same night one of his old companions in arms in the regiment of La Fere, an Alsatian named Wolff, who had been a sergeant of artillery in the regiment in which the Emperor and M. de Bussy had been his superior officers. He came from Strasburg, and testified to the good disposition of the inhabitants through the whole extent of the country he had traversed. The dismay caused in the allied armies by the first attacks of the Emperor made itself felt even to the frontiers; and on each road the peasants rose, armed themselves, and cut off the retreat, and killed many, of the enemy. Corps of the Emperor's adherents were formed in the Vosges, with officers of well-proved bravery at their head, who were accustomed to this species of warfare. The garrisons of the cities and fortified places of the east were full of courage and resolution; and it would have well suited the wishes of the population of this part of the Empire had France become, according to the wish expressed by the Emperor, the tomb of the foreign armies. The brave Wolff, after having given this information to the Emperor, repeated it before many other persons, myself among the number. He took only a few hours' repose, and set out again immediately; but the Emperor did not dismiss him until he had been decorated with the cross of honor, as the reward of his devotion.

The battle of Craonne commenced, or I should say recommenced, on the 7th at break of day, the infantry commanded by the Prince of Moskwa – [Marshal Ney] – and the Duke of Belluno, who was wounded on this day. Generals Grouchy and Nansouty, the first commanding the cavalry of the army, the second at the head of the cavalry of the guard, also received severe wounds. The difficulty was not so much to take the heights, as to hold them when taken. Meanwhile the French artillery, directed by the modest and skillful General Drouot, forced the enemy's artillery to yield their ground foot by foot. This was a terribly bloody struggle; for the sides of the heights were too steep to allow of attacking the Russians on

the flank, and the retreat was consequently slow and murderous. They fell back at length, however, and abandoned the field of battle to our troops, who pursued them as far as the inn of the Guardian Angel, situated on the highroad from Soissons to Laon, when they wheeled about, and held their position in this spot for several hours.

The Emperor, who in this battle as in every other of this campaign, had exposed his person and incurred as many dangers as the most daring soldiers, now transferred his headquarters to the village of Bray. As soon as he entered the room which served as his cabinet, he had me summoned, and I pulled off his boots, while he leaned on my shoulder without uttering a word, threw his hat and sword on the table, and threw himself on his bed, uttering a deep sigh, or rather one of those exclamations which we cannot tell whether they arise from discouragement or simply from fatigue. His Majesty's countenance was sad and careworn, nevertheless he slept from sheer weariness for many hours. I awoke him to announce the arrival of M. de Rumigny, who was the bearer of dispatches from Chatillon. In the condition of the Emperor's mind at this moment he seemed ready to accept any reasonable conditions which might be offered him; therefore I admit I hoped (in which many joined me) that we were approaching the moment when we should obtain the peace which we so ardently desired. The Emperor received M. de Rumigny without witnesses, and the interview lasted a long while. Nothing transpired of what had been said, and it occurred to me that this mystery argued nothing good. The next day early M. de Rumigny returned to Chatillon, where the Duke of Vicenza awaited him; and from the few words his Majesty uttered as he mounted his horse to return to his advance posts, it was easy to see that he had not yet resigned himself to the idea of making a peace which he regarded as dishonorable.

While the Duke of Vicenza was at Chatillon or Lusigny for the purpose of treating for a peace, the orders of the Emperor delayed or hastened the conclusion of the treaty according to his successes or repulses. On the appearance of a ray of hope he demanded more than they were willing to grant, imitating in this respect the example which the allied sovereigns had set him, whose requirements since the armistice of Dresden increased in proportion as they advanced towards France. At last everything was finally broken off, and the Duke of Vicenza rejoined his Majesty at Saint-Dizier. I was in a small room so near his sleeping-room that I could not avoid hearing their conversation. The Duke of Vicenza earnestly besought the Emperor to accede to the proposed conditions, saying that they were reasonable now, but later would no longer be so. As the Duke of Vicenza still returned to the charge, arguing against the Emperor's postponing his positive decision, his Majesty burst out vehemently, "You are a Russian, Caulaincourt!"—"No, Sire," replied the duke with spirit, no; I am a Frenchman! I think that I have proved this by urging your Majesty to make peace."

The discussion thus continued with much warmth in terms which unfortunately I cannot recall. But I remember well that every time the

Duke of Vicenza insisted and endeavored to make his Majesty appreciate the reasons on account of which peace had become indispensable, the Emperor replied, "If I gain a battle, as I am sure of doing, I will be in a situation to exact the most favorable conditions. The grave of the Russians is under the walls of Paris! My measures are all taken, and victory cannot fail."

After this conversation, which lasted more than an hour, and in which the Duke of Vicenza was entirely unsuccessful, he left his Majesty's room, and rapidly crossed the saloon where I was; and I remarked as he passed that his countenance showed marks of agitation, and that, overcome by his deep emotion, great tears rolled from his eyes. Doubtless he was deeply wounded by what the Emperor had said to him of his partiality for Russia; and whatever may have been the cause, from that day I never saw the Duke of Vicenza except at Fontainebleau.

The Emperor, meanwhile, marched with the advance guard, and wished to reach Laon on the evening of the 8th; but in order to gain this town it was necessary to pass on a narrow causeway through marshy land. The enemy was in possession of this road, and opposed our passage. After a few cannon-shots were exchanged his Majesty deferred till next day the attempt to force a passage, and returned, not to sleep (for at this critical time he rarely slept), but to pass the night in the village of Chavignon.

In the middle of this night General Flahaut

—[Count Auguste Charles Joseph Flahaut de la Billarderie, born in Paris, 1785; colonel in 1809; aide-de-camp to the Emperor, 1812; and made a general of division for conduct at Leipzig; was at Waterloo. Ambassador to Vienna, 1841-1848, and senator, 1853; died 1870. He was one of the lovers of Queen Hortense, and father by her of the late Duc de Morny.-TRANS.]—

came to announce to the Emperor that the commissioners of the allied powers had broken the conferences at Lusigny. The army was not informed of this, although the news would probably have surprised no one. Before daylight General Gourgaud set out at the head of a detachment selected from the bravest soldiers of the army, and following a cross road which turned to the left through the marshes, fell unexpectedly on the enemy, slew many of them in the darkness, and drew the attention and efforts of the allied generals upon himself, while Marshal Ney, still at the head of the advance guard, profited by this bold maneuver to force a passage of the causeway. The whole army hastened to follow this movement, and on the evening of the 9th was in sight of Laon, and ranged in line of battle before the enemy who occupied the town and its heights. The army corps of the Duke of Ragusa had arrived by another road, and also formed in line of battle before the Russian and Prussian armies. His Majesty passed the night expediting his orders, and preparing everything for the grand attack which was to take place next morning at daylight.

The appointed hour having arrived, I had just finished in haste the toilet of the Emperor, which was very short, and he had already put his foot in the stirrup, when we saw running towards us on foot, with the utmost speed and all out of breath, some cavalymen belonging to the army corps of the Duke of Ragusa. His Majesty had them brought before him, and inquired angrily the meaning of this disorder. They replied that their bivouacs had been attacked unexpectedly by the enemy; that they and their comrades had resisted to the utmost these overwhelming forces, although they had barely time to seize their arms; that they had at last been compelled to yield to numbers, and it was only by a miracle they had escaped the massacre. "Yes," said the Emperor knitting his brow, "by a miracle of agility, as we have just seen. What has become of the marshal?" One of the soldiers replied that he saw the Duke of Ragusa fall dead, another that he had been taken prisoner. His Majesty sent his aide-de-camp and orderly officers to ascertain, and found that the report of the cavalymen was only too true. The enemy had not waited to be attacked, but had fallen on the army corps of the Duke of Ragusa, surrounded it, and taken a part of his artillery. The marshal, however, had been neither wounded nor taken prisoner, but was on the road to Rheims, endeavoring to arrest and bring back the remains of his army corps.

The news of this disaster greatly increased his Majesty's chagrin; but nevertheless the enemy was driven back to the gates of Laon, though the recapture of the city was impossible. After a few fruitless attempts, or rather after some false attacks, the object of which was to conceal his retreat from the enemy, the Emperor returned to Chavignon and passed the night. The next day, the 11th, we left this village, and the army fell back to Soissons. His Majesty alighted at the bishopric, and immediately commanded Marshal Mortier, together with the principal officials of the place, to take measures to put the town in a state of defense. For two days the Emperor shut himself up at work in his cabinet, and left it only to examine the locality, visit the fortifications, and everywhere give orders and see that they were executed. In the midst of these preparations for defense, his Majesty learned that the town of Rheims had been taken by the Russian general, Saint-Priest, notwithstanding the vigorous resistance of General Corbineau, of whose fate we were ignorant, but it was believed that he was dead or had fallen into the hands of the Russians. His Majesty confided the defense of Soissons to the Marshal Duke of Treviso, and himself set out for Rheims by forced marches; and we arrived the same evening at the gates of the city, where the Russians were not expecting his Majesty. Our soldiers entered this battle without having taken any repose, but fought with the resolution which the presence and example of the Emperor never failed to inspire. The combat lasted the whole evening, and was prolonged far into the night; but after General Saint-Priest had been grievously wounded the resistance of his troops became less vigorous, and at two o'clock in the morning they abandoned the town. The Emperor and his army entered by one gate while the Russians were emerging from the other; and as the

inhabitants pressed in crowds around his Majesty, he inquired before alighting from his horse what havoc the enemy was supposed to have made. It was answered that the town had suffered only the amount of injury which was the inevitable result of a bloody nocturnal struggle, and that moreover the enemy had maintained severe discipline among the troops during their stay and up to the moment of retreat. Among those who pressed around his Majesty at this moment was the brave General Corbineau. He wore a citizen's coat, and had remained disguised and concealed in a private house of the town. On the morning of the next day he again presented himself before the Emperor, who welcomed him cordially, and complimented him on the courage he had displayed under such trying circumstances. The Duke of Ragusa had rejoined his Majesty under the walls of Rheims, and had contributed with his army corps to the capture of the town. When he appeared before the Emperor, the latter burst out in harsh and severe reproaches regarding the affair at Laon; but his anger was not of long duration, and his Majesty soon resumed towards the marshal the tone of friendship with which he habitually honored him. They held a long conference, and the Duke of Ragusa remained to dine with the Emperor.

His Majesty spent three days at Rheims in order to give his troops time to rest and recuperate before continuing this arduous campaign. They were in sore need of this; for even old soldiers would have had great difficulty in enduring such continued forced marches, which often ended only in a bloody battle; nevertheless, the greater part of the brave men who obeyed with such unwearied ardor the Emperor's orders, and who never refused to endure any fatigue or any danger, were conscripts who had been levied in haste, and fought against the most warlike and best disciplined troops in Europe. The greater part had not had even sufficient time to learn the drill, and took their first lessons in the presence of the enemy, brave young fellows who sacrificed themselves without a murmur, and to whom the Emperor once only did injustice,—in the circumstance which I have formerly related, and in which M. Larrey played such a heroic part. It is a well-known fact that the wonderful campaign of 1814 was made almost entirely with conscripts newly levied.

During the halt of three days which we made at Rheims, the Emperor saw with intense joy, which he openly manifested, the arrival of an army corps of six thousand men, whom the brave Dutch General Janssens brought to his aid. This re-enforcement of experienced troops could not have come more opportunely. While our soldiers were taking breath before recommencing a desperate struggle, his Majesty was giving himself up to the most varied labors with his accustomed ardor. In the midst of the cares and dangers of war the Emperor neglected none of the affairs of the Empire, but worked for several hours each day with the Duke of Bassano, received couriers from Paris, dictated his replies, and fatigued his secretaries almost as much as his generals and soldiers. As for himself, he was indefatigable as of yore.



## CHAPTER XXV.

Affairs had reached a point where the great question of triumph or defeat could not long remain undecided. According to one of the habitual expressions of the Emperor, the pear was ripe; but who was to gather it? The Emperor while at Rheims appeared to have no doubt that the result would be in his favor. By one of those bold combinations which astonish the world, and change in a single battle the face of affairs, although the enemy had approached the capital, his Majesty being unable to prevent it, he nevertheless resolved to attack them in the rear, compel them to wheel about, and place themselves in opposition to the army which he commanded in person, and thus save Paris from their invasion. With the intention of executing this bold combination the Emperor left Rheims. Meanwhile, being anxious concerning his wife and son, the Emperor, before attempting this great enterprise, wrote in the greatest secrecy to his brother, Prince Joseph, lieutenantgeneral of the Empire, to have them conveyed to a place of safety in case the danger became imminent. I knew nothing of this order the day it was sent, as the Emperor kept it a secret from every one; but when I learned afterwards that it was from Rheims that this command had been addressed to Prince Joseph, I thought that I could without fear of being mistaken fix the date at March 15th. That evening, in fact, his Majesty had talked to me as he retired of the Empress and the King of Rome; and as usual, whenever he had during the day been deeply impressed with any idea, it always recurred to him in the evening; and for that reason I conclude that this was the day on which his mind had been occupied with putting in a place of shelter from the dangers of the war the two objects of his most devoted affection.

From Rheims we directed our course to Epernay, the garrison and inhabitants of which had just repulsed the enemy, who the evening before had attempted to capture it. There the Emperor learned of the arrival at Troyes of the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia. His Majesty, in order to testify to the inhabitants of Epernay his satisfaction with their admirable conduct, rewarded them in the person of their mayor by giving him the cross of the Legion of Honor. This was M. Moet, whose reputation has become almost as European as that of Champagne wine.

During this campaign, without being too lavish of the cross of honor, his Majesty presented it on several occasions to those of the inhabitants who were foremost in resisting the enemy. Thus, for example, I remember that before leaving Rheims he gave one to a simple farmer of the village of Selles whose name I have forgotten. This brave man, on learning that a detachment of Prussians was approaching his commune, put himself at the head of the National Guard, whom he encouraged both by word and example; and the result of his enterprise was forty-five prisoners, among them three officers, whom he brought into the town.

How many deeds similar to this occurred which it is impossible to

remember! However all that may be, the Emperor on leaving Epernay marched towards Fere-Champenoise, I will not say in all haste, for that is a term which might be used concerning all his Majesty's movements, who sprang with the rapidity of an eagle on the point where his presence seemed most necessary. Nevertheless, the enemy's army, which had crossed the Seine at Pont and Nogent, having learned of the re-occupation of Rheims by the Emperor, and understanding the movement he wished to make on their rear, began their retreat on the 17th, and retook successively the bridges which he had constructed at Pont, Nogent, and Arcis-sur-Aube. On the 18th occurred the battle of Fere-Champenoise, which his Majesty fought to clear the road intervening between him and Arcis-sur-Aube, where were the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia, who, on learning of this new success of the Emperor, quickly fell back to Troyes. The pronounced intention of his Majesty was then to go as far as Bar-sur-Aube. We had already passed the Aube at Plancy, and the Seine at Mery, but it was necessary to return to Plancy. This was on the 19th, the same day on which the Count d'Artois arrived at Nancy, and on which the rupture of the Congress of Chatillon occurred, which I mentioned in the preceding chapter, following the order in which my souvenirs recurred to my mind.

The 20th March was, as I have said, an eventful date in the Emperor's life, and was to become still more so one year later. The 20th March, 1814, the King of Rome completed his third year, while the Emperor was exposing himself, if it were possible, even more than was his usual custom. At the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube, which took place on that day, his Majesty saw that at last he would have new enemies to encounter. The Austrians themselves entered the line of battle; and an immense army, under the command of the Prince von Schwarzenberg, spread itself out before him, when he supposed he had only an advance guard to resist. The coincidence may not perhaps appear unimportant that the Austrian army did not begin to fight seriously or attack the Emperor in person until the day after the rupture of the Congress of Chatillon. Was this the result of chance, or did the Emperor of Austria indeed prefer to remain in the second line, and spare the person of his son-in-law, so long as peace appeared possible to him? This is a question which it is not my province to answer.

The battle of Arcis-sur-Aube was terrible, and ended only with the close of day. The Emperor still occupied the city in spite of the combined efforts of an army of one hundred and thirty thousand fresh troops, who attacked thirty thousand worn out by fatigue. The battle still continued during the night, while the fire of the faubourgs lighted our defenses and the works of the besieging-party. It was at last found impossible to hold our position longer, and only one bridge remained by which the army could effect its retreat. The Emperor had another constructed; and the retreat commenced, but in good order, in spite of the numerous masses which closely threatened us. This unfortunate affair was the most disastrous his Majesty had experienced during the whole campaign, since the roads leading to the capital had been left uncovered; and the

prodigies of his genius and valor were unavailing against such overwhelming numbers. An instance which furnishes an excellent proof of the presence of mind which the Emperor preserved in the most critical positions was, that before evacuating Arcis he committed to the Sisters of Charity a sum sufficient for the first needs of the wounded.

On the evening of the 21st we arrived at Sommepeuis, where the Emperor passed the night. There I heard him for the first time pronounce the name of the Bourbons. His Majesty was extremely agitated, and spoke in such broken tones that I understood only these words, which he repeated many times: "Recall them myself—recall the Bourbons! What would the enemy say? No, no? it is impossible! Never!" These words which escaped the Emperor in one of those attacks of preoccupation to which he was subject whenever his soul was deeply moved astonished me inexpressibly; for the idea had never once entered my mind that there could be any other government in France than that of his Majesty. Besides, it may be easily understood that in the position I then occupied I had scarcely heard the Bourbons mentioned, except to the Empress Josephine in the early days of the Consulate, while I was still in her service.

The various divisions of the French army and the masses of the enemy were then so closely pressed against each other, that the enemy occupied each point the moment we were compelled to abandon it; thus, on the 22d the allies seized Epernay, and, in order to punish this faithful town for the heroic defense it had previously made, orders were given that it should be pillaged. Pillage? The Emperor called it the crime of war; and I heard him often express in most vehement terms the horror with which it inspired him, which was so extreme that at no time did he authorize it during his long series of triumphs. Pillage! And yet every proclamation of our devastators declared boldly that they made war only on the Emperor; they had the audacity to repeat this statement, and some were foolish enough to believe them. On this point I saw too plainly what actually occurred to have ever believed in the ideal magnanimity which has since been so much vaunted.

On the 23d we were at Saint-Dizier, where the Emperor returned to his first plan of attacking the enemy's rear. The next day, just as his Majesty mounted his horse to go to Doulevant, a general officer of the Austrians was brought to him, whose arrival caused a great sensation at headquarters, as it delayed the Emperor's departure for a few moments. I soon learned that it was Baron de Weissemberg, ambassador from Austria to London, who was returning from England. The Emperor ordered that he should follow him to Doulevant, where his Majesty gave him a verbal message to the Emperor of Austria, while Colonel Galbois was charged with a letter which the Emperor had the Duke of Vicenza write. But after a movement by the French army towards Chaumont, by the road of Langres, the Emperor of Austria, finding himself separated from the Emperor Alexander, was forced to fall back as far as Dijon. I remember that on his arrival at Doulevant his Majesty received secret information from his faithful

director-general of the post, M. de Lavalette. This information, the purport of which I did not know, appeared to produce the deepest impression on the Emperor; but he soon resumed before the eyes of those around his accustomed serenity, though for some time past I had seen that this was only assumed. I have learned since that M. de Lavalette informed the Emperor that there was not a moment to lose if he would save the capital. Such an opinion from such a man could only be an expression of the real truth, and it was this conviction which contributed to increase the Emperor's anxiety. Until then the news from Paris had been favorable; and much had been said of the zeal and devotion of the National Guard, which nothing could dismay. At the various theaters patriotic pieces had been played, and notably the 'Oriflamme' at the Opera, a very trivial circumstance apparently, but which nevertheless acted very powerfully on the minds of enthusiasts, and for this reason was not to be disdained. Indeed, the small amount of news that we had received represented Paris as entirely devoted to his Majesty, and ready to defend itself against any attacks. And in fact, this news was not untrue; and the handsome conduct of the National Guard under the orders, of Marshal Moncey, the enthusiasm of the different schools, and the bravery of the pupils of the polytechnic schools, soon furnished proof of this. But events were stronger than men. Meanwhile, time passed on, and we were approaching the fatal conclusion; each day, each moment, saw those immense masses collecting from the extremities of Europe, inclosing Paris, and pressing it with a thousand arms, and during these last days it might well be said that the battle raged incessantly. On the 26th the Emperor, led by the noise of a fierce cannonade, again repaired to Saint-Dizier, where his rear-guard was attacked by very superior forces, and compelled to evacuate the town; but General Milhaud and General Sebastiani repulsed the enemy on the Marne at the ford of Valcourt; the presence of the Emperor produced its accustomed effect, and we re-entered Saint-Dizier, while the enemy fled in the greatest disorder over the road to Vitry-le-Francais and that of Bar-sur-Ornain. The Emperor moved towards the latter town, thinking that he now had the Prince of Schwarzenberg in his power; but just as he arrived there learned that it was not the Austrian general-in-chief whom he had fought, but only one of his lieutenants, Count Witzingerode. Schwarzenberg had deceived him; on the 23d he had made a junction with General Blucher, and these two generals at the head of the coalition had rushed with their masses of soldiers upon the capital.

However disastrous might be the news brought to headquarters, the Emperor wished to verify its truth in person, and on his return from Saint-Dizier made a detour to Vitry, in order to assure himself of the march of the allies on Paris; and all his doubts were dissipated by what he saw. Could Paris hold out long enough for him to crush the enemy against its walls? Thereafter this was his sole and engrossing thought. He immediately placed himself at the head of his army, and we marched on Paris by the road to Troyes. At Doulencourt he received a courier from King Joseph, who announced to him the march of the allies on Paris. That

very moment he sent General Dejean in haste to his brother to inform him of his speedy arrival. If he could defend himself for two days, only two days, the allied armies would enter Paris, only to find there a tomb. In what a state of anxiety the Emperor then was! He set out with his headquarters squadrons. I accompanied him, and left him for the first time at Troyes, on the morning of the 30th, as will be seen in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

What a time was this! How sad the period and events of which I have now to recall the sad memory ! I have now arrived at the fatal day when the combined armies of Europe were to sully the soil of Paris, of that capital, free for so many years from the presence of the invader. What a blow to the Emperor! And what cruel expiation his great soul now made for his triumphant entries into Vienna and Berlin! It was, then, all in vain that he had displayed such incredible activity during the admirable campaign of France, in which his genius had displayed itself as brilliantly as during his Italian campaign. The first time I saw him on the day after a battle was at Marengo; and what a contrast his attitude of dejection presented when I saw him again on the 31st of March at Fontainebleau.

Having accompanied His Majesty everywhere, I was near him at Troyes on the morning of the 30th of March.

The Emperor set out at ten o'clock, accompanied only by the grand marshal and the Duke of Vicenza. It was then known at headquarters that the allied troops were advancing on Paris; but we were far from suspecting that at the very moment of the Emperor's hurried departure the battle before Paris was being most bitterly waged. At least I had heard nothing to lead me to believe it. I received an order to move to Essonne, and, as means of transportation had become scarce and hard to obtain, did not arrive there until the morning of the 31st, and had been there only a short time when the courier brought me an order to repair to Fontainebleau, which I immediately did. It was then I learned that the Emperor had gone from Troyes to Montereau in two hours, having made the journey of ten leagues in that short space of time. I also learned that the Emperor and his small suite had been obliged to make use of a chaise on the road to Paris, between Essonne and Villejuif. He advanced as far as the Cour de France with the intention of marching on Paris; but there, verifying the news and the cruel certainty of the surrender of Paris, had sent to me the courier whom I mentioned above.

I had been at Fontainebleau only a short while when the Emperor arrived. His countenance was pale and harassed to a greater degree than I had ever

seen it; and he who knew so well how to control all the emotions of his soul did not seem to attempt to conceal the dejection which was so manifest both in his attitude and in his countenance. It was evident how greatly he was suffering from all the disastrous events which had accumulated one after the other in terrible progression. The Emperor said nothing to any one, and closeted himself immediately in his cabinet, with the Dukes of Bassano and Vicenza and the Prince of Neuchatel. These generals remained a long while with the Emperor, who afterwards received some general officers. His Majesty retired very late, and appeared to me entirely crushed. From time to time I heard stifled sighs escape from his breast, with which were mingled the name of Marmont, which I could not then understand, as I had heard nothing of the terms of the surrender, and knew that the Duke of Ragusa was a marshal to whom the Emperor seemed always deeply attached. I saw that evening, at Fontainebleau, Marshal Moncey, who the evening before had bravely commanded the national guard at the barricade of Clichy, and also the Duke of Dantzic.

A gloomy and silent sadness which is perfectly indescribable reigned at Fontainebleau during the two days which followed. Overcome by so many repeated blows, the Emperor seldom entered his cabinet, where he usually passed so many hours engaged in work. He was so absorbed in his conflicting thoughts, that often he did not notice the arrival of persons whom he had summoned, looked at them, so to speak, without seeing them, and sometimes remained nearly half an hour without addressing them; then, as if awaking from this state of stupefaction, asked them questions without seeming to hear the reply; and even the presence of the Duke of Bassano and the Duke of Vicenza, whom he summoned more frequently, did not interrupt this condition of preoccupation or lethargy, so to speak. The hours for meals were the same, and they were served as usual; but all took place amid complete silence, broken only by the necessary noise of the service. At the Emperor's toilet the same silence; not a word issued from his lips; and if in the morning I suggested to him one of the drinks that he usually took, he not only did not reply, but nothing in his countenance which I attentively observed could make me believe that he had heard me. This situation was terrible for all the persons attached to his Majesty.

Was the Emperor really so overwhelmed by his evil fortune? Was his genius as benumbed as his body? I must admit, in all candor, that seeing him so different from what he appeared after the disasters of Moscow, and even when I had left him at Troyes a few days before, I strongly believed it. But this was by no means the case; his soul was a prey to one fixed idea that of taking the offensive and marching on Paris. And though, indeed, he remained overwhelmed with consternation in his intimate intercourse with his most faithful ministers and most skillful generals, he revived at sight of his soldiers, thinking, doubtless, that the one would suggest only prudent counsels while the others would never reply aught but in shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" to the most daring orders he might give. For instance, on the 2d of April he momentarily, so to

speak, shook off his dejection, and in the court of the palace held a review of his guard, who had just rejoined him at Fontainebleau. He addressed his soldiers in a firm voice, saying:

”Soldiers! the enemy has stolen three marches on us, and has taken possession of Paris; we must drive them out. Unworthy Frenchmen, emigres to whom we have extended pardon, have donned the white cockade, and gone over to our enemies. The cowards! They will reap the reward of this new treason. Let us swear to conquer or to die, and to have respect shown to this tricolored cockade, which for twenty-five years we have borne on the road to glory and honor.”

The troops were roused to enthusiasm at the sound of their chief’s voice, and shouted in unison, ”Paris! Paris!” But the Emperor, nevertheless, resumed his former dejection on crossing the threshold of the palace, which arose no doubt from the fear, only too well founded, of seeing his desire to march on Paris thwarted by his lieutenants. It is only since, that reflecting on the events of that time, I am enabled to conjecture as to the struggles which passed in the soul of the Emperor; for then, as during my entire period of service, I would not have dared to think of going outside the limits of my ordinary duties and functions.

Meanwhile, the situation became more and more unfavorable to the wishes and plans of the Emperor. The Duke of Vicenza had been sent to Paris, where a provisional government had been formed under the presidency of the Prince of Benevento, without having succeeded in his mission to the Emperor Alexander; and each day his Majesty with deep grief witnessed the adherence of the marshals and a large number of generals to the new government. He felt the Prince de Neuchatel’s desertion deeply; and I must say that, unaccustomed as we were to political combinations, we were overcome with astonishment.

Here I find that I am compelled to speak of myself, which I have done as little as possible in the course of these memoirs, and I think this is a justice which all my readers will do me; but what I have to say is too intimately connected with the last days I passed with the Emperor, and concerns my personal honor too nearly, for me to suppose that I can be reproached for so doing. I was, as may well be supposed, very anxious as to the fate of my family, of whom I had received no news for a long while; and, at the same time, the cruel disease from which I had long suffered had made frightful progress, owing to the fatigue of the last campaign. Nevertheless, the mental suffering to which I saw the Emperor a victim so entirely absorbed all my thoughts, that I took no precautions against the physical suffering which I endured; and I had not even thought of asking for a safeguard for the country-house I possessed in the environs of Fontainebleau. A free corps having seized it, had established themselves there, after having pillaged and destroyed everything, even the little flock of merino sheep which I owed to the kindness of the Empress Josephine. The Emperor, having been informed of it by others than myself, said to me one morning at his toilet,

"Constant, I owe you indemnity."—"Sire?"—"Yes, my child, I know that your place has been pillaged, I know that you have incurred considerable losses in the Russian campaign; I have given an order that fifty thousand francs should be handed you to cover the whole." I thanked his Majesty, who more than indemnified me for my losses.

This occurred during the first days of our last stay at Fontainebleau. At the same period the Emperor's removal to the Island of Elba having been already discussed, the grand marshal of the palace asked me if I would follow his Majesty to this residence. God is my witness that I had no other wish than to consecrate all my life to the service of the Emperor; therefore I did not need a moment's reflection to reply that this could not be a matter of doubt; and I occupied myself almost immediately with preparations for the sojourn, which proved to be not a long one, but the duration of which no human intelligence could then have been able to foretell.

Meanwhile, in the retirement of his chamber, the Emperor became each day more sad and careworn; and when I saw him alone, which often occurred, for I tried to be near him as much as possible, I remarked the extreme agitation which the reading of the dispatches he received from Paris caused him; this agitation was many times so great that I noticed he had torn his leg with his nails until the blood flowed, without being aware of it. I then took the liberty of informing him of the fact as gently as possible, with the hope of putting an end to this intense preoccupation, which cut me to the heart. Several times also the Emperor asked Roustan for his pistols; fortunately I had taken the precaution, seeing his Majesty so unnerved, to recommend him not to give them to him, however much the Emperor might insist. I thought it my duty to give an account of all this to the Duke of Vicenza, who entirely approved of my conduct. One morning, I do not recall whether it was the 10th or 11th of April, but it was certainly on one of those days, the Emperor, who had said nothing to me in the morning, had me called during the day. I had hardly entered his room when he said to me, in a tone of most winning kindness, "My dear Constant, there is a hundred thousand francs waiting for you at Peyrache's; if your wife arrives before our departure, you will give them to her; if she should not, put them in the corner of your country-place, note the exact location of the spot, which you will send to her by some safe person. When one has served me well he should not be in want. Your wife will build a farm, in which she will invest this money; she will live with your mother and sister, and you will not have the fear of leaving her in need." Even more moved by the provident kindness of the Emperor, who thus deigned to consider the interests of my family affairs, than delighted with the great value of the present he had made me, I could hardly find words to express to him my gratitude; and such was, besides, my carelessness of the future, so far from me had been the thought that this great Empire could come to an end, that this was the first time I had really considered the embarrassed condition in which I would have left my family, if the Emperor had not thus generously provided for them. I had, in fact, no fortune, and possessed in all the



world only my pillaged house, and the fifty thousand francs destined to repair it.

Under these circumstances, not knowing when I should see my wife again, I made arrangements to follow the advice his Majesty had been kind enough to give me; converted my hundred thousand francs into gold, which I put into five bags; and taking with me the wardrobe boy Denis, whose honesty was above suspicion, we followed the road through the forest to avoid being seen by any of the persons who occupied my house. We cautiously entered a little inclosure belonging to me, the gate of which could not be seen on account of the trees, although they were now without foliage; and with the aid of Denis I succeeded in burying my treasure, after taking an exact note of the place, and then returned to the palace, being certainly very far from foreseeing how much chagrin and tribulation those hundred thousand francs would cause me, as we shall see in the succeeding chapters.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Here more than ever I must beg the indulgence of my readers as to the order in which I relate the events I witnessed during the Emperor's stay at Fontainebleau, and those connected with them which did not come to my knowledge until later. I must also apologize for any inaccuracy in dates of which I may be guilty, though I remember collectively, so to speak, all that occurred during the unhappy twenty days which ensued between the occupation of Paris and the departure of his Majesty for the Island of Elba; for I was so completely absorbed in the unhappy condition of my good master that all my faculties hardly sufficed for the sensations I experienced every moment. We suffered in the Emperor's sufferings; it occurred to none of us to imprint on his memory the recollection of so much agony, for we lived, so to speak, only provisionally.

During the first days of our stay at Fontainebleau the idea that the Emperor would soon cease to reign over France was very far from entering the minds of any of those around him, for every one was possessed with the conviction that the Emperor of Austria would not consent that his son-in-law, daughter, and grandson should be dethroned; in this they were strangely mistaken. I remarked during these first days that even more petitions than usual were addressed to his Majesty; but I am ignorant whether he responded favorably, or even if he replied at all. The Emperor often took up the daily papers, but after casting his eyes over them threw them down angrily; and if we recall the shameless abuse in which those writers indulged who had so often lavished fulsome praises on him, it may well be understood that such a transition would naturally excite his Majesty's disgust. The Emperor usually remained alone; and the person whom he saw most frequently was the Duke of Bassano, the only

one of his ministers then at Fontainebleau; for the Duke of Vicenza, being charged continually with missions, was, so to speak, constantly on the wing, especially as long as his Majesty retained the hope of seeing a regency in favor of his son succeed him in the government. In seeking to recall the varied feelings whose impress I remarked on his Majesty's countenance, I think I may affirm that he was even more deeply affected by being compelled to renounce the throne for his son than in resigning it for himself. When the marshals or the Duke of Vicenza spoke to his Majesty of arrangements relating to his person, it was easy to see that he forced himself to listen to them only with the greatest repugnance. One day when they spoke of the Island of Elba, and I do not know what sum per year, I heard his Majesty reply vehemently: "That is too much, much too much for me. If I am no longer anything more than a common soldier, I do not need more than one louis per day."

Nevertheless, the time arrived when, pressed on every side, his Majesty submitted to sign the act of abdication pure and simple, which was demanded of him. This memorable act was conceived in these terms:

"The allied powers having proclaimed that the Emperor Napoleon is the only obstacle to the re-establishment of peace in Europe, the Emperor Napoleon, faithful to his oath, declares that he renounces for himself and his heirs the thrones of France and Italy, and that there is no personal sacrifice, even his life, which he is not willing to make for the interests of France.

"Done at the palace of Fontainebleau, 11th of April, 1814.

NAPOLEON."

I do not need to say that I then had no knowledge of the act of abdication above given; it was one of those state secrets which emanated from the cabinet, and hardly entered into the confidence of the bedroom. I only recall that there was some discussion of the matter, though very vague, that same day in the household; and, besides, it was evident that something extraordinary was taking place, and the whole day his Majesty seemed more depressed than at any previous time; but, nevertheless, I was far from anticipating the agony which followed this fatal day!

I beg the reader in advance to give earnest attention to the event which I shall now relate. I now become a historian, since I inscribe the painful remembrance of a striking act in the career of the Emperor; of an event which has been the subject of innumerable controversies, though it has been necessarily only a matter of surmise, since I alone knew all the painful details. I refer to the poisoning of the Emperor at Fontainebleau. I trust I do not need to protest my perfect truthfulness; I feel too keenly the great importance of such a revelation to allow myself to omit or add the least circumstance to the truth. I shall therefore relate events just as they occurred, just as I saw them, and as memory, has engraved the painful details indelibly on my mind.

On the 11th of April I undressed the Emperor as usual, I think rather earlier than usual; for, if I remember aright, it was not quite half-past ten. As he retired he appeared to me better than during the day, and in nearly the same condition he had been on previous evenings. I slept in a room on the next floor, situated behind the Emperor's room, with which it communicated by a small, dark staircase. For some time past I had slept in my clothes, in order to attend the Emperor more promptly if he should call me; and I was sleeping soundly, when at midnight I was awaked by M. Pelard, who was on duty. He told me that the Emperor had asked for me, and on opening my eyes I saw on his face an expression of alarm which astounded me. I threw myself out of the bed, and rapidly descended the staircase, as M. Pelard added, "The Emperor has poured something in a glass and drunk it." I entered his Majesty's room, a prey to indescribable anxiety. The Emperor had lain down; but in advancing towards his bed I saw on the floor between the fireplace and the bed the little bag of black silk and skin, of which I spoke some time since. It was the same he had worn on his neck since the campaign in Spain, and which I had guarded so carefully from one campaign to another. Ah! if I had suspected what it contained. In this terrible moment the truth was suddenly revealed to me!

Meanwhile, I was at the head of the Emperor's bed. "Constant," said he, in a voice painfully weak and broken, "Constant, I am dying! I cannot endure the agony I suffer, above all the humiliation of seeing myself surrounded by foreign emissaries! My eagles have been trailed in the dust! I have not been understood! My poor Constant, they will regret me when I am no more! Marmont dealt me the finishing stroke. The wretch! I loved him! Berthier's desertion has ruined me! My old friends, my old companions in arms!" The Emperor said to me many other things which I fear I might not repeat correctly; and it may well be understood that, overwhelmed as I was with despair, I did not attempt to engrave in my memory the words which at intervals escaped the Emperor's lips; for he did not speak continuously, and the complaints I have related were uttered only between intervals of repose, or rather of stupor. While my eyes were fastened on the Emperor's countenance, I noticed on it a sudden contraction, which was the premonition of a convulsion which frightened me terribly; fortunately this convulsion brought on a slight attack of vomiting, which gave me some hope. The Emperor, amidst his complicated physical and mental sufferings, maintained perfect selfpossession, and said to me, after the first vomiting spell, "Constant, call M. Yvan and Caulaincourt." I half opened the door, and gave the order to M. Pelard, without leaving the Emperor's room, and returning to his bed, besought and entreated him to take a soothing potion; but all my efforts were in vain, so strong was his determination to die, even when in the presence of death.

In spite of the obstinate refusal of the Emperor, I was still entreating him when M. de Caulaincourt and M. Yvan entered the room. His Majesty made a sign to the Duke of Vicenza to approach his bed, and said to him,

"Caulaincourt, I recommend to you my wife and child; serve them as you have served me. I have not long to live!" At this moment the Emperor was interrupted by another fit of vomiting, but slighter than the first, during which I tried to tell the duke that the Emperor had taken poison; he understood rather than heard me, for sobs stifled my voice to such an extent that I could not pronounce a word distinctly. M. Yvan drew near, and the Emperor said to him, "Do you believe the dose was strong enough?" These words were really an enigma to M. Yvan; for he was not aware of the existence of this sachet, at least not to my knowledge, and therefore answered, "I do not know what your Majesty means;" to which his Majesty made no reply.

The Duke of Vicenza, M. Yvan, and I, having united our entreaties to the Emperor, were so fortunate at length as to induce him, though not without much difficulty, to drink a cup of tea, which he had refused when I had made it in much haste and presented it to him, saying, "Let me alone, Constant; let me alone: But, as a result of our redoubled efforts, he drank it at last, and the vomiting ceased. Soon after taking the tea the Emperor appeared calmer and fell asleep. These gentlemen quietly retired; and I remained alone in his room, where I awaited until he woke.

After a sleep of a few hours the Emperor awoke, seeming almost as usual, although his face still bore traces of what he had suffered, and while I assisted him in his morning toilet did not utter a word relating in the most indirect manner to the frightful night he had just passed. He breakfasted as usual, only a little later than ordinary. His appearance had resumed its usual calm, and he seemed more cheerful than for a long time past. Was it the result of his satisfaction at having escaped death, which a momentary despair had made him desire? Or did it not rather arise from the certainty of no longer fearing it in his bed more than on the battlefield? However that may be, I attribute the remarkable preservation of the Emperor's life to the fact that the poison contained in the bag had lost its efficacy.

When everything had returned to its usual order, without any one in the palace except those I have named suspecting what had occurred, I learned that M. Yvan had left Fontainebleau. Overwhelmed by the question the Emperor had addressed to him in the presence of the Duke of Vicenza, and fearing that he might suspect that he had given his Majesty the means of attempting his life, this skillful physician, so long and so faithfully attached to the Emperor's person, had, so to speak, lost his head in thinking of the responsibility resting on him. Hastily descending the stairs from the Emperor's apartments, and finding a horse ready saddled and bridled in one of the courts of the palace, he threw himself upon it, and hastily took the road to Paris. This was the morning of the same day that Roustan left Fontainebleau.

On the 12th of April, the Emperor also received the last adieux of Marshal Macdonald. When he was introduced, the Emperor was still feeling the effects of the events of the preceding night; and I am sure the Duke

of Tarentum perceived, without divining the cause, that his Majesty was not in his usual condition. He was accompanied by the Duke of Vicenza; and at this moment the Emperor was still so much depressed, and seemed so entirely absorbed in thought, that he did not at first perceive these gentlemen, although he was perfectly wide awake. The Duke of Tarentum brought to the Emperor the treaty with the allies, and I left the room as he was preparing to sign it. A few moments after the Duke of Vicenza summoned me; and his Majesty said, "Constant, bring me the saber which Mourad-Bey presented to me in Egypt. You know which it is?"—"Yes, Sire." I went out, and immediately returned with this magnificent sword, which the Emperor had worn at the battle of Mount Tabor, as I have heard many times. I handed it to the Duke of Vicenza, from whose hands the Emperor took it, and presented it to Marshal Macdonald; and as I retired heard the Emperor speaking to him most affectionately, and calling him his worthy friend.

These gentlemen, according to my recollection, were present at the Emperor's breakfast, where he appeared calmer and more cheerful than for a long time past; and we were all surprised to see him converse familiarly and in the most amiable manner with persons to whom for some time past he had usually addressed very brief and distant remarks. However, this gayety was only momentary; and, indeed, the manner in which the Emperor's mood varied from one moment to another during the whole time of our stay at Fontainebleau was perfectly indescribable. I have seen him on the same day plunged for several hours into the most terrible depression; then, a moment after, walking with great strides up and down his room, whistling or humming *La Monaco*; after which he suddenly fell into a kind of stupor, seeing nothing around him, and forgetting even the orders he had given. A fact which impressed me forcibly was the remarkable effect produced on him by letters addressed to him from Paris. As soon as he perceived them his agitation became extreme,—I might say convulsive, without fear of being taxed with exaggeration.

In support of what I have said of the incredible preoccupation of the Emperor, I will mention an occurrence which comes to my memory. During our sojourn at Fontainebleau the Countess Walewska, of whom I have heretofore spoken, came, and having summoned me, told me how anxious she was to see the Emperor. Thinking that this would be sure to distract his Majesty, I mentioned it to him that very evening, and received orders to have her come at ten o'clock. Madame Walewska was, as may well be believed, promptly on hand at the appointed hour, and I entered the Emperor's room to announce her arrival. He was lying on his bed, and plunged so deeply in meditation that it was only on a second reminder from me he replied, "Ask her to wait." She then waited in the apartment in front of his Majesty's, and I remained to keep her company. Meanwhile the night passed on, and the hours seemed long to the beautiful visitor; and her distress that the Emperor did not summon her became so evident that I took pity on her, and reentered the Emperor's room to remind him again. He was not asleep, but was so deeply absorbed in thought that he made no reply. At last day began to break; and the countess, fearing to

be seen by the people of the household, withdrew in despair at not having bidden adieu to the object of her affections; and she had been gone more than an hour when the Emperor remembered that she was waiting, and asked for her. I told his Majesty how it was, and did not conceal the state of despair in which the countess took her departure. The Emperor was much affected. "Poor woman, she thinks herself humiliated! Constant, I am really grieved. If you see her again, tell her so. But I have so many things there!" added he in a, very energetic tone, striking his brow with his hand.

The visit of this lady to Fontainebleau recalls another of almost the same kind, but to describe which it is necessary that I take up the thread of events a little further back.

—[I have learned since that the Countess de Walewska went with her son to visit the Emperor on the Island of Elba. This child resembled his Majesty so greatly that the report was started that the King of Rome had visited his father. Madame de Walewska remained only a short time at the Island of Elba. —CONSTANT.]—

A short time after his marriage with the Archduchess Marie Louise, although she was a young and beautiful woman, and although he really loved her devotedly, the Emperor was no more careful than in the time of the Empress Josephine to scrupulously observe conjugal fidelity. During one of our stays at Saint-Cloud he took a fancy to Mademoiselle L—, whose mother's second husband was a chief of squadron. These ladies then stayed at Bourg-la-Reine, where they were discovered by M. de —, one of the most zealous protectors of the pretty women who were presented to his Majesty, and who spoke to him of this young person, then seventeen years old. She was a brunette of ordinary height, but with a beautiful figure, and pretty feet and hands, her whole person full of grace, and was indeed perfectly charming in all respects, and, besides, united with most enticing coquetry every accomplishment, danced with much grace, played on several instruments, and was full of intelligence; in fact, she had received that kind of showy education which forms the most charming mistresses and the worst wives. The Emperor told me one day, at eight o'clock in the evening, to seek her at her mother's, to bring her and return at eleven o'clock at latest. My visit caused no surprise; and I saw that these ladies had been forewarned, no doubt by their obliging patron, for they awaited me with an impatience they did not seek to conceal. The young person was dazzling with ornaments and beauty, and the mother radiant with joy at the idea of the honors destined for her daughter. I saw well that she imagined the Emperor could not fail to be captivated by so many charms, and that he would be seized with a great passion; but all this was only a dream, for the Emperor was amorous only when all things suited. However, we arrived at Saint-Cloud at eleven o'clock, and entered the chateau by the orangery, for fear of indiscreet eyes. As I had a pass-key to all the gates of the chateau, I conducted her into the Emperor's apartments without being seen by any one, where she remained about three hours. At the end of this time I escorted her

to her home, taking the same precautions on leaving the chateau.

This young person, whom the Emperor had since seen three or four times at most, also came to Fontainebleau, accompanied by her mother; but, being unable to see his Majesty, this lady, like the Countess Walewska, determined to make the voyage to the Island of Elba, where it is said the Emperor married Mademoiselle L— to a colonel of artillery.

What I have just written has carried me back almost unconsciously to happier times. It is necessary, however, to return to the sad stay at Fontainebleau; and, after what I have said of the dejection in which the Emperor lived, it is not surprising that, overwhelmed by such crushing blows, his mind was not disposed to gallantry. It seems to me I can still see the evidences of the gloomy melancholy which devoured him; and in the midst of so many sorrows the kindness of heart of the man seemed to increase in proportion to the sufferings of the dethroned sovereign. With what amenity he spoke to us in these last days! He then frequently deigned to question me as to what was said of recent events. With my usual artless candor I related to him exactly what I had heard; and I remember that one day, having told him I had heard many persons remark that the continuation of the last wars which had been so fatal to us was generally attributed to the Duke of Bassano, "They do poor Maret gross injustice," said he. "They accuse him wrongfully. He has never done anything but execute orders which I gave." Then, according to his usual habit, when he had spoken to me a moment of these serious affairs, he added, "What a shame! what humiliation! To think that I should have in my very palace itself a lot of foreign emissaries!"

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

After the 12th of April there remained with the Emperor, of all the great personages who usually surrounded him, only the grand marshal of the palace and Count Drouot. The destination reserved for the Emperor, and the fact that he had accepted it, was not long a secret in the palace. On the 16th we witnessed the arrival of the commissioners of the allies deputed to accompany his Majesty to the place of his embarkment for the Island of Elba. These were Count Schuwaloff, aide-de-camp of the Emperor Alexander from Russia; Colonel Neil Campbell from England; General Kohler from Austria; and finally Count of Waldburg-Truchsess for Prussia. Although his Majesty had himself demanded that he should be accompanied by these four commissioners, their presence at Fontainebleau seemed to make a most disagreeable impression on him. However, each of these gentlemen received from the Emperor a different welcome; and after a few words that I heard his Majesty say, I was convinced on this, as on many previous occasions, that he esteemed the English far more than all his other enemies, and Colonel Campbell was, therefore, welcomed with more

distinction than the other ministers; while the ill-humor of the Emperor vented itself especially on the commissioner of the King of Prussia, who took no notice of it, and put on the best possible countenance.

With the exception of the very slight apparent change made at Fontainebleau by the presence of these gentlemen, no remarkable incident, none at least in my knowledge, came to disturb the sad and monotonous life of the Emperor in the palace. Everything remained gloomy and silent among the inhabitants of this last imperial residence; but, nevertheless, the Emperor personally seemed to me more calm since he had come to a definite conclusion than at the time he was wavering in painful indecision. He spoke sometimes in my presence of the Empress and his son, but not as often as might have been expected. But one thing which struck me deeply was, that never a single time did a word escape his lips which could recall the act of desperation of the night of the 11th, which fortunately, as we have seen, had not the fatal results we feared. What a night! What a night! In my whole life since I have never been able to think of it without shuddering.

After the arrival of the commissioners of the allied powers, the Emperor seemed by degrees to acclimate himself, so to speak, to their presence; and the chief occupation of the whole household consisted of duties relating to our preparations for departure. One day, as I was dressing his Majesty, he said to me smiling, "Ah, well, my son, prepare your cart; we will go and plant our cabbages." Alas! I was very far from thinking, as I heard these familiar words of his Majesty, that by an inconceivable concurrence of events, I should be forced to yield to an inexplicable fatality, which did not will that in spite of my ardent desire I should accompany the Emperor to his place of exile.

The evening before the day fixed for our departure the grand marshal of the palace had me called. After giving me some orders relative to the voyage, he said to me that the Emperor wished to know what was the sum of money I had in charge for him. I immediately gave an account to the grand marshal; and he saw that the sum total was about three hundred thousand francs, including the gold in a bag which Baron Fain had sent me, since he would not be on the journey. The grand marshal said he would present the account to the Emperor. An hour after he again summoned me, and said that his Majesty thought he had one hundred thousand francs more. I replied that I had in my possession one hundred thousand francs, which the Emperor had presented to me, telling me to bury it in my garden; in fact, I related to him all the particulars I have described above, and begged him to inquire of the Emperor if it was these one hundred thousand francs to which his Majesty referred. Count Bertrand promised to do this, and I then made the great mistake of not addressing myself directly to the Emperor. Nothing would have been easier in my position; and I had often found that it was always better, when possible, to go directly to him than to have recourse to any intermediate person whatever. It would have been much better for me to act thus, since, if the Emperor had demanded the one hundred thousand



francs which he had given me, which, after all, was hardly possible, I was more than disposed to restore them to him without a moment's hesitation. My astonishment may be imagined when the grand marshal reported to me that the Emperor did not remember having given me the sum in question. I instantly became crimson with anger. What! the Emperor had allowed it to be believed by Count Bertrand that I had attempted—I, his faithful servant—to appropriate a sum which he had given me under all the circumstances I have related! I was beside myself at this thought. I left in a state impossible to be described, assuring the grand marshal that in an hour at most I would restore to him the fatal present of his Majesty.

While rapidly crossing the court of the palace I met M. de Turenne, to whom I related all that had occurred. "That does not astonish me," he replied, "and we will see many other similar cases." A prey to a sort of moral fever, my head distracted, my heart oppressed, I sought Denis, the wardrobe boy, of whom I have spoken previously; I found him most fortunately, and hastened with him to my country place; and God is my witness that the loss of the hundred thousand francs was not the cause of my distress, and I hardly thought of it. As on the first occasion, we passed along the side of the woods in order not to be seen; and began to dig up the earth to find the money we had placed there; and in the eagerness with which I hunted for this miserable gold, in order to restore it to the grand marshal, I dug up more than was necessary. I cannot describe my despair when I saw that we had found nothing; I thought that some one had seen and followed us, in fact, that I had been robbed. This was a more crushing blow to me than the first, and I foresaw the consequences with horror; what would be said, what would be thought, of me? Would my word be taken? The grand marshal, already prejudiced by the inexplicable reply of the Emperor, would consider me a person totally devoid of honor. I was overwhelmed by these fatal thoughts when Denis suggested to me that we had not dug in the right spot, and had made a mistake of some feet. I eagerly embraced this ray of hope; we began again to dig up the earth with more eagerness than ever, and I can say without exaggeration that my joy bordered almost on delirium when I saw the first of the bags. We drew out in succession all the five; and with the assistance of Denis I carried them to the palace, and placed them without delay in the hands of the grand marshal, with the keys of the Emperor's trunk, and the casket which M. Fain had committed to me. I said to him as I left, "Monseigneur, be good enough to say to his Majesty that I will not accompany him."—"I will tell him."

After this cold and laconic reply I immediately left the palace, and was soon after in Rue du Coq-Gris, with M. Clement, a bailiff, who for a long time had been charged with my small affairs, and had given the necessary attention to my farm during the long absences which the journeys and campaigns of the Emperor necessitated. Then I gave full vent to my despair. I was choking with rage as I remembered that my honesty had been suspected,—I, who for fourteen years had served the Emperor with a disinterestedness which was so scrupulous, and even carried to such a

point that many persons called it silliness; I, who had never demanded anything of the Emperor, either for myself or my people! My brain reeled as I tried to explain to myself how the Emperor, who knew all this so well, could have allowed me to appear to a third person as a dishonorable man; the more I thought of it the more extreme became my irritation, and yet it was not possible to find the shadow of a motive for the blow aimed at me. My despair was at its height, when M. Hubert, ordinary valet de chambre of the Emperor, came to tell me that his Majesty would give me all I wished if I would follow him, and that three hundred thousand francs would be immediately handed me. In these circumstances, I ask of all honest men, what could I do, and what would they have done in my place? I replied that when I had resolved to consecrate my whole life to the service of the unfortunate Emperor, it was not from views of vile interest; but I was in despair at the thought that he should have made me appear before Count Bertrand as an impostor and a dishonest man. Ah! how happy would it then have been for me had the Emperor never thought of giving me those accursed one hundred thousand francs! These ideas tortured me. Ah! if I could only have taken twenty-four hours for reflection, however just might have been my resentment, how gladly would I have sacrificed it! I would have thought of the Emperor alone, and would have followed him; but a sad and inexplicable fatality had not decreed this.

This took place on the 19th of April, the most miserable day of my life. What an evening, what a night I passed! What was my grief on learning the next day that the Emperor had departed at noon, after making his adieux to his guard! When I awoke that morning, all my resentment had been appeased in thinking of the Emperor. Twenty times I wished to return to the palace; twenty times after his departure I wished to take post horses and overtake him; but I was deterred by the offer he had made me through M. Hubert. "Perhaps," I thought, "he will think it is the money which influences me; this will, doubtless, be said by those around him; and what an opinion he will have of me!" In this cruel perplexity I did not dare to decide. I suffered all that it is possible for a man to suffer; and, at times, that which was only too true seemed like a dream to me, so impossible did it seem that I could be where the Emperor was not. Everything in this terrible situation contributed to aggravate my distress. I knew the Emperor well enough to be aware that even had I returned to him then, he would never have forgotten that I had wished to leave him; I felt that I had not the strength to bear this reproach from his lips. On the other side, the physical suffering caused by my disease had greatly increased, and I was compelled to remain in bed a long while. I could, indeed, have triumphed over these physical sufferings however cruel they might have been, but in the frightful complications of my position I was reduced to a condition of idiocy; I saw nothing of what was around me; I heard nothing of what was said; and after this statement the reader will surely not expect that I shall have anything to say about the farewell of the Emperor to his old and faithful guard, an account of which, moreover, has been often enough published for the facts to be well known concerning this event, which, besides, took place in public. Here

my Memoirs might well close; but the reader, I well believe, cannot refuse me his attention a few moments longer, that I may recall some facts which I have a right to explain, and to relate some incidents concerning the return from the Island of Elba. I, therefore, now continue my remarks on the first of these heads, and the second will be the subject of the next chapter.

The Emperor had then already started; and as for myself, shut up alone, my country house became henceforth a sad residence to me. I held no communication with any one whatever, read no news, and sought to learn none. At the end of a short time I received a visit from one of my friends from Paris, who said to me that the journals spoke of my conduct without understanding it, and that they condemned it severely. He added that it was M. de Turenne who had sent to the editors the note in which I had been so heavily censured. I must say that I did not believe this; I knew M. de Turenne too well to think him capable of a proceeding so dishonorable, inasmuch as I had frankly explained everything to him, when he made the answer I gave above. But however the evil came, it was nevertheless done; and by the incredible complications of my position I found myself compelled to keep silence. Nothing certainly would have been easier than to repel the calumny by an exact rehearsal of the facts; but should I justify myself in this manner by, so to speak, accusing the Emperor at a moment especially when the Emperor's enemies manifested much bitterness? When I saw such a great man made a mark for the shafts of calumny, I, who was so contemptible and insignificant among the crowd, could surely allow a few of these envenomed shafts to fall on me. To-day the time has come to tell the truth, and I have done so without restriction; not to excuse myself, for on the contrary I blame myself for not having completely sacrificed myself, and for not having accompanied the Emperor to the Island of Elba regardless of what might have been said. Nevertheless, I may be allowed to say in my own defense, that in this combination of physical and mental sufferings which overwhelmed me all at once, a person must be very sure of infallibility himself to condemn completely this sensitiveness so natural in a man of honor when accused of a fraudulent transaction. This, then, I said to myself, is the recompense for all my care, for the endurance of so much suffering, for unbounded devotion, and a refinement of feeling for which the Emperor had often praised me, and for which he rendered me justice later, as will be seen when I shall have occasion to speak of certain circumstances occurring about the 20th of March of the following year.

But gratuitously, and even malevolently, interested motives have been attributed to me for the decision I made to leave the Emperor. The simplest common-sense, on the contrary, would suffice to see that, had I allowed myself to be guided by my interests, everything would have influenced me to accompany his Majesty. In fact, the chagrin which the incident I have mentioned caused me, and the manner in which I was completely overwhelmed by it, have injured my fortune more than any determination to follow the Emperor could possibly have done. What could I hope for in France, where I had no right to anything? Is it not,

besides, very evident to whoever would recall my position, which was one of confidence near the Emperor, that, if I had been actuated by a love of money, this position would have given me an opportunity to reap an abundant harvest without injuring my reputation; but my disinterestedness was so well known that, whatever may be said to the contrary, I can assert that during the whole time my favor with the Emperor continued, I on no occasion used it to render any other but unselfish services, and often I refused to support a demand for the sole reason that the petition had been accompanied by offers of money, which were often of very considerable amount. Allow me to cite one example among many others of the same nature. I received one day an offer of the sum of four hundred thousand francs, which was made me by a lady of a very noble family, if I would influence the Emperor to consider favorably a petition in which she claimed indemnity for a piece of property belonging to her, on which the port of Bayonne had been constructed. I had succeeded in obtaining favorable answers to applications more difficult than this, but I refused to agree to support her petition solely on account of the offer which had been made to me; I would have been glad to oblige this lady, but only for the pleasure of being obliging, and it was for this reason alone I allowed myself to solicit of the Emperor the pardons which he nearly always granted. Neither can it be said that I ever demanded of the Emperor licenses for lottery drawings, or anything else of this kind, in which, as is well known, a scandalous commerce is often made, and which, no doubt, if I had demanded them of the Emperor he would have readily granted.

The confidence in me which the Emperor had always shown was such that even at Fontainebleau, when it had been decided that none of the ordinary valets de chambre were to accompany him to the Island of Elba, the Emperor left to my choice the selection of a young man to assist me in my duties. I selected a boy of the apartments, whose upright character was well known to me, and who was, moreover, the son of Madame Marchand, the head nurse of the King of Rome. I spoke of him to the Emperor, who accepted him; and I went immediately to inform M. Marchand, who received the position most gratefully, and proved to me, by his thanks, how delighted he would be to accompany us. I say us, for at this moment I was very far from foreseeing the succession of fatal events which I have faithfully narrated; and it may be seen afterwards, from the manner in which M. Marchand expressed himself concerning me at the Tuileries during the Hundred Days, that I had not bestowed my confidence unworthily.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

I became a stranger to all the world after the departure of the Emperor for the Island of Elba, and, filled with a deep sense of gratitude for the kindness with which his Majesty had overwhelmed me during the

fourteen years I had passed in his service, thought incessantly of this great man, and took pleasure in renewing in memory all the events, even the most trivial, of my life with him. I thought it best suited my former position to live in retirement, and passed my time most tranquilly in the bosom of my family in the country-house belonging to me. At the same time a fatal idea preoccupied my mind involuntarily; for I feared that persons who were jealous of my former favor might succeed in deceiving the Emperor as to my unalterable devotion to his person, and strengthen in his mind the false opinion that they had for a time succeeded in giving him of me. This opinion, although my conscience told me that it was unjust, was not the less painful to me; but, as will soon be seen, I was fortunate enough to obtain the certainty that my fears in this respect were without foundation.

Although an entire stranger to politics, I had read with deep interest the newspapers I received in my retreat, since the great political change to which the name of the Restoration was given; and it seemed to me to need only the simplest common-sense to see the marked difference which existed between the government which had been overthrown and the new. In all departments I saw a succession of titled men take the places of the long list of distinguished men who had given under the Empire so many proofs of merit and courage; but I was far from thinking, notwithstanding the large number of discontented, that the fortunes of the Emperor and the wishes of the army would ever restore him to that throne which he had voluntarily abdicated in order that he might not be the cause of a civil war in France. Therefore, it would be impossible to describe my astonishment, and the multiplicity of varied feelings which agitated me, when I received the first news of the landing of the Emperor on the coast of Provence. I read with enthusiasm the admirable proclamation in which he announced that his eagles would fly from steeple to steeple, and that he himself would follow so closely in his triumphal march from the Bay of Juan to Paris.

Here I must make a confession, which is, that only since I had left the Emperor, had I fully comprehended the immensity of his greatness. Attached to his service almost from the beginning of the Consulate, at a time when I was still very young, he had grown, so to speak, without my having perceived it, and I had above all seen in him, from the nature of my duties, the excellent master rather than the great man; consequently, in this instance the effects of distance were very different from what it usually produces. It was with difficulty I could realize, and I am often astonished to-day in recalling the frank candor with which I had dared to defend to the Emperor what I knew to be the truth; his kindness, however, seemed to encourage me in this, for often, instead of becoming irritated by my vehemence, he said to me gently, with a benevolent smile, "Come, come! M. Constant, don't excite yourself." Adorable kindness in a man of such elevated rank! Ah, well I this was the only impression it made on me in the privacy of his chamber, but since then I have learned to estimate it at its true value.

On learning that the Emperor was to be restored to us, my first impulse was to repair at once to the palace, that I might be there on his arrival; but more mature reflection and the advice of my family made me realize that it would be more suitable for me to await his orders, in case he wished to recall me to my former service. I congratulated myself on deciding to take the latter course, since I had the happiness to learn that his Majesty had been kind enough to express his approval of my former conduct. I learned from most reliable authority, that he had hardly arrived at the Tuileries, when he condescended to inquire of M. Eible, then concierge of the palace, "Well, what is Constant doing? How is he succeeding? Where is he?"—"Sire, he is at his country-place, which he has not left."—"Ah, very good. He is happy raising his cabbages." I learned also that, during the first days of the Emperor's return, his Majesty had been investigating the list of pensions, and had been good enough to make a note that mine should be increased. Finally, I experienced an intense satisfaction of another kind, no doubt, but none the less sincere in the certainty of not being considered an ingrate. I have stated that I had been fortunate enough to procure a position for M. Marchand with the Emperor; and this is what was related to me by an eye-witness. M. Marchand, in the beginning of the Hundred Days, happened to be in one of the saloons of the palace of the Tuileries, where several persons were assembled, and some of them were expressing themselves most unkindly in regard to me. My successor with the Emperor interrupted them brusquely, saying that there was not a word of truth in the calumnies which were asserted of me; and added that, while I held the position, I had uniformly been most obliging to all persons of the household who had addressed themselves to me, and had done no injury to any one. In this respect I can affirm that M. Marchand told only the truth; but I was none the less deeply grateful to him for so honorably defending me, especially in my absence.

Not being in Paris on the 20th of March, 1815, as we have just seen, I could have nothing to say of the circumstances of this memorable epoch, had I not collected from some of my friends particulars of what occurred on the night following the re-entrance of the Emperor into the palace, once again become Imperial; and it may be imagined how eager I was to know everything relating to the great man whom we regarded at this moment as the savior of France.

I will begin by repeating exactly the account which was given me by one of my friends, a brave and excellent man, at that time sergeant in the National Guard of Paris, who happened to be on duty at the Tuileries exactly on the 20th of March. "At noon," he said, "three companies of National Guards entered the court of the Tuileries, to occupy all the interior and exterior posts of the palace. I belonged to one of these companies, which formed a part of the fourth legion. My comrades and I were struck with the inexpressible sadness produced by the sight of an abandoned palace. Everything, in fact, was deserted. Only a few men were seen here and there in the livery of the king, occupied in taking down and removing portraits of the various members of the Bourbon family.

Outside could be heard the clamorous shouts of a frantic mob, who climbed on the gates, tried to scale them, and pressed against them with such force that at last they bent in several places so far that it was feared they would be thrown down. This multitude of people presented a frightful spectacle, and seemed as if determined to pillage the palace.

”Hardly a quarter of an hour after we entered the interior court an accident occurred which, though not serious in itself, threw consternation into our ranks, as well as among those who were pressing against the grating of the Carrousel. We saw flames issuing from the chimney of the King’s apartments, which had been accidentally set on fire by a quantity of papers which had just been burned therein. This accident gave rise to most sinister conjectures, and soon the rumor spread that the Tuileries had been undermined ready for an explosion before the departure of Louis XVIII. A patrol was immediately formed of fifteen men of the National Guard, commanded by a sergeant; they explored the chateau most thoroughly, visited each apartment, descended into the cellars, and assured themselves that there was nowhere the slightest indication of danger.

”Reassured on this point, we were nevertheless not without anxiety. In returning to our posts we had heard numerous groups shouting, ‘Vive le Roi! Vivent les Bourbons!’ and we soon had proofs of the exasperation and fury of a part of the people against Napoleon; for we witnessed the arrival in our midst, in a most pitiable condition, of a superior officer who had imprudently donned too soon the tricolored cockade, and consequently had been pursued by the mob from the Rue Saint-Denis. We took him under our protection, and made him enter the interior of the palace, as he was almost exhausted. At this moment we received orders to force the people to withdraw, as they had become still more determined to scale the gates; and in order to accomplish this we were compelled to have recourse to arms.

We had occupied the post at the Tuileries an hour at most when General Excelmans, who had received the chief command of the guard at the chateau, gave orders to raise the tricolored banner over the middle pavilion.

”The reappearance of the national colors excited among us all emotions of the most intense satisfaction; and immediately the populace substituted the cry of ‘Vive l’Empereur’ for that of ‘Vive le Roi,’ and nothing else was heard the whole day. As for us, when we were ordered to don the tricolored cockade it was a very easy performance, as a large number of the guard had preserved their old ones, which they had simply covered with a piece of white cambric. We were ordered to stack arms in front of the arch of triumph, and nothing extraordinary occurred until six o’clock; then lights began to shine on the expected route of the Emperor, and a large number of officers on half pay collected near the pavilion of Flora; and I learned from one of them, M. Saunier, a decorated officer, that it was on that side the Emperor would re-enter the palace of the

Tuileries. I repaired there in all haste; and as I was hurrying to place myself on his route, I was so fortunate as to meet a commanding officer, who assigned me to duty at the very door of Napoleon's apartment, and to this circumstance I owe the fact that I witnessed what now remains to be related.

"I had for some time remained in expectation, and in almost perfect solitude, when, at fifteen minutes before nine, an extraordinary noise that I heard outside announced to me the Emperor's arrival; and a few moments after I saw him appear, amidst cries of enthusiasm, borne on the arms of the officers who had escorted him from the island of Elba. The Emperor begged them earnestly to let him walk; but his entreaties were useless, and they bore him thus to the very door of his apartment, where they deposited him near me. I had not seen the Emperor since the day of his farewell to the National Guard in the great court of the palace; and in spite of the great agitation into which I was thrown by all this commotion, I could not help noticing how much stouter he had become.

"The Emperor had hardly entered his apartments than I was assigned to duty in the interior. Marshal Bertrand, who had just replaced General Excelmans in the command of the Tuileries, gave me an order to allow no one to enter without informing him, and to give him the names of all who requested to see the Emperor. One of the first to present himself was Cambaceres, who appeared to me even more pallid than usual. A short time after came the father of General Bertrand; and as this venerable old man attempted to pay his respects first to the Emperor, Napoleon said to him, 'No, monsieur! nature first;' and in saying this, with a movement as quick as his words, the Emperor, so to speak, threw him into the arms of his son. Next came Queen Hortense, accompanied by her two children; then, Count Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angely, and many other persons whose names have escaped me. I did not see again those I announced to Marshal Bertrand, as they all went out by another door. I continued this duty till eleven o'clock in the evening, at which time I was relieved of my duties, and was invited to supper at an immense table of about three hundred covers. All the persons presented at the palace took their places at this table, one after the other. I there saw the Duke of Vicenza, and found myself placed opposite General Excelmans. The Emperor supped alone in his room with Marshal Bertrand, and their supper was by no means so splendid as ours, for it consisted only of a roast chicken and a dish of lentils; and yet I learned from an officer who had attended him constantly since he left Fontainebleau, that his Majesty had eaten nothing since morning. The Emperor was exceedingly fatigued; I had opportunity to mark this each time his door was opened. He was seated on a chair in front of the fire, with his feet on the mantelpiece.

"As we all remained at the Tuileries, word was sent us about one o'clock that the Emperor had just retired, and that in case any soldiers should arrive during the night who had accompanied him, he had given orders that they should be on duty at the palace conjointly with the National Guard. The poor creatures were hardly in a condition to obey such an order. At



two o'clock in the morning we saw two of them arrive in a most pitiable condition; they were perfectly emaciated, and their feet blistered. All that they could do was to throw themselves on their bags, on which they fell sound asleep; and they did not even awake while the duty of bandaging their feet was attended to in the room which they had reached with so much difficulty. All were eager to lavish every attention on them; and I admit that I have always regretted not having inquired the names of these two brave grenadiers, who inspired in all of us an interest I cannot describe.

"After retiring at one o'clock, the Emperor was on his feet at five o'clock in the morning; and the order was immediately given to the soldiers on half pay to hold themselves ready for a review, and at break of day they were ranged in three ranks. At this moment I was deputed to watch over an officer who was pointed out as suspicious, and who, it was said, had come from Saint-Denis. This was M. de Saint-Chamans. At the end of a quarter of an hour of arrest, which had nothing disagreeable in it, he was simply asked to leave. Meanwhile, the Emperor had descended from the palace, and passed through the ranks of the soldiers on half pay, speaking to each one, taking many of them by the hand, and saying to them, "My friends, I need your services; I rely on you as you may rely on me." Magic words on the lips of Napoleon, and which drew tears of emotion from all those brave soldiers whose services had been ignored for a year.

"From the morning the crowd increased rapidly on all the approaches to the Tuileries, and a mass of people assembled under the windows of the chateau, demanding with loud shouts to see Napoleon. Marshal Bertrand having informed him of this, the Emperor showed himself at the window, where he was saluted by the shouts which his presence had so often excited. After showing himself to the people, the Emperor himself presented to them Marshal Bertrand, his arm resting on the marshal's shoulder, whom he pressed to his heart with demonstrations of the liveliest affection. During this scene, which deeply affected all the witnesses, who cheered with all their might, officers, standing behind the Emperor and his friend, held above their heads banners surmounted by their eagles, of which they formed a kind of national canopy. At eleven o'clock the Emperor mounted his horse, and reviewed the various regiments which were arriving from every direction, and the heroes of the island of Elba who had returned to the Tuileries during the night. All seemed deeply impressed with the appearance of these brave men, whom the sun of Italy had tanned, and who had traveled nearly two hundred leagues in twenty days."

These are the curious details which were given to me by a friend; and I can guarantee the truth of his recital the same as if I myself had been an eye-witness of all that occurred during the memorable night of the 20th and 21st March, 1815. Continuing in my retreat during the hundred days, and long after, I have nothing to say which all the world would not know as well as I concerning this important epoch in the life of the

Emperor. I have shed many tears over his sufferings at the time of his second abdication, and the tortures inflicted on him at St. Helena by the miserable Hudson Lowe, whose infamy will go down through the ages side by side with the glory of the Emperor. I will simply content myself by adding to the preceding a certain document which was confided to me by the former Queen of Westphalia, and saying a word in conclusion as to the destination I thought best to give to the first cross of the Legion of Honor which the First Consul had worn.

Princess Catharine of Wurtemberg, the wife, of Prince Jerome, is, as is well known, a woman of great beauty, gifted at the same time with more solid qualities, which time increases instead of diminishing. She joins, to much natural intelligence, a highly cultivated mind, a character truly worthy of a sister-in-law of the Emperor, and carries even to enthusiasm her love of duty. Events did not allow her to become a great queen, but they have not prevented her remaining an accomplished wife. Her sentiments are noble and elevated; but she shows haughtiness to none, and all who surround her take pleasure in boasting of the charms of her kindness towards her household, and she possesses the happiest gift of nature, which consists in making herself beloved by every one. Prince Jerome is not without a certain grandeur of manner and formal generosity, which he learned while on the throne of Cassel, but he is generally very haughty. Although in consequence of the great changes which have taken place in Europe since the fall of the Emperor, Prince Jerome owes the comfortable maintenance which he still enjoys to the love of the princess, she does not any the less show a truly exemplary submission to his will. Princess Catharine occupies herself almost exclusively with her three children, two boys and one girl, all of whom are very beautiful. The eldest was born in the month of August, 1814. Her daughter, the Princess Mathilde, owes her superior education to the care her mother exercised over it; she is pretty, but less so than her brothers, who all have their mother's features.

After the description, which is not at all flattered, which I have just given of Princess Catharine, it may seem surprising that, provided as she is with so many solid qualities, she has never been able to conquer an inexplicable weakness regarding petty superstitions. Thus, for instance, she is extremely afraid to seat herself at a table where there are thirteen guests. I will relate an anecdote of which I can guarantee the authenticity, and which, perhaps, may foster the weakness of persons subject to the same superstitions as the Princess of Wurtemberg. One day at Florence, being present at a family dinner, she perceived that there were exactly thirteen plates, suddenly grew pale, and obstinately refused to take her seat. Princess Eliza Bacciochi ridiculed her sister-in-law, shrugged her shoulders, and said to her, smiling, "There is no danger, there are in truth fourteen, since I am enceinte." Princess Catharine yielded, but with extreme repugnance. A short time after she had to put on mourning for her sister-in-law; and the death of the Princess Eliza, as may well be believed, contributed no little to render her more superstitious than ever as to the number thirteen. Well! let strong

minds boast themselves as they may; but I can console the weak, as I dare to affirm that, if the Emperor had witnessed such an occurrence in his own family, an instinct stronger than any other consideration, stronger even than his all-powerful reason, would have caused him some moments of vague anxiety.

Now, it only remains for me to render an account of the bestowal I made of the first cross of honor the First Consul wore. The reader need not be alarmed; I did not make a bad use of it; it is on the breast of a brave soldier of our old army. In 1817 I made the acquaintance of M. Godeau, a former captain in the Imperial Guard. He had been severely wounded at Leipzig by a cannon-ball, which broke his knee. I found in him an admiration for the Emperor so intense and so sincere, he urged me so earnestly to give him something, whatever it might be, which had belonged to his Majesty, that I made him a present of the cross of honor of which I have spoken, as he had long ago been decorated with that order. This cross is, I might say, a historical memento, being the first, as I have stated, which his Majesty wore. It is of silver, medium size, and is not surmounted with the imperial crown. The Emperor wore it a year; it decorated his breast for the last time the day of the battle of Austerlitz. From that day, in fact, his Majesty wore an officer's cross of gold with the crown, and no longer wore the cross of a simple member of the legion.

Here my souvenirs would end if, in re-reading the first volumes of my memoirs, the facts I have there related had not recalled to me some others which may be of interest. With the impossibility of presenting them in the proper order and connection, I have decided, in order that the reader may not be deprived of them, to offer them as detached anecdotes, which I have endeavored to class as far as possible, according to the order of time.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### ANECDOTES AND INCIDENTS.

As I have often-had occasion to remark, the Emperor's tastes were extremely simple in everything relating to his person; moreover, he manifested a decided aversion to the usages of fashion; he did not like, so to speak, to turn night into day, as was done in the most of the brilliant circles of society in Paris under the Consulate, and at the commencement of the Empire. Unfortunately, the Empress Josephine did not hold the same views, and being a submissive slave of fashion, liked to prolong her evenings after the Emperor had retired.

She had the habit of then collecting around her her most intimate ladies

and a few friends, and giving them tea. Gaming was entirely precluded from these nocturnal reunions, of which conversation was the only charm. This conversation of the highest circles of society was a most agreeable relaxation to the Empress; and this select circle assembled frequently without the Emperor being aware of it, and was, in fact, a very innocent entertainment. Nevertheless, some obliging person was so indiscreet as to make the Emperor a report concerning these assemblies, containing matters which roused his displeasure. He expressed his dissatisfaction to the Empress Josephine, and from that time she retired at the same time as the Emperor.

These teas were then abandoned, and all persons attached to the service of the Emperor received orders not to sit up after the Emperor retired.

As well as I remember, this is how I heard his Majesty express himself on the occasion. "When the masters are asleep, the valets should retire to bed; and when the masters are awake, the valets should be on their feet." These words produced the intended effect; and that very evening, as soon as the Emperor was in bed, all at the palace retired, and at half-past eleven no one was awake but the sentinels.

By degrees, as always occurs, the strict observance of the Emperor's orders was gradually relaxed, still without the Empress daring to resume her nocturnal gatherings. The words of his Majesty were not forgotten, however, and were well remembered by M. Colas, concierge of the pavilion of Flora.

One morning about four o'clock, M. Colas heard an unaccustomed noise, and a continued movement in the interior of the palace, and supposed from this that the Emperor was awake, in which he was not mistaken. He dressed in all haste, and had been ten minutes at his post when the Emperor, descending the staircase with Marshal Duroc, perceived him. His Majesty usually took pleasure in showing that he remarked exactness in fulfilling his orders; therefore he stopped a moment, and said to M. Colas, "Ah! already awake, Colas?"—"Yes, Sire; I have not forgotten that valets should be on foot when the masters are awake."—"You have a good memory, Colas; an excellent thing."

All this was very well, and the day began for M. Colas under most favorable auspices; but in the evening the medal of the morning was obliged to show the opposite side. The Emperor went that morning to visit the works on the canal of the Ourcq. He was apparently much dissatisfied; for he returned to the palace in such evident illhumor, that M. Colas, perceiving it, let these words escape his lips, "Il y a de l'oignon." Although he spoke in a low tone, the Emperor heard him, and turning abruptly to him, repeated angrily, "Yes, Monsieur, you are not mistaken; il y a de l'oignon." He then rapidly remounted the staircase, while the concierge, fearing he had said too much, approached the grand marshal, begging him to excuse him to his Majesty; but he never had an idea of punishing him for the liberty he had taken, and the expression

which had escaped his lips one would hardly expect to find in the imperial vocabulary.

The coming of the Pope to Paris for the purpose of crowning the Emperor is one of those events which suffice to mark the grandeur of a period. The Emperor never spoke of it except with extreme satisfaction, and he wished his Holiness to be received with all the magnificence which should attend the founder of a great empire. With this intention his Majesty gave orders that, without any comment, everything should be furnished not only that the Pope, but also all that the persons of his suite, might demand. Alas! it was not by his own personal expenses that the Holy Father assisted to deplete the imperial treasury

Pius VII. drank only water, and his sobriety was truly apostolic; but this was not the case with the abbés attached to his service, for these gentlemen each day required five bottles of Chambertin wine, without counting those of other kinds and most expensive liquors.

This recalls another occurrence, which, however, relates only indirectly to the Pope's stay in Paris. It is known that David was ordered by the Emperor to execute the picture of the coronation, a work which offered an incredible number of almost insurmountable difficulties, and which was, in fact, one of the masterpieces of the great painter.

At all events, the preparation of this picture gave rise to controversies in which the Emperor was compelled to interfere; and the case was serious, as we shall see, since a Cardinal's wig was in question. David persisted in not painting the head of Cardinal Caprara with a wig; and on his part the Cardinal was not willing to allow him to paint his head without the wig. Some took sides with the painter, some with the model; and though the affair was treated with much diplomacy, no concession could be obtained from either of the contracting parties, until at last the Emperor took the part of his first painter against the Cardinal's wig. This recalls the story of the artless man who would not allow his head to be painted bare because he took cold so easily, and his picture would be hung in a room without a fire.

When M. de Bourrienne left the Emperor, as is well known, he was replaced by M. de Meneval, who had been formerly in the service of Prince Joseph. The Emperor became more and more attached to his new private secretary in proportion as he came to know him better. By degrees the work of the cabinet, in which was transacted the greater part of the most important business, became so considerable that it was impossible for one man alone to perform it; and from the year 1805 two young men, proteges of M. Maret, secretary of state, were admitted to the honor of working in the Emperor's cabinet; and though initiated by the nature of their duties into the most important state secrets, there was never the slightest reason to suspect their perfect discretion. They were, besides, very diligent, and endowed with much talent, so that his Majesty formed an excellent opinion of them. Their position was most enviable. Lodged in

the palace, and consequently supplied with fuel and lights, they were also fed, and received each a salary of eight thousand francs. It might well have been thought that this sum would be sufficient for these gentlemen to live most comfortably; but this was not the case. For if they were assiduous during the hours of labor, they were not less so during those devoted to pleasure; whence it arose that the second quarter had hardly passed before the whole year's salary was spent, part of it in gambling, and the rest among low companions.

Among the two secretaries added to the Emperor's service, there was one especially who had contracted so many debts, and whose creditors were so pitiless, that, had there been no other reason, he would infallibly have been dismissed from the private cabinet if the report of this had reached his Majesty's ears.

After passing an entire night reflecting on his embarrassing position, searching his imagination to secure some means of obtaining the sum necessary to satisfy those creditors who were most importunate, the new spendthrift sought distraction in work, and went to his desk at five o'clock in the morning in order to drive away his painful thoughts; not thinking that at this hour any one would hear him, and while working began to whistle *La Linotte* with all his might. Now, this morning, as often before, the Emperor had already been working a whole hour in his cabinet, and had just gone out as the young man entered, and, hearing this whistling, immediately returned.

"Already here, Monsieur," said his Majesty. "Zounds! Why, that is remarkable! Maret should be well satisfied with you. What is your salary?"—"Sire, I have eight thousand francs a year, and besides am boarded and lodged in the palace."—"That is well, Monsieur, and you ought to be very happy."

The young man, seeing that his Majesty was in a very good humor, thought that fortune had sent him a favorable opportunity of being relieved of his embarrassment, and resolved to inform the Emperor of his trying situation. "Alas, Sire!" said he, "no doubt I ought to be happy, but I am not."—"Why is that?"—"Sire, I must confess to your Majesty that I have so many English to carry, and besides I have to support an old father, two sisters, and a brother."—"You are only doing your duty. But what do you mean by your English? Are you supporting them also?"—"No, Sire; but it is they who have fed my pleasures, with the money they have lent me, and all who have creditors now call them the English."—"Stop! stop, Monsieur! What! you have creditors, and in spite of your large salary you have made debts! That is enough, Monsieur. I do not wish to have any longer near me a man who has recourse to the gold of the English, when on what I give him he can live honorably. In an hour you will receive your discharge."

The Emperor, having expressed himself as we have just heard, picked up some papers from the desk, threw a severe glance at the young secretary,

and left him in such a state of despair that, when some one else fortunately entered the cabinet, he was on the point of committing suicide with a long paper-cutter he held in his hand. This person was the aide-de-camp on duty, who brought him a letter from the Emperor, couched in the following terms:

”Monsieur, you deserve to be dismissed from my service, but I have thought of your family, and I pardon you on their account; and since it is they who would suffer from your misconduct, I consequently send you with my pardon ten thousand francs in bank-notes. Pay with this sum all the English who torment you, and, above all, do not again fall into their clutches; for in that case I shall abandon you.  
NAPOLEON.”

An enormous ”Vive l’Empereur!” sprang spontaneously to the lips of the young man, who darted out like lightning to announce to his family this new proof of imperial tyranny.

This was not the end, however; for his companion, having been informed of what had taken place, and also desiring some bank-notes to pacify his English, redoubled his zeal and activity in work, and for several days in succession repaired to the cabinet at four in the morning, and also whistled La Linotte; but it was all in vain, the Emperor did not seem to hear him.

Much was said at Paris and in the Court in ridicule of the ludicrous sayings of the wife of Marshal Lefebvre, and a collection could be made of her queer speeches, many of which are pure fabrications; but a volume would also be necessary to record all the acts by which she manifested her kindness of heart.

One day, at Malmaison (I think a short time after the Empire was founded), the Empress Josephine had given explicit orders that no one should be admitted. The Marechale Lefebvre presented herself; but the usher, compelled by his orders, refused to allow her to enter. She insisted, and he still refused. During this discussion, the Empress, passing from one apartment to the other, was seen through a glass door which separated this apartment from that in which the duchess then was. The Empress, having also seen her, hastily advanced to meet her, and insisted on her entering. Before passing in, Madame Lefebvre turned to the usher, and said to him in a mocking tone, ”Well, my good fellow, you see I got in!” The poor usher blushed up to his ears, and withdrew in confusion.

Marshal Lefebvre was not less good, less excellent, than his wife; and it might well be said of them that high honors had made no change in their manners. The good they both did could not be told. It might have been said that this was their only pleasure, the only compensation for a great domestic misfortune. They had only one son, who was one of the worst men

in the whole Empire. Each day there were complaints against him; the Emperor himself frequently admonished him on account of the high esteem he had for his brave father. But there resulted no improvement, and his natural viciousness only manifested itself the more. He was killed in some battle, I forget which; and as little worthy of regret as he was, his death was a deep affliction to his excellent mother, although he even forgot himself so far as to speak disrespectfully of her in his coarse speeches. She usually made M. de Fontanes the confidant of her sorrows; for the grand master of the university, notwithstanding his exquisite politeness and his admirable literary style, was very intimately associated with the household of Marshal Lefebvre.

In this connection I recall an anecdote which proves better than anything that could be said the kindness and perfect simplicity of the marshal. One day it was announced to him that some one whose name was not given wished to speak to him. The marshal left his cabinet, and recognized his old captain in the French Guards, in which, as we have said, the marshal had been a sergeant. The marshal begged permission to embrace him, offered his services, his purse, his house; treated him almost exactly as if he had been under his orders. The old captain was an emigre, and had returned undecided what he would do. Through the efforts of the marshal his name was promptly struck out of the list of emigres; but he did not wish to re-enter the army, and yet was in much need of a position. Having supported himself during his emigration by giving lessons in French and Latin, he expressed a desire to obtain a position in the university. "Well, my colonel," said the marshal with his German accent, "I will take you at once to my friend M. de Fontanes." The marshal's carriage is soon at the door, and the respectful protector and his protegee enter the apartments of the grand master of the university. M. de Fontanes hastens to meet the marshal, who, I have been informed, made his presentation speech in this style:

"My dear friend, I present to you the Marquis of —."

He was my former captain, my good captain. He would like to obtain a place in the university. Ah! he is not a man of nothing, a man of the Revolution like you and me. He is my old captain, the Marquis of —."

Finally the marshal closed by saying, "Ah, the good, excellent man! I shall never forget that when I went for orders to my good captain, he never failed to say: 'Lefebvre, my child, pass on to the kitchen; go and get something to eat.' Ah, my good, my excellent captain!"

All the members of the imperial family had a great fondness for music, and especially the Italian; but they were not musicians, and most of them sang as badly as his Majesty himself, with the exception of the Princess Pauline, who had profited by the lessons of Blangini, and sang tolerably well. In respect of his voice, Prince Eugene showed himself worthy to be the adopted son of the Emperor; for, though he was a musician and sang with fervor, it was not in such a manner as to satisfy his auditors. In compensation, however, Prince Eugene's voice was magnificent for



commanding military evolutions, an advantage which Count Lobau and General Dorsenne also possessed; and it was consequently always one of these whom his Majesty appointed to command under his orders on great reviews.

Notwithstanding the severe etiquette of the Emperor's court, there were always a few privileged persons who had the right to enter his apartment, even when he was in bed, though the number was small. They consisted of the following persons:—

M. de Talleyrand, vice grand elector; de Montesquiou, grand chamberlain; de Remusat, first chamberlain; Maret, Corvisart, Denon, Murat, Yvan; Duroc, grand marshal; and de Caulaincourt, grand equerry.

For a long time all these personages came to the Emperor's apartment almost every morning, and their visits were the origin of what was afterwards called 'le petit lever'. M. de Lavalette also came frequently, and also M. Real and Messieurs Fouche and Savary while each of them was minister of police.

The princes of the imperial family also enjoyed the right to enter the Emperor's apartment in the morning. I often saw the Emperor's mother. The Emperor kissed her hand with much respect and tenderness, but I have many times heard him reproach her for her excessive economy. Madame Mere listened, and then gave as excuse for not changing her style of living reasons which often vexed his Majesty, but which events have unfortunately justified.

Madame Mere had been a great beauty, and was still very pretty, especially when I saw her for the first time. It was impossible to find a better mother; devoted to her children; she lavished on them the sagest counsels, and always intervened in family quarrels to sustain those whom she thought in the right; for a long time she took Lucien's part, and I have often heard her warmly defend Jerome when the First Consul was most severe towards his young brother. The only fault in Madame Mere's character was her excessive economy, and on this point astonishing things could be said without fear of exaggeration, but she was beloved by every one in the palace for her kindness and affability.

I recall in reference to Madame Mere an incident which greatly amused the Empress Josephine. Madame was spending several days at Malmaison, when one day one of her ladies, whom she had caused to be sent for, found, on entering the room, to her great astonishment, Cardinal Fesch discharging the duty of a lady's maid by lacing up his sister, who had on only her underclothing and her corset.

One of the subjects on which the Emperor would listen to no raillery was that of custom-house duties, and towards all contraband proceeding he showed inflexible severity; and this reached such a point, that one day M. Soiris, director of the custom-house at Verceil, having seized a

package of sixty cashmere shawls, sent from Constantinople to the Empress, the Emperor approved his action, and the cashmeres were sold for the benefit of the state. In such cases the Emperor always said, "How can a sovereign have the laws respected if he does not respect them himself?" I recall another occasion, and I think the only instance in which he permitted an infraction of the custom-house regulations; but we shall see the question was not that of ordinary smuggling.

The grenadiers of the Old Guard, under the orders of General Soules, returned to France after the peace of Tilsit. On their arrival at Mayence, the custom-house officers endeavored to perform their duty, and consequently inspected the chests of the Guard and those of the general. Meanwhile, the director of the custom-house, in doubt what proceedings to take, sought the general to inform him of the necessity he was under of executing the laws, and of carrying out the direct orders of the Emperor. The general's reply to this courteous overture was plain and energetic: "If a single officer dares to place his hand on the boxes of my old mustaches, I'll throw him into the Rhine!" The officer insisted. The custom-house employees were quite numerous, and were preparing to proceed with the inspection, when General Soules had the boxes put in the middle of the square, and a regiment detailed to guard them. The director of the custom-house, not daring to proceed further, sent to the director-general a report to be submitted to the Emperor. Under any other circumstances the case would have been serious; but the Emperor had just returned to Paris, where he had been welcomed more heartily than ever before by the acclamations of the people on the occasion of the fetes celebrated in honor of peace, and this old Guard was returning home resplendent with glory, and after most admirable behavior at Eylau. All these things combined to quell the Emperor's anger; and having decided not to punish, he wished to reward them, and not to take seriously their infraction of his custom-house regulations. General Soules, on reaching Paris, presented himself before the Emperor, who received him cordially, and, after some remarks relative to the Guard, added: "By the by, what is this you have been doing? I heard of you. What! you really threatened to throw my custom-house officers into the Rhine! Would you have done it?"—"Yes, Sire," replied the general, with his German accent, "yes; I would have done it. It was an insult to my old grenadiers to attempt to inspect their boxes."—"Come, now," said the Emperor very affably, "I see just how it is. You have been smuggling."—"I, Sire?"—"Yes, I say. You have been smuggling. You bought linen in Hanover. You wanted to furnish your house handsomely, as you imagined I would appoint you senator. You were not mistaken. Go and have your senator's coat made, but do not repeat this performance, for next time I will have you shot."

During our stay at Bayonne, in 1808, every one was struck with the awkward manners of the King and Queen of Spain, and the poor taste displayed in their toilets, the disgraceful appearance of their equipages, and a certain air of constraint and embarrassment which was general among all the persons of their suite. The elegant manners of the French and the magnificence of the imperial equipages furnished such a

contrast to all this that it rendered them indescribably ridiculous. The Emperor, who had such exquisite tact in all matters, was not one of the last to perceive this, but, nevertheless, was not pleased that an opportunity should be found to ridicule crowned heads. One morning at his toilet he said to me, "I say, then, Monsieur le drole, you, who are so well versed in these matters, give a few hints to the valet de chambre of the King and Queen of Spain. They appear so awkward they really excite my pity." I eagerly did what his Majesty suggested; but he did not content himself with this, but also communicated to the Empress Josephine his observations on the queen and her ladies. The Empress Josephine, who was the embodiment of taste, gave orders accordingly; and for two days her hairdressers and women were occupied exclusively in giving lessons in taste and elegance to their Spanish brethren. This is a striking evidence of how the Emperor found time for everything, and could descend from his elevated duties to the most insignificant affairs.

The grand marshal of the palace (Duroc) was almost the same height as the Emperor. He walked badly and ungracefully, but had a tolerably good head and features. He was quick tempered, impulsive, and swore like a soldier; but he had much administrative ability, of which he gave more than one proof in the organization of the imperial household, which was ably and wisely regulated. When the enemy's cannon deprived his Majesty of this devoted servitor and sincere friend, the Empress Josephine said that she knew only two men capable of filling his place; these were General Drouot and M. de Flahaut, and the whole household hoped that one of these two gentlemen would be nominated; this, however, was not the case.

M. de Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza, was extremely severe towards the household; but he was just and of a chivalrous loyalty, and his word was as good as a contract: He was feared and yet beloved. He had a piercing eye, spoke quickly and with great ease. The Emperor's regard for him was well known, and certainly no one was more worthy of it than he.

The Count de Remusat was of medium height, with a smooth, white face, obliging, amiable, and with natural politeness and good taste; but he was extravagant, lacked order in managing his own affairs and consequently those of the Emperor. This lavish expenditure, which is admirable from one point of view, might have suited any other sovereign; but the Emperor was economical, and though, much attached to M. de Remusat, dismissed him from the head of the wardrobe bureau, and put in his place Monsieur de Turenne, who exercised the strictest economy. M. de Turenne possessed perhaps a little too much of what his predecessor lacked, but it was exactly this that pleased the Emperor. M. de Turenne was quite a pretty man, thinking perhaps a little too much of himself, a great talker and Anglo-maniac, which led the Emperor to give him the name of my lord Kinsester (who cannot be silent); but he told a story well, and sometimes his Majesty took pleasure in making him relate the chronicles of Paris.

When the Count of Turenne replaced the Count of Remusat in the office of

grand master of the wardrobe, in order not to exceed the sum of twenty thousand francs which his Majesty allowed for his toilet, he exercised the greatest possible economy in the quantity, price, and quality of things indispensable to the household. I have been told, but I do not know whether it is true, that, in order to ascertain exactly what were the profits of the Emperor's furnishers, he went to the various factories of Paris with samples of gloves, silk stockings, aloes wood, etc.; but, even if this is true, it only does honor to the zeal and probity of M. de Turenne.

I knew very little of Count Segur, grand master of ceremonies. It was said in the household that he was haughty and somewhat abrupt, but perfectly polite and intelligent, with a delicate and refined face.

It would be necessary to have witnessed the perfect order which reigned in the Emperor's household to comprehend it fully. From the time of the Consulate, General Duroc had brought into the administration of the interior affairs of the palace that spirit of order and economy which especially characterized him. But, great as was the Emperor's confidence in General Duroc, he did not disdain to throw the glance of a master over things which seemed insignificant, and with which, in general, sovereigns rarely occupy themselves. Thus, for example, in the beginning of the Empire there was some little extravagance in certain parts of the palace, notably at Saint-Cloud, where the aides-de-camp kept open table; but this was, nevertheless, far from equaling the excessive prodigality of the ancient regime. Champagne and other wines especially were used in great quantities, and it was very necessary that the Emperor should establish regulations as to his cellar. He summoned the chief of the household service, Soupe Pierrugues, and said to him, "Monsieur, I commit to you the keys of my imperial cellars; you will there have charge of the wines of all kinds; some are needed in my palaces of the Tuileries, Saint-Cloud, Compiègne, Fontainebleau, Marrac, Lacken, and Turin. Establish a moderate price at all these residences, and you alone will furnish wines to my household." This arrangement was made, and all kinds of fraud were impossible, as the deputy of M. Soupe Pierrugues delivered wines only on a note signed by the controller of the kitchen; all the bottles not opened were returned, and each evening an account was given of what had been used for that day.

The service had the same regulations while we were on campaigns. During the second campaign of Vienna, I recollect that the house deputy of Soupe Pierrugues was M. Eugene Pierrugues, frank, gay, witty, and much beloved by us all. An imprudence cost him dear, for in consequence of a heedlessness natural at his age he had his arm broken. We were then at Schoenbrunn. Those who have seen this imperial residence know that splendid avenues extend in front of the palace, leading to the road to Vienna. As I often took horseback rides through the town, M. Eugene Pierrugues wished to accompany me one day, and borrowed a horse from one of the quartermasters of the palace. He was forewarned that the horse was very fiery; but he paid no attention to that, and immediately put him

into a gallop. I reined mine in, in order not to excite my companion's; but in spite of this precaution the horse ran away, dashed into the woods, and broke the arm of his unfortunate and imprudent rider. M. Eugene Pierrugues was, however, not unhorsed by the blow, and kept his seat a short while after the injury; but it was very serious, and it was necessary to carry him back to the palace. I, more than any one else, was distressed by this frightful accident; and we established a regular attendance on him, so that one at least could always be with him when our duties allowed. I have never seen suffering borne with more fortitude; and it was carried to such a remarkable degree, that, finding his arm badly set, at the end of a few days he had it again fractured, an operation which caused him horrible suffering.

My uncle, who was usher of the Emperor's cabinet, related to me an anecdote which is probably entirely unknown; since everything, as we shall see, occurred under cover of the most profound mystery. "One evening," he said to me, "Marshal Duroc gave me in person orders to extinguish the lights in the saloon in front of his Majesty's cabinet, and to leave only a few candles lighted. I was surprised at such a novel order, especially as the grand marshal was not accustomed to give them thus directly, but, nevertheless, executed it precisely, and waited at my post. At ten o'clock Marshal Duroc returned, accompanied by a personage whose features it was impossible to distinguish, as he was entirely wrapped in a large cloak, his head covered, and his hat pulled down over his eyes. I withdrew, leaving the two alone, but had hardly left the saloon when the Emperor entered, and Marshal Duroc also retired, leaving the stranger alone with his Majesty. From the tone in which the Emperor spoke it was easy to see that he was greatly irritated. He spoke very loud; and I heard him say, 'Well, Monsieur, you will never change then. It is gold you want, always gold. You draw on all foreign banks, and have no confidence in that of Paris. You have ruined the bank of Hamburg; you have caused M. Drouet (or Drouaut, for the name was pronounced very quickly) to lose two millions:

"The Emperor," my uncle continued, "conversed in this strain for a long while, though the stranger did not reply, or replied in so low a tone that it was impossible to hear a word; and the scene, which must have been most trying to the mysterious personage, lasted about twenty minutes. At last he was permitted to leave, which he did with the same precautions as on his arrival, and retired from the palace as secretly as he had come."

Nothing of this scene was known in Paris; and, moreover, neither my uncle nor I have ever sought to ascertain the name of the person whom the Emperor overwhelmed with such numerous and severe reproaches.

Whenever circumstances allowed, the Emperor's habits of life were very regular, his time being almost uniformly divided as follows. Every morning, at nine o'clock precisely, the Emperor left the imperial apartments; his exactness in observing hours was carried to an extreme,

and I have sometimes seen him wait two or three moments in order that no one might be taken by surprise. At nine o'clock his toilet was made for the whole day. When he had reached the reception-room, the officers on duty were first admitted, and received his Majesty's orders for their time of service.

Immediately after this, what was called the grandes entrees took place. That is to say, personages of high rank were admitted, who had this right on account of their duties, or by the special favor of the Emperor; and I can assert that this favor was much envied. It was granted generally to all the officers of the imperial household, even if they were not on duty; and every one remained standing, as did the Emperor also. He made the tour of all the persons present, nearly always addressed a remark or a question to each one; and it was amusing to see afterwards, during the whole day, the proud and haughty bearing of those to whom the Emperor had spoken a little longer than to others. This ceremony usually lasted a half-hour, and as soon as it was finished the Emperor bowed and each retired.

At half-past nine the Emperor's breakfast was served, usually on a small mahogany stand; and this first repast commonly lasted only seven or eight minutes, though sometimes it was prolonged, and even lasted quite a long while. This, however, was only on rare occasions, when the Emperor was in unusually good-humor, and wished to indulge in the pleasure of a conversation with men of great merit, whom he had known a long while, and who happened to be present at his breakfast. There he was no longer the formal Emperor of the levee; he was in a manner the hero of Italy, the conqueror of Egypt, and above all the member of the Institute. Those who came most habitually were Messieurs Monge, Berthollet, Costaz (superintendent of crown buildings), Denon, Corvisart, David, Gerard, Isabey, Talma, and Fontaine (his first architect). How many noble thoughts, how many elevated sentiments, found vent in these conversations which the Emperor was accustomed to open by saying, "Come, Messieurs, I close the door of my cabinet." This was the signal, and it was truly miraculous to see his Majesty's aptitude in putting his genius in communication with these great intellects with such diversities of talent.

I recall that, during the days preceding the Emperor's coronation, M. Isabey attended regularly at the Emperor's breakfast, and was present almost every morning; and strange, too, it did not seem an absurd thing to see children's toys used to represent the imposing ceremony which was to exert such a great influence over the destinies of the world. The intelligent painter of his Majesty's cabinet portraits caused to be placed on a large table a number of small figures representing all the personages who were to take part in the ceremony of the coronation; each had his designated place; and no one was omitted, from the Emperor to the Pope, and even to the choristers, each being dressed in the costume he was expected to wear.

These rehearsals took place frequently, and all were eager to consult the model in order to make no mistake as to the place each was to occupy. On those days, as may be imagined, the door of the cabinet was closed, and in consequence the ministers sometimes, waited awhile. Immediately after the breakfast the Emperor admitted his ministers and director generals; and these audiences, devoted to the special work of each minister and of each director, lasted until six o'clock in the evening, with the exception of those days on which his Majesty occupied himself exclusively with governmental affairs, and presided over the council of state, or the ministerial councils.

At the Tuileries and at Saint-Cloud dinner was served at six o'clock; and the Emperor dined each day alone with the Empress, except on Sunday, when all the family were admitted to dinner. The Emperor, Empress, and Madame Mere only were seated in armchairs; all others, whether kings or queens, having only ordinary chairs. There was only one course before the dessert. His Majesty usually drank Chambertin wine, but rarely without water, and hardly more than one bottle. To dine with the Emperor was rather an honor than a pleasure to those who were admitted; for it was necessary, to use the common expression, to swallow in post haste, as his Majesty never remained at table more than fifteen or eighteen minutes. After his dinner, as after breakfast, the Emperor habitually took a cup of coffee, which the Empress poured out. Under the Consulate Madame Bonaparte began this custom, because the General often forgot to take his coffee; she continued it after she became Empress, and the Empress Marie Louise retained the same custom.

After dinner the Empress descended to her apartments, where she found assembled her ladies and the officers on duty; and the Emperor sometimes accompanied her, but remained only a short while. Such was the customary routine of life in the palace at the Tuileries on those days when there was neither the chase in the morning, nor concert nor theater in the evening; and the life at Saint-Cloud differed little from that at the Tuileries. Sometimes rides were taken in coaches when the weather permitted; and on Wednesday, the day set for the council of ministers, these officials were invariably honored by an invitation to dine with their Majesties. When there was a hunt at Fontainebleau, Rambouillet, or Compiègne, the usual routine was omitted; the ladies followed in coaches, and the whole household dined with the Emperor and Empress under a tent erected in the forest. It sometimes happened, though rarely, that the Emperor invited unexpectedly some members of his family to remain to dine with him; and this recalls an anecdote which should have a place in this connection. The King of Naples came one day to visit the Emperor, and being invited to dine, accepted, forgetting that he was in morning dress, and there was barely time for him to change his costume, and consequently none to return to the Elysee, which he then inhabited. The king ran quickly up to my room, and informed me of his embarrassment, which I instantly relieved, to his great delight. I had at that time a very handsome wardrobe, almost all the articles of which were then entirely new; so I gave him a shirt, vest, breeches, stockings, and shoes, and

assisted him to dress, and fortunately everything fitted as if it had been made especially for him. He showed towards me the same kindness and affability he always manifested, and thanked me in the most charming manner. In the evening the King of Naples, after taking leave of the Emperor, returned to my room to resume his morning dress, and begged me to come to him next day at the laysee, which I did punctually after relating to the Emperor all that had occurred, much to his amusement. On my arrival at the Elysee I was immediately introduced into the king's apartments, who repeated his thanks in the most gracious manner, and gave me a pretty Breguet watch.

–[Abraham Louis Breguet, the celebrated watchmaker, was born at Neuchatel, 1747; died 1823. He made numerous improvements in watches and in nautical and astronomical instruments.]–

During our campaigns I sometimes had occasion to render little services of the same nature to the King of Naples; but the question was not then, as at Saint-Cloud, one of silk stockings, for more than once on the bivouac I shared with him a bundle of straw, which I had been fortunate enough to procure. In such cases I must avow the sacrifice was much greater on my part than when I had shared my wardrobe with him. The king was not backward in expressing his gratitude; and I thought it a most remarkable thing to see a sovereign, whose palace was filled with all that luxury can invent to add to comfort, and all that art can create which is splendid and magnificent, only too happy in procuring half of a bundle of straw on which to rest his head.

I will now give some fresh souvenirs which have just recurred to my mind concerning the Court theater. At Saint-Cloud, in order to reach the theater hall, it was necessary to cross the whole length of the Orangery; and nothing could be more elegant than the manner in which it was decorated on these occasions. Rows of rare plants were arranged in tiers, and the whole lighted by lamps; and during the winter the boxes were hidden by covering them with moss and flowers, which produced a charming effect under the lights.

The parterre of the theater was usually filled with generals, senators, and councilors of state; the first boxes were reserved for the princes and princesses of the imperial family, for foreign princes, marshals, their wives, and ladies of honor. In the second tier were placed all persons attached to the Court. Between the acts, ices and refreshments were served; but the ancient etiquette had been re-established in one particular, which greatly displeased the actors,—no applause was allowed; and Talma often told me that the kind of coldness produced by this silence was very detrimental at certain parts where the actor felt the need of being enthused. Nevertheless, it sometimes happened that the Emperor, in testimony of his satisfaction, made a slight signal with his hand; and then and also at the grandest periods we heard, if not applause, at least a flattering murmur which the spectators were not always able to repress.



The chief charm of these brilliant assemblies was the presence of the Emperor; and consequently an invitation to the theater of Saint-Cloud was an honor much desired. In the time of the Empress Josephine there were no representations at the palace in the absence of the Emperor; but when Marie Louise was alone at Saint-Cloud during the campaign of Dresden, two representations a week were given, and the whole repertoire of Gretry was played in succession before her Majesty. At the end of each piece there was always a little ballet.

The theater of Saint-Cloud was, so to speak, on more than one occasion the theater of first attempts. For instance, M. Raynouard played there for the first time the 'Etats de Blois', a work which the Emperor would not allow to be played in public, and which was not done, in fact, until after the return of Louis XVIII.

'The Venetians' by M. Amand also made its first appearance on the theater of Saint-Cloud, or rather of Malmaison. This was not highly considered at the time; but the infallible judgment the Emperor displayed in his choice of plays and actors was most remarkable. He generally gave M. Corvisart the preference in deciding these matters, on which he descanted with much complacency when his more weighty occupations allowed. He was usually less severe and more just than Geoffroy; and it is much to be desired that the criticisms and opinions of the Emperor concerning authors and actors could have been preserved. They would have been of much benefit to the progress of art.

In speaking of the retreat from Moscow, I related previously in my memoirs that I had the good fortune to offer a place in my carriage to the young Prince of Aremborg, and assisted him in continuing his journey. I recall another occasion in the life of this prince, when one of my friends was very useful to him, some particulars of which may not be without interest.

The Prince of Aremborg, an ordnance officer of the Emperor, had, as we know, married Mademoiselle Tascher, niece of the Empress Josephine. Having been sent into Spain, he was there taken by the English, and afterwards carried a prisoner to England. His captivity was at first very disagreeable; and he told me himself that he was very unhappy, until he made the acquaintance of one of my friends, M. Herz, commissary of war, who possessed a fine mind, was very intelligent, spoke several languages, and was, like the prince, a prisoner in England. The acquaintance formed at once between the prince and M. Herz soon became so intimate that they were constantly together; and thus passed the time as happily as it can with one far from his native land and deprived of his liberty.

They were living thus, ameliorating for each other the ennui of captivity, when M. Herz was exchanged, which was, perhaps, a great misfortune for him, as we shall afterwards see. At all events, the

prince was deeply distressed at being left alone; but, nevertheless, gave M. Herz several letters to his family, and at the same time sent his mother his mustache, which he had mounted in a medallion with a chain. One day the Princess of Aremburg arrived at SaintCloud and demanded a private audience of the Emperor.

"My son," said she, "demands your Majesty's permission to attempt his escape from England."—"Madame," said the Emperor, "your request is most embarrassing! I do not forbid your son, but I can by no means authorize him."

It was at the time I had the honor of saving the Prince of Aremburg's life that I learned from him these particulars. As for my poor friend Herz, his liberty became fatal to him, owing to an inexplicable succession of events. Having been sent by Marshal Augereau to Stralsund to perform a secret mission, he died there, suffocated by the fire of a brass stove in the room in which he slept. His secretary and his servant nearly fell victims to the same accident; but, more fortunate than he, their lives were saved. The Prince of Aremburg spoke to me of the death of M. Herz with real feeling; and it was easy to see that, prince as he was and allied to the Emperor, he entertained a most sincere friendship for his companion in captivity.

## CHAPTER, XXXI.

### MILITARY ANECDOTES.

I have collected under the title of Military Anecdotes some facts which came to my knowledge while I accompanied the Emperor on his campaigns, and the authenticity of which I guarantee. I might have scattered them through my memoirs, and placed them in their proper periods; my not having done so is not owing to forgetfulness on my part, but because I thought that these incidents would have an added interest by being collected together, since in them we see the direct influence of the Emperor upon his soldiers, and thus can more easily form an exact idea of the manner in which his Majesty treated them, his consideration for them, and their attachment to his person.

During the autumn of 1804, between the time of the creation of the empire and the coronation of the Emperor, his Majesty made several journeys to the camp of Boulogne; and from this fact rumors arose that the expedition against England would soon set sail. In one of his frequent tours of inspection, the Emperor, stopping one day near the end of the camp on the left, spoke to a cannoneer from a guard ship, and while conversing with him, asked him several questions, among others, the following, "What is thought here of the Emperor?"—"That 'sacre tondu' puts us out of breath

as soon as he arrives. Each time he comes we have not a moment's repose while he is here. It might be thought he was enraged against those dogs of English who are always beating us, not much to our own credit."

"You believe in glory, then?" said the Emperor. The cannoneer then looked at him fixedly: "Somewhat, I think. Do you doubt it?"—"No, I do not doubt it, but money, do you believe in that also?"—"Ah! what—I see—do you mean to insult me, you questioner? I know no other interest than that of the state."—"No, no, my brave soldier; I do not intend to insult you, but I bet that a twenty-franc piece would not be disagreeable to you in drinking a cup to my health." While speaking thus the Emperor had drawn a Napoleon from his pocket, which he presented to the cannoneer, whereupon the latter uttered a shout loud enough to be heard by the sentinel at the west post some distance off; and even threw himself on the Emperor, whom he took for a spy, and was about to seize him by the throat when the Emperor suddenly opened his gray overcoat and revealed his identity. The soldier's astonishment may be imagined! He prostrated himself at the feet of the Emperor, overcome with confusion at his mistake; but the latter, extending his hand, said, "Rise, my brave fellow, you have done your duty; but you will not keep your word, I am very sure; you will accept this piece, and drink to the health of the 'sacre tondo', will you not?" The Emperor then continued his rounds as if nothing had occurred.

Every one admits to-day that never, perhaps, has any man been gifted to the same degree as the Emperor with the art of addressing soldiers. He appreciated this talent highly in others; but it was not fine phrases which pleased him, and accordingly he held that a master-piece of this kind was the very short harangue of General Vandamme to the soldiers he commanded the day of the battle of Austerlitz. When day began to break General Vandamme said to the troops, "My brave fellows! There are the Russians! Load your pieces, pick your flints, put powder in the pan, fix bayonets, ready and forward!" I remember one day the Emperor spoke of this oration before Marshal Berthier, who laughed at it. "That is like you," he said. "Well, all the advocates of Paris would not have said it so well; the soldier understands this, and that is the way battles are won."

When after the first campaign of Vienna, so happily terminated by the peace of Presburg, the Emperor was returning to Paris, many complaints reached him against the exactions of certain generals, notably General Vandamme. Complaint was made, amongst other grievances, that in the little village of Lantza this general had allowed himself five hundred florins per day, that is to say, eleven hundred and twenty-five francs, simply for the daily expenses of his table. It was on this occasion the Emperor said of him: "Pillages like a madman, but brave as Caesar." Nevertheless, the Emperor, indignant at such exactions, and determined to put an end to them, summoned the general to Paris to reprimand him; but the latter, as soon as he entered the Emperor's presence, began to speak before his Majesty had time to address him, saying, "Sire, I know why you

have summoned me; but as you know my devotion and my bravery I trust you will excuse some slight altercations as to the furnishing of my table, matters too petty, at any rate, to occupy your Majesty." The Emperor smiled at the oratorical skillfulness of General Vandamme, and contented himself with saying, "Well, well! say no more, but be more circumspect in future."

General Vandamme, happy to have escaped with so gentle an admonition, returned to Lantza to resume his command. He was indeed more circumspect than in the past; but he found and seized the occasion to revenge himself on the town for the compulsory self-denial the Emperor had imposed on him. On his arrival he found in the suburbs a large number of recruits who had come from Paris in his absence; and it occurred to him to make them all enter the town, alleging that it was indispensable they should be drilled under his own eyes. This was an enormous expense to the town, which would have been very willing to recall its complaints, and continue his expenses at the rate of five hundred florins per day.

The Emperor does not figure in the following anecdote. I will relate it, however, as a good instance of the manners and the astuteness of our soldiers on the campaign.

During the year 1806, a part of our troops having their quarters in Bavaria, a soldier of the fourth regiment of the line, named Varengo, was lodged at Indersdorff with a joiner. Varengo wished to compel his host to pay him two florins, or four livres ten sous, per day for his pleasures. He had no right to exact this. To succeed in making it to his interest to comply he set himself to make a continual racket in the house. The poor carpenter, not being able to endure it longer, resolved to complain, but thought it prudent not to carry his complaints to the officers of the company in which Varengo served. He knew by his own experience, at least by that of his neighbors, that these gentlemen were by no means accessible to complaints of this kind. He decided to address himself to the general commanding, and set out on the road to Augsburg, the chief place of the arrondissement.

On his arrival at the bureau of the town, he was met by the general, and began to submit to him an account of his misfortunes; but unfortunately the general did not know the German language, so he sent for his interpreter, told the carpenter to explain himself, and inquired of what he complained. Now, the general's interpreting secretary was a quartermaster who had been attached to the general's staff since the Peace of Presburg, and happened to be, as luck would have it, the first cousin of this Varengo against whom the complaint was made. Without hesitation the quartermaster, as soon as he heard his cousin's name, gave an entirely incorrect translation of the report, assuring the general that this peasant, although in very comfortable circumstances, disobeyed the order of the day, in refusing to furnish fresh meat for the brave soldier who lodged with him; and this was the origin of the disagreement on which the complaint was based, no other motive being alleged for

demanding a change. The general was much irritated, and gave orders to his secretary to require the peasant, under severe penalties, to furnish fresh meat for his guest. The order was written; but instead of submitting it to the supervision of the general, the interpreting secretary wrote out at length that the carpenter should pay two florins per day to Varengo. The poor fellow, having read this in German, could not restrain a movement of anger, seeing which, the general, thinking he had resisted the order, ordered him out, threatening him with his riding-whip. Thus, thanks to his cousin, the interpreter, Varengo regularly received two florins per day, which enabled him to be one of the jolliest soldiers in his company.

The Emperor did not like duelling. He often pretended to be ignorant of duels; but when he had to admit his knowledge of one, loudly expressed his dissatisfaction. I recall in this connection two or three circumstances which I shall attempt to relate.

A short time after the foundation of the Empire, a duel occurred, which created much stir in Paris, on account of the rank of the two adversaries. The Emperor had just authorized the formation of the first foreign regiment which he wished to admit into the service of France,—the regiment of Aremberg. Notwithstanding the title of this corps, most of the officers who were admitted were French; and this was a good opening, discreetly made, for rich and titled young men, who, in purchasing companies by the authority of the minister of war, could thus pass more rapidly through the first grades. Among the officers of the Aremberg regiment, were M. Charles de Sainte-Croix, who had recently served in the ministry of foreign affairs, and a charming young man whom I saw often at Malmaison, M. de Mariolles, who was nearly related to the Empress Josephine. It seems that the same position had been promised both, and they resolved to settle the dispute by private combat. M. de Mariolles fell, and died on the spot, and his death created consternation among the ladies of the salon at Malmaison.

His family and relations united in making complaint to the Emperor, who was very indignant, and spoke of sending M. de Sainte-Croix to the Temple prison and having him tried for murder. He prudently concealed himself during the first outburst over this affair; and the police, who were put on his track, would have had much difficulty in finding him, as he was especially protected by M. Fouche, who had recently re-entered the ministry, and was intimately connected with his mother, Madame de Sainte-Croix. Everything ended with the threats of his Majesty; since M. Fouche had remarked to him that by such unaccustomed severity the malevolent would not fail to say that he was performing less an act of sovereignty than one of personal vengeance, as the victim had the honor of being connected with himself.

The affair was thus suffered to drop; and I am here struck with the manner in which one recollection leads on to another, for I remember that in process of time the Emperor became much attached to M. de Sainte-

Croix, whose advancement in the army was both brilliant and rapid; since, although he entered the service when twenty-two years of age, he was only twenty-eight when he was killed in Spain, being already then general of division. I often saw M. de Sainte-Croix at the Emperor's headquarters. I think I see him still, small, delicate, with an attractive countenance, and very little beard. He might have been taken for a young woman, rather than the brave young soldier he was; and, in fact, his features were so delicate, his cheeks so rosy, his blond hair curled in such natural ringlets, that when the Emperor was in a good humor he called him nothing but Mademoiselle de Sainte-Croix!

Another circumstance which I should not omit is a duel which took place at Burgos, in 1808, between General Franceschi, aide-de-camp to King Joseph, and Colonel Filangieri, colonel of his guard, both of whom were equerries of his Majesty. The subject of the quarrel was almost the same as that between M. de Mariolles and de Sainte-Croix; since both disputed for the position of first equerry to King Joseph, both maintaining that it had been promised them.

We had hardly been in the palace of Burgos five minutes when the Emperor was informed of this duel, which had taken place almost under the walls of the palace itself, and only a few hours before. The Emperor learned at the same time that General Franceschi had been killed, and on account of the difference in their rank, in order not to compromise military etiquette, they had fought in their uniforms of equerry. The Emperor was struck with the fact that the first news he received was bad news; and with his ideas of fatality, this really excited a great influence over him. He gave orders to have Colonel Filangieri found and brought to him, and he came in a few moments. I did not see him, as I was in another apartment; but the Emperor spoke to him in so loud and sharp a tone that I heard distinctly all he said. "Duels! duels! always duels!" cried the Emperor. "I will not allow it. I will punish it! You know how I abhor them!"—"Sire, have me tried if you will, but hear me."—"What can you have to say to me, you crater of Vesuvius? I have already pardoned your affair with Saint Simon; I will not do the like again. Moreover, I cannot, at the very beginning of the campaign, when all should be thoroughly united! It produces a most unfortunate effect!" Here the Emperor kept silence a moment; then he resumed, although in a somewhat sharper tone: "Yes! you have a head of Vesuvius. See what a fine condition of affairs I arrive and find blood in my palace!" After another pause, and in a somewhat calmer tone: "See what you have done! Joseph needs good officers; and here you have deprived him of two by a single blow,—Franceschi, whom you have killed, and yourself, who can no longer remain in his service." Here the Emperor was silent for some moments, and then added: "Now retire, leave! Give yourself up as a prisoner at the citadel of Turin. There await my orders, or rather place yourself in Murat's hands; he will know what to do with you; he also has Vesuvius in his head, and he will give you a warm welcome. Now take yourself off at once."

Colonel Filangieri needed no urging, I think, to hasten the execution of the Emperor's orders. I do not know the conclusion of this adventure; but I do know that the affair affected his Majesty deeply, for that evening when I was undressing him he repeated several times, "Duels! What a disgraceful thing! It is the kind of courage cannibals have!" If, moreover; the Emperor's anger was softened on this occasion, it was on account of his affection for young Filangieri; at first on account of his father, whom the Emperor highly esteemed, and also, because the young man having been educated at his expense, at the French Prytane, he regarded him as one of his children by adoption, especially since he knew that M. Filangieri, godson of the queen of Naples, had refused a regiment, which the latter had offered him while he was still only a simple lieutenant in the Consular Guard, and further, because he had not consented to become a Neapolitan again until a French prince had been called to the throne of Naples.

What remains to be said on the subject of duels under the Empire, and the Emperor's conduct regarding them which came to my knowledge, somewhat resembles the little piece which is played on the theater after a tragedy. I will now relate how it happened that the Emperor himself played the role of peacemaker between two sub-officers who were enamored of the same beauty.

When the French army occupied Vienna, some time after the battle of Austerlitz, two sub-officers belonging to the forty-sixth and fiftieth regiments of the line, having had a dispute, determined to fight a duel, and chose for the place of combat a spot situated at the extremity of a plain which adjoined the palace of Schoenbrunn, the Emperor's place of residence. Our two champions had already unsheathed and exchanged blows with their short swords, which happily each had warded off, when the Emperor happened to pass near them, accompanied by several generals. Their stupefaction at the sight of the Emperor may be imagined. Their arms fell, so to speak; from their hands.

The Emperor inquired the cause of their quarrel, and learned that a woman who granted her favors to both was the real motive, each of them desiring to have no rival.

These two champions found by chance that they were known to one of the generals who accompanied his Majesty, and informed him that they were two brave soldiers of Marengo and Austerlitz, belonging to such and such regiments, whose names had already been put on the list for the Cross of Honor; whereupon the Emperor addressed them after this style: "My children, woman is capricious, as fortune is also; and since you are soldiers of Marengo and Austerlitz, you need to give no new proofs of your courage. Return to your corps, and be friends henceforth, like good knights." These two soldiers lost all desire to fight, and soon perceived that their august peacemaker had not forgotten them, as they promptly received the Cross of the Legion of Honor.

In the beginning of the campaign of Tilsit, the Emperor, being at Berlin, one day took a fancy to make an excursion on foot to the quarter where our soldiers in the public houses indulged in the pleasures of the dance. He saw a quartermaster of the cavalry of his guard walking with a coarse, rotund German woman, and amused himself listening to the gallant remarks made by this quartermaster to his beautiful companion. "Let us enjoy ourselves, my dear," said he; "it is the 'tondu' who pays the musicians with the 'kriches' of your sovereign. Let us take our own gait; long live joy! and forward"—"Not so fast," said the Emperor, approaching him. "Certainly it must always be forward, but wait till I sound the charge." The quartermaster turned and recognized the Emperor, and, without being at all disconcerted, put his hand to his shako, and said, "That is useless trouble. Your Majesty does not need to beat a drum to make us move." This repartee made the Emperor smile, and soon after gained epaulets for the sub-officer, who perhaps might have waited a long while except for this fancy of his Majesty. But, at all events, if chance sometimes contributed thus to the giving of rewards, they were never given until after he had ascertained that those on whom he bestowed them were worthy.

At Eylau provisions failed; for a week, the bread supply being exhausted, the soldiers fed themselves as they could. The evening before the first attack, the Emperor, who wished to examine everything himself, made a tour of the bivouacs, and reaching one where all the men were asleep, saw some potatoes cooking, took a fancy to eat them, and undertook to draw them out of the fire with the point of his sword. Instantly a soldier awoke, and seeing some one usurping part of his supper, "I say, you are not very ceremonious, eating our potatoes!"—"My comrade, I am so hungry that you must excuse me."—"Well, take one or two then, if that is the case; but get off." But as the Emperor made no haste in getting off, the soldier insisted more strongly, and soon a heated discussion arose between him and the Emperor. From words they were about to come to blows, when the Emperor thought it was time to make himself known. The soldier's confusion was indescribable. He had almost struck the Emperor. He threw himself at his Majesty's feet, begging his pardon, which was most readily granted. "It was I who was in the wrong," said the Emperor; "I was obstinate. I bear you no illwill; rise and let your mind be at rest, both now and in the future."

The Emperor, having made inquiries concerning this soldier, learned that he was a good fellow, and not unintelligent. On the next promotion he was made sub-lieutenant. It is impossible to give an idea of the effect of such occurrences on the army. They were a constant subject of conversation with the soldiers, and stimulated them inexpressibly. The one who enjoyed the greatest distinction in his company was he of whom it could be said: "The Emperor has spoken to him."

At the battle of Essling the brave General Daleim, commanding a division of the fourth corps, found himself during the hottest part of the action at a spot swept by the enemy's artillery. The Emperor, passing near him,



said: "It is warm in your locality!"—"Yes, Sire; permit me to extinguish the fire."—"Go." This one word sufficed; in the twinkling of an eye the terrible battery was taken. In the evening the Emperor, seeing General Daleim, approached him, and said, "It seems you only had to blow on it." His Majesty alluded General Daleim's habit of incessant whistling.

Among the brave general officers around the Emperor, a few were not highly educated, though their other fine qualities recommended them; some were celebrated for other reasons than their military merit. Thus General Junot and General Fournier were known as the best pistol shots; General Lasalette was famous for his love of music, which he indulged to such an extent as to have a piano always in one of his baggage wagons. This general drank only water; but, on the contrary, it was very different with General Bisson. Who has not heard of the hardest drinker in all the army? One day the Emperor, meeting him at Berlin, said to him, "Well, Bisson, do you still drink much?"—"Moderately, Sire; not more than twenty-five bottles." This was, in fact, a great improvement, for he had more than once reached the number of forty without being made tipsy. Moreover, with General Bisson it was not a vice, but an imperious need. The Emperor knowing this, and being much attached to him, allowed him a pension of twelve thousand francs out of his privy purse, and gave him besides frequent presents.

Among the officers who were not very well educated, we may be permitted to mention General Gros; and the manner in which he was promoted to the grade of general proves this fact. But his bravery was equal to every proof, and he was a superb specimen of masculine beauty. The pen alone was an unaccustomed weapon to him, and he could hardly use it to sign his name; and it was said that he was not much more proficient in reading. Being colonel of the guard, he found himself one day alone at the Tuileries in an apartment where he waited until the Emperor could be seen. There he delighted himself with observing his image reflected in the glass, and readjusting his cravat; and the admiration he felt at his own image led him to converse aloud with himself or rather with his reflection. "Ah!" said he, "if you only knew 'bachebachiques' (mathematics), such a man as you, with a soldier's heart like yours, ah! the Emperor would make you a general!"—"You are one," said the Emperor, striking him on the shoulder. His Majesty had entered the saloon without being heard, and had amused himself with listening to the conversation Colonel Gros had carried on with himself. Such were the circumstances of his promotion to the rank of general, and what is more to be a general in the guard.

I have now arrived at the end of my list of military anecdotes. I have just spoken of a general's promotion, and will close with the story of a simple drummer, but a drummer renowned throughout the army as a perfect buffoon, in fact, the famous Rata, to whom General Gros, as we shall see; was deeply attached.

The army marched on Lintz during the campaign of 1809. Rata, drummer

of

the grenadiers of the fourth regiment of the line, and famous as a buffoon, having learned that the guard was to pass, and that it was commanded by General Gros; desired to see this officer who had been his chief of battalion, and with whom he had formerly taken all sorts of liberties. Rata thereupon waded his mustache, and went to salute the general, addressing him thus: "Ah, here you are, General. How are you?"—"Very well, indeed, Rata; and you?"—"Always well, but not so well as you, it seems to me. Since you are doing so very well, you no longer think of poor Rata; for if he did not come to see you, you would not even think of sending him a few sous to buy tobacco." While saying, "You do so well," Rata had quickly seized General Gros's hat, and put it on his head in place of his own. At this moment the Emperor passed, and seeing a drummer wearing the hat of a general of his guard, he could hardly believe his eyes. He spurred up his horse, and inquired the cause. General Gros then said, laughing, and in the frank speech he so often used even to the Emperor, "It is a brave soldier from my old battalion, accustomed to play pranks to amuse his comrades. He is a brave fellow, Sire, and every inch a man, and I recommend him to your Majesty. Moreover, Sire, he can himself do more than a whole park of artillery. Come, Rata, give us a broad side, and no quarter." The Emperor listened, and observed almost stupefied what was passing under his very eyes, when Rata, in no wise intimidated by the presence of the Emperor, prepared to execute the general's order; then, sticking his finger in his mouth, he made a noise like first the whistling and then the bursting of a shell. The imitation was so perfect that the Emperor was compelled to laugh, and turning to General Gros, said, "Come, take this man this very evening into the guard, and remind me of him on the next occasion." In a short while Rata had the cross, which those who threw real shells at the enemy often had not; so largely does caprice enter into the destiny of men!

L'ENVOI.

(BY THE EDITOR OF THE FRENCH EDITION OF 1830.)

The life of any one who has played a distinguished part offers many points of view, the number of which increases in proportion to the influence he has wielded upon the movement of events. This has been greater in the case of Napoleon than of any other personage in history. The product of an era of convulsions, in all of whose changes he took part, and which he at last closed by subjecting all ideas under a rule, which at one time promised to be lasting, he, like Catiline, requires a Sallust; like Charlemagne, an Eginhard; and like Alexander, a Quintus Curtius. M. de Bourrienne has, indeed, after the manner of Commines, shown him to us undisguised in his political manipulations and in the private life of his Court. This is a great step towards a knowledge of his individuality, but it is not enough. It is in a thorough acquaintance with his private life that this disillusioned age will find the secret springs of the drama of his marvelous career. The great men of former ages were veiled from us by a cloud of prejudice which even the

good sense of Plutarch scarcely penetrated. Our age, more analytical and freer from illusions, in the great man seeks to find the individual. It is by this searching test that the present puts aside all illusions, and that the future will seek to justify its judgments. In the council of state, the statesman is in his robe, on the battlefield the warrior is beneath his armor, but in his bedchamber, in his undress, we find the man.

It has been said that no man is, a hero to his valet. It would give wide latitude to a witty remark, which has become proverbial, to make it the epigraph of these memoirs. The valet of a hero by that very fact is something more than a valet. Amber is only earth, and Bologna stone only a piece of rock; but the first gives out the perfume of the rose, and the other flashes the rays of the sun. The character of a witness is dignified by the solemnity of the scene and the greatness of the actor. Even before reading the manuscript of M. Constant, we were strongly persuaded that impressions so unusual and so striking would raise him to the level of the occasion.

The reader can now judge of this for himself. These are the memoirs of M. Constant,—autographic memoirs of one still living, who has written them to preserve his recollections. It is the private history, the familiar life, the leisure moments, passed in undress, of Napoleon, which we now present to the public. It is Napoleon taken without a mask, deprived of his general's sword, the consular purple, the imperial crown,—Napoleon resting from council and from battle, forgetful of power and of conquest, Napoleon unbending himself, going to bed, sleeping the slumber of a common man, as if the world did not hang upon his dreams.

These are striking facts, so natural and of such simplicity, that though a biased judgment may, perhaps, exaggerate their character, and amplify their importance, they will furnish to an impartial and reflective mind a wealth of evidence far superior to the vain speculations of the imagination or the prejudiced judgments of political parties.

In this light the author of these memoirs is not an author, but simply a narrator, who has seen more closely and intimately than any one else the Master of the West, who was for fifteen years his master also; and what he has written he has seen with his own eyes.