

LOUIS DE BOURRIENNE

MEMOIRS OF NAPOLEON
BONAPARTE — VOLUME
08

Louis Bourrienne

**Memoirs of Napoleon
Bonaparte — Volume 08**

«Public Domain»

Bourrienne L. A.

Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte — Volume 08 / L. A. Bourrienne —
«Public Domain»,

Содержание

CHAPTER XXVII	5
CHAPTER XXVIII	12
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	15

Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne

Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte — Volume 08

CHAPTER XXVII

1804.

Clavier and Hemart—Singular Proposal of Corvisart—M. Desmaisons—Project of influencing the judges—Visit to the Tuileries—Rapp in attendance—Long conversation with the Emperor—His opinion on the trial of Moreau—English assassins and Mr. Fox—Complaints against the English Government—Bonaparte and Lacuee—Affectionate behaviour—Arrest of Pichegru—Method employed by the First Consul to discover his presence in Paris—Character of Moreau—Measures of Bonaparte regarding him—Lauriston sent to the Temple—Silence respecting the Duc d'Enghien—Napoleon's opinion of Moreau and Georges—Admiration of Georges—Offers of employment and dismissal—Recital of former vexations—Audience of the Empress—Melancholy forebodings—What Bonaparte said concerning himself—Marks of kindness.

The judges composing the Tribunal which condemned Moreau were not all like Thuriot and Hemart. History has recorded an honourable contrast to the general meanness of the period in the reply given by M. Clavier, when urged by Hemart to vote for the condemnation of Moreau. "Ah, Monsieur, if we condemn him, how shall we be able to acquit ourselves?" I have, besides, the best reason for asserting that the judges were tampered with, from, a circumstance which occurred to myself.

Bonaparte knew that I was intimately connected with M. Desmaisons, one of the members of the Tribunal, and brother in-law to Corvisart; he also knew that Desmaisons was inclined to believe in Moreau's innocence, and favourable to his acquittal. During the progress of the trial Corvisart arrived at my house one morning at a very early hour, in a state of such evident embarrassment that, before he had time to utter a word, I said to him, "What is the matter? Have you heard any bad news?"

"No," replied Corvisart, "but I came by the Emperor's order. He wishes you to see my brother-in-law. 'He is,' said he to me, 'the senior judge, and a man of considerable eminence; his opinion will carry with it great weight, and I know that he is favourable to Moreau; he is in the wrong. Visit Bourrienne, said the Emperor, and concert with him respecting the best method of convincing Desmaisons of his error, for I repeat he is wrong, he is deceived.' This is the mission with which I am entrusted."

"How," said I, with thorough astonishment, "how came you to be employed in this affair? Could you believe for one moment that I would tamper with a magistrate in order to induce him to exercise an unjust rigour?"

"No, rest assured," replied Corvisart, "I merely visited you this morning in obedience to the order of the Emperor; but I knew beforehand in what manner you would regard the proposition with which I was charged. I knew your opinions and your character too well to entertain the smallest doubt in this respect, and I was convinced that I ran no risk in becoming the bearer of a commission which would be attended with no effect. Besides, had I refused to obey the Emperor, it would have proved prejudicial to your interest, and confirmed him in the opinion that you were favourable to the acquittal of Moreau. For myself," added Corvisart, "it is needless to affirm that I have no intention of attempting to influence the opinion of my brother-in-law; and if I had, you know him sufficiently well to be convinced in what light he would regard such a proceeding."

Such were the object and result of Corvisart's visit, and I am thence led to believe that similar attempts must have been made to influence other members of the Tribunal.

—["The judges had been pressed and acted on in a thousand ways by the hangerson of the Palace and especially by Real, the natural intermediary between justice and the Government. Ambition, servility, fear, every motive capable of influencing them, had been used: even their humane scruples were employed" (Lanfrey tome iii. p. 193, who goes on to say that the judges were urged to sentence Moreau to death in order that the Emperor might fully pardon him).]

But however this may be, prudence led me to discontinue visiting M. Desmaisons, with whom I was in habits of the strictest friendship.

About this period I paid a visit which occupies an important place in my recollections. On the 14th of June 1804, four days after the condemnation of Georges and his accomplices, I received a summons to attend the Emperor at St. Cloud. It was Thursday, and as I thought on the great events and tragic scenes about to be acted, I was rather uneasy respecting his intentions.

But I was fortunate enough to find my friend Rapp in waiting, who said to me as I entered, "Be not alarmed; he is in the best of humours at present, and wishes to have some conversation. with you."

Rapp then announced me to the Emperor, and I was immediately admitted to his presence. After pinching my ear and asking his usual questions, such as, "What does the world say? How are your children? What are you about? etc.," he said to me, "By the by, have you attended the proceedings against Moreau?"—"Yes, Sire, I have not been absent during one of the sittings."—"Well, Bourrienne, are you of the opinion that Moreau is innocent?"—"Yes, Sire; at least I am certain that nothing has come out in the course of the trial tending to criminate him; I am even surprised how he came to be implicated in this conspiracy, since nothing has appeared against him which has the most remote connexion with the affair."—"I know your opinion on this subject; Duroc related to me the conversation you held with him at the Tuileries; experience has shown that you were correct; but how could I act otherwise? You know that Bouvet de Lozier hanged himself in prison, and was only saved by accident. Real hurried to the Temple in order to interrogate him, and in his first confessions he criminated Moreau, affirming that he had held repeated conferences with Pichegru. Real immediately reported to me this fact, and proposed that Moreau should be arrested, since the rumours against him seemed to be well founded; he had previously made the same proposition. I at first refused my sanction to this measure; but after the charge made against him by Bouvet de Lozier, how could I act otherwise than I did? Could I suffer such open conspiracies against the Government? Could I doubt the truth of Bouvet de Lozier's declaration, under the circumstances in which it was made? Could I foresee that he would deny his first declaration when brought before the Court? There was a chain of circumstances which human sagacity could not penetrate, and I consented to the arrest of Moreau when it was proved that he was in league with Pichegru. Has not England sent assassins?"—"Sire," said I, "permit me to call to your recollection the conversation you had in my presence with Mr. Fox, after which you said to me, 'Bourrienne, I am very happy at having heard from the mouth of a man of honour that the British Government is incapable of seeking my life; I always wish to esteem my enemies.'—"Bah! you are a fool! Parbleu! I did not say that the English Minister sent over an assassin, and that he said to him, 'Here is gold and a poniard; go and kill the First Consul.' No, I did not believe that; but it cannot be denied that all those foreign conspirators against my Government were serving England, and receiving pay from that power. Have I agents in London to disturb the Government of Great Britain? I have waged with it honourable warfare; I have not attempted to awaken a remembrance of the Stuarts amongst their old partisans. Is not Wright, who landed Georges and his accomplices at Dieppe, a captain in the British navy? But rest assured that, with the exception of a few babblers, whom I can easily silence, the hearts of the French people are with me; everywhere public opinion has been declared in my favour, so that I have nothing to

apprehend from giving the greatest publicity to these plots, and bringing the accused to a solemn trial. The greater number of those gentlemen wished me to bring the prisoners before a military commission, that summary judgment might be obtained; but I refused my consent to this measure. It might have been said that I dreaded public opinion; and I fear it not. People may talk as much as they please, well and good, I am not obliged to hear them; but I do not like those who are attached to my person to blame what I have done."

As I could not wholly conceal an involuntary emotion, in which the Emperor saw something more than mere surprise, he paused, took me by the ear, and, smiling in the most affectionate manner, said, "I had no reference to you in what I said, but I have to complain of Lacuee. Could you believe that during the trial he went about clamouring in behalf of Moreau? He, my aide de camp—a man who owes everything to me! As for you, I have said that you acted very well in this affair."—"I know not, Sire, what has either been done or said by Lacuee,—whom I have not seen for a long time; what I said to Duroc is what history teaches in every page."—"By the by," resumed the Emperor, after a short silence, "do you know that it was I myself who discovered that Pichegru was in Paris. Everyone said to me, Pichegru is in Paris; Fouché, Real, harped on the same string, but could give me no proof of their assertion. 'What a fool you are,' said I to Real, when in an instant you may ascertain the fact. Pichegru has a brother, an aged ecclesiastic, who resides in Paris; let his dwelling be searched, and should he be absent, it will warrant a suspicion that Pichegru is here; if, on the contrary, his brother should be at home, let him be arrested: he is a simple-minded man, and in the first moments of agitation will betray the truth. Everything happened as I had foreseen, for no sooner was he arrested than, without waiting to be questioned, he inquired if it was a crime to have received his brother into his house. Thus every doubt was removed, and a miscreant in the house in which Pichegru lodged betrayed him to the police. What horrid degradation to betray a friend for the sake of gold."

Then reverting to Moreau, the Emperor talked a great deal respecting that general. "Moreau," he said, "possesses many good qualities; his bravery is undoubted; but he has more courage than energy; he is indolent and effeminate. When with the army he lived like a pasha; he smoked, was almost constantly in bed, and gave himself up to the pleasures of the table. His dispositions are naturally good; but he is too indolent for study; he does not read, and since he has been tied to his wife's apronstrings is fit for nothing. He sees only with the eyes of his wife and her mother, who have had a hand in all these late plots; and then, Bourrienne, is it not very strange that it was by my advice that he entered into this union? I was told that Mademoiselle Hulot was a creole, and I believed that he would find in her a second Josephine; how greatly was I mistaken! It is these women who have estranged us from each other, and I regret that he should have acted so unworthily. You must remember my observing to you more than two years ago that Moreau would one day run his head against the gate of the Tuileries; that he has done so was no fault of mine, for you know how much I did to secure his attachment. You cannot have forgotten the reception I gave him at Malmaison. On the 18th Brumaire I conferred on him the charge of the Luxembourg, and in that situation he fully justified my choice. But since that period he has behaved towards me with the utmost ingratitude—entered into all the silly cabala against me, blamed all my measures, and turned into ridicule the Legion of Honour. Have not some of the intriguers put it into his head that I regard him with jealousy? You must be aware of that. You must also know as well as I how anxious the members of the Directory were to exalt the reputation of Moreau. Alarmed at my success in Italy, they wished to have in the armies a general to serve as a counterpoise to my renown. I have ascended the throne and he is the inmate of a prison! You are aware of the incessant clamouring raised against me by the whole family, at which I confess I was very much displeased; coming from those whom I had treated so well! Had he attached himself to me, I would doubtless have conferred on him the title of First Marshal of the Empire; but what could I do? He constantly depreciated my campaigns and my government. From discontent to revolt there is frequently only one step, especially when a man of a weak character becomes the tool of popular clubs; and therefore when I was first informed that Moreau was implicated in the conspiracy

of Georges I believed him to be guilty, but hesitated to issue an order for his arrest till I had taken the opinion of my Council. The members having assembled, I ordered the different documents to be laid before them, with an injunction to examine them with the utmost care, since they related to an affair of importance, and I urged them candidly to inform me whether, in their opinion, any of the charges against Moreau were sufficiently strong to endanger his life. The fools! their reply was in the affirmative; I believe they were even unanimous! Then I had no alternative but to suffer the proceedings to take their course. It is unnecessary to affirm to you, Bourrienne, that Moreau never should have perished on a scaffold! Most assuredly I would have pardoned him; but with the sentence of death hanging over his head he could no longer have proved dangerous; and his name would have ceased to be a rallying-point for disaffected Republicans or imbecile Royalists. Had the Council expressed any doubts respecting his guilt I would have intimated to him that the suspicions against him were so strong as to render any further connection between us impossible; and that the best course he could pursue would be to leave France for three years, under the pretext of visiting some of the places rendered celebrated during the late wars; but that if he preferred a diplomatic mission I would make a suitable provision for his expenses; and the great innovator, Time, might effect great changes during the period of his absence. But my foolish Council affirmed to me that his guilt, as a principal, being evident, it was absolutely necessary to bring him to trial; and now his sentence is only that of a pickpocket. What think you I ought to do? Detain him? He might still prove a rallying-point. No. Let him sell his property and quit? Can I confine him in the Temple? It is full enough without him. Still, if this had been the only great error they had led me to commit—"

"Sire, how greatly you have been deceived."

"Oh yes, I have been so; but I cannot see everything with my own eyes."

At this part of our conversation, of which I have suppressed my own share as much as possible, I conceived that the last words of Bonaparte alluded to the death of the Duc d'Enghien; and I fancied he was about to mention that event but he again spoke of Moreau.

"He is very much mistaken," resumed the Emperor, "if he conceives I bore any ill-will towards him. After his arrest I sent Lauriston to the Temple, whom I chose because he was of an amiable and conciliating disposition; I charged him to tell Moreau to confess he had only seen Pichegru, and I would cause the proceedings against him to be suspended. Instead of receiving this act of generosity as he ought to have done, he replied to it with great haughtiness, so much was he elated that Pichegru had not been arrested; he afterwards, however, lowered his tone. He wrote to me a letter of excuse respecting his anterior conduct, which I caused to be produced on the trial. He was the author of his own ruin; besides, it would have required men of a different stamp from Moreau to conspire against me. Amongst the conspirators, for example, was an individual whose fate I regret; this Georges in my hands might have achieved great things. I can duly appreciate the firmness of character he displayed, and to which I could have given a proper direction. I caused Real to intimate to him that, if he would attach himself to me, not only should he be pardoned, but that I would give him the command of a regiment. Perhaps I might even have made him my aide de camp. Complaints would have been made, but, parbleu, I should not have cared. Georges refused all my offers; he was as inflexible as iron. What could I do? he underwent his fate, for he was a dangerous man; circumstances rendered his death a matter of necessity. Examples of severity were called for, when England was pouring into France the whole offscouring of the emigration; but patience, patience! I have a long arm, and shall be able to reach them, when necessary. Moreau regarded Georges merely as a ruffian—I viewed him in a different light. You may remember the conversation I had with him at the Tuileries—you and Rapp were in an adjoining cabinet. I tried in vain to influence him—some of his associates were affected at the mention of country and of glory; he alone stood cold and unmoved. I addressed myself to his feelings, but in vain; he was insensible to everything I said. At that period Georges appeared to me little ambitious of power; his whole wishes seemed to centre in commanding the Vendéans. It was not till I had exhausted every means of conciliation that I assumed the tone and language of

the first magistrate. I dismissed him with a strong injunction to live retired—to be peaceable and obedient—not to misinterpret the motives of my conduct towards himself—nor attribute to weakness what was merely the result of moderation and strength. 'Rest assured,' I added, 'and repeat to your associates, that while I hold the reins of authority there will be neither chance nor salvation for those who dare to conspire against me: How he conformed to this injunction the event has shown. Real told me that when Moreau and Georges found themselves in the presence of Pichegru they could not come to any understanding, because Georges would not act against the Bourbons. Well, he had a plan, but Moreau had none; he merely wished for my overthrow, without having formed any ulterior views whatever. This showed that he was destitute of even common sense. Apropos, Bourrienne, have you seen Corvisart?'—"Yes, Sire."—"Well!" "He delivered to me the message with which you entrusted him."—"And Desmaisons!—I wager that you have not spoken to him in conformity to my wishes."—"Sire, the estimation in which I hold Desmaisons deterred me from a course so injurious to him; for in what other light could he have considered what I should have said to him? I have never visited at his house since the commencement of the trial."—"Well! well! Be prudent and discreet, I shall not forget you." He then waved a very gracious salute with his hand, and withdrew into his cabinet.

The Emperor had detained me more than an hour. On leaving the audience-chamber I passed through the outer salon, where a number of individuals were waiting; and I perceived that an observance of etiquette was fast gaining ground, though the Emperor had not yet adopted the admirable institution of Court Chamberlains.

I cannot deny that I was much gratified with my reception; besides I was beginning to be weary of an inactive life, and was anxious to obtain a place, of which I stood in great need, from the losses I had sustained and the unjust resumption which Bonaparte had made of his gifts. Being desirous to speak of Napoleon with the strictest impartiality, I prefer drawing my conclusions from those actions in which I had no personal concern. I shall therefore only relate here, even before giving an account of my visit to the Empress on leaving the audience-chamber, the former conduct of Napoleon towards myself and Madame de Bourrienne, which will justify the momentary alarm with which I was seized when summoned to the Tuileries, and the satisfaction I felt at my reception. I had a proof of what Rapp said of the Emperor being in good-humour, and was flattered by the confidential manner in which he spoke to me concerning some of the great political secrets of his Government. On seeing me come out Rapp observed, "You have had a long audience."—"Yes, not amiss;" and this circumstance procured for me a courtly salutation from all persons waiting in the antechamber.'

I shall now relate how I spent the two preceding years. The month after I tendered my resignation to the First Consul, and which he refused to accept, the house at St. Cloud belonging to Madame Deville was offered to me; it was that in which the Due d'Angouleme and the Due de Berri were inoculated. I visited this mansion, thinking it might be suitable for my family; but, notwithstanding the beauty of its situation, it seemed far too splendid either for my taste or my fortune. Except the outer walls, it was in a very dilapidated state, and would require numerous and expensive repairs. Josephine, being informed that Madame de Bourrienne had set her face against the purchase, expressed a wish to see the mansion, and accompanied us for that purpose. She was so much delighted with it that she blamed my wife for starting any objections to my becoming its possessor. "With regard to the expense," Josephine replied to her, "ah, we shall arrange that." On our return to Malmaison she spoke of it in such high terms that Bonaparte said to me, "Why don't you purchase it, Bourrienne, since the price is so reasonable?"

The house was accordingly purchased. An outlay of 20,000 francs was immediately required to render it habitable. Furniture was also necessary for this large mansion, and orders for it were accordingly given. But no sooner were repairs begun than everything crumbled to pieces, which rendered many additional expenses necessary.

About this period Bonaparte hurried forward the works at St. Cloud, to which place he immediately removed. My services being constantly required, I found it so fatiguing to go twice or thrice a day from Ruel to St. Cloud that I took possession of my new mansion, though it was still filled with workmen. Scarcely eight days had elapsed from this period when Bonaparte intimated that he no longer had occasion for my services. When my wife went to take leave Napoleon spoke to her in a flattering manner of my good qualities, my merit, and the utility of my labours, saying that he was himself the most unfortunate of the three, and that my loss could never be replaced. He then added, "I shall be absent for a month, but Bourrienne may be quite easy; let him remain in retirement, and on my return I shall reward his services, should I even create a place on purpose for him."

Madame de Bourrienne then requested leave to retain the apartments appropriated to her in the Tuileries till after her accouchement, which was not far distant, to which he replied, "You may keep them as long as you please; for it will be some time before I again reside in Paris."

Bonaparte set out on his journey, and shortly afterwards I went with my family to visit Madame de Coubertin, my cousin-german, who received us with her usual kindness. We passed the time of the First Consul's absence at her country seat, and only returned to St. Cloud on the day Bonaparte was expected.

Scarcely a quarter of an hour had elapsed after his arrival when I received an intimation to give up, in twenty-four hours, the apartments in the Tuileries, which he had promised my wife should retain till after her confinement. He reclaimed at the same time the furniture of Ruel, which he presented to me two years before, when I purchased that small house on purpose to be near him.

I addressed several memorials to him on this subject, stating that I had replaced the worn-out furniture with new and superior articles; but this he wholly disregarded, compelling me to give up everything, even to the greatest trifle. It may be right to say that on his return the Emperor found his table covered with information respecting my conduct in Paris, though I had not held the smallest communication with any one in the capital, nor once entered it during his absence.

After my departure for Hamburg, Bonaparte took possession of my stables and coach-house, which he filled with horses. Even the very avenues and walks were converted into stabling. A handsome house at the entrance to the park was also appropriated to similar purposes; in fact, he spared nothing. Everything was done in the true military style; I neither had previous intimation of the proceedings nor received any remuneration for my loss. The Emperor seemed to regard the property as his own; but though he all but ordered me to make the purchase, he did not furnish the money that was paid for it. In this way it was occupied for more than four years.

The recollection of those arbitrary and vexatious proceedings on the part of Bonaparte has led me farther than I intended. I shall therefore return to the imperial residence of St. Cloud. On leaving the audience-chamber, as already stated, I repaired to the apartments of the Empress, who, knowing that I was in the Palace, had intimated her wishes for my attendance. No command could have been more agreeable to me, for every one was certain of a gracious reception from Josephine. I do not recollect which of the ladies in waiting was in attendance when my name was announced; but she immediately retired, and left me alone with Josephine. Her recent elevation had not changed the usual amenity of her disposition. After some conversation respecting the change in her situation, I gave her an account of what had passed between the Emperor and myself.

I faithfully related all that he had said of Moreau, observing that at one moment I imagined he was about to speak of the Due d'Enghien, when he suddenly reverted to what he had been saying, and never made the slightest allusion to the subject.

Madame Bonaparte replied to me, "Napoleon has spoken the truth respecting Moreau. He was grossly deceived by those who believed they could best pay their court to him by calumniating that general. His silence on the subject of the Due d'Enghien does not surprise me; he says as little respecting it as possible, and always in a vague manner, and with manifest repugnance. When you see Bonaparte again be silent on the subject, and should chance bring it forward, avoid every expression

in the smallest degree indicative of reproach; he would not suffer it; you would ruin yourself for ever in his estimation, and the evil is, alas! without remedy. When you came to Malmaison I told you that I had vainly endeavoured to turn him from his fatal purpose, and how he had treated me. Since then he has experienced but little internal satisfaction; it is only in the presence of his courtiers that he affects a calm and tranquil deportment; but I perceive his sufferings are the greater from thus endeavouring to conceal them. By the by, I forgot to mention that he knew of the visit you paid me on the day after the catastrophe. I dreaded that your enemies, the greater number of whom are also mine, might have misrepresented that interview; but, fortunately, he paid little attention to it. He merely said, 'So you have seen Bourrienne? Does he sulk at me? Nevertheless I must do something for him.' He has again spoken in the same strain, and repeated nearly the same expressions three days ago; and since he has commanded your presence to-day, I have not a doubt but he has something in view for your advantage."—" May I presume to inquire what it is?"—"I do not yet know; but I would recommend to you, in the meantime, to be more strictly on your guard than ever; he is so suspicious, and so well informed of all that is done or said respecting himself. I have suffered so much since I last saw you; never can I forget the unkind manner in which he rejected my entreaties! For several days I laboured under a depression of spirits which greatly irritated him, because he clearly saw whence it proceeded. I am not dazzled by the title of Empress; I dread some evil will result from this step to him, to my children, and to myself. The miscreants ought to be satisfied; see to what they have driven us! This death embitters every moment of my life. I need not say to you, Bourrienne, that I speak this in confidence."—"You cannot doubt my prudence."—" No, certainly not, Bourrienne. I do not doubt it. My confidence in you is unbounded. Rest assured that I shall never forget what you have done for me, under various circumstances, and the devotedness you evinced to me on your return from Egypt. —Adieu, my friend. Let me see you soon again."

It was on the 14th of June 1804 that I had this audience of the Emperor, and afterwards attended the Empress.

On my return home I spent three hours in making notes of all that was said to me by these two personages; and the substance of these notes I have now given to the reader.

CHAPTER XXVIII

1804.

Curious disclosures of Fouche—Remarkable words of Bonaparte respecting the protest of Louis XVIII—Secret document inserted in the *Moniteur*—Announcement from Bonaparte to Regnier—Fouche appointed Minister of Police—Error of Regnier respecting the conspiracy of Georges—Undeserved praise bestowed on Fouche—Indication of the return of the Bourbons—Variation between the words and conduct of Bonaparte—The iron crown—Celebration of the 14th of July—Church festivals and loss of time—Grand ceremonial at the Invalides—Recollections of the 18th Brumaire—New oath of the Legion of Honour—General enthusiasm—Departure for Boulogne—Visits to Josephine at St. Cloud and Malmaison—Josephine and Madame de Remusat—Pardons granted by the Emperor—Anniversary of the 14th of July—Departure for the camp of Boulogne—General error respecting Napoleon's designs—Caesar's Tower—Distribution of the crosses of the Legion of Honour—The military throne—Bonaparte's charlatanism—Intrepidity of two English sailors—The decennial prizes and the Polytechnic School—Meeting of the Emperor and Empress—First negotiation with the Holy Sea—The Prefect of Arras and Comte Louis de Narbonne—Change in the French Ministry.

Louis XVIII., being at Warsaw when he was informed of the elevation of Napoleon to the Imperial dignity, addressed to the sovereigns of Europe a protest against that usurpation of his throne. Fouche, being the first who heard of this protest, immediately communicated the circumstance to the Emperor, observing that doubtless the copies would be multiplied and distributed amongst the enemies of his Government, in the Faubourg St. Germain, which might produce the worst effects, and that he therefore deemed it his duty to inform him that orders might be given to Regnier and Real to keep a strict watch over those engaged in distributing this document.

"You may judge of my surprise," added Fouche, "you who know so well that formerly the very mention of the Bourbons rendered Bonaparte furious, when, after perusing the protest, he returned it to me, saying, 'Ah, ah, so the Comte de Lille makes his protest! Well, well, all in good time. I hold my right by the voice of the French nation, and while I wear a sword I will maintain it! The Bourbons ought to know that I do not fear them; let them, therefore, leave me in tranquillity. Did you say that the fools of the Faubourg St. Germain would multiply the copies of this protest of Comte de Lille? well, they shall read it at their ease. Send it to the *Moniteur*, Fouche; and let it be inserted to-morrow morning.'" This passed on the 30th of June, and the next day the protest of Louis XVIII. did actually appear in that paper.

Fouche was wholly indifferent respecting the circulation of this protest; he merely wished to show the Emperor that he was better informed of passing events than Regnier, and to afford Napoleon another proof of the inexperience and inability of the Grand Judge in police; and Fouche was not long in receiving the reward which he expected from this step. In fact, ten days after the publication of the protest, the Emperor announced to Regnier the re-establishment of the Ministry of General Police.

The formula, I Pray God to have you in His holy keeping, with which the letter to Regnier closed, was another step of Napoleon in the knowledge of ancient usages, with which he was not sufficiently familiar when he wrote Cambaceres on the day succeeding his elevation to the Imperial throne; at the same time it must be confessed that this formula assorted awkwardly with the month of "Messidor," and the "twelfth year of the Republic!"

The errors which Regnier had committed in the affair of Georges were the cause which determined Bonaparte to re-establish the Ministry of Police, and to bestow it on a man who had created a belief in the necessity of that measure, by a monstrous accumulation of plots and intrigues. I am also certain that the Emperor was swayed by the probability of a war breaking out, which would force him to leave France; and that he considered Fouché as the most proper person to maintain the public tranquillity during his absence, and detect any cabala that might be formed in favour of the Bourbons.

At this period, when Bonaparte had given the finishing blow to the Republic, which had only been a shadow since the 19th Brumaire, it was not difficult to foresee that the Bourbons would one day remount the throne of their ancestors; and this presentiment was not, perhaps, without its influence in rendering the majority greater in favour of the foundation of the Empire than for the establishment of a Consulate for life. The reestablishment of the throne was a most important step in favour of the Bourbons, for that was the thing most difficult to be done. But Bonaparte undertook the task; and, as if by the aid of a magic rod, the ancient order of things was restored in the twinkling of an eye. The distinctions of rank—orders—titles, the noblesse—decorations—all the baubles of vanity—in short, all the burlesque tattooing which the vulgar regard as an indispensable attribute of royalty, reappeared in an instant. The question no longer regarded the form of government, but the individual who should be placed at its head. By restoring the ancient order of things, the Republicans had themselves decided the question, and it could no longer be doubted that when an occasion presented itself the majority of the nation would prefer the ancient royal family, to whom France owed her civilisation, her greatness, and her power, and who had exalted her to such a high degree of glory and prosperity.

It was not one of the least singular traits in Napoleon's character that during the first year of his reign he retained the fete of the 14th of July. It was not indeed strictly a Republican fate, but it recalled the recollection of two great popular triumphs,—the taking of the Bastille and the first Federation. This year the 14th of July fell on a Saturday, and the Emperor ordered its celebration to be delayed till the following day, because it was Sunday; which was in conformity with the sentiments he delivered respecting the Concordat. "What renders me," he said, "most hostile to the re-establishment of the Catholic worship is the number of festivals formerly observed. A saint's day is a day of indolence, and I wish not for that; the people must labour in order to live. I consent to four holidays in the year, but no more; if the gentlemen from Rome are not satisfied with this, they may take their departure."

The loss of time seemed to him so great a calamity that he seldom failed to order an indispensable solemnity to be held on the succeeding holiday. Thus he postponed the Corpus Christi to the following Sunday.

On Sunday, the 15th of July 1804, the Emperor appeared for the first time before the Parisians surrounded by all the pomp of royalty. The members of the Legion of Honour, then in Paris, took the oath prescribed by the new Constitution, and on this occasion the Emperor and Empress appeared attended for the first time by a separate and numerous retinue.

The carriages in the train of the Empress crossed the garden of the Tuileries, hitherto exclusively appropriated to the public; then followed the cavalcade of the Emperor, who appeared on horseback, surrounded by his principal generals, whom he had created Marshals of the Empire. M. de Segur, who held the office of Grand Master of Ceremonies, had the direction of the ceremonial to be observed on this occasion, and with, the Governor received the Emperor on the threshold of the Hotel des Invalides. They conducted the Empress to a tribune prepared for her reception, opposite the Imperial throne which Napoleon alone occupied, to the right of the altar. I was present at this ceremony, notwithstanding the repugnance I have to such brilliant exhibitions; but as Duroc had two days before presented me with tickets, I deemed it prudent to attend on the occasion, lest the keen eye of Bonaparte should have remarked my absence if Duroc had acted by his order.

I spent about an hour contemplating the proud and sometimes almost ludicrous demeanour of the new grandees of the Empire; I marked the manoeuvring of the clergy, who, with Cardinal Belloy

at their head, proceeded to receive the Emperor on his entrance into the church. What a singular train of ideas was called up to my mind when I beheld my former comrade at the school of Brienne seated upon an elevated throne, surrounded by his brilliant staff, the great dignitaries of his Empire — his Ministers and Marshals! I involuntarily recurred to the 19th Brumaire, and all this splendid scene vanished; when I thought of Bonaparte stammering to such a degree that I was obliged to pull the skirt of his coat to induce him to withdraw.

It was neither a feeling of animosity nor of jealousy which called up such reflections; at no period of our career would I have exchanged my situation for his; but whoever can reflect, whoever has witnessed the unexpected elevation of a former equal, may perhaps be able to conceive the strange thoughts that assailed my mind, for the first time, on this occasion.

When the religious part of the ceremony terminated, the church assumed, in some measure, the appearance of a profane temple. The congregation displayed more devotion to the Emperor than towards the God of the Christians,—more enthusiasm than fervour. The mass had been heard with little attention; but when M. de Lacépède, Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour, after pronouncing a flattering discourse, finished the call of the Grand Officers of the Legion, Bonaparte covered, as did the ancient kings of France when they held a bed of justice. A profound silence, a sort of religious awe, then reigned throughout the assembly, and Napoleon, who did not now stammer as in the Council of the Five Hundred, said in a firm voice:

"Commanders, officers, legionaries, citizens, soldiers; swear upon your honour to devote yourselves to the service of the Empire—to the preservation of the integrity of the French territory—to the defence of the Emperor, of the laws of the Republic, and of the property which they have made sacred—to combat by all the means which justice, reason, and the laws authorise every attempt to reestablish the feudal system; in short, swear to concur with all your might in maintaining liberty and equality, which are the bases of all our institutions. Do you swear?"

Each member of the Legion of Honour exclaimed, "I swear;" adding, "Vive l'Empereur!" with an enthusiasm it is impossible to describe, and in which all present joined.

What, after all, was this new oath? It only differed from that taken by the Legion of Honour, under the Consulate, in putting the defence of the Emperor before that of the laws of the Republic; and this was not merely a form. It was, besides, sufficiently laughable and somewhat audacious, to make them swear to support equality at the moment so many titles and monarchical distinctions had been re-established.

On the 18th of July, three days after this ceremony, the Emperor left Paris to visit the camp at Boulogne. He was not accompanied by the Empress on this journey, which was merely to examine the progress of the military operations. Availing myself of the invitation Josephine had given me, I presented myself at St. Cloud a few days after the departure of Napoleon; as she did not expect my visit, I found her surrounded by four or five of the ladies in waiting, occupied in examining some of the elegant productions of the famous Leroi and Madame Despeaux; for amidst the host of painful feelings experienced by Josephine she was too much of a woman not to devote some attention to the toilet.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.