

# LOUIS DE BOURRIENNE

MEMOIRS OF NAPOLEON  
BONAPARTE — VOLUME  
12

**Louis Antoine Fauvelet Bourrienne**  
**Memoirs of Napoleon**  
**Bonaparte — Volume 12**

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*Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte — Volume 12:*

# Содержание

CHAPTER XXVIII	4
CHAPTER XXIX	22
CHAPTER XXX	35
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	39

# **Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte — Volume 12**

## **CHAPTER XXVIII**

1813.

Riots in Hamburg and Lubeck—Attempted suicide of M. Konning— Evacuation of Hamburg—Dissatisfaction at the conduct of General St. Cyr—The Cabinets of Vienna and the Tuileries—First appearance of the Cossacks—Colonel Tettenborn invited to occupy Hamburg—Cordial reception of the Russians—Depredations—Levies of troops— Testimonials of gratitude to Tettenborn—Napoleon's new army—Death of General Morand—Remarks of Napoleon on Vandamme—Bonaparte and Gustavus Adolphus—Junction of the corps of Davoust and Vandamme— Reoccupation of Hamburg by the French—General Hogendorff appointed Governor of Hamburg—Exactions and vexatious contributions levied upon Hamburg and Lubeck—Hostages.

A considerable time before Napoleon left Paris to join the

army, the bulk of which was in Saxony, partial insurrections occurred in many places. The interior of France proper was indeed still in a state of tranquillity, but it was not so in the provinces annexed by force to the extremities of the Empire, especially in the north, and in the unfortunate Hanse Towns, for which, since my residence at Hamburg, I have always felt the greatest interest. The intelligence I received was derived from such unquestionable sources that I can pledge myself for the truth of what I have to state respecting the events which occurred in those provinces at the commencement of 1813; and subsequently I obtained a confirmation of all the facts communicated by my correspondence when I was sent to Hamburg by Louis XVIII. in 1815.

M. Steuve, agent from the Court of Russia, who lived at Altona apparently as a private individual, profited by the irritation produced by the measures adopted at Hamburg. His plans were so well arranged that he was promptly informed of the route of the Grand Army from Moscow, and the approach of the Allied troops. Aided by the knowledge and activity of Sieur Hanft of Hamburg, M. Steuve profited by the discontent of a people so tyrannically governed, and seized the opportunity for producing an explosion. Between eight and nine o'clock on the morning of the 24th of February 1813 an occurrence in which the people were concerned was the signal for a revolt. An individual returning to Hamburg by the Altona gate would not submit to be searched by a fiscal agent, who in

consequence maltreated him and wounded him severely. The populace instantly rose, drove away the revenue guard, and set fire to the guard-house. The people also, excited by secret agents, attacked other French posts, where they committed the same excesses. Surprised at this unexpected movement, the French authorities retired to the houses in which they resided. All the respectable inhabitants who were unconnected with the tumult likewise returned to their homes, and no person appeared out of doors.

General Carry St. Cyr had the command of Hamburg after the Prince of Eckmuhl's departure for the Russian campaign.

—[General Carry St. Cyr is not to be confuted with the Marshal Gouvion de St. Cyr; he fell into disgrace for his conduct at Hamburg at this time, and was not again employed by Napoleon. Under the Restoration he became Governor of French Guiana.]—

At the first news of the revolt he set about packing up his papers, and Comte de Chaban, M. Konning, the Prefect of Hamburg, and M. Daubignosc, the Director of Police, followed his example. It was not till about four o'clock in the afternoon that a detachment of Danish hussars arrived at Hamburg, and the populace was then speedily dispersed. All the respectable citizens and men of property assembled the next morning and adopted means for securing internal tranquillity, so that the Danish troops were enabled to return to Altona. Search was then made for the ringleaders of the disturbance. Many persons

were arrested, and a military commission, ad hoc; was appointed to try them. The commission, however, condemned only one individual, who, being convicted of being one of the most active voters, was sentenced to be shot, and the sentence was carried into execution.

On the 26th February a similar commotion took place at Lubeck. Attempts were made to attack the French Authorities. The respectable citizens instantly assembled, protected them against outrage, and escorted them in safety to Hamburg, where they arrived on the 27th. The precipitate flight of these persons from Lubeck spread some alarm in Hamburg. The danger was supposed to be greater than it was because the fugitives were accompanied by a formidable body of troops.

But these were not the only attempts to throw off the yoke of French domination, which had become insupportable. All the left bank of the Elbe was immediately in a state of insurrection, and all the official persons took refuge in Hamburg. During these partial insurrections everything was neglected. Indecision, weakness, and cupidity were manifested everywhere. Instead of endeavours to soothe the minds of the people, which had been, long exasperated by intolerable tyranny, recourse was had to rigorous measures. The prisons were crowded with a host of persons declared to be suspected upon the mere representations of the agents of the police. On the 3d of March a special military commission condemned six householders of Hamburg and its neighbourhood to be shot on the glacis for no other offence than

having been led, either by chance or curiosity, to a part of the town which was the scene of one of the riots. These executions excited equal horror and indignation, and General Carra St. Cyr was obliged to issue a proclamation for the dissolution of the military commission by whom the men had been sentenced.

The intelligence of the march of the Russian and Prussian troops; who were descending the Elbe, increased the prevailing agitation in Westphalia, Hanover, Mecklenburg, and Pomerania, and all the French troops cantoned between Berlin and Hamburg, including those who occupied the coast of the Baltic, fell back upon Hamburg. General Carra St. Cyr and Baron Konning, the Prefect of Hamburg, used to go every evening to Altona. The latter, worn out by anxiety and his unsettled state of life, lost his reason; and on his way to Hamburg, on the 5th of May, he attempted to cut his throat with a razor. His 'valet de chambre' saved his life by rushing upon him before he had time to execute his design. It was given out that he had broken a blood-vessel, and he was conveyed to Altona, where his wound was cured, and he subsequently recovered from his derangement. M. Konning, who was a native of Holland, was a worthy man, but possessed no decision of character, and but little ability.

At this juncture exaggerated reports were circulated respecting the approach of a Russian corps. A retreat was immediately ordered, and it was executed on the 12th of March. General Carra St. Cyr having no money for the troops, helped himself to 100,000 francs out of the municipal treasury. He left



Hamburg at the head of the troops and the enrolled men of the custom-house service. He was escorted by the Burgher Guard, which protected him from the insults of the populace; and the good people of Hamburg never had any visitors of whom they were more happy to be rid.

This sudden retreat excited Napoleon's indignation. He accused General St. Cyr of pusillanimity, in an article inserted in the 'Moniteur', and afterwards copied by his order into all the journals. In fact, had General St. Cyr been better informed, or less easily alarmed, he might have kept Hamburg, and prevented its temporary occupation by the enemy, to dislodge whom it was necessary to besiege the city two months afterwards. St. Cyr had 3000 regular troops, and a considerable body of men in the custom-house service. General Morand could have furnished him with 5000 men from Mecklenburg. He might, therefore, not only have kept possession of Hamburg two months longer, but even to the end of the war, as General Lexnarrois retained possession of Magdeburg. Had not General St. Cyr so hastily evacuated the Elbe he would have been promptly aided by the corps which General Vandamme soon brought from the Wesel, and afterwards by the very, corps with which Marshal Davoust recaptured Hamburg.

The events just described occurred before Napoleon quitted Paris. In the month of August all negotiation was broken off with Austria, though that power, still adhering to her time-serving policy, continued to protest fidelity to the cause of the

Emperor Napoleon until the moment when her preparations were completed and her resolution formed. But if there was duplicity at Vienna was there not folly, nay, blindness, in the Cabinet of the Tuileries? Could we reasonably rely upon Austria? She had seen the Russian army pass the Vistula and advance as far as the Saale without offering any remonstrance. At that moment a single movement of her troops, a word of declaration, would have prevented everything. As, therefore, she would not avert the evil when she might have done so with certainty and safety, there must have been singular folly and blindness in the Cabinet who saw this conduct and did not understand it.

I now proceed to mention the further misfortunes which occurred in the north of Germany, and particularly at Hamburg. At fifteen leagues east of Hamburg, but within its territory, is a village named Bergdorf. It was in that village that the Cossacks were first seen. Twelve or fifteen hundred of them arrived there under the command of Colonel Tettenborn. But for the retreat of the French troops, amounting to 3000, exclusive of men in the customhouse service, no attempt would have been made upon Hamburg; but the very name of the Cossacks inspired a degree of terror which must be fresh in the recollection of every one. Alarm spread in Hamburg, which, being destitute of troops and artillery, and surrounded with dilapidated fortifications, could offer no defence. The Senator Bartch and Doctor Know took upon themselves to proceed to Bergdorf to solicit Colonel Tettenborn to take possession of Hamburg, observing that they felt sure

of his sentiments of moderation, and that they trusted they would grant protection to a city which had immense commercial relations with Russia. Tettenborn did not place reliance on these propositions because he could not suppose that there had been such a precipitate evacuation; he thought they were merely a snare to entrap him, and refused to accede to them. But a Doctor Von Hess, a Swede, settled in Hamburg some years, and known to Tettenborn as a decided partisan of England and Russia, persuaded the Russian Commander to comply with the wishes of the citizens of Hamburg. However, Tettenborn consented only on the following conditions:—That the old Government should be instantly re-established; that a deputation of Senators in their old costume should invite him to take possession of Hamburg, which he would enter only as a free and Imperial Hanse Town; that if those conditions were not complied with he would regard Hamburg as a French town, and consequently hostile. Notwithstanding the real satisfaction with which the Senators of Hamburg received those propositions they were restrained by the fear of a reverse of fortune. They, however, determined to accept them, thinking that whatever might happen they could screen themselves by alleging that necessity had driven them to the step they took. They therefore declared their compliance with the conditions, and that night and the following day were occupied in assembling the Senate, which had been so long dissolved, and in making the preparations which Tettenborn required.

At four o'clock in the afternoon of the 17th of March a picket of Cossacks, consisting of only forty men, took possession of a town recently flourishing, and containing a population of 124,000, but ruined and reduced to 80,000 inhabitants by the blessing of being united to the French Empire. On the following day, the 18th, Colonel Tettenborn entered Hamburg at the head of 1000 regular and 200 irregular Cossacks. I have described the military situation of Hamburg when it was evacuated on the 12th of March, and Napoleon's displeasure may be easily conceived. Tettenborn was received with all the honours usually bestowed upon a conqueror. Enthusiasm was almost universal. For several nights the people devoted themselves to rejoicing. The Cossacks were gorged with provisions and drink, and were not a little astonished at the handsome reception they experienced.

It was not until the expiration of three or four days that the people began to perceive the small number of the allied troops. Their amount gradually diminished. On the day after the arrival of the Cossacks a detachment was sent to Lubeck, where they were received with the same honours as at Hamburg. Other detachments were sent upon different places, and after four days' occupation there remained in Hamburg only 70 out of the 1200 Cossacks who had entered on the 18th March.

The first thing their commander did was to take possession of the post-office and the treasuries of the different public offices. All the movable effects of the French Government and its agents were seized and sold. The officers evinced a true Cossack

disregard of the rights of private property. Counts Huhn, Buasenitz, and Venechtern, who had joined Tettenborn's staff, rendered themselves conspicuous by plundering the property of M. Pyonnier, the Director of the Customs, and M. Gonae, the Postmaster, and not a bottle of wine was left in their cellars. Tettenborn laid hands upon a sum of money, consisting of upwards of 4000 Louis in gold, belonging to M. Gonse, which had been lodged with M. Schwartz, a respectable banker in Hamburg, who filled the office of Prussian Consul. M. Schwartz, with whom this money had been deposited for the sake of security, had also the care of some valuable jewels belonging to Mesdames Carry St. Cyr and Daubignoac; Tettenborn carried off these as well as the money. M. Schwartz remonstrated in his character of Prussian Consul, Prussia being the ally of Russia, but he was considered merely as a banker, and could obtain no redress. Tettenborn, like most of the Cossack chiefs, was nothing but a man for blows and pillage, but the agent of Russia was M. Steuve, whose name I have already mentioned.

Orders were speedily given for a levy of troops, both in infantry and cavalry, to be called Hanseatic volunteers. A man named Hanft, who had formerly been a butcher, raised at his own expense a company of foot and one of lancers, of which he took the command. This undertaking, which cost him 130,000 francs, may afford some idea of the attachment of the people of Hamburg to the French Government! But money, as well as men, was wanting, and a heavy contribution was imposed to

defray the expense of enrolling a number of workmen out of employment and idlers, of various kinds. Voluntary donations were solicited, and enthusiasm was so general that even servant-maids gave their rings. The sums thus collected were paid into the chest of Tettenborn's staff, and became a prey to dishonest appropriation. With respect to this money a *Sieur Oswald* was accused of not having acted with the scrupulous delicacy which *Madame de Stael* attributes to his namesake in her romance of *Corinne*.

Between 8000 and 10,000 men were levied in the Hanse Towns and their environs, the population of which had been so greatly reduced within two years. These undisciplined troops, who had been for the most part levied from the lowest classes of society, committed so many outrages that they soon obtained the surname of the Cossacks of the Elbe; and certainly they well deserved it.

Such was the hatred which the French Government had inspired in Hamburg that the occupation of Tettenborn was looked upon as a deliverance. On the colonel's departure the Senate, anxious to give high a testimonial of gratitude, presented him with the freedom of the city, accompanied by 5000 gold fredericks (105,000 francs), with which he was doubtless much more gratified than with the honour of the citizenship.

The restored Senate of Hamburg did not long survive. The people of the Hanse Towns learned, with no small alarm, that the Emperor was making immense preparations to fall upon

Germany, where his lieutenants could not fail to take cruel revenge on those who had disavowed his authority. Before he quitted Paris on the 15th of April Napoleon had recalled under the banners of the army 180,000 men, exclusive of the guards of honour, and it was evident that with such a force he might venture on a great game, and probably win it. Yet the month of April passed away without the occurrence of any event important to the Hanse Towns, the inhabitants of which vacillated between hope and fear. Attacks daily took place between parties of Russian and French troops on the territory between Lunenburg and Bremen. In one of these encounters General Morand was mortally wounded, and was conveyed to Lunenburg. His brother having been taken prisoner in the same engagement, Tettenborn, into whose hands he had fallen, gave him leave on parole to visit the General; but he arrived in Lunenburg only in time to see him die.

The French having advanced as far as Haaburg took up their position on the plateau of Schwartzenberg, which commands that little town and the considerable islands situated in that part of the river between Haaburg and Hamburg. Being masters of this elevated point they began to threaten Hamburg and to attack Haaburg. These attacks were directed by Vandamme, of all our generals the most redoubtable in conquered countries. He was a native of Cassel, in Flanders, and had acquired a high reputation for severity. At the very time when he was attacking Hamburg Napoleon said of him at Dresden, "If I were to lose Vandamme I

know not what I would give to have him back again; but if I had two such generals I should be obliged to shoot one of them." It must be confessed that one was quite enough.

As soon as he arrived Vandamme sent to inform Tettenborn that if he did not immediately liberate the brother and brother-in-law of Morand, both of whom were his prisoners, he would burn Hamburg. Tettenborn replied that if he resorted to that extremity he would hang them both on the top of St. Michael's Tower, where he might have a view of them. This energetic answer obliged Vandamme to restrain his fury, or at least to direct it to other objects.

Meanwhile the French forces daily augmented at Haaburg. Vandamme, profiting by the negligence of the new Hanseatic troops, who had the defence of the great islands of the Elbe, attacked them one night in the month of May. This happened to be the very night after the battle of Lutzsn, where both sides claimed the victory; and Te Deum was sung in the two hostile camps. The advance of the French turned the balance of opinion in favour of Napoleon, who was in fact really the conqueror on a field of battle celebrated nearly two centuries before by the victory and death of Gustavus Adolphus. The Cossacks of the Elbe could not sustain the shock of the French; Vandamme repulsed the troops who defended Wilhelmsburg, the largest of the two islands, and easily took possession of the smaller one, Fidden, of which the point nearest the right bank of the Elbe is not half a gunshot distant from Hamburg. The 9th of May



was a fatal day to the people of Hamburg; for it was then that Davoust, having formed his junction with Vandamme, appeared at the head of a corps of 40,000 men destined to reinforce Napoleon's Grand Army. Hamburg could not hold out against the considerable French force now assembled in its neighbourhood. Tettenborn had, it is true, received a reinforcement of 800 Prussians and 2000, Swedes, but still what resistance could he offer to Davoust's 40,000 men? Tettenborn did not deceive himself as to the weakness of the allies on this point, or the inutility of attempting to defend the city. He yielded to the entreaties of the inhabitants, who represented to him that further resistance must be attended by certain ruin. He accordingly evacuated Hamburg on the 29th of May, taking with him his Hanseatic legions, which had not held out an hour in the islands of the Elbe, and accompanied by the Swedish Doctor Von Hess, whose imprudent advice was the chief cause of all the disasters to which the unfortunate city had been exposed.

Davoust was at Haaburg, where he received the deputies from Hamburg with an appearance of moderation; and by the conditions stipulated at this conference on the 30th of May a strong detachment of Danish troops occupied Hamburg in the name of the Emperor. The French made their entrance the same evening, and occupied the posts as quietly as if they had been merely changing guard. The inhabitants made not a shadow of resistance. Not a drop of blood was issued; not a threat nor an insult was interchanged. This is the truth; but the truth did not

suit Napoleon. It was necessary to get up a pretext for revenge, and accordingly recourse was had to a bulletin, which proclaimed to France and Europe that Hamburg had been taken by main force, with a loss of some hundred men. But for this imaginary resistance, officially announced, how would it have been possible to justify the spoliation and exactions which ensued?

The Dutch General, Hogendorff, became Governor of Hamburg in lieu of Carra St. Cyr, who had been confined at Osnabruck since his precipitate retreat. General Hogendorff had been created one of the Emperor's aides de camp, but he was neither a Rapp, a Lauriston, nor a Duroc. The inhabitants were required to pay all the arrears of taxes due to the different public offices during the seventy days that the French had been absent; and likewise all the allowances that would have been paid to the troops of the garrison had they remained in Hamburg. Payment was also demanded of the arrears for the quartering of troops who were fifty leagues off. However, some of the heads of the government departments, who saw and understood the new situation of the French at Hamburg, did not enforce these unjust and vexatious measures. The duties on registrations were reduced. M. Pyonier, Director of the Customs, aware of the peculiar difficulty of his situation in a country where the customs were held in abhorrence, observed great caution and moderation in collecting the duties: Personal examination, which is so revolting and indecorous, especially with respect to females, was suppressed. But these modifications did not proceed from

the highest quarter; they were due to the good sense of the subordinate agents, who plainly saw that if the Empire was to fall it would not be owing to little infractions in the laws of proscription against coffee and rhubarb.

If the custom-house regulations became less vexatious to the inhabitants of Hamburg it was not the same with the business of the post-office. The old manoeuvres of that department were resumed more actively than ever. Letters were opened without the least reserve, and all the old post-office clerks who were initiated in these scandalous proceedings were recalled. With the exception of the registrations and the customs the inquisitorial system, which had so long oppressed the Hanse Towns, was renewed; and yet the delegates of the French Government were the first to cry out, "The people of Hamburg are traitors to Napoleon: for, in spite of all the blessings he has conferred upon them they do not say with the Latin poet, '*Deus nobis haec otia fecit.*'"

But all that passed was trifling in comparison with what was to come. On the 18th of June was published an Imperial decree, dated the 8th of the same month, by virtue of which were to be reaped the fruits of the official falsehood contained in the bulletin above mentioned. To expiate the crime of rebellion Hamburg was required to pay an extraordinary contribution of 48,000,000 francs, and Lubeck a contribution of 6,000,000. The enormous sum levied on Hamburg was to be paid in the short space of a month, by six equal instalments, either in money, or bills on

respectable houses in Paris. In addition to this the new Prefect of Hamburg made a requisition of grain and provisions of every kind, wines, sailcloth, masts, pitch, hemp, iron, copper, steel, in short, everything that could be useful for the supply of the army and navy.

But while these exactions were made on property in Hamburg, at Dresden the liberties of individuals and even lives were attacked. On the 15th of June Napoleon, doubtless blinded by the false reports that were laid before him, gave orders for making out a list of the inhabitants of Hamburg who were absent from the city. He allowed them only a fortnight to return home, an interval too short to enable some of them to come from the places where they had taken refuge. They consequently remained absent beyond the given time. Victims were indispensable but assuredly it was not Bonaparte who conceived the idea of hostages to answer for the men whom prudence kept absent. Of this charge I can clear his memory. The hostages, were, however, taken, and were declared to be also responsible for the payment of the contribution of 48,000,000. In Hamburg they were selected from among the most respectable and wealthy men in the city, some of them far advanced in age. They were conveyed to the old castle of Haaburg on the left bank of the Elbe, and these men, who had been accustomed to all the comforts of life, were deprived even of necessities, and had only straw to lie on. The hostages from Lubeck were taken to, Hamburg: they were placed between decks on board an old ship in the port: this

was a worthy imitation of the prison hulks of England. On the 24th of July there was issued a decree which was published in the Hamburg Correspondent of the 27th. This decree consisted merely of a proscription list, on which were inscribed the names of some of the wealthiest men in the Hanse Towns, Hanover, and Westphalia.

## CHAPTER XXIX

1813.

Napoleon's second visit to Dresden—Battle of Bantzen—The Congress at Prague—Napoleon ill advised—Battle of Vittoria—General Moreau Rupture of the conferences at Prague—Defection of Jomini—Battles of Dresden and Leipsic—Account of the death of Duroc—An interrupted conversation resumed a year after—Particulars respecting Poniatowski—His extraordinary courage and death—His monument at Leipsic and tomb in the cathedral of Warsaw.

On the 2d of May Napoleon won the battle of Lutzen. A week after he was at Dresden, not as on his departure for the Russian campaign, like the Sovereign of the West surrounded by his mighty vassals: he was now in the capital of the only one of the monarchs of his creation who remained faithful to the French cause, and whose good faith eventually cost him half his dominions. The Emperor stayed only ten days in Dresden, and then went in pursuit of the Russian army, which he came up with on the 19th, at Bautzen. This battle, which was followed on the two succeeding days by the battles of Wurtchen and Oclikirchen, may be said to have lasted three days—a sufficient proof that it was obstinately disputed. It ended in favour of Napoleon, but he and France paid dearly for it: while General Kirschner and Duroc were talking together the former was killed by a cannon-

ball, which mortally wounded the latter in the abdomen.

The moment had now arrived for Austria to prove whether or not she intended entirely to desert the cause of Napoleon.

—[There is a running attack in *Erreurs* (tome, ii. pp, 289-325) on all this part of the *Memoirs*, but the best account of the negotiations between France, Austria, and the Allies will be found in *Metternich*, Vol. i. pp. 171-215. Metternich, with good reason, prides himself on the skill with which he gained from Napoleon the exact time, twenty days, necessary for the concentration of the Austrian armies. Whether the negotiations were consistent with good faith on the part of Austria is another matter; but, one thing seems clear—the Austrian marriage ruined Napoleon. He found it impossible to believe that the monarch who had given him his daughter would strike the decisive blow against him. Without this belief there can be no doubt that he would have attacked Austria before she could have collected her forces, and Metternich seems to have dreaded the result. "It was necessary, therefore to prevent Napoleon from carrying out his usual system of leaving an army of observation before the Allied armies, and himself turning to Bohemia to deal a great blow at us, the effect of which it would be impossible to foresee in the present depressed state of the great majority of our men" (*Metternich*, Vol. i, p. 177). With our knowledge of how Napoleon held his own against the three armies at Dresden we may safely assume that he would have crushed Austria if she had not joined him or disarmed. The conduct of Austria was natural and politic,

but it was only successful because Napoleon believed in the good faith of the Emperor Francis, his father-in-law. It is to be noted that Austria only succeeded in getting Alexander to negotiate on the implied condition that the negotiations were not to end in a peace with France. See Metternich, Vol. i. p. 181, where, in answer to the Czar's question as to what would become of their cause if Napoleon accepted the Austrian mediation, he says that if Napoleon declines Austria will join the Allies. If Napoleon accepts, "the negotiations will most certainly show Napoleon to be neither wise nor just, and then the result will be the same. In any case we shall have gained the necessary time to bring our armies into such positions that we need not again fear a separate attack on any one of them, and from which we may ourselves take the offensive." ]—

All her amicable demonstrations were limited to an offer of her intervention in opening negotiations with Russia. Accordingly, on the 4th of June, an armistice was concluded at Pleiswitz, which was to last till the 8th of July, and was finally prolonged to the 10th of August.

The first overtures after the conclusion of the armistice of Pleiswitz determined the assembling of a Congress at Prague. It was reported at the time that the Allies demanded the restoration of all they had lost since 1805; that is to say, since the campaign of Ulm. In this demand Holland and the Hanse Towns, which had become French provinces, were comprehended. But we should still have retained the Rhine, Belgium, Piedmont, Nice, and



Savoy. The battle of Vittoria,

—The news of this decisive battle increased the difficulty of the French plenipotentiaries at Prague, and raised the demands of the Allies. It also shook the confidence of those who remained faithful to us.—  
Bourrienne.]—

which placed the whole of Spain at the disposal of the English, the retreat of Suchet upon the Ebro, the fear of seeing the army of Spin annihilated, were enough to alter the opinions of those counsellors who still recommended war. Notwithstanding Napoleon's opposition and his innate disposition to acquire glory by his victories, probably he would not have been inaccessible to the reiterated representations of sensible men who loved their country, France, therefore, has to reproach his advisers. At this juncture General Moreau arrived; it has been said that he came at the solicitation of Bernadotte. This is neither true nor probable. In the first place, there never was any intimacy between Bernadotte and Moreau; and, in the next, how can it be imagined that Bernadotte wished to see Moreau Emperor! But this question is at once put at rest by the fact, that in the interview at Abo the Emperor of Russia hinted to Bernadotte the possibility of his succeeding Napoleon. It was generally reported at the time, and I have since learnt that it was true, that the French Princes of the House of Bourbon had made overtures to Moreau through the medium of General Willot, who had been proscribed on the 18th Fructidor; and I have since learned from an authentic

source that General Moreau, who was then at Baltimore, refused to support the Bourbon cause. Moreau yielded only to his desire of being revenged on Napoleon; and he found death where he could not find glory.

At the end of July the proceedings of the Congress at Prague were no. further advanced than at the time of its assembling. Far from cheering the French with the prospect of a peace, the Emperor made a journey to Mayence; the Empress went there to see him, and returned to Paris immediately after the Emperor's departure. Napoleon went back to Dresden, and the armistice not being renewed, it died a natural death on the 17th of August, the day appointed for its expiration. A fatal event immediately followed the rupture of the conferences. On the 17th of August Austria, wishing to gain by war as she had before gained by alliances, declared that she would unite her forces with those of the Allies. On the very opening of this disastrous campaign General Jomini went over to the enemy. Jomini belonged to the staff of the unfortunate Marshal Ney, who was beginning to execute with his wonted ability, the orders he had received. There was much surprise at his eagerness to profit by a struggle, begun under such melancholy auspices, to seek a fresh fortune, which promised better than what he had tried under our flag. Public opinion has pronounced judgment on Jomini.

—[It was on the 11th of August, not the 17th, that Metternich announced to Caulaincourt, Napoleon's plenipotentiary at Prague, that Austria had joined the Allies

and declared war with France; At midnight on 10th August Metternich had despatched the passports for the Comte Louis de Narbonne, Napoleon's Ambassador, and the war manifesto of the Emperor Francis; then he had the beacons lighted which had been prepared from Prague to the Silesian frontier, as a sign of the breach of the negotiations, and the right (i.e. power) of the Allied armies to cross the Silesian frontier (Metternich, vol. i, p. 199).]—

The first actions were the battle of Dresden, which took place seven days after the rupture of the armistice, and the battle in which Vandamme was defeated, and which rendered the victory of Dresden unavailing. I have already mentioned that Moreau was killed at Dresden. Bavaria was no sooner rid of the French troops than she raised the mask and ranged herself among our enemies.

In October the loss of the battle of Leipsic decided the fate of France. The Saxon army, which had long remained faithful to us, went over to the enemy during the battle. Prince Poniatowski perished at the battle of Leipsic in an attempt to pass the Aster.

I will here mention a fact which occurred before Duroc's departure for the campaign of 1812. I used often to visit him at the Pavilion Marsan, in the Tuileries, where he lodged. One forenoon, when I had been waiting for him a few minutes, he came from the Emperor's apartments, where he had been engaged in the usual business, He was in his court-dress. As soon as he entered he pulled off his coat and hat and laid them aside. "I have just had a conversation with the Emperor about you," said

he. "Say nothing to anybody. Have patience, and you will be—" He had, no sooner uttered these words than a footman entered to inform him that the Emperor, wished to see him immediately. "Well," said Duroc, "I must go." No sooner was the servant gone than Duroc stamped violently on the floor, and exclaimed, "That —— never leaves me a moment's rest. If he finds I have five minutes to myself in the course of the morning he is sure to send for me." He then put on his coat and returned to the Emperor, saying, "Another time you shall hear what I have to tell you."

From that time I did not see Duroc until, the month of January 1813. He was constantly absent from Paris, and did not return until the end of 1812. He was much affected at the, result of the campaign, but his confidence in Napoleon's genius kept up his spirits. I turned the conversation from this subject and reminded him of his promise to tell me what had passed between the Emperor and himself relative tome. "You shall hear," said he. "The Emperor and I had been playing at billiards, and, between ourselves, he plays very badly. He is nothing at a game which depends on skill. While negligently rolling his balls about he muttered these words: 'Do you ever see Bourrienne now?'—'Yes, Sire, he sometimes dines with me on diplomatic reception-days, and he looks so droll in his old-fashioned court-dress, of Lyons manufacture, that you would laugh if you saw him.'—'What does he say respecting the new regulation for the court-dresses?'—'I confess he says it is very ridiculous; that it will have no other

result than to enable the Lyons manufacturers to get rid of their old-fashioned goods; that forced innovations on the customs of a nation are never successful.'—'Oh, that is always the way with Bourrienne; he is never pleased with anything.'— 'Certainly, Sire, he is apt to grumble; but he says what he thinks.'— 'Do you know, Duroc, he served me very well at Hamburg. He raised a good deal of money for me. He is a man who understands business. I will not leave him unemployed. Time must hang heavily on his hands. I will see what I can do for him. He has many enemies.'—'And who has not, Sire?'— 'Many complaints against him were transmitted to me from Hamburg, but the letter which he wrote to me in his justification opened my eyes, and I begin to think that Savary had good motives for defending him. Endeavours are made to dissuade me from employing him, but I shall nevertheless do so at last. I remember that it was he who first informed me of the near approach of the war which we are now engaged in. I forget all that has been said against him for the last two years, and as soon as peace is concluded, and I am at leisure, I will think of him.'"

After relating to me this conversation Duroc said, "you must, of course, feel assured that I said all I think of you, and I will take an opportunity of reminding him of you. But we must be patient. Adieu, my dear friend; we must set off speedily, and Heaven knows when we shall be back again!" I wished him a successful campaign and a speedy return. Alas! I was doomed to see my excellent friend only once again.

Next to the death of Duroc the loss most sincerely regretted during the campaign of 1813 was that of Prince Poniatowski. Joseph Poniatowski, a nephew of Stanislas Augustus, King of Poland, was born at Warsaw on the 7th of May 1763: At an early age he was remarkable for his patriotic spirit; but his uncle's influence gave him an apparent irresolution, which rendered him suspected by some of the parties in Poland. After his uncle had acceded to the Confederation of Targowitz, Poniatowski left the service accompanied by most of his principal officers. But when, in 1794, the Poles endeavoured to repulse the Russians, he again repaired to the Polish camp and entered the army as a volunteer. His noble conduct obtained for him the esteem of his countrymen. Kosciuszko gave him the command of a division, with which he rendered useful services during the two sieges of Warsaw. Immediately after the surrender of that capital Poniatowski went to Vienna. He refused the offers of Catherine and Paul to bear arms in the service of Russia.

Poniatowski retired to his estate near Warsaw, where he lived like a private gentleman until the creation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw revived the hopes of the Polish patriots. He then became War Minister. The Archduke Ferdinand having come, in 1809, with Austrian troops to take possession of the Duchy of Warsaw, Poniatowski, who commanded the Polish troops, which were very inferior in numbers to the Austrian force, obliged the latter, rather by dint of skillful maneuvering than by fighting, to evacuate the Grand Duchy. He pursued them into Galicia as far

as Cracow.

After this honourable campaign he continued to exercise his functions as Minister until 1812. The war against Russia again summoned him to the head of the Polish army. After taking part in all the events of that war, which was attended by such various chances, Poniatowaki was present at the battle of Leipsic. That battle, which commenced on the 14th of October, the anniversary of the famous battles of Ulm and of Jena, lasted four days, and decided the fate of Europe. Five hundred thousand men fought on a surface of three square leagues.

Retreat having become indispensable, Napoleon took leave at Leipsic of the King of Saxony and his family, whom he had brought with him from Dresden. The Emperor then exclaimed in a loud voice, "Adieu; Saxons," to the people who filled the market-place, where the King of Saxony resided. With some difficulty, and after passing through many turnings and windings, he gained the suburb of Runstadt and left Leipsic by the outer gate of that suburb which leads to the bridge of the Elster, and to Lindenau. The bridge was blown up shortly after he had passed it, and that event utterly prevented the retreat of the part of the army which was on the left bank of the Easter, and which fell into the power of the enemy. Napoleon was at the time accused of having ordered the destruction of the bridge immediately after he had himself passed it in order to secure his own personal retreat, as he was threatened by the active pursuit of the enemy. The English journals were unanimous on this point, and to counteract

this opinion, which was very general, an article was inserted in the 'Moniteur'.

Before passing the bridge of the Elster Napoleon had directed Poniatowski, in concert with Marshal Macdonald, to cover and protect the retreat, and to defend that part of the suburb of Leipsic which is nearest to the Borne road. For the execution of these orders he had only 2000 Polish infantry. He was in this desperate situation when he saw the French columns in full retreat and the bridge so choked up with their artillery and waggons that there was no possibility of passing it. Then drawing his sword, and turning to the officers who were near him, he said, "Here we must fall with honour!" At the head of a small party of cuirassiers and Polish officers he rushed on the columns of the Allies. In this action he received a ball in his left arm: he had already been wounded on the 14th and 16th. He nevertheless advanced, but he found the suburb filled with Allied troops.

—[The Allies were so numerous that they scarcely perceived the losses they sustained. Their masses pressed down upon us in every direction, and it was impossible that victory could fail to be with them. Their success, however, would have been less decisive had it not been for the defection of the Saxons. In the midst of the battle, these troops having moved towards the enemy, as if intending to make an attack, turned suddenly around, and opened a heavy fire of artillery and musketry on the columns by the aids of which they had a few moments before been fighting. I do not know to what page of history such a



transaction is recorded. This event immediately produced a great difference in our affairs, which were before in a bad enough train. I ought here mention that before the battle the Emperor dismissed a Bavarian division which still remained with him. He spoke to the officers in terms which will not soon be effaced from their memory. He told them, that, "according to the laws of war, they were his prisoners, since their Government had taken part against him; but that he could not forget the services they had rendered him, and that they were therefore at liberty to return home." These troops left the army, where they were much esteemed, and marched for Bavaria.]—

He fought his way through them and received another wound. He then threw himself into the Pleisse, which was the first river he came to. Aided by his officers, he gained the opposite bank, leaving his horse in the river. Though greatly exhausted he mounted another, and gained the Elster, by passing through M. Reichenbach's garden, which was situated on the side of that river. In spite of the steepness of the banks of the Elster at that part, the Prince plunged with his horse into the river: both man and horse were drowned, and the same fate was shared by several officers who followed Poniatowski's example. Marshal Macdonald was, luckily, one of those who escaped. Five days after a fisherman drew the body of the Prince, out of the water. On the 26th of October it was temporarily interred at Leipsic, with all the honours due to the illustrious deceased. A modest stone marks the spot where the body of the Prince was

dragged from the river. The Poles expressed a wish to erect a monument to the memory of their countryman in the garden of M. Reichenbach, but that gentleman declared he would do it at his own expense, which he did. The monument consists of a beautiful sarcophagus, surrounded by weeping willows. The body of the Prince, after being embalmed, was sent in the following year to Warsaw, and in 1816 it was deposited in the cathedral, among the remains of the Kings and great men of Poland. The celebrated Thorwaldsen was commissioned to execute a monument for his tomb. Prince Poniatowski left no issue but a natural son, born in 1790. The royal race, therefore existed only in a collateral branch of King Stanislas, namely, Prince Stanislas, born in 1754.

# CHAPTER XXX

1813

Amount of the Allied forces against Napoleon—Their advance towards the Rhine—Levy of 280,000 men—Dreadful situation of the French at Mayence—Declaration of the Allies at Frankfort—Diplomatic correspondents—The Due de Bassano succeeded by the Duke of Vicenza—The conditions of the Allies vaguely accepted—Caulaincourt sent to the headquarters of the Allies—Manifesto of the Allied powers to the French people.—Gift of 30,000,000 from the Emperor's privy purse—Wish to recall M. de Talleyrand—Singular advice relative to Wellington—The French army recalled from Spain—The throne resigned Joseph—Absurd accusation against M. Laine—Adjournment of the Legislative Body—Napoleon's Speech to the Legislative Body—Remarks of Napoleon reported by Cambaceres.

When the war resumed its course after the disaster of Leipsic I am certain that the Allied sovereigns determined to treat with Napoleon only in his own capital, as he, four years before, had refused to treat with the Emperor of Austria except at Vienna. The latter sovereign now completely raised the mask, and declared to the Emperor that he would make common cause with Russia and Prussia against him. In his declaration he made rise of the singular pretext, that the more enemies there were

against Napoleon there would be the greater chance of speedily obliging him to accede to conditions which would at length restore the tranquillity of which Europe stood so much in need. This declaration on the part of Austria was an affair of no little importance, for she had now raised an army of 260,000 men. An equal force was enrolled beneath the Russian banners, which were advancing towards the Rhine. Prussia had 200,000 men; the Confederation of the Rhine 150,000: in short, including the Swedes and the Dutch, the English troops in Spain and in the Netherlands, the Danes, who had abandoned us, the Spaniards and Portuguese, whose courage and hopes were revived by our reverses, Napoleon had arrayed against him upwards of a million of armed men. Among them, too, were the Neapolitans, with Murat at their head!

The month of November 1813 was fatal to the fortune of Napoleon. In all parts the French armies were repulsed and driven back upon the Rhine, while in every direction, the Allied forces advanced towards that river. For a considerable time I had confidently anticipated the fall of the Empire; not because the foreign sovereigns had vowed its destruction, but because I saw the impossibility of Napoleon defending himself against all Europe, and because I knew that, however desperate might be his fortune, nothing would induce him to consent to conditions which he considered disgraceful. At this time every day was marked by a new defection. Even the Bavarians, the natural Allies of France, they whom the Emperor had led to victory at the

commencement of the second campaign of Vienna, they whom he had, as it were, adopted on the field of battle, were now against us, and were the bitterest of our enemies.

Even before the battle of Leipsic, the consequences of which were so ruinous to Napoleon, he had felt the necessity of applying to France for a supply of troops; as if France had been inexhaustible. He directed the Empress Regent to make this demand; and accordingly Maria Louisa proceeded to the Senate, for the first time, in great state: but the glories of the Empire were now on the decline. The Empress obtained a levy of 280,000 troops, but they were no sooner enrolled than they were sacrificed. The defection of the Bavarians considerably augmented the difficulties which assailed the wreck of the army that had escaped from Leipsic. The Bavarians had got before us to Hanau, a town four leagues distant from Frankfort; there they established themselves, with the view of cutting off our retreat; but French valour was roused, the little town was speedily carried, and the Bavarians were repulsed with considerable loss. The French army arrived at Mayence; if, indeed, one may give the name of army to a few masses of men destitute, dispirited, and exhausted by fatigue and privation. On the arrival of the troops at Mayence no preparation had been made for receiving them: there were no provisions, or supplies of any kind; and, as the climax of misfortune, infectious epidemics broke out amongst the men. All the accounts I received concurred in assuring me that their situation was dreadful:

However; without counting the wreck which escaped from the disasters of Leipsic, and the ravages of disease; without including the 280,000 men which had been raised by a 'Senatus-consulte, on the application of Maria Louisa, the Emperor still possessed 120,000 good troops; but they were in the rear, scattered along the Elbe, shut up in fortresses such as Dantzic, Hamburg, Torgau, and Spandau. Such was the horror of our situation that if, on the one hand, we could not resolve to abandon them, it was at the same time impossible to aid them. In France a universal cry was raised for peace, at whatever price it could be purchased. In this state of things it may be said that the year 1813 was more fatal to Napoleon than the year 1812. The disasters of Moscow were repaired by his activity and the sacrifices of France; but the disasters of Leipsic were irreparable.

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