

## CHAPTER XIII

### BONAPARTE EMBODIES THE REVOLUTION

END OF THE REVOLUTION — THE ALTERNATIVES — BONAPARTE AS AN IDEALIST — RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ARMY — RUSSIA AND THE GREAT POWERS — SLACKNESS OF THE COALITION — THE POLICY OF ENGLAND — DEBATES IN PARLIAMENT — CANNING'S INFLUENCE — AUSTRIAN SCHEMES — FRENCH OPINION AND THE PRESS — CONSOLIDATION OF FRENCH POWER — BONAPARTE IN THE TUILERIES — THE WASHINGTON FESTIVAL.

NO one understood better than Bonaparte the connection in a state between external and internal affairs. The second coalition, so far as Russia, Austria, England, and Turkey were concerned, was very loosely cemented indeed. They were united in their determination to subdue France, but they had not an interest in common beyond that. Such was their jealousy as regarded the control of the Mediterranean that a strong government in France might hope to create discord among them. When, therefore, on December fifteenth, 1799, the provisional consulate came to an end, and the new constitution, known in French history as that of the twenty-second of Frimaire, year VIII, came into operation by the so-called popular vote, or plebiscite, it entered upon life, as was most essential for French interests, not as an empty scheme, but as a full-fledged organism, with every office filled, the machinery actually in motion, and the administration ready for intercourse with the other governments of Europe. The words of Bonaparte's proclamation were: "Citizens, the Revolution is planted on the principles from which it proceeded. It is ended." As regarded the internal life of France, no truer words could have been written. There had never been true liberty or true brotherhood under its banners; the leveling had been more successful, and equality in the matter of civic

rights might be considered as won. What was left of those principles, as the event proved, was embodied for France herself in the First Consul and in his beneficent measures. To Europe at large this embodiment of the Revolution in the new sovereign was soon made equally evident. France had adopted him. Would the surviving dynasties admit him, as the representative of French nationality, to a seat on their Olympus? Nothing but an imperative necessity would compel them to do so, and then only for the moment.

Two courses were therefore open to the new power: first, to extort an acquiescence, however distasteful, by consolidating France as the nation and the homogeneous people which the Revolution had made it, by increasing her prosperity, by fostering her genius, by showing an example to the world of what the people of a peaceful, enlightened, industrious state could be in contrast to the case-hardened, unreceptive, and sullen populations who still remained passive under dynastic rule; or, second, to restore the expansive anti-national character of the Revolution, and, using the magnificent military system created in that epoch as a destroying power, to menace the dynasties in their very existence, and thus make them first respectful neutrals and then subservient tools both in their own reconstruction and in the liberation of their subjects. These were, in this emergency, the two alternatives at the First Consul's command. Choosing neither permanently, but one or the other at will, as each rising question made it expedient, the result was an interference which brought first this and then that policy into prominence, made both partly successful, but neither entirely so, and ended in the ruin of the schemer.

Taking advantage of the temporary abdication of all power, and of the momentary renunciation of all activities, even of interest, by the people, the unconscious idealist began his work. Never was a man more practical in his own eyes, or, from his own point of view, more concrete and direct in his motives or conduct. Seizing every opportunity as it arose, he was the type of what is to-day called in France an opportunist. But for all that, not the least element of his supernal greatness was an ever-present idealism. In view of his birth and early training, it is easy to see that if, as Mme. de Staël first suggested, nature had brought that quality down in his line from some far-off Italian of the early Renaissance, it would develop under Rousseau's and Raynal's influence. Whencesoever it came, it is not least among the causes of

the later political renaissance which saw the creation of a new and modern society, the completion of a process which began with the English revolution. It is this quality alone which makes Napoleon an element of the first importance in universal history. Other traits make him so in the epoch now called by his name.

His first thought was for the army. It is probable that Moreau's participation in the latest political stroke—a fact to which, in the initial stages, it owed its success—was due to personal ambition; he probably thought that when Bonaparte had once become a civilian, his only military rival would be disposed of. Accordingly, when the plan for the coming campaign was published, it was found that Moreau was to command a great central European force composed of the recruited armies of the Rhine and of Helvetia, to be called by the name of the former. Masséna, whose brilliant victories in Switzerland had moderated the gloom occasioned by the disasters of the previous year in Italy, was to have supreme command of the forces which were still to be called the Army of Italy—the name made so glorious at Lodi, at Arcola, at Castiglione, and at Rivoli. It seemed, indeed, as if the First Consul had himself renounced all ambition as a soldier in order to become entirely a statesman. The imperious and jealous but prudent Moreau was to have full scope for his powers, the brilliant Masséna was to wear his old commander's laurels. But there was a reserve army, not talked of nor paraded, which was quietly, silently, and unostentatiously formed, under Berthier's master hand, from new conscripts skilfully intermingled with selected veterans. The divisions were gathered in different places, apparently with no unity, and thus were drilled, trained, and organized without observation. While most of it was kept within the French borders, ready for instant mobilization, and with headquarters ostensibly at Dijon, a part was sent under the nominal command of the devoted adjutant to Geneva in order to maintain the French honor in Switzerland.

The French people, however, desired not war, but peace. The list of competent and admirable administrators chosen by the government was sufficient proof that public affairs were to be carefully transacted. The reconstruction of the army gave evidence that peace was to be made with honor. The next step was so to behave that France should think her new chief magistrate eager for a general pacification. Since Bonaparte's return from Egypt there had been a combination of



circumstances which pointed to an easy solution of this problem. The Czar of Russia was much exasperated with George III. because the Russian soldiers included in the capitulation of Alkmaar were coolly received when transported to England, and then virtually imprisoned in the island of Guernsey. When, soon afterward, the English laid siege to Malta, of which he yearned to be grand master, he was ready to accuse Great Britain of treachery. But he was still more incensed with Austria. As has been told, a portion of his army, under Korsakoff, was overwhelmed by Masséna at Zurich on September twenty-fifth, 1799. Suvaroff, with the other wing, was at the time in full possession of Piedmont; and in accordance with his master's instructions he had invited the fugitive Charles Emmanuel IV. to return from Sardinia and reinstate himself at Turin.

The Austrian archduke Charles had withdrawn, after his defeat of Masséna by the first battle of Zurich in June, 1799, to take command in central Germany. Francis, being fully determined to keep all northern Italy for himself, and therefore to prevent the reestablishment of the house of Savoy on the mainland, speciously ordered Suvaroff to the assistance of his fellow-countrymen beyond the Alps. The Russian general found nothing prepared for his passage of the St. Gotthard; on the contrary, he was so hindered at every turn by the absence of mules for his baggage-train, and so harassed by the attacks of the French, that his expedition was one long disaster. He attributed his misfortunes to Austrian indifference or worse. Driven from valley to valley, over icy peaks and barren passes, his troops perished in great numbers, and their panic was complete when they heard of Korsakoff's terrible defeat. Before a junction could be effected with the remnants of that army, Masséna turned and attacked Suvaroff himself, compelling him to flee eastward as best he could until he reached the confines of Bavaria. This put a climax to the Czar's fury; he demanded that the Italian princes should be restored to their governments, and that Thugut should be dismissed, as a guarantee of good faith. Finally he heard that when Ancona fell before the combined attacks of Austrians, Russians, and Turks, his own standard had been taken down, and only the Austrian left flying. To a gloomy enthusiast, claiming to be the mirror of chivalry and magnanimity, this was a crowning insult; and he determined, in December, 1799, to withdraw from the coalition. This was Bonaparte's opportunity, and he began at once a series of the most flat-

tering attentions to Paul, which made him for the rest of his short life a passionate admirer of the schemes and person of the First Consul. England and Austria were thus the only formidable opponents left in the coalition against France.

With ostentatious simplicity Bonaparte wrote both to George III. and to Francis II., as man to man, announcing his accession to power, and pleading, in the interest of commerce, of national well-being, and of domestic happiness, for a cessation of hostilities after eight years of warfare. The French people, who looked upon the First Consul as a ruler made by themselves, were delighted with this simple straightforwardness, and gratified by the notion of their representative treating on equal terms with the divine-right monarchs of Europe. Pitt mistakenly thought that Bonaparte still personified Jacobinism, and labored under the delusion that France was completely exhausted. An English army was ready and about to disembark on the west coast of France. Kléber in Egypt, having maintained himself superbly thus far, was about to yield to pitiless fate, and accept humiliating terms for evacuating the country. Could the flames of the civil war which was once more raging in France be further fanned, and the control of the Levant secured in English hands, the great English premier would be able in a few months to make terms far more advantageous than any he could hope for at the moment. Lord Grenville therefore wrote a brusque letter to Talleyrand, refusing negotiation with a government the stability of which was not assured, and suggesting in a weak, impolitic way that while the French had a right to choose their own government, the return of the Bourbons would be the best guarantee of a permanent and settled administration. This clause afforded the opportunity for a smart reply by Bonaparte, denouncing England as the author of the war which had raged through 1799 and was about to be renewed, and reminding the King that he himself ruled by consent of his people.

The debate which ensued in Parliament was most instructive, because the First Consul was entirely right. Great Britain was the main-spring of the coalition. The wits of London said in public that England had contracted half of her national debt to destroy the Bourbons and the other half to restore them to power. This was the key-note of the Liberal opposition. Lord Holland was willing to be sponsor for Bonaparte's sincerity, but the Lords laughed at him. In the Commons Whitbread charged the excesses of the French Revolution to the un-

warrantable interference of other powers; England owed it to herself to make peace when she could, even with a usurper. Erskine could see in England's course nothing but a blind obstinacy which had overwhelmed the nation with debt and disaster. "What would you say," said Tierney, "if Bonaparte victorious should refuse to treat except with the Stuarts?" But the temper of Parliament and the people was for continuing the war. Grenville, in the upper house, declared that Bonaparte was merely a new exponent of the revolutionary wickedness of the Directory. He had made treaties or armistices with Sardinia, Tuscany, Modena, and the minor Italian states, only to violate them; he had scorned the neutrality of Parma; he had dragged Venice into war for her own destruction; he had trampled Genoa underfoot; and he had destroyed the liberty of Switzerland while uttering false promises of peace and friendship. His hearers sustained him by an overwhelming majority.

In the lower house Canning denounced the First Consul as a usurper who, like a specter, wore on his head something which resembled a crown. Pitt rose to the height of his majestic powers in one of the great orations of his life. Minor political considerations must be waived. Bonaparte was the destroyer of Europe. The sole refuge from the calamities with which he was about to flood the nations was England. He himself had unwillingly consented to the negotiations at Lille; it was Fructidor which had broken them off, and it was Bonaparte who was the author of Fructidor. He might be reproached for desiring the restoration of the ancient monarchy to France, but an exhausted and desperate country could not find the long repose essential for recuperation except under the Bourbons. The success of his plea was even greater than Grenville's. Thus by an appeal to the old detestation of revolutionary excess which was so deep-seated in the English masses, and by an adroit insinuation that it was this for which Bonaparte stood,—a fact which seemed to be shown by his career,—the ministry gained a new lease of life, and men believed that a few months would see France fall in utter exhaustion before the coalition.

Bonaparte's personal letter to the Emperor was, as the writer doubtless foresaw it would be, equally unsuccessful. Austria, thanks to her double dealings with Russia in the last campaign, was now occupying Lombardy, Piedmont, and the Papal States; she meant to keep them, and moderately but firmly refused to treat on the basis proposed, which was that of Campo Formio.

Among other unfortunate surrenders which France under the Directory had made for the sake of quiet and security was that of freedom for the press. A consular decree of January seventeenth, 1800, further emphasized this democratic policy, and suppressed all but thirteen political journals. This was nominally a measure to be enforced only during the war. For its justification there was the plea of necessity. The serious indiscretions which a free and enterprising press always has committed, and is sure to commit, during hostilities, uniformly calls out the angry denunciations of military writers. The "spurred and booted ruler" of whom Napoleon spoke at St. Helena could not well be expected to act otherwise than he did. Unfortunately, the only papers which continued to be published became at once mere administrative organs. When, therefore, with a skilful display of facts the course of negotiations in both England and Austria was laid before the public, the people of Paris and the provinces were easily roused to warlike ardor. The clever and witty pasquinades, the abusive and scathing paragraphs, in which all the papers indulged, from the "Moniteur" downward, increased the excitement. It pleased the French fancy to read a supposed summons to George, inviting him, as a convert to legitimacy, to abdicate in favor of the surviving Stuart heir. Forgetful of the immediate past, the nation was ready to maintain French honor at any cost against its embittered and inveterate foe. The Pactolus streams of English gold could not, the French felt sure, much longer subsidize the Continental powers; for it was Great Britain, and not France, which was really exhausted.

Led by a man whose genius was believed to be as fertile in political, administrative, and fiscal expedients as it had always been in military measures, with an admirable machinery of government and a general confidence in their ruler, the French people became ever more certain that they might now and finally conquer in the struggle with England for mastery. This opinion was further strengthened because the inveterate rancor of civil conflict in the west was again temporarily quieted. The devastator of Egypt and Syria held out with one hand the mildest offers of conciliation to the malcontent communities of that district, with the other he displayed his powerful sword, while in his proclamations he threatened measures as severe as those he had practised against the rebellious Bedouin. This course had the desired effect, and brought the French rebels to terms. The Army of the West could



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be reduced in numbers; and as at the same time the Batavian Republic was in a fervor of enthusiastic loyalty, so also could the Army of Holland. In this way more than thirty thousand excellent soldiers were freed for use elsewhere.

Simultaneously with these events the most careful preparation was made for a step which might redound to Bonaparte's credit if properly taken, but could easily be detrimental to the complete success of his schemes. Under the new constitution every department of government had an assigned dwelling-place. That of the consuls was to be the Tuileries. How could an absolute dictator install his penates in the sometime home of absolute royalty without inspiring general distrust? The first step was to rechristen the pile as "the palace of the government," the next to consecrate it to glory. From far and near the statues of the great were gathered to adorn its halls. The choice of these displayed in significant confusion the generals and statesmen of all times in all places. Alexander, Cæsar, Frederick; Cato, Cicero, Brutus; Mirabeau, Marceau, and Joubert; and many others of lesser note, were assembled in effigy. But highest of all was set the image of Washington, the news of whose death had just reached Europe. His example was to be held up as the real inspiration of the new ruler. In order both to arouse the imagination of the people and to convince their understanding, the army was put into mourning for the great American, and a festival was instituted in his honor. To exalt the man who was universally considered as the typical and ideal republican of the age was a conspicuously effective idea, since it accorded thoroughly with the approved traditions of the Revolution.

The celebration was set for February ninth, 1800, and proved a great success. It had already been decided to reawaken public enthusiasm by instituting great military ceremonies when the captured standards from Aboukir were finally deposited in the hospital of the Invalides. These and the Washington festival were interwoven with consummate art: while the First Consul's victories were recalled in the imposing parade, the simple and impressive words of an able orator, M. de Fontanes, reminded the nation that the immortal Washington had shown as a general more strength than brilliancy, and had awakened little enthusiasm, but great confidence; that he was one of the men inspired to rule who appear from time to time in the world; that he was neither partisan nor demagogue; and that when peace had once been signed he

had laid down his arms to become the wisest of constructive legislators. "Yes, Washington; thy counsels shall be heard—thou warrior, legislator, administrator! He who in his youth surpassed thee in battle, like thee shall close with conquering hands the wounds of his country." Minds less quick than those of the Parisians would have discovered the moral of the address even without the peroration. When the official journal next day published the glowing words and described the brilliant ceremony, the coming monarch was already lodged under the roof of the Bourbons. Since Bonaparte had made the liberation of Lafayette an indispensable condition of the treaty ratified at Campo Formio, it might have been expected that this name, so long used elsewhere in a natural juxtaposition, would on such an occasion have been mentioned in connection with that of Washington; but the honors of that day were to be shared with the dead foreigner, not with the living Frenchman.