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**The
BONAPARTES IN AMERICA**

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**Clarence Edward Macartney  
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#### FIRST CONSUL BONAPARTE

Napoleon, salesman to the United States of an inland empire known as the Louisiana Purchase, 1803. The "empire," far greater in many respects than his own, brought him less than three cents an acre. It was five times the size of France itself

*(Courtesy Library of Congress)*

THE  
BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

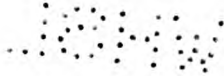
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CLARENCE EDWARD <sup>Noble</sup> MACARTNEY  
and  
GORDON DORRANCE

*Illustrated*



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TO  
AMERICA  
Where King Is Man  
and Man Is King

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## FOREWORD

**O**F the making of many books about Napoleon there is no end. After the Prince of Peace Himself, more books have been written about this Prince of War than of any man in the history of the world. Odious and detestable in many respects, great and lofty in others, marvelous combination of military genius and administrator, the coming generations, as Cicero said of Julius Cæsar, will dispute over him.

The first important contact of the Bonapartes with America was in 1803, when Napoleon, disappointed in his dream of a colonial empire, and doubting that he could hold French territory in North America against British aggression, sold Louisiana to the United States for the paltry sum of fifteen million dollars. Thus Napoleon, unwittingly, played a great part in the expansion and growth of the United States, for out of that vast territory acquired from France there were carved thirteen of the States of the Union.

As the United States was the chief practical example and exponent of the liberal idea in government, it was only natural that the Bonapartes should have looked upon America as a place of refuge and an asylum of safety when their Empire fell to pieces. Napoleon himself was at first fully minded to go to the United States. Passports to the United States, although not delivered to him, had been promised him, and two frigates had been placed at his disposal. But after days had been lost in vacillation and indecision, Napoleon, likening himself to Themistocles, boarded the *Bellerophon* and sealed his fate for the South Atlantic rock.

## FOREWORD

Napoleon's youngest brother, Jerome, married a Baltimore girl when in this country. Joseph, his oldest brother, the King of Spain, lived for nineteen years in New Jersey. Another brother, Lucien, then out of favor with Napoleon, started for the United States in 1811, but his ship was captured by a British cruiser and he was taken to England. Reconciled to Napoleon during the Hundred Days, Lucien tried to follow Joseph to the United States after Waterloo, but was too closely watched by his enemies.

Napoleon III was in exile in New York in 1837 after his ill-fated attempt at Strasbourg. Two of Napoleon's nieces and several of his nephews came to America. After Waterloo many of Napoleon's old officers, proscribed by the Bourbons, made America their refuge, their Champ d'Asile, where they warmed themselves at the fires of memory and nursed their hopes for the future. Among these were Marshal Grouchy, the Lallemand brothers, Clausel, Raoul, Rigaud, and Lefebvre-Desnouettes. It was in the United States, too, that the principal plots were devised for the release of Napoleon from St. Helena.

From Napoleon and the Louisiana Purchase to Charles Joseph Bonaparte of Maryland, a period of well over one hundred years, the Bonapartes have played a singular part in the annals of America. Thus it is that the story of this family in the United States is an important, fascinating and, hitherto, never completely told chapter in the history of that Corsican clan which genius, revolution and war hurled up to the high places of the earth.

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# The BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

## I

### JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

**I**N December, 1936, Edward VIII, King of Great Britain and Ireland, Emperor of India, and Defender of the Faith, gave up his throne for the sake of a twice-divorced Baltimore woman, Wallis Warfield. In December, 1803, Jerome Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon, then First Consul and soon to be Emperor, married the beautiful Elizabeth Patterson, also of Baltimore, and thereby incurred the wrath of his brother and was shut out from the succession to the new French dynasty. The history of Edward's marriage is yet to be written. The marriage of Jerome and Elizabeth was full of sorrow and tragedy.

Jerome Bonaparte, the youngest of Napoleon's brothers, was born in Corsica, November 15, 1784. He was thus fifteen years younger than Napoleon. He was put to school at Juilly and at an early age entered the French navy. He is described as an affectionate though impulsive and wayward youth. Napoleon frequently referred to him as a little scoundrel. In his early days he spent much time at Malmaison with Josephine, who was ever fond of children. "This sojourn in the salon of his sister-in-law spread over his whole life a perfume of elegance and so to speak *une odeur de femme*: not only did he love the women which is common, but he knew how to talk to them and to please them. He had

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

with everybody, even with men, polite manners which were not acquired; a greeting which left no one indifferent; a seduction which attracted even those who were forewarned, and a prodigality which showed how well he had profited by the lessons of his instructress.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1801 Jerome sailed with the French expedition to Santo Domingo. In charge of this expedition was General Le Clerc, who had married Napoleon's sister, Pauline, regarded as the most beautiful woman of Europe, and whose beauty has been immortalized in the statue of the Venus of Victory by Canova in the Borghese gallery in Rome. In 1802 Jerome had a part in the taking of Port au Prince. For his gallantry he was rewarded with the rank of Ensign. The same year he returned to France bearing dispatches. Displeased with his expensive dissipations and with his delay in returning to his station, Napoleon wrote Jerome: “I have seen your letter and am waiting with impatience to hear that you are on board your ship, studying a profession intended to be the scene of your glory. Die young if you ever intend to disgrace your name; for if you live to sixty without having served your country, you had better not have been born.”

Jerome returned to Martinique on the bark *Epervier*. In the West Indies he piled up extraordinary debts for a youth of eighteen. Speaking of Jerome to Las Cases at St. Helena, Napoleon said: “Jerome was an absolute prodigal. He plunged into boundless extravagance and the most odious libertinism. His excuse perhaps

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<sup>1</sup> Masson, *Napoleon et sa famille*, p. 256.



## JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

may be his youth and the temptation by which he was surrounded."

Disobeying orders to return with his ship to France, Jerome ordered his ship to sail while he himself took passage in an American pilot boat, arriving at Norfolk, Virginia, in July, 1803. He was accompanied by one Lecamus, whom he made his secretary. From Norfolk he proceeded to Washington where he called upon Pichot, the French charge d'affaires, to supply him with money and look after his comfort. In Washington he fell in with Joshua Barney, who had served for a time in the French Navy, and who was also one of the early officers in the United States Navy.

Pichot planned to get Jerome out of the country and for ten thousand dollars chartered a ship at Philadelphia, the *Clothier*, which was to carry Jerome back to France; but in the meantime Jerome had gone with his friend Barney to Baltimore. There he fell in with Elizabeth Patterson and all plans for returning to France were abandoned. Elizabeth Patterson was the daughter of a Baltimore merchant, William Patterson, born in Donegal, Ireland, in 1752. He was said to have been a descendant of Robert Patterson, the original of Scott's *Old Mortality*, that picturesque character who, mounted on his white pony, rode up and down Scotland searching out on barren moors and in lonely glens the graves of the martyred Covenanters, and with his hammer and chisel renewing the inscriptions which pronounced the blessings of heaven upon the martyrs and called down maledictions upon their persecutors and murderers.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

William Patterson soon acquired a fortune in the shipping business in the new land, and rendered a great service to the Colonies during the Revolutionary War by bringing in on his vessels powder and other munitions and arms which he had purchased in France. In the letter which he wrote to Robert Livingston at Paris about the marriage of Elizabeth and Jerome, Thomas Jefferson said, "Mr. Patterson is President of the Bank of Baltimore, the wealthiest man in Maryland, perhaps in the United States, except Mr. Carroll, a man of great virtue and respectability. The mother is the sister of the lady of General Samuel Smith and consequently the station of the family is with the first of the United States." Patterson married Dorothy Spear, the daughter of a well connected family in Baltimore. So regular and methodical was he in his habits that after once establishing himself in Baltimore in 1788, he almost never in his life left the city either on pleasure or on business. He was the first president of the Bank of Maryland, and when the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was chartered, Patterson, then in his eightieth year, was one of its directors.

His daughter Elizabeth was then eighteen years of age and recognized by all as a girl of intelligence, beauty, wit, and charm. The three-fold painting by Gilbert Stuart shows a face of regular features and undoubted beauty. She is thus described: "Her features were perfectly regular; her brown eyes clear and sparkling; her hair black; her neck and shoulders marvelous; her form, her hands and feet, exquisitely modeled. In short she was a regular 'Irish beauty' with

## JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

a little of the Anglo-Saxon race in her appearance. In the painting by Stuart it is impossible to find a fault, to note an imperfection: '*c'est la beauté!*' and it is not the beauty of a statue but beauty full of life and spirit: brilliant, striking, laughing, alluring—a beauty which awakens desire and demands homage."<sup>1</sup>

The first meeting between Jerome and Elizabeth is thus related by James Gallatin, son of Albert Gallatin, who met Elizabeth long afterward in Switzerland. "Madame Patterson Bonaparte told us how she first met her husband, Jerome Bonaparte. He had gone to America in command of a ship, arriving at Baltimore. He was invited to dine with an old Frenchman, the Marquis de Poleon, who had escaped with his family from Santo Domingo during the massacre on that island. Two of his children with their nurses were killed. On account of the troubled state of France, he had thought it wiser to go to America. All the beauties of Baltimore were invited to the dinner—the Catons, etc. She was looking out of the window overlooking the drive with Monsieur de Poleon's oldest daughter. She continued: 'We saw two young men approaching the house. Mlle. Pascault exclaimed, pointing to the taller one, that man will be my husband. I answered, very well, I will marry the other one. Strangely enough, we both did as we had said. Henriette Pascault married Reubell, son of one of the Three Directors, and I married Jerome Bonaparte. Had I waited, with my beauty and wit, I would have married an

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<sup>1</sup> Geer, *Napoleon and His Family*. Coward McCann Co., N. Y.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

English Duke, instead of which I married a Corsican blackguard.'"<sup>1</sup>

After this there were frequent meetings between Jerome and the beautiful Elizabeth; one a formal affair at the home of Samuel Chase, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. At their first dance the dress of Elizabeth became entangled with a gold chain, part of Jerome's uniform. While Jerome was disentangling her, not too eagerly or hurriedly, Elizabeth recalled a prophecy made to her as a child, that one day she would be a great lady of France.

Jerome had fallen deeply in love with Elizabeth, and Elizabeth, although a cold and calculating person, was greatly stirred at the thought of marriage with the youngest brother of the chief personality in the world at that time. William Patterson, the hard-headed Covenanter, warned by friends that Jerome was seeking only a home and a fortune, and that when he returned to France he would abandon Elizabeth, made every effort to break the engagement, as did also Pichot, the French representative at Washington. But Elizabeth declared that she would rather be the wife of Jerome Bonaparte for an hour than the wife of any other man for life, and Jerome told the French Minister to mind his own business. Every effort was made in drawing up the marriage contract to protect the interests of Elizabeth in the event of the non-recognition of the marriage or its annulment. Article 4 in this contract, which was drawn by Alexander J. Dallas, after-

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<sup>1</sup> James Gallatin, *Diary*, p. 61. Scribner's Sons, N. Y. 1916.

## JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

wards Secretary of the Treasury, read, "that if the marriage should be annulled on demand of the said Jerome Bonaparte, or that of any member of his family, the said Elizabeth Patterson shall have a right in any case to one-third of the real, personal, and mixed property of her husband." As things turned out, this clause did not avail to protect Elizabeth's rights when the marriage was annulled by an Imperial decree.

Jerome and Elizabeth were married Christmas Eve, 1802, by Bishop John Carroll of the Roman Catholic Church. The wedding was witnessed by M. Sotin, the French Consul at Baltimore, by Lecamus, Jerome's secretary, and by the mayor of Baltimore. The wedding dress of Elizabeth, and which she kept ever near her until her death more than three-quarters of a century afterward, seems to have created something of a sensation. Lecamus wrote that "all the clothes worn by the bride might be put in my pocket." Another spoke of the gown as "a mere suspicion of a dress—India muslin covered with lace." Baltimore society leaders said with shocked accent after the wedding that the bride wore beneath her dress but a single garment!

A more careful observer describes the dress thus: "A slip of white satin over a dress of muslin, hand-sewn, with silver spangles and embroidered in a deep hem, with stars worked into a design of flowers and spray. Shoes of silver cloth; orange blossoms; and on the hair a veil worked into shimmering silver." On their honeymoon Jerome and Elizabeth visited Washington, where they were entertained by the French Minister, and made a tour of the Eastern states.

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Expecting that difficulties would arise concerning the marriage, Patterson sent his son Robert to France to sound out Napoleon. Robert sent back word that although the American Minister, Livingston, was using every effort to reconcile Napoleon to Jerome's marriage, the First Consul, soon to be Emperor, was greatly incensed over the marriage, all the more so because at that time he was enraged and disappointed over the marriage of his brother, Lucien, to Alexandrine de Bleschamps, or Mme. Joubertou, May 25, 1803, the day after she had borne him a child. Robert Patterson had a meeting with Lucien Bonaparte on the 14th of March, 1804, when Lucien told him that his mother and the whole family, with the exception of Napoleon, approved the match. He referred also to his own recent marriage which had so displeased Napoleon, making the sensible remark, "When we marry we are to consult our own happiness and not that of another. It matters not who else is or is not to be displeased." Lucien advised Jerome to remain in America and become an American citizen, and thought that an income of twenty thousand dollars a year might be secured for him. As a result of these interviews and negotiations, Robert Patterson advised his father to the effect that Jerome ought to remain for the present in the United States, but if he should decide to return to France, he was to bring his wife with him.

Napoleon's first move against the marriage was an order to the French Consul at New York that no money was to be advanced to the person of Citizen Jerome. The Consul was also informed that Jerome was to be

## JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

sent back to France by the first French frigate to sail. All captains of French vessels were forbidden to receive on board Jerome's wife, and should she arrive in France, she was to be deported immediately to the United States. The Consul-General was instructed to appeal to Jerome's sense of honor and remind him of the glorious career which was still possible for him. In a personal letter to Jerome, the French Minister of Marine endeavored to rouse his ambitions. He said, "War is going on and you are quiet and in peace at a distance of twelve hundred leagues from the stage on which you ought to be acting a great part. How will men recognize in you the brother of the Regulator of Europe?"

To his Minister of Marine Napoleon said, "Jerome is wrong to fancy that he will find in me affections that will yield to his weakness. Sole fabricator of my destiny, I owe nothing to my brother. If I completely abandon him (Lucien), who in maturer years has thought proper to withdraw himself from my direction, what has Jerome to expect?"

The marriage of Jerome and Elizabeth was to all effect annulled when the French Senate prohibited all civil officers from receiving on their registers "the transcription of the act of celebration of a pretended marriage that Jerome Bonaparte has contracted in a foreign country during the age of minority without the consent of his mother and without previous publication in the place of his nativity." To one of his Ministers, Napoleon said, "I will receive Jerome, if leaving in America the young person in question, he shall come

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hither to associate himself with my fortunes. Should he bring her along with him, she shall not put a foot on the territory of France. If he comes alone, I shall forgive the error of a moment, and the fault of youth. Faithful services and the conduct which he owes to himself and to his name will regain him all my kindness."

Such were the tidings from France that clouded the honeymoon of Jerome and Elizabeth. Still devoted to his beautiful wife, Jerome was determined to take her to Europe with him, confident that if Napoleon once met her, her beauty and charm would overcome all prejudice; but Elizabeth was never granted the opportunity to charm the Emperor.

In October, 1804, Jerome and Elizabeth embarked at Philadelphia on a ship bound for Cadiz. The vessel was wrecked off Lewes, Delaware, and Jerome and Elizabeth narrowly escaped drowning. They took refuge at the house of a gentleman, where Elizabeth greatly displeased her aunt, Miss Spear, who was traveling with her, by enjoying a hearty meal of roast goose and applesauce, when, thought her pious aunt, she ought to be offering up prayers of thanksgiving for her deliverance. Before sailing, Jerome had received a letter from his always kind and generous brother, Joseph, in which Joseph said, "Do not forget that everything I have is at your disposition. I shall share with you anything I have with great pleasure. Since your affections have led you far from your family, and from your friends, I feel for my part that you cannot renounce them. Tell Mrs. Jerome for me that as soon





JEROME BONAPARTE  
Husband of Elizabeth, and King of Westphalia  
*(From "The Napoleon Dynasty")*

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## JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

as she arrives and is acknowledged by the chief of the family, she will not find a more affectionate brother than I."

On the 18th of May, 1804, Napoleon declared himself Emperor of the French, and was crowned at Notre Dame, December 2, 1804. Joseph and Louis Bonaparte were declared princes of the Empire with the right of succession, should Napoleon fail of issue. Lucien and Jerome, by their marriages which displeased the Emperor, were both excluded from the right of succession.

In March, 1805, Elizabeth, now pregnant, and therefore all the more anxious to get to France before her child should be born, sailed with Jerome in one of her father's ships, the *Erin*—reaching Lisbon April 2. At Lisbon a guard was placed about the *Erin* and Elizabeth was not permitted to land. To the French Ambassador at Lisbon, who asked what he might do for "Miss Patterson," the proud Elizabeth replied, "Tell your master that Madame Bonaparte is ambitious and demands her rights as a member of the Imperial family."

The *Erin* then proceeded to Amsterdam, where, as at Lisbon, Elizabeth was not permitted to land. In fear for her life now, she sailed to Dover, where she landed amid the shouts of a great multitude, for by this time her vicissitudes had aroused immense interest in England. Her child was born at Camberwell, July 7, 1805, and was named Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte.

When Jerome attempted to see Napoleon, the Emperor refused to meet him, and instructed him to address him by letter. In reply to Jerome's letter,

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Napoleon wrote: "I have received your letter of this morning. There are no faults that you have committed which may not be effaced in my eyes by a sincere repentance. Your marriage is null, both in a religious and legal point of view. I will never acknowledge it. Write to Miss Patterson to return to the United States and tell her it is not possible to give things another turn. On condition of her return to America, I will allow her a pension during her life of sixty thousand francs per year, provided she does not take the name of my family, to which she has no right, her marriage having no existence."

To his Chancellor, Cambaceres, Napoleon said of the marriage, "There was no more of a marriage than between two lovers who unite themselves in a garden upon the altar of love in the presence of the moon and the stars." When Jerome was first admitted to the presence of the Emperor, Napoleon, referring to the way in which Jerome had abandoned his ship in the West Indies, said to him, "So, Sir, you are the first of the family who has shamefully abandoned his post. It will require many splendid actions to wipe off that stain from your reputation. As to your love affair with your little girl, I pay no regard to it."

On May 24, 1805, Napoleon wrote to the Pope, Pius VII, requesting him to grant a bull annulling the marriage. The letter was accompanied with the present of a gold tiara. In his letter the Emperor wrote: "I have frequently spoken to your Holiness of a young brother nineteen years of age whom I sent in a frigate to America and who, after a sojourn of a month, al-

JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

though a minor, married a Protestant, a daughter of a merchant of the United States. He has just returned. He is fully conscious of his fault. I have sent back to America Miss Patterson, who calls herself his wife. By our laws the marriage is null. A Spanish priest so far forgot his duties as to pronounce the benediction. I desire from your Holiness a bull annulling the marriage. I send your Holiness several papers from one of which, by Cardinal Casselli, your Holiness will receive much light. I could easily have this marriage broken in Paris, since the Gallican church pronounces such matrimony null, but it appears to me better to have it done in Rome on account of the example to sovereign families marrying Protestants. I beg your Holiness to do this quietly, and as soon as I know that you are willing to do it, I will have it broken here civilly. It is important for France that there should not be a Protestant young woman so near my person. It is dangerous that a minor and a distinguished youth should be exposed to such seduction against the civil laws and all sorts of propriety."

In this letter there were a number of inaccuracies. The marriage was not solemnized by a Spanish priest, but by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Baltimore, and it was celebrated with all the formalities required by the Catholic laws. The real reason for Napoleon's objection to the marriage, and his request of the Pope for a bull of annulment, was not of course what he says, that he dreaded to have "a Protestant young woman so near my person," but that having recently been made Emperor, he wished his family to make distinguished

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

connections in Europe. To the Emperor's amazement and chagrin, Pope Pius refused to issue the bull annulling the marriage. In his answer to the Emperor the Pope wrote: "In the crowded affairs which overwhelm us, we have taken all the care and given ourselves all the trouble to derive personally from all sources the means of making the most careful researches to ascertain if our Apostolic authority could furnish any method of satisfying the wishes of your majesty, which, considering their end, it would have been very agreeable to us to second. But in whatever light we have considered it, the result of our examination has been that of all the motives that have been proposed, or which we can imagine, there is not one which allows us to gratify your majesty, as we should be glad to do, by declaring the nullity of the marriage.

"The proposed impediments are four in number. On examining them separately, however, it has not been possible to find one which, in the present case, and according to the principles of the Church, can authorize us to declare the nullity of the marriage contracted and already consummated. The difference in religion, considered by the Church as an absolute impediment, does not obtain between persons who have been baptized, even when one of them is not in the Catholic communion. This impediment obtains only in marriages contracted between a Christian and an infidel. These marriages between Protestants and Catholics, although disapproved by the Church, are nevertheless acknowledged as valid. We earnestly hope that your majesty will be satisfied that the desire which animates

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us of seconding your wishes is in this case rendered ineffectual by the want of power, and you will accept this very declaration as a sincere testimony of our paternal affection."

This courageous refusal of the Pope to annul the marriage of Jerome and Elizabeth was the beginning of a feud between Napoleon and the Vatican which led to the imprisonment of Pope Pius at Fontainebleau. Thwarted in his attempt to have the marriage annulled by the Church, Napoleon had the Council of State annul the marriage on the ground that Jerome was under age and had married without consent of his guardian.

For a brief period, Jerome wrote Elizabeth assurances of his loyalty and affection. On October 16, 1805, he wrote to her: "I loved my country; I loved glory; but I loved them as a man who accustomed to fear nothing never will forget that he is the father of Jerome Napoleon and the husband of Elizabeth." In the mind of Elizabeth, however, there seems to have been a suspicion from the time that her child was born that Jerome would desert her, for five weeks after the birth of her son, Elizabeth, writing to her father that she had received a letter from Jerome indicating unchanging affection, says: "No matter what I think, it is unjust to condemn until we have some certainty greater than at the present, and my conduct shall be such as if I had a perfect reliance upon him. The Emperor has offered to give me twelve thousand dollars a year during my life, on condition that I return to America and give up his name. I request that you will not mention this

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proposal. I have never taken the smallest notice of it." She did, however, afterwards accept the pension and received it annually up to 1814.

In November, 1805, Elizabeth returned with her child to Baltimore. Jerome soon yielded to the will of his imperious brother, and acquiesced in the annulment of the marriage. On August 12, 1807, Jerome was married to Princess Frederica Catharine, daughter of the King of Wurttemberg. As a king, Jerome was, like his brothers, a failure. At the Emperor's request, Talleyrand prepared a coat of arms for the new King of Westphalia. The coat of arms "encaged in a single shield all the heraldic enamels figuring in the arms of Brunswick, Hesse, and the other states. It made a regular menagerie: a horse and ten lions of every enamel, of every metal, and of every attitude, with the eagle of the Empire over all."<sup>1</sup> Jerome's reign in Westphalia was marked by folly, foolish expenditure, and unbridled dissipation and licentiousness.

Some years afterward, Napoleon thought of putting Jerome on the throne of Poland. "I would put Jerome on the throne," he said to Caulaincourt, "and make a splendid kingdom for him; but he would have to do something for it, for the Poles love true glory. Jerome cares for nothing but pageantry, women, plays, and fetes. My brothers do not back me up. My brothers think of nothing but themselves; yet I set them a good example. I am the king of the people, for I spend nothing except on encouraging the arts and leaving

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<sup>1</sup> Masson, *Napoleon et sa famille*.

## JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

memories that shall be glorious and useful to the nation. It can never be said that I endow favorites and mistresses. I give rewards only for services rendered to the country—nothing else.”<sup>1</sup>

One thing greatly to the credit of Jerome as king of Westphalia was his treatment of the Jews. Because of the state of the treasury of the kingdom, he was obliged to borrow a large sum of money from a Hebrew banker, Isaac Jacobson. Some time afterward, a deputation of Jews from Westphalia presented to Jerome an address of loyalty. In answer to their address, Jerome said, “I like your address, gentlemen. The clause of my constitution which establishes the equality of religions is in unison with my own heart. No law ought to interfere with the exercise of the religious worship of any man. Every subject ought to be as free to observe the rules of his faith as the king himself. It is the duty of the citizen only that the laws of the government ought to regulate. I hope I shall never have cause to regret that I favor and protect the Israelites in my kingdom.” Henceforth Westphalia became a promised land to the Jews of Europe. The Minister of State, the Counsellor of Finances, the Commissary of War, the Superintendent of Hospitals, and the Burgomaster were all Jews.

Jerome’s habit of playing at leap-frog with his courtiers and ministers at the royal palace added nothing to his dignity or to the prestige of his reign. He wasted his revenues upon worthless favorites and made royalty odious by his disgraceful amours. In 1812 he

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<sup>1</sup> Caulaincourt, *With Napoleon in Russia*, p. 41. Wm. Morrow & Co., N. Y. 1935.



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started with Napoleon on the Russian campaign, but after Smolensk, Napoleon, displeased with his conduct, placed him under the command of Marshal Davout, whereupon Jerome, in a huff, returned to Germany. During the Hundred Days, Jerome joined Napoleon at Paris, was placed in command of a division, and fought with great bravery and distinction at Quatrebras and Hougoumont. After the second abdication he took up his residence in Trieste. In 1847 he returned to France and was made a Marshal of France by Napoleon III. Jerome died in Paris June 25, 1860. By his German wife he had three children: Jerome Napoleon Charles, who died in childhood, Mathilde Laetitia Wilhelmina, and Napoleon Joseph Charles Paul, known as Prince Napoleon, and who became heir to the fortunes of the Napoleonic dynasty. The present head of the Bonaparte family, and Bonaparte Pretender to the French Throne, is Prince Louis Napoleon, a great-grandson of Jerome.

Jerome, who wished to have his son by Elizabeth Patterson with him, asked Elizabeth to come to Westphalia, promising her a handsome residence at Smalgalden, with the titles of Prince and Princess for her son and herself, and an income of two hundred thousand francs. On receiving this letter, Elizabeth said that Westphalia was not a kingdom large enough to contain two queens. When Elizabeth heard that Jerome was displeased that she had declined a pension from him, but had accepted one of twelve thousand dollars a year from Napoleon, she remarked that she "preferred to be sheltered under the wings of an eagle rather than to be

## JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

suspended from the bill of a goose." The French Minister to the United States, General Toureau, in 1808 informed the French government that there was a projected marriage between Elizabeth and the son of an English admiral, Sir Thomas Braves. From the general tone of her correspondence with the Emperor, and with French officials, one gets the impression that Elizabeth capitalized rumored marriages with Englishmen to extort money from Napoleon. She was supposed to be about to marry a Mr. Oakley, a secretary of the British Legation. She informed the French Legation that her family threatened to disinherit her if she did not marry Oakley. The French Minister thereupon offered her a credit of twenty-five thousand dollars.

Her child, Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, born July 7, 1805, was not baptized until May 9, 1809. The ceremony was performed by the Bishop who had married her, John Carroll. Elizabeth herself never seems to have had any idea of renouncing her own Presbyterian faith, such as it was, although her son was brought up in the religion of his father. Discussing one day with a friend the matter of religion, and using the familiar argument for Roman Catholicism, she said that if she adopted any religion it would be the Catholic, because at least that was the religion of kings. Her niece who was present exclaimed, "How can you say such a thing? You would not give up Presbyterianism." To which Madame Bonaparte responded, "The only reason I would not is that I should not like to give up the stool my ancestors had sat upon."

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Through her marriage with one of the Bonapartes, and her frequent stays in Europe, Elizabeth developed a most extraordinary Europe-mania, and was ever in dread lest her son should degrade himself by marrying an American. It was wormwood and gall to her when her son, Jerome Napoleon, married on November 3, 1829, Susan May Williams, a lady of fortune and family, in Baltimore. When she first heard of the proposed marriage, she wrote: "I had endeavored to instill into him from the hour of his birth the opinion that he was much too high in birth and connection ever to marry an American woman. I hated and loathed a residence in Baltimore so much that when I thought I was to spend my life there, I tried to screw my courage up to the point of committing suicide. My cowardice and only my cowardice prevented my exchanging Baltimore for the grave. I now repeat what I said in my last letter, that I would as soon have gone to Botany Bay as to have married any man in Baltimore." In a letter from Florence, December, 1829, commenting on the marriage, she said: "I always told him that he should never degrade himself by marrying an American."<sup>1</sup>

Almost the only good thing that Elizabeth Patterson is reported to have said of her own country is related by Madame de Stael. She had given a dinner at her house in Geneva, to which Madame Bonaparte was invited. "Arriving very late, she delayed serving of the dinner for over half an hour. On one side of her was a Mr. Dundas, a great gourmand, who was much put out at

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<sup>1</sup> Didier, *Life of Mme. Bonaparte*, p. 216. Scribner's Sons, N. Y. 1879.

## JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

having to wait. After the soup had been served, he turned to Madame Bonaparte and asked her if she had read the book of Captain Basil Hall<sup>1</sup> on America. She replied in the affirmative. 'Well, Madame,' said Dundas, 'did you notice that Hall said all Americans are vulgarians?' 'Quite true,' calmly answered Madame Bonaparte, 'I am not in the least surprised. If the Americans had been the descendants of the Indians, or the Esquimeaux, there might have been some reason to be astonished, but as they are the direct descendants of the English, it is perfectly natural that they should be vulgarians.' After this, Mr. Dundas did not open his mouth again and left at the first opportunity.<sup>2</sup>

Elizabeth and Jerome met just once after they separated at Lisbon in the spring of 1805. Jerome was walking one day with his wife through the gallery of the Pitti Palace at Florence when he saw Elizabeth. Drawing Catharine aside and pointing to Elizabeth, Jerome said: "That is my American wife."

However one sympathizes with Elizabeth in her abandonment by Jerome, hers is not a character which one can admire. When James Gallatin first saw her at Geneva, he wrote of her: "She is very lovely, but hard in expression and manner. I don't think she has much heart." There was no doubt about that. Elizabeth seems to have been an unsexed woman. Not that she was incapable of conceiving and bringing forth chil-

<sup>1</sup> Basil Hall visited St. Helena in 1817 and had an interesting interview with Napoleon, related in *A Voyage of Discovery to the Western Coast of Corea*. His father, Sir James Hall, visited Brienne when Napoleon was a student there. He was the first Englishman Napoleon ever saw. See *Napoleon*, Walter Scott.

<sup>2</sup> Gallatin, *Diary*, p. 51. Scribner's Sons, N. Y. 1916.

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dren, but that she was altogether devoid of love or passion. Her unmotherly and unfeminine nature is revealed in this sentence in a letter to her father, where, speaking of her son, she writes: "I hope he will reward by success all my cares, and I rejoice that I have no more children to toil after, never having envied anyone the honor of being the mother of a family, which is generally a thankless position."<sup>1</sup>

Although she amassed during her life a large fortune, she was singularly parsimonious. When she had her bedroom in her house in Baltimore carpeted, she gave instructions that the spaces under the bed and under the wardrobe were to be left out of the measurements. It was her custom to collect bits of bread after dinner and put them in her bag, for she said she was often hungry in the night. Once when living in Paris a crowd was seen to gather in front of her house. Some thought that the house was on fire, but a maid advised that they look in Elizabeth's bedroom. There it was found that her linen was suspended from the windows to dry, for she was her own washwoman. Once she fell in a stairway. When asked if she were hurt, she answered, "Hurt? Where are my false teeth? Are they broken? Alas, I paid five hundred francs for them only yesterday."

Elizabeth carried on an interesting correspondence with her Presbyterian father in Baltimore. Her father was disgusted with her distaste for her own country and her fondness for the fashionable circles of Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Gallatin, *Diary*, Scribner's Sons, N. Y. 1916.



ELIZABETH PATTERSON  
Ancestress of American Bonapartes  
*(From "The Napoleon Dynasty")*

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## JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

In one letter she wrote to her father that she is surprised at the enmity and jealousy of her American friends, and wonders that her friends do not have their pride gratified, at hearing that she is in the first society in Europe. She warns her father that in Europe a woman who is handsome and is likely to have a fortune may marry well, but if the report gets about that her parents are dissatisfied with her, no one will marry her, even if she has the beauty of Venus and the talents of Minerva. The meaning of this was that her father had expressed dissatisfaction with her stay in Europe and she feared that this might become known and therefore interfere with her social promotion. Yet she affirms that she will never marry again without rank. "I would never marry without rank, for God knows I might have got money enough by marriage." Her wise father writes to her, "I cannot say that I am satisfied with the attentions you seem to receive from great people in England. They cannot be lasting. They must arrive chiefly from curiosity and compassion." In an appeal to her to return to her home in Baltimore, her father wrote: "What will the world think of a woman who had recently followed her mother and her last sister to the grave, had quit her father's house where duty and necessity calls for her attentions as the only female of the family left, and thought proper to abandon all to seek for admiration in foreign countries?"

William Patterson's final estimate of his daughter is expressed in his will, when he died in 1835. He left her a few houses and handed her down to posterity as an unfilial ingrate in these bitter words: "The conduct

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of my daughter Betsy has through life been so disobedient that in no instance has she ever consulted my opinions or feelings. Indeed she has caused me more anxiety and trouble than all my other children put together and her folly and misconduct have occasioned me a train of expense that first and last has cost me much money.”<sup>1</sup>

The beauty and charm of Elizabeth were acknowledged in the highest circles in Europe, for she enjoyed great success in European society. Among her admirers were the astronomer Humboldt, the Duke of Wellington, Talleyrand, Madame de Stael, Chateaubriand, and other notable personalities of that day. The Russian statesman Gortschakoff said of Elizabeth, “Had she been near the throne, the allies would have had more difficulty in overthrowing Napoleon;” and Talleyrand paid her this compliment: “If she were a queen, how gracefully she would reign.”

As the years went by and she passed into middle life, then into old age, and saw her son and her grandson disappoint her ambitions and “degrade themselves” by marrying American women, life began to lose its zest for Elizabeth. To her friend Lady Morgan she wrote, “I have been in such a state of melancholy that I wished myself dead a thousand times. All my philosophy, all my courage, are insufficient sometimes to support the inexpressible ennui of existence.” When she was forty-seven years old, and still one of the most beautiful women in Europe, Elizabeth asked her family in

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<sup>1</sup> Didier, *Life of Mme. Bonaparte*, p. 244. Scribner's Sons, N. Y. 1879.



JEROME BONAPARTE AND ELIZABETH PATTERSON

America to send her a string of white topazes, which she would wear as a necklace and pretend they were diamonds. They were to be sent forward by private conveyance, so as to save the duties. Then she adds, "I am dying with ennui and do not know in what a person of my age can be amused. I am tired of reading, and of all my ways of killing time. I doze away existence. I am too old to coquette, and without this stimulus I die of ennui. The Princess (Gallitzen) tries to keep me up to the toil of dressing by telling me I am a beauty. I am tired of life and tired of having lived." Such is the melancholy confession of this woman who had great beauty of body, but no beauty of soul.

In 1840 Elizabeth returned from her last visit to Europe. Even at that age her beauty was remarked by all, and age seemed to have made little inroad upon it. Although she had now a large fortune which yielded her an annual income of one hundred thousand dollars, the last eighteen years of her life were spent in a Baltimore boarding-house. Up to the age of ninety she visited her brokers and agents and conducted her business affairs with much acumen. Her summers were spent at fashionable watering places, Rockaway Beach, York Springs, and White Sulphur Springs in West Virginia. Her mordant wit never failed her, even to the end. At York Springs one summer a woman remarked to her, "Madam, I am very glad to meet you. I hear you were once very beautiful. How old are you now?" To which Madame Bonaparte curtly replied,

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“Nine hundred and ninety years, nine days, and nine minutes.”<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth always appeared with bare arms, and always wore bracelets. She was never seen on the streets without her red parasol. When she returned for the last time from Europe, she brought with her a supply of gowns which was to last many years. She brought also twelve bonnets which, she said, were to last her as long as she lived. She was remembered in Baltimore not only for her red parasol but also for a black velvet bonnet, trimmed with orange colored feathers.

Not long before her death, surrounded by her jewels and dresses, relics of a long vanished splendor, she said to one of her friends: “Yes, the Emperor dealt hardly with me, but I long ago forgave him. Did he not say of me to Marshal Bertrand at St. Helena, ‘Those whom I have wronged have forgiven me; those whom I have loaded with kindness have forsaken me?’ Ah, Napoleon, I have not let my grandsons forget that their grand-uncle was the Emperor.” For the last two years of her life Elizabeth lived upon brandy and milk. She died April 4, 1879, having completed her ninety-fourth year. Shortly before her death she remarked bitterly, “Once I had everything but money. Now I have nothing but money.” On her grave in the Baltimore cemetery are cut these words: “After life’s fitful fever she sleeps well.”

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Didier, *Life of Mme. Bonaparte*, Scribner’s Sons, N. Y. 1879.

## II

### DESCENDANTS OF JEROME AND ELIZABETH

**J**EROME NAPOLEON, first American Bonaparte, son of Jerome, Napoleon's youngest brother, and Elizabeth Patterson, and their only child, was born at Camberwell, England, July 7, 1805. About three months later, the mother and young Jerome Napoleon returned to the United States, and once home she remained there for a decade, not leaving Baltimore until 1815, when again she crossed the Atlantic.

Meantime her son, called "Bo," received his early education at St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland. His mother came back to Baltimore from Europe in the summer of 1816, and this time stayed at home, which she thoroughly disliked, until May 1, 1819. She then, with "Bo," went to Geneva, and the young man was entered in a school appropriate to the age of fourteen. The two apparently enjoyed most of the next eight years there, their time devoted to schooling, and during vacation periods delightful trips to Paris, Florence, Rome. In all these centers they were cordially welcomed and warmly treated by the French and Italians and by the "family."

In November, 1821, was a great occasion. Mother and son, Elizabeth and Jerome, went to Rome to visit Pauline, the Princess Borghese, and Grandmother Bonaparte, Madame Mère, who at that time resided

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together in the Eternal City. There they were greeted warmly and with the utmost cordiality, the Princess and her mother even going so far as to suggest that young Jerome offer his hand in marriage to the Princess Charlotte, daughter of Joseph. Apparently this caught the fancy of Jerome himself. He returned to America in the February following, and it was not long after before he called on his Uncle Joseph in Philadelphia. Although Joseph's family may have made the same suggestion to him, Joseph himself avoided any mention of the subject during Jerome's call, and when the young man came again, Joseph was "not at home." It is probable that Joseph even then wished to strengthen family ties and royal claims through an alliance with the European family rather than the American.

Concerning the proposed match the guileless youth thus writes his grandfather in Baltimore: "My grandmother and my aunt and uncle talk of marrying me to my uncle's, the Count of Survilliers', daughter, who is in the United States. I hope it may take place, for then I would return immediately to America, and pass the rest of my life among my relations and friends. Mama is very anxious for the match. My father is also, and all of my father's family. So I hope that you will also approve of it."

It had been at the advice of his grandmother, Madame Mère, and of Cardinal Fesch and Louis Napoleon, that Jerome was sent to America to meet his uncle Joseph and his cousin Charlotte. But there must have been some hitch, for the young Jerome makes no mention of meeting his cousin, the proposed bride. As

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far as his mother was concerned, the projected marriage was a purely commercial matter. "His daughters," she writes to her father of Joseph's children, "are the best matches in Europe in point of both money and connection. They will have at least \$500,000 from him each, and something besides from their mother."

Or perhaps Jerome was disappointed when he saw Charlotte. That may well have been the case, if what Madame Tousard, a close friend of Jerome's mother, said of Charlotte was true: "I meet Joseph Bonaparte and his daughter very frequently in company. She is in size a dwarf and excessively ugly. Jerome is quite too handsome for her. It would be a great sacrifice." Charlotte finally bestowed her charms, or the lack of them, on Napoleon Louis, second son of Louis Bonaparte and Hortense, and a brother of Louis Napoleon, afterwards Napoleon III. Napoleon Louis took part in an Italian rising against Austria in 1831 and died from illness brought on by exposure in that campaign.

Jerome, his matrimonial plans thus summarily disposed of, repaired to Lancaster, Massachusetts, where he tutored for Harvard, to which in February, 1823, he was admitted. While in Harvard Jerome, as a devout Roman Catholic, was given a special dispensation exempting him from attending the Protestant service in the college chapel. Graduating from the University in 1826, he then sailed to meet his mother in Europe. While on the other side he once more saw his relatives in Rome, even his father. Of his father he had this to say when writing to Grandfather Patterson, January 17, 1827: "My father is very anxious for me to remain

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with him altogether, but I cannot think for a moment of settling myself out of America, to whose government, manners, and customs I am too much attached and accustomed to find pleasure in those of Europe, which are so different from my early education.”<sup>1</sup>

In June, 1827, he sailed once more for the United States, where on November 3, 1829, he was married to Miss Susan May Williams of Baltimore, whereupon he was warmly congratulated by all the Bonapartes abroad, including Madame Mère, congratulations in which only his mother did not join. One would have supposed that Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte, in view of her own experience, would have been a better and more complacent mother, since the young woman was in all ways worthy and the match desirable from every standpoint. Jerome's mother however dreaded the thought of having any son of hers “degrade himself” by marriage with an American woman, her own choice having been Charlotte.

Jerome was admitted to the Maryland Bar, but because of his family's considerable means, together with the fact that his bride was rich, he did not devote his life to the practice of his profession. Their estate was large and received most of his attention. He was regarded as one of the wealthiest and most worthy citizens of Baltimore, where early writers depict him as “devoting his life to books, to travel, to society, and to planting. For many years he has cultivated large tracts of land with great success, owing doubtless to scientific agriculture.”

<sup>1</sup> Bishop, *Charles Joseph Bonaparte*, pp. 18-19. Scribner's Sons, N. Y. 1922.

## DESCENDANTS OF JEROME AND ELIZABETH

When Napoleon III ascended the throne of France, Jerome visited him in Paris, where he was well received by his relative, the new Emperor. Napoleon addressed him as his cousin, and "Cousin Jerome" was made, by a Council of State decree, a citizen of France. In spite of Jerome's own efforts, and he seems to have been sincerely interested in the subject, he never was recognized as of the Imperial family or as having place in the line of their succession. The decree of the State, however, did entitle all Elizabeth Patterson's descendants to the Bonaparte name. The only objection to this concession, seemingly trivial to an American, was registered by the father himself, ex-King Jerome of Westphalia. Following this Jerome Bonaparte's death, 1860, his American son Jerome appealed through the French courts for the right to share his properties. Of course, in a sense the granting of such an appeal would have recognized the Imperial status of the American branch, and so doubtless through the influence of Napoleon III himself this appeal, which Elizabeth probably inspired though her son made it, was denied. Whereupon Jerome Napoleon made his protest to the Emperor, which accomplished nothing, and then returned to Baltimore to live and die. We fear that if he had got what he wanted he would have remained a Frenchman. Let us be thankful that he did not, for in Baltimore were born to him and his good wife two sons, one destined to become a great American.

Jerome himself pre-deceased his mother, the aged and never-tiring one, for he died in Baltimore June 17, 1870, the same year as died the hopes of his "dear

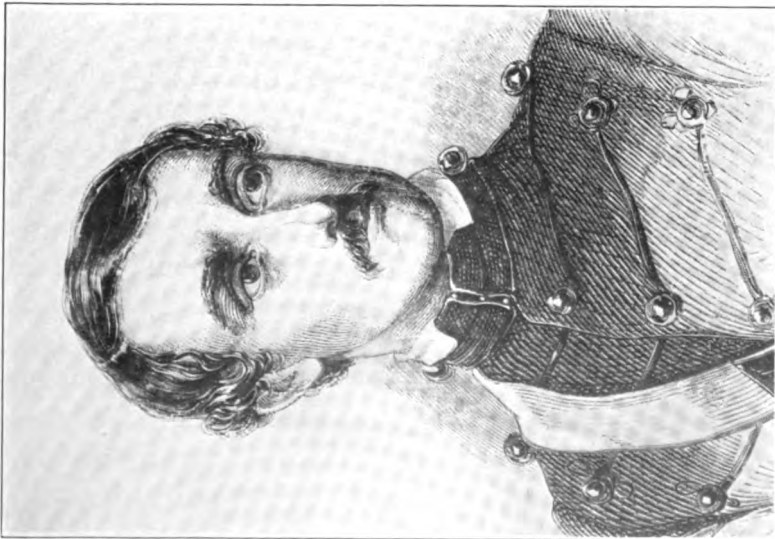
## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

Cousin," Napoleon III. Jerome, who in his appearance resembled the great Napoleon, died of cancer of the throat—not the first Bonaparte to succumb to this dread disease nor indeed the last so destined. It had struck before in the Bonaparte family and it was to strike again, for generations. Indeed, cancer is reported to have killed both the father and the grandfather of Napoleon.

Jerome and his wife had the two sons, born twenty-one years apart: the elder, named for him, Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, born November 5, 1830; the younger, Charles Joseph, born June 9, 1851, and christened Charles for his great-grandfather, father of Napoleon and his own father, and Joseph for his great-uncle Joseph, the King of Spain.

Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, the third Jerome, and the second Jerome Napoleon, spent one year at Harvard, then entered West Point, where he was graduated in 1852, eleventh in a class of forty-three, with Henry Slocum, George Crook, and others of Civil War fame. It is related that at his graduation his brother Charles, aged one year, was present. This Jerome served for a time with the Third Cavalry on border or frontier duty in Texas, but after two years of chiefly garrison life the new Second Lieutenant resigned from the United States Army August 16, 1854, accepting a commission as Second Lieutenant in the Seventh Dragoons of the French Army. His French commission from Napoleon III was dated September 7, 1854. For many years he saw active service, commencing with the Crimean War, the first of three conflicts in which he





LIEUTENANT JEROME NAPOLEON  
BONAPARTE  
United States Army  
(From "The Napoleon Dynasty")



JEROME NAPOLEON BONAPARTE  
OF NEW YORK  
Last of a great family in America  
(Photo by Koehltz, N. Y.)

## DESCENDANTS OF JEROME AND ELIZABETH

was to engage. For distinguishing himself at Inkerman, and famed Balaklava, as well as in the Sebastopol siege, he received from the Queen of England the Crimean Medal; from the French, Chevalier of the Legion of Honor; from the Turkish Sultan, the Order of Medjidie. He was as French as his soldier ancestors and he could not help himself.

In June, 1855, Jerome had been promoted to First Lieutenant, later serving in the Algerian campaign of 1856-57. In May, 1859, he was transferred as Captain to the First African Chasseurs and in 1859 participated in the Italian campaign and the battles of Montebello and Solferino, as well as many outpost clashes. He was on the staff of the Emperor part of this time and again was decorated by the Emperor, this time with the *Medaille d'Italie*, and by the King of Sardinia with a decoration of Military Valor. In February, 1860, Captain Jerome transferred again, to the First Carabiniers. Five years later, in August, 1865, he was promoted to Major, this time in the Third Cuirassiers. Next came a most important step, March, 1867, when he was transferred to the Dragoons of the Empress. He was commissioned their Lieutenant Colonel in August, 1870. French historians attest that he was not a palace soldier but an active-duty officer, since he had participated in many famous campaigns and had earned his promotions wherever awarded him. We are told that when Napoleon III left for the front in 1870, as the Franco-Prussian War commenced, he left Colonel Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte in effect Commandant of the Tuileries. Later Jerome was on his way to the

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

front with his regiment when the disaster at Sedan turned him back. He accompanied the Empress Eugenie to safety. He participated in the siege of Paris and the fall of the Empire, and barely escaped with his life during the Commune.

Jerome returned to his part-time homeland in April of 1871, and on September 7 of that year married Mrs. Caroline Le Roy Edgar, née Appleton, a granddaughter of Daniel Webster. His grandmother, Mme. Elizabeth, was still alive and still able to feel disappointment and irritation over the non-royal mating of another of her descendants. Jerome was to pay one more visit to France, as he and his wife went to Paris in 1873, and indeed remained there for six years. Following that they returned for good to this country, where the family led a quiet and respected life at its home, Pride's Crossing, near Beverly, Massachusetts. The Colonel was a stockholder in the Newport Casino, and socially prominent in Baltimore as well. He entertained distinguished French visitors and was said to believe in rule by divine right. His grandmother in fact had hoped to see him become Regent or Emperor upon the fall of Napoleon III, and it was the failure of this dearest wish that caused Elizabeth, heartbroken, to go home to Baltimore for the last time. Nevertheless, save for occasional disappointments with him, Colonel Bonaparte was his grandmother's favorite, and this was not strange, for to the background and deeds of a hero and a Bonaparte he added a bearing as appropriate. "Tall, distinguished, with a military air, long dark moustache, goatee, and handsome features," it was

## DESCENDANTS OF JEROME AND ELIZABETH

agreed that he resembled his family in appearance and "air," as well as in his way of life, and it was natural that Elizabeth Patterson should have been impressed affectionately by one who so reminded her, impressionable as she had been once, of the Bonapartes of old. She thought he would make "a very presentable Emperor of the French."

Colonel Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, as he was known to his Massachusetts neighbors, died September 4, 1893, from a cancer of the stomach. He left behind him two children, Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, who was born in Paris February 26, 1878, and a daughter Louise Eugénie, born in Baltimore February 7, 1873.

With the passing of Colonel Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte and the coming of the last Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, Harvard '99, we meet the first "moderns" of this Franco-American family, as will appear. The son, with his mother, spent much time in Washington, D. C., and, rich by inheritance from grandmother and father, this great-grandson of the youngest brother of the "Little Corporal" also journeyed to Palm Beach, New York City, and Narragansett Pier.

His mother until her death in 1912 was a Washington grande-dame, and he the first Bonaparte who really enjoyed society. Let it be said, moreover, that he always has been proud of being an American citizen and that in 1921 he is reported to have received and refused an offer to occupy the throne of Albania. Further, Jerome, although he spent some time in the courts of Berlin and Brussels, consistently refused to join the ranks of the "pretenders" to the French throne, though senior to

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those who did aspire. The fortunes of the New York Appletons and the Newport Edgars enabled him to live where he pleased and do what he liked, and he liked America. He was married to Mrs. Blanche Pierce Strebeigh in New York, April 8, 1914.

Tall, slender, moustached, well-dressed and alert, this Jerome exercised as swordsman, boxer, golfer, fisherman and motorist. Well regarded in Washington, where he had resided as a bachelor, he and his wife frequently visited Europe, where they were made much of and called "Prince and Princess" by the Paris journals, a decided improvement on the "Patterson-Bonaparte" appellation patronizingly bestowed in his father's day to distinguish them from the European line. He had no children, she twin daughters, and they had an apartment on Park Avenue, a villa at Palm Beach, and a summer place at Newport. From there they would travel to Europe to see perhaps his sister Louise, who had become the Danish Countess Moltke Huitfeldt. There were frequent visits to Biarritz and Deauville, and many Atlantic crossings.

Finally, his health failed in 1922. Although subsequently fully recovered, less of late has been read of this Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, the last of his line in the United States and last living American Bonaparte. The New York "Social Register" shows Mr. and Mrs. Jerome N. Bonaparte still to be residents at 15 E. 69th Street. The Countess, his sister, died in 1923 at Biarritz.

### III

## CHARLES JOSEPH BONAPARTE

**“YOU** are a French boy, Charlie.”  
“No, I am an American boy!”<sup>1</sup>

The boy, then six years of age, who thus refused to be classified as French and asserted his Americanism, was none other than Charles Joseph Bonaparte, a grandson of Jerome Bonaparte, Napoleon's youngest brother.

As was the boy, so was the man, emphatically, for Charles Joseph was the first all-American Bonaparte. To him Baltimore meant more than Bonaparte, and the United States infinitely more than France. This and much else one may sense, in his life that he lived, and on which many amusing and interesting sidelights were given by his biographer, Joseph Bucklin Bishop (to whom the authors are greatly indebted for much of interest and value), who on behalf of the subject of his book rendered a pæan of praise. Yet careful investigation among those who best knew Mr. Bonaparte seems to indicate that it is all true, and more, and that in the first great American Bonaparte, and perhaps the last great Bonaparte, there was a man.

For of such was the life of this great American Bonaparte, who was in the more enlightened sense “one hundred per cent” an American, by birth, by residence, by interests, and finally in death. He was born at his

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop, *Charles Joseph Bonaparte, His Life and Public Services*. Scribner's Sons, N. Y. 1922.

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father's old home near the place in which he died, and for any Bonaparte to make his entry and his exit on the same stage and in the same city sets him apart again among the Bonapartes. Yes, Charles J. Bonaparte was a confirmed American, and he was the first Bonaparte to have a place in *Who's Who in America*, that great reference work of the best known.

As a child Charles was both serious and studious. He was six years of age when he entered a French school, studying later with private tutors. He always attained high marks and made himself a brilliant record, entering Harvard as a Junior in 1869, though only eighteen then. We are told that he passed "all the necessary examinations easily." He was graduated from Harvard Law School in 1874 and even in college was something of a reformer.

In the fall of 1874 Bonaparte was admitted to the Maryland Bar, making his Baltimore home at 601 Park Avenue, in the house built by his father. Here in the place where he was born were health to enjoy life, and wealth to do nothing in life. Yet these things were not enough, and it took no time for him to become a poor man's lawyer, frequently, if not usually, giving his services freely, if not entirely free, and indeed there were cases in which he himself even paid his clients' court costs.

Bonaparte is always referred to as having been ingenious and quick-witted in court. As a boxer and fencer, he was always ready in the arts of self-defense, and on one court occasion at least he relied on his art.

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His memory was prodigious and his success was great, for he seldom if ever lost a case.

Not only did he fight his cases in the courts of law, but just as consistently and courageously in the courts of public opinion. For a score of years he combatted political corruption and corrupt politicians in Baltimore and Maryland. He was always a fearless fighter, an able and popular public speaker. When he commenced to practice law, his biographer and others tell us that Baltimore had one of the worst reputations in the United States, "as bad as New York and Philadelphia of that time." Bonaparte and his cohorts generally were beaten in their efforts and in their elections, but their needs and efforts made the public politically conscious, and crookedness was being shown up for the public's benefit. In 1881 Bonaparte aided in forming Maryland and National Civil Service Reform Leagues, but to show the man's persistence it is related that "it was not until 1895 that he had made much impression on political conditions in the State of Maryland and City of Baltimore."

Maryland has been largely Democratic, but that did not deter Republican Charles J. Bonaparte. He had a battling grandmother and a noble mother of Pilgrim stock. She it was who encouraged him to become wholly American and to be entirely forgetful of his French antecedents. Maryland, though it did not secede, was in some sections fiercely Southern during The War Between the States; yet Mrs. Bonaparte urged her husband, Charles J. Bonaparte's father, to espouse the Union cause, which he did. So actively did he



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attempt to aid and abet the North that he became the first President of the Union Club, which came into being after the War had divided the Maryland Club in Baltimore, as it had divided the city and state where it was located.

It was fated that Charles J. Bonaparte should become the American of all the Bonapartes. His father had not wed King Joseph's daughter, but a girl of sterling American stock. He himself made no foreign alliance either, for his choice had been Miss Ellen Channing Day of Hartford, Connecticut, whom he met while a Harvard student in 1871. The young lady's grandfather was a brother of a former president of Yale, her father a former publisher of the famous *Hartford Courant*. His biographer reports him at this time "a very serious young man with a heavy black beard." Happily Charles' suit was smiled on; they became engaged in June, 1875, and married in Newport September 1 of the same year. When he brought his bride back to Baltimore they lived at first in the old home but ultimately purchased a country place some fifteen miles from Baltimore, "Bella Vista," a home on a high hill with a commanding view, their farm in the valley below.

Here on this place of three hundred acres these Bonapartes, who like the others loved the country, could live and love not far from Charles' law practice in the city. His beloved Bella Vista burned after his death. The Bonapartes have been fond of the cities and capitals where they have worked and ruled, but whenever they could they lived in the country and all Bonapartes have

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loved their homes, when they had them. This particular country place, a Colonial mansion in the midst of spaciousness, also had for the pleasure of its horse-loving owner a dozen horses and many carriages. Mr. Bonaparte did not invest in a car, but with his spanking trotters drove to and from Baltimore daily, from Bella Vista, where he could generally be found from May until July. After the middle of July he usually removed to St. Andrews in New Brunswick, on Passamaquoddy Bay. Two months or so there and he was in physical readiness to resume his Baltimore affairs. Mrs. Bonaparte herself was not exceptionally well nor strong, and he suffered from a weak heart, or perhaps he put too great a strain upon a stout one.

One of the most interesting things in his life and perhaps the one that had the greatest influence on it was his acquaintance with Theodore Roosevelt, who was graduated from Harvard just a year before Bonaparte. Roosevelt joined his National Civil Service Reform League nearly as soon as it was founded. He and Bonaparte became acquainted and friends almost as soon as acquaintances. These two rich young men had much in common. They were not idle rich and they were both primarily political reformers. In 1891 Roosevelt as a Civil Service Commissioner conducted some investigations of Federal offices there in Baltimore. Bonaparte helped him, and as soon as Roosevelt became President he commenced his special employment of Bonaparte which was to continue for just as long as Roosevelt was President. When Roosevelt had discovered a man he did not forget him and he did not

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believe in letting him "rust." In 1902 President Roosevelt named Bonaparte a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners, and in 1904 Bonaparte, who had been assigned to investigate conditions in the Indian Territory, reported, "Conditions in the Indian Territory involve immediate danger of ruin to the genuine Indian population and profound discredit to the United States, excite reasonable discontent on the part of all classes of the population, and demand prompt and drastic remedies on the part of Congress." This, it is said, "led to a radical change in the Government's Indian policy."<sup>1</sup> In 1904 Bonaparte was first on the list of Republican Presidential electors for Maryland, and as first was the only one elected. He cast his vote for Theodore Roosevelt, but the other Marylanders voted Democratic. This is supposed to have been the first and only time he ever was a candidate. He refused consistently to run for any office at any time, though he was appointed to many.

On May 10, 1905, Theodore Roosevelt inquired if Bonaparte would join his Cabinet. On May 21, at the age of fifty-four, he accepted, albeit reluctantly, this invitation to enter public life. However, before making any announcement and a definite appointment, Roosevelt inquired of the French Government via our State Department if they objected to Bonaparte's appointment as Secretary of the Navy in his Cabinet. The French said "No," so Bonaparte was made Secretary of the Navy as of July 1, 1905, his appointment having

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop, *Charles Joseph Bonaparte*. Scribner's.

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been announced the day before. One of the cartoons of the day displayed the spirit of Napoleon receiving a wireless message from Roosevelt, which read, "I have made your grand-nephew Secretary of the Navy." Napoleon replied, "I hope he does better with ships than I did." The appointment caused no little comment, created considerable surprise, but in the end won genuine approval. Bonaparte at this time was a leading Republican, later he was a Progressive Republican; and the last mention of him in *Who's Who* was to list him as a Progressive.

The appearance of the new Secretary of the Navy was ingratiating and pleasant. A sturdy man with small hands and feet, a very high forehead and almost bald head, with a generous moustache, he was taller than Napoleon and possessed "the cannon-ball head of a warrior with room for two sets of brains." His smile was famous and to it he resorted in anger as well as in joy. As the Secretary of the Navy he showed himself as fearless as the reformer and the poor man's lawyer. It may take courage also to be known as the friend of poor negroes, but Bonaparte did not hesitate when he felt that they were put upon and that his eloquence and strength were needed; no more than did Grandfather Jerome hesitate when he assumed the Germanic throne of Westphalia to befriend the Jews, to treat them as others were treated by them. Not only was this Baltimore Bonaparte a great man and statesman, he was a gentleman.

In various ways, by law if necessary, Bonaparte increased respect at home for the Navy uniform, abroad

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for the Navy ships. However, he raised a great storm when he recommended that the frigate *Constitution*, "Old Ironsides," be "used as a target and sunk in the ocean" for Navy practice. Mass-meetings were held in Faneuil Hall, and Oliver Wendell Holmes' poem, "Ay, tear her tattered ensign down," was everywhere reprinted and circulated. Bonaparte held that the frigate, save for a few timbers, was not the original "Old Ironsides" at all, and that it was therefore an imposition on the American public to exhibit her as such. He recommended that whatever timbers were from the original frigate be built into a new vessel; and if, he said, the frigate were indeed "Old Ironsides," what more fitting end could she have than to go down under cannon fire in mid-ocean? Congress authorized funds for the preservation of the *Constitution*, and the storm ended. He was "a large Navy" man, and he won the respect of ranking officers of the United States Navy, by whom he was regarded as efficient. He had the gift of friendship and he also won their liking. While Secretary of the Navy, Bonaparte took a leading part in the return to its homeland of the body of John Paul Jones, which in 1906 was removed from Paris for more suitable interment at Annapolis.

However, Roosevelt had said, "I put you in the Navy Department as a stop gap." Roosevelt, it seems, all along had intended him for his Attorney General, and finally, with the way clear, Bonaparte's appointment as such was confirmed by the Senate December 17, 1906. There he remained until March 5, 1909. Like Roosevelt, he was a "trust buster." A newspaper of the time

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said: "He is an aristocrat in feeling and deportment. He is too proud to be bossed and too cynical to be fooled. No 'interest' or no person does or can control him. He does his own thinking . . . and with his natural hatred of vulgar and greedy rich men he will prove a terror to every trust magnate in the country who comes under that head."<sup>1</sup> He was well placed as Attorney General, and in this post he led Roosevelt's chief assaults upon "bad trusts." Successful legal actions were taken under Bonaparte against oil, tobacco, railroads, coal, and the like, under the anti-trust act. He became "the man who fights with a smile." Greatness of pride or pocket meant nothing to him, and in a speech in Chicago, December 21, 1907, Bonaparte said, "Americans as a nation think their laws are meant to be obeyed by all alike, by the rich no less than by the poor, by the enlightened no less than by the ignorant."<sup>1</sup> And J. Edgar Hoover, chief of the famous Federal Bureau of Investigation, reminds us in a newspaper article that his Bureau (the "G-men") "was created by an executive order issued by Attorney General Charles J. Bonaparte" some thirty years ago.

Although many attempts were made by enemies of both to sow or show discord between Roosevelt and Bonaparte, there was no discord, and they always were as they had begun, friends until the end. Like Roosevelt, this man Bonaparte had a lively sense of humor, and like him also he was a great gentleman and scholar.

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop, *Charles Joseph Bonaparte*. Scribner's.

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He was "fond of the classics and fond of horses, fond of jokes and not fond of bosses."

Roosevelt and Bonaparte left Washington together, the latter informing Taft that he did not wish to continue in Cabinet or public life. He was anxious to get home and stay home, and indeed while in Washington he spent nearly every week-end in Maryland and as much time in addition as he was allowed by a good lawyer's conscientious regard for the public interest, for he was happiest when at home and he and his wife had the Bonaparte dislike for society per se. He believed in an aristocracy of the intellect and in a nobility of nature. He was not lost in ancestral Bonapartes, and traders in Napoleonana were surprised to discover that he had no interest in their wares. He condemned Napoleon and he was not a professional descendant.

When he left office with Roosevelt in March, 1909, Charles J. Bonaparte was a very happy man, and happily he resumed his law practice where he had left it in 1905. In 1912 he supported Theodore Roosevelt, advancing him as a nominee in 1916, though when Hughes received the Republican nomination he supported Hughes. His stand on the World War and on national preparedness was approximately that of Theodore Roosevelt, and a series of articles by Bonaparte in the *Baltimore Evening Sun* of that day asked immediate preparedness. When the War had been won, he said before a Baltimore club in December, 1919, to give expression to his opposition to the League of Nations, "Its effects will be to give foreign powers an excuse for meddling in our business, to greatly increase for us the

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danger of friction, controversy, and at the same time, to aid pacifists and other mischievous dreamers to mislead public opinion as to our need for preparedness in the future, as they had misled it in the past at a cost to us of billions of money and tens of thousands of lives.”<sup>1</sup>

This was in 1919. It was not long before impaired health caused him to go to Bella Vista, where he continued driving “till within four days of his death.”<sup>1</sup> There in his invalid’s chair he was thought by some, including his biographer, to resemble the Versailles statue of Napoleon in his final days at St. Helena. On June 28, 1921, at four in the morning, came placidly and without pain the mortal end of Charles J. Bonaparte, statesman. Respected rather than popular, except by those privileged to know him well, he was a statesman and reformer rather than a politician, and better liked by the voters than by their “leaders.” Answering the calls of public life and civic duty left him but little time for the life he most enjoyed. His days rarely were his own, but the evenings were, and until the end he and his good wife are reported after forty-five years of wedded life to have “held hands” and expressed to each other daily their lifetime of devotion which was to outlast life. Here again was an unusual Bonaparte, perhaps the first.

Among many distinctions, Charles J. Bonaparte was one of the first “see America first” enthusiasts. He had even visited Alaska as early as 1888. He never saw

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop, *Charles Joseph Bonaparte*. Scribner’s.



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France, other European countries, or the British Isles, and he never wished to do so. The interests near his heart were near his home. He was the president of the famous Enoch Pratt Library, of the Maryland Board of State Aid and Charities, a Trustee of the Catholic University of America, an overseer of Harvard, and a member of the Advisory Board of the Council of National Defense. He received Doctorates of Law from Mt. St. Mary's in 1882, from the Catholic University of America in 1915, and in 1903 he had been awarded the Laetare Medal by the University of Notre Dame. Always deeply religious, as a Catholic he was "a good son of the Church" and a great friend of Cardinal Gibbons. In one of his speeches Bonaparte said, "No American can be at once a good Catholic and a bad citizen," and on another occasion, "No one can be a good Catholic who is a bad Christian."<sup>1</sup>

When he died, several pews in Baltimore's Catholic Cathedral were full of devoted negro servants who had been with the Bonapartes for many years. Servants and other employees always remained for many years with the Bonapartes, and were their friends as well. His stenographer for thirty years attended the Cathedral service and later wrote, "My lines have fallen in pleasant places . . . and I would wish for nothing better in the next world than to serve him again."<sup>1</sup> Nephew Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte attended the last rites.

Baltimore itself was represented largely, for Bonaparte had been one of the city's sights, the "Bonaparte

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop, *Charles Joseph Bonaparte*. Scribner's.



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*(Courtesy Paul M. Burnett)*

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walk” and the Bonaparte family carriage always being pointed out to visitors. Bonaparte’s gait was rather sidling and wholly distinctive. His coach must have harked back to Uncle Joseph’s Adirondack equipage. As Judge John C. Rose has pointed out, his appearance was somewhat Italian, as also his manner and courtesy. Actually he was only “one-quarter Corsican,” the balance New Englander, Scotch, Irish, and Southerner. He was given to boasting that he did not have “a drop of French blood in his veins.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Bonaparte had been happy “stay-at-homes.” She waited for him when he went to town carrying his lunch, “two sandwiches in a silver box.”<sup>1</sup> His Presbyterian mother had taught him simplicity—good doctrine for any American, particularly when that American is born a Bonaparte.

Bonaparte owned in addition to Bella Vista an Anne Arundel County farm, and a third place, “Weston,” in Prince George’s County, but it is doubtful if he visited either place. When his city home was razed, over a decade ago, to make way for an insurance building, it is reported that a brass box two feet square, containing jewels, necklaces and rings, was unearthed. If so, those perhaps were the long lost (to them) jewels sent to Charles J. Bonaparte’s mother by Napoleon III, jewels which later had been worn by Charles J. Bonaparte’s wife in the American capital city, and which long ago had belonged to Jerome. He really had intended them for his wife Elizabeth, but the first Na-

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop, *Charles Joseph Bonaparte*. Scribner’s.

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oleon may well have prevented their ever being received by her.

Bonaparte and Bonaparte's biographer—both are dead now. We cannot ask them questions we should like about the Bonapartes in America, about the Bonapartes in Europe, about Charles J. Bonaparte himself; only in the case of this one Bonaparte may we still inquire of living contemporaries just what they thought of a last great branch on the dying trunk of the Bonaparte family tree. What manner of man, of American statesman, was he? Those who knew the others are gone. Yet witnesses are not lacking in Baltimore and elsewhere in the nation to talk to us of the first, perhaps the last, and certainly the only Bonaparte of the past to amount to something big both for and in America exclusively. Yes, though democratic in the grand manner of his royal progenitor, the blood of Mme. Elizabeth told; he stuck to Baltimore and he stuck to his guns.

His homes are gone. Mrs. Bonaparte herself died in Washington, D. C., on June 23, 1924, the same month, almost the same day, as her beloved partner had passed on only three years before. His homes, his wife, and all his famous ancestry have vanished like the rest of the Bonapartes. They did not build for permanence, it seems, these Bonapartes; yet Charles J. Bonaparte did, in "things not made with hands." Let us ask only two neighbors and associates what they thought of the lawyer-statesman-farmer.

First to testify for Attorney Bonaparte is Paul M. Burnett, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Monumental Life Insurance Company, located at

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Baltimore. Mr. Burnett was Charles J. Bonaparte's law partner for thirty-five years, from 1885 to 1920. Perhaps he is a prejudiced witness, yet any one who knew him so long must have known him well, and only one who knew him well could write of Charles J. Bonaparte as he does here:

"Charles Joseph Bonaparte was a Catholic—a very liberal and sensible one. In politics he was a Republican, but often voted for Democratic candidates when he thought they were better than the candidates of his own party. He was a reformer, but not the objectionable species; he strove for honesty in Governmental affairs; he was opposed to 'bosses' in either party. He violently denounced dishonesty in politics and was a master of invective and sarcasm when making political speeches against a candidate he distrusted. He was one of the overseers of Harvard and voted against an honorary degree for McKinley because he did not believe the President was entitled to the honor. He despised pretense in any one and made all manner of fun of certain of his friends who pretended to be what he knew they were not. He was tolerant of the faults of those he liked and severe and uncompromising with those he distrusted. He enjoyed life—his home—his farm—his office—his profession; but as one of his friends remarked, 'Why shouldn't he?' He had social position, a wonderful mind, a fine education and a fortune. With it all he was modest and democratic, unostentatious, severely plain in his dress, and disliked show, and 'society' as we know it—that of pretense; he sought his friends and associates among men of education and re-

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finement. Our offices were for a long time the headquarters for meetings of the National Civil Service Reform association, in the work of which he took much interest. I remember meetings attended by prominent men from all over the country and at which Theodore Roosevelt was invariably the dominating personality and always interesting. I recall on one occasion Mr. Bonaparte invited a gentleman attending one of the meetings to dinner at eight. The gentleman appeared in informal dress while his host greeted him in formal dress, to the chagrin of the guest. At the next meeting the gentleman came fully prepared and received an invitation for dinner at eight. He appeared in all the glory of formal dress while Mr. Bonaparte, not wishing to embarrass him again, appeared in a plain business suit. An incident of this character was much enjoyed by Mr. Bonaparte and provided occasion for a hearty laugh whenever it was referred to.

“His memory was prodigious. Other lawyers would take hours, sometimes days to prepare cases for trial. Mr. Bonaparte seldom spent more than an hour just before trial. When he was asked about any question of law, no matter how intricate or complicated, he would rub his forehead in a characteristic manner with two fingers and say, ‘Look at—volume of—reports, case of Smith vs. Brown about page —and you will find what you want.’ When conducting a trial and some new point was raised unexpectedly, all he would do was to ask the clerk to give him a designated volume of the Maryland Reports, and without referring to the index,

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would turn to the page and paragraph he needed to answer the argument.

“Mr. Bonaparte did not like the French and was not proud of his French ancestry. He never went abroad, in fact was never out of the territorial jurisdiction of the United States. At every opportunity he asserted his pride in his American citizenship. Because of his name, stranded foreigners and French people particularly called to borrow, beg or sell something. When he was compelled to see any of these, he was patient and helpful. I saw him lose control of himself but twice in all the years of our association. One was an altercation with another attorney which ended almost as soon as it began, and the other was the reward of a Frenchman who persisted in pressing some proposition in French after Mr. Bonaparte had told him he was not interested. After exhausting every other means, he jumped from his seat, gave the top of the desk a bang, and uttered a few words in French at which the man withered completely and left his office. I have often wondered what he said.

“One of the brilliant young men I met just after being admitted to the Bar was William C. Smith, who later became States Attorney. During his term an Italian was arrested for attacking a girl, and his arrest caused quite a commotion in the Italian colony. Mr. Bonaparte had an honest conviction that it was his duty to take any case for a client who employed him and to use his ability and all proper measures to present his client in the most favorable light, yet he disliked criminal and divorce cases. One morning a delegation of Italians

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came to employ him to defend the accused. Mr. Bonaparte was reluctant to take the case and had me advise the delegation he could not represent the man unless he was prepared to pay a retainer of five hundred dollars, thinking this would discourage the delegation. The following morning the delegation reappeared with five hundred dollars in pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters. We had piles of small coins all over the office. Mr. Bonaparte took the case and put into the defense every bit of energy and ability he had. His masterful handling confused the States Attorney and secured an acquittal. Not one point of advantage was overlooked and after the first day the case drew a gallery. Mr. Smith told me later that Mr. Bonaparte's handling of the case was more of an education to him than all his years of study, and that it was the only time in his life he was completely in a hole and did not know how to get out!

"Mr. Bonaparte never rode in an automobile. When all horse vehicles had for years been withdrawn from use, his Brewster barouche with two spanking Arabian horses, coachman and footman, was a curiosity, winding its way through traffic to the amazement of the modern city dweller. He owned Chestnutwood, on Roland Avenue, a beautiful country home of about thirty-five acres on which he conducted farming and stock raising on a limited scale. As time went on, the City extended and the Railway announced an extension of its lines past the farm. Trouble began at once, a suit ensued; but the Railway won. Immediately the farm was offered for sale and the first offer accepted. Then



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a hunt for a farm began. It must be out of reach of a street railway. It was found in Long Green Valley, 'Bella Vista,' where a beautiful house was built, fences repaired and the fields became alive with Jersey cattle and highly bred horses. He loved horses and refused to the day of his death to give them up.

"Mr. Bonaparte was hopeful of recovery to within a few days of his passing. Only one week before I had sat on the beautiful veranda, overlooking the valley for miles, and discussed our cases with him. He expressed his hope for a speedy recovery and asked me to prepare the cases for trial during the approaching term of Court.

"Mr. Bonaparte was a very interesting man, and although I was with him almost constantly for over forty years, he was just as interesting to me at the last as he was in the early days when he was a young lawyer."

Dr. Joseph Irwin France was not a lawyer like the distinguished commentator quoted. He was a physician, professor, former Presidential candidate, and one of the most brilliant and progressive leaders ever to sit in the Senate of the United States. Since he was not an attorney-at-law, he brings us an analysis of different kind and approach, that of the doctor, of the student of men and affairs:

"Charles Joseph Bonaparte was a man of extraordinary physical vitality, of intellectual and moral power. In Maryland he became our first citizen through faithful and able services rendered the cause of good government. He rose to eminence in national affairs, when called by Theodore Roosevelt.

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“If a man becomes eminent in history, it must be because of his own greatness and his stars; by the combination of events. Large issues often summon a single supreme leader, one having the vision to see the way, and power to make the voice of reason audible above the din and confusion of the world, and hence mediocrity achieves notoriety. Charles J. Bonaparte lived in relatively quiet and peaceful times. There was no clash, in war, of material, imperial ambitions. There were no destructive mobs swarming the streets. His clear intellect, his moral cleanliness and fortitude, his indomitable physical courage were never summoned to conspicuous service in spectacular events. If it had been otherwise, in spite of his modesty, his seeming diffidence, his apparent self-depreciation, he would have responded with as great and forceful a leadership as that displayed by any man of history. He was a most remarkable man. He could blush with the diffidence of a debutante. But he was bolder than a lion. He was the most intrepid of leaders. So, in his time and generation, great events not calling, he was faithful ‘in that which is least’ and hence ‘faithful also in much.’ But who can estimate what shall be least and greatest in the judgment of time and the Infinite?

“Mr. Bonaparte accepted literally the faith of the founders of the Republic, that ‘All men are created equal.’ He believed in the true American system, and he had a deep knowledge of our Constitution. He believed the American philosophy to be that which ultimately must bring justice in the world. So he was ultra conscientious, a most meticulous guardian, lest some

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profane hand should touch the Ark of the American Covenant. Although, by heredity and his own nature, he was a devout Roman Catholic, there was not in his soul a taint of religious prejudice or intolerance. Jews, negroes, the descendants of all foreign born were, to him, American equals.

“The things he loathed with all the intensity of his nature were intolerance, injustice and, above all, political corruption. This last he believed should be fought as being a menace to the purity and integrity of our Republic. He believed the abuse of the power of patronage tended toward political immorality and it was for this reason that he became our most conspicuous national leader for Civil Service Reform. Bonaparte was never a partisan but always a patriot.

“For several decades after the Civil War, the Democratic party was in supreme control in Maryland. It had rendered invaluable services and had given notable men as leaders of State and Nation. But this party came under the control of men unworthy of its fine tradition and a tidal wave of protest and reform swept the state. High-minded Democrats and Republicans alike united to destroy the dominant machine. It was a fierce battle between corruption and reform. As a result, a Republican Governor and Legislature were elected and two Republicans were sent to the United States Senate. One of the leaders in this fight was the valiant young Charles J. Bonaparte. In order to guard against another invasion of our government by corrupt influences, the Baltimore Reform League was established and, for years, Mr. Bonaparte was the leader and

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moving power of this League, which was always on guard. It was a rock of virtue amidst the shifting sands of sordid and sometimes corrupt Maryland politics. Taking a longer view, Maryland, at times the worst governed of the States, is now one of the best governed, and no man contributed as much toward this evolution as Mr. Bonaparte. For a time the Reform League scrutinized carefully the record of every man who became a candidate for public office, published the records, and pointed the way. This of course involved much painstaking research and careful judgment.

“By 1905, when I first entered politics as a candidate for the State Senate, there had occurred a grave recession in the political morality of Maryland, and I went to the State Capital to fight for political decency. It was as a result that I received a letter from Mr. Bonaparte asking me if, at my convenience, I would call upon him. I had not, prior to this, seen Mr. Bonaparte, although of course his distinguished ancestry and his outstanding services to the State were well known to me, and I deeply appreciated the opportunity of meeting him. Shortly after the close of the session of the Senate, I called upon him at his office, which was on the ground floor of a building on Park Avenue. Later he removed his offices to his residence, on the corner of Park Avenue and Center Street, a short distance from the home I later occupied, so that subsequently I saw him frequently, often driving in his barouche, the old-fashioned carriage, with his wife. With his name and fortune he had married a distinguished woman to whom, always faithful, he was devoted although she was an invalid and

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they were childless. It has seemed to me a tragedy that such a man did not leave a son to the country he so loved.

“It was an afternoon in the spring of 1908. Mr. Bonaparte’s private office was at the front, on the street, and there was no anteroom. His desk was at the left of the door before the window which looked upon the street, while the desk of Cleveland P. Manning, Mr. Bonaparte’s assistant, was almost in front of the door. The office was rather small so that there was little space between the two desks. Mr. Bonaparte rose as I entered and greeted me cordially, but with that somewhat awkward and diffident manner so characteristic of him. He was tall, with broad shoulders, of rather heavy frame. He wore the conventional black frock coat. The collar of his shirt was of the old fashioned turndown style and he wore a black cravat which had its ends beneath the collar, a neck dress once an indication of modesty and conservatism. His complexion was clear, with the glow and flush of health, and when meeting strangers his color often suddenly heightened. As he took his seat, his head was turned to one side and downward and, as if embarrassed, he fingered the ruler and articles upon the desk.

“But his outstanding feature was his wide, massive head, and the high forehead, noble, imperial, that denoted extraordinary intellectual power. His whole demeanor indicated that extreme modesty which is quite compatible with a majesty of mind. I knew, as I looked at Mr. Bonaparte, that I was in the presence of an extraordinary man. Whether or not it was the power of suggestion, he impressed me as being a larger,

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more massive, more noble replica of Napoleon Bonaparte himself. As a physician, a student of the human body and of the fathomless capacities of the mind, I had read of Napoleon, studied his portraits and once most carefully examined his death mask, seeking an understanding of this mysterious and monstrous man.

“Charles J. Bonaparte’s hair, like Napoleon’s, was sparse. His head was much larger than Napoleon’s. His brow was more imperial. No student of the brain could see that brow, and doubt that within ruled a mind of vigor, far vision and vast power. But that which his collateral ancestor had possessed, superlative arrogance and self-assertiveness, were not to be observed in this man.

“When he began to speak one realized the force of his personality and his huge reserves of energy, of mind and will. His voice was high, vibrant, at times strident. He spoke slowly. His articulation was deliberate and perfect, each word falling like a hard coin, ‘fresh minted.’ Except Theodore Roosevelt, I have never heard another speak, in private conversation, with such perfectly controlled energy and stress. As Roosevelt’s speech revealed a restrained physical and emotional temperament, that of Bonaparte suggested high intellectual and moral tension. Both of these men were highly dynamic, carrying a heavy voltage. Bonaparte was serious, intense, but he was no solemn fellow. His sense of humor was spontaneous and delicious. Sometimes his laughter was explosive but more often it was a chuckle suppressed, even sardonic, and on occasions he would confound his opponents with a terrific sarcasm

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and irony. I attended at least one great banquet at which he was toastmaster. His wit was brilliant and inexhaustible; his humor sharp and pointed as a flashing rapier. When Mr. Bonaparte was ready to castigate those who deserved it, he could do it with cruel weapons of pen and speech, mercilessly, and with destructive power. Woe to the man who aroused that righteous wrath!

“For some time I was associated with Mr. Bonaparte in the Baltimore Reform League and frequently we met with a small Board, Mr. Bonaparte, Charles Morris Howard, Cleveland P. Manning and I. Much later, when I became a candidate for the United States Senate, I was gratified and proud to receive Mr. Bonaparte’s endorsement and support.

“Comparing Mr. Bonaparte, intellectually and morally, with other notable men with whom I have been associated in various fields of endeavor, I can say that Mr. Bonaparte nationally was without a superior and had but few peers. Not only was he a great Marylander, but a superbly pure and patriotic American, and undoubtedly one of the greatest minds and most extraordinary personalities of his time. Had Theodore Roosevelt been called upon to appoint a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and had he chosen Bonaparte, our own generation would have had another John Marshall.

“When an accurate political history of Maryland shall be written, no name will shine with greater lustre than that of Charles J. Bonaparte, persistent, fearless and powerful champion of political decency. Yet,

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again, if a man is to be pre-eminent in national or international events, his genius must be joined by opportunity. In a sense, Mr. Bonaparte never met opportunity. He was faithful and diligent in dealing with the issues that presented. I have known the famous and the infamous of those whose names stand out in our contemporary political history. Some of these rose, with a residue of ideals at the bottom of the beaker, by political opportunism. Some, by very lightness of weight, came up into the foam of temporary fame. Having observed the gymnastics of our political mountebanks, and having known Bonaparte, I question whether our country has ever had a more virtuous and virile patriot. If America, in his time, had experienced a revolution like that of France in the days of Napoleon, this Bonaparte, with his great powers, summoned by a crisis, would have come forward, not a Bonaparte of ambition, blood and destruction, but one of benevolence, construction and progress under the best American ideals. A great crisis would have enlisted all his powers and his name would have become immortal."

With which our case for the Patterson-Bonapartes rests, rests with Charles Joseph Bonaparte, who if he were not the most Bonaparte of all the Bonapartes, certainly was the most American.



## IV

### JOSEPH BONAPARTE AT BORDENTOWN

**W**HEN he returned to Paris after the Russian campaign, Napoleon one day placed on the table a large map of the United States and said to his older brother, "Joseph, it is very probable that the time is not distant when you and I will be forced to seek an asylum in the United States. Come, let us look out the best spot."

The place they selected was the territory between the Delaware and Hudson Rivers in New Jersey. Within three years Napoleon was an exile at St. Helena and Joseph was living on the banks of the Delaware at Bordentown, New Jersey.

Napoleon once remarked, "I love no one; not even my own brothers." Then he added, "Joseph perhaps a little." Joseph Bonaparte, the eldest of the Bonaparte brothers, was born at Ajaccio, January 7, 1768, nineteen months before the birth of Napoleon. He was in school for a time at Autun in Burgundy, when Napoleon was at Brienne. Joseph claimed the credit of starting Napoleon on his brilliant career as an officer of artillery. It was in this wise. At an exhibition at his College Joseph acquitted himself with so much honor as to attract the attention of the Prince of Condé, the grandfather of the unfortunate Duke d'Enghien, who was to be put to death for alleged complicity in a plot against Napoleon's life. When the Prince of Condé asked Jo-

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seph about his ambitions and projects, the lad said that the Bishop of Autun had destined him for the Church and had a living in reserve for him, but that his own desire was to enter the army. When asked what branch of the service he would like to enter, Joseph replied, "The artillery." The Prince of Condé told him he should have his desire. Joseph then immediately wrote a letter to Napoleon telling him of his conversation with the Prince of Condé and begging him to give up his ambitions for the navy and devote himself to the artillery. "Napoleon," says Joseph, "immediately acceded to my proposal, abandoned from that moment all his naval projects and replied that his mind was made up to dedicate himself with me to the artillery, with what success, the world has since learned. Thus it was to this visit of the Prince of Condé that Napoleon owed his resolution of entering on a career which paved the way to all his honors."

As the head of the family, after the death of his father, Joseph thought it wise to study law. He attended lectures in the University at Pisa and returning to Corsica commenced the practice of law in Ajaccio. At this time he had much fellowship with Napoleon who was on a visit to his home. Napoleon was then occupied in writing an essay on the subject, "What are the Opinions and the Feelings with which it is Necessary to Inspire Men for the Promotion of Their Happiness?" "This," says Joseph, "was the subject of our conversations in our daily walks which were prolonged upon the banks of the sea; in sauntering along the shores of a gulf which was as beautiful as that of Naples, in a

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country fragrant with the exhalations of myrtles and oranges. We sometimes did not return home until night had closed over us. There will be found in what remains of this essay the opinions and the characteristic traits of Napoleon, who united in his character qualities which seemed to be contradictory—the calm of reason, illumined with the flashes of an oriental imagination; kindness of soul, exquisite sensibility, precious qualities which he subsequently deemed it his duty to conceal under an artificial character which he studied to assume when he attained power, saying that men must be governed by one who is fair and just as law, and not by a prince whose amiability might be regarded as weakness, when that amiability is not controlled by the most inflexible justice. He had continually in view the judgment of posterity. His heart throbbed at the idea of a grand and noble action which posterity could appreciate.”<sup>1</sup>

With the rise of his brother Napoleon to power in France, Joseph became prominent in the field of diplomacy. He was appointed Ambassador to the Court of Parma and then to Rome. In 1800 he concluded at Mortfontaine a Treaty with the United States which put an end to the serious situation which had existed for a number of years between France and the United States and had brought about, although without an actual declaration of war, hostilities on the ocean between the two nations. In 1801 Joseph negotiated a Treaty of Peace with Austria after the victories at

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<sup>1</sup> Abbot, *Joseph Bonaparte*, p. 24. Harper & Bros., N. Y. 1869.

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Marengo and Hohenlinden. In 1802 he was the representative of France at the Congress of Amiens, where, with Lord Cornwallis as the British envoy, peace was signed between England and France.

In 1806 Napoleon made Joseph King of Naples. One day, wandering over the ruins of Cuma, Joseph reflected with himself, "Thus too, in the revolution of centuries, the monuments of the Emperor Napoleon will be buried."

Joseph like Napoleon was a friend of the philosophers. In the preface of one of the editions of St. Pierre's immortal romance of "Paul and Virginia," St. Pierre pays this tribute to Joseph: "About a year and a half ago I was invited by one of the subscribers to the fine edition of 'Paul and Virginia' to come and see him at his country house. He was a young father of a family whose physiognomy announced the qualities of his mind. He united in himself everything which distinguishes a son, a brother, a husband, a father and a friend to humanity. He took me in private and said, 'My fortune which I owe to the nation affords me the means of being useful. Add to my happiness by giving me an opportunity of contributing to your own.' This philosopher, so worthy of a throne, if any throne was worthy of him, was Prince Joseph Bonaparte."

When Napoleon determined to dethrone the Spanish Bourbons in 1808, he issued a decree proclaiming Joseph King of Spain and the Indies, and guaranteeing his kingdom and dominion in the four quarters of the world. Napoleon had assigned Joseph an impossible task. He had to contend first of all with the re-



JOSEPH BONAPARTE  
King of Naples and Spain, almost of Mexico  
*(From "The Napoleon Dynasty")*

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sentment and fury of the Spanish populace, and on the other hand with the British army under the capable leadership of the Duke of Wellington. After Wellington's victory at Vittoria, June 21, 1813, Joseph was compelled to flee the country. Thus came to an end his reign as King of Spain and the far-flung Indies.

In the disastrous campaign of 1814 Napoleon made Joseph Lieutenant-General of the Empire and placed him at the head of the Council of Regency to assist the Empress Regent, Maria Louisa. During the Hundred Days, which he helped to finance with much of his own wealth, Joseph returned from Switzerland and joined the Emperor at Paris. After Waterloo he went to Rochefort where Napoleon was, and did all he could to persuade Napoleon to attempt an escape to the United States. Since he closely resembled the Emperor, he proposed that they exchange passports, thinking that in this way there would be less likelihood of Napoleon being captured. After the Emperor decided to cast himself on the mercies of the English and boarded the *Bellerophon*, refusing to escape in his brother's place, Joseph, under the name of M. Bouchard, embarked for the United States on board the American ship *Commerce*. Several times the ship was halted by British cruisers. Even when the *Commerce* was approaching the harbor of New York she was pursued by two British cruisers, but by a favorable wind, and the skill of her pilot, she managed to escape.

The other passengers on the ship thought that M. Bouchard was the famous General Carnot. Joseph landed at New York on the 28th of August, 1815. The

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Mayor of New York, supposing that he was Carnot, came to pay him his respects. He said to him,

"You are not simply M. Bouchard."

"No."

"Nor General Carnot?"

"Nor General Carnot."

"Then may I inquire under what title you do pass?"

"I pass under the title of the Count de Survilliers. But here in America I believe I may safely avow the truth. I am Joseph Bonaparte."

When Joseph asked for rooms at the City Hotel, the manager told him that he had given the last suite of rooms to Henry Clay, who had just returned from Europe as one of the American envoys to negotiate the Treaty of Ghent. Hearing that Joseph Bonaparte was at the hotel, Clay at once called upon him, and bringing him to his dining room, said to him, "And here is a dinner ready for yourself and your suite." Joseph accepted Clay's generous hospitality, and thus began a pleasant friendship between the two men. For a time Joseph occupied a mansion overlooking the Hudson, since known to thousands of diners as the Claremont Inn. A few days after Joseph landed in New York, passersby on lower Broadway stopped to watch a man who threw himself on his knees, with tears pouring down his cheeks, before a stout elderly gentleman who tried in vain to raise him and to calm his emotions. An old soldier of Napoleon had recognized the Count de Survilliers as Joseph, King of Spain.

Joseph now began to look about for a permanent residence. He first took a house at 260 South Ninth

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Street, Philadelphia. This house is still standing. From there he removed to "Lansdowne" in Fairmount Park, one time residence of John Penn, last Colonial Governor of Pennsylvania. "Horticultural Hall" in Fairmount Park, of Centennial Exposition fame, now stands on the site of "Lansdowne." An avenue of trees led up to the mansion at which Washington, Adams, Jefferson and others of note had often visited. "Lansdowne" had been occupied before Joseph's visit by Edmond Randolph, Attorney General of the United States. Here Joseph gave his greatest and possibly his only "entertainment of state" in Pennsylvania. To a lawn fete at "Lansdowne" in the summer of 1817 came the celebrities, the beaux and belles of Philadelphia and many miles about. Joseph was easily the center of attraction where he stood on the open greensward before the house. Those who saw him that day proclaimed his resemblance to "an English gentleman farmer."

After Joseph left the mansion later that year, it remained untenanted and not long afterwards was burned during a fireworks exhibition. The property was bought by citizens and sold to Philadelphia in 1866 for \$85,000, when it was incorporated in Fairmount Park and the ruins razed by the Commissioners of the Park.

Desiring greater privacy than was possible at Philadelphia, Joseph purchased "Point Breeze" at Bordentown, New Jersey, from Stephen Sayre for the sum of \$17,500. The estate of some 211 acres eventually expanded to one of 1,800 acres. The Legislature of New Jersey passed a special act—1817—enabling Joseph as a foreigner to hold property in his own name. Joseph



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lived in the United States under the title of the Count de Survilliers, the name of a village on his estate in France. He was joined at Bordentown by his two daughters, Zenaide and Charlotte, but his wife dreaded the ocean voyage and never came to America. She was Julie-Marie Clary, daughter of a wealthy merchant of Marseilles. Her sister, Eugenie, to whom Napoleon was at one time much attached, afterwards married General Bernadotte who became a Marshal of France, subsequently the King of Sweden and Norway, and the founder of the present royal house of Sweden. At the time of Napoleon's marriage to Josephine in 1796, Joseph was greatly disappointed that his brother had not married his wife's sister. "Thus vanished," wrote Joseph, "the hope which my wife and I had cherished for several years of seeing her younger sister, Eugenie, united in marriage with my brother Napoleon. Time and separation disposed of the event otherwise." Eugenie's resentment toward Napoleon for passing her by for Josephine is said to have played a part in the future hostile conduct of Bernadotte, who was not able to forget that Napoleon had once won the love of his wife.

On a spring day in 1816, Dr. William Burns, who had been a surgeon in the British army in the Revolutionary War, and who afterwards settled at Bordentown, was returning from White Hill when he was accosted by two gentlemen riding in a carriage. They made inquiry as to properties that were for sale in the neighborhood. Dr. Burns knew that Stephen Sayre desired to dispose of Point Breeze and drove with the two strangers to

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view the estate. One of the gentlemen was Joseph Bonaparte, and the other his American interpreter, James Carret. On August 27, 1816, James Carret took title to the property as agent for Joseph Bonaparte.

At that time Bordentown was an important link in the route of travel from New York to Philadelphia. Passengers for Philadelphia left the boat at Amboy and drove thence to Bordentown, where they took the boat again down the Delaware to Philadelphia. Bordentown was for a time the residence of Tom Paine, who said, "I had rather see my horse Button eating the grass of Bordentown than see all the pomp and show of Europe." It was at Bordentown that Paine constructed the model of his iron bridge.

The park at Point Breeze was laid out in the style of the Escorial grounds and was traversed by twelve miles of drives and bridle paths, "winding through clustering pines and oaks and planted on every knoll with statuary. Rustic cots or rain shelters, bowers and seats, sheltered springs and solitary retreats were interspersed." One of the small streams had been dammed to form a lake two hundred yards broad and half a mile long. The lake was dotted with little islands, and swans floated on the surface of the water. In the summer time the lake was covered with fleets of pleasure boats.

Not far from Joseph's house was the white house with green shutters, the residence of Joseph's daughter, Zenaide, and her husband Prince Charles Lucien Bonaparte, the son of Joseph's brother. Joseph constructed an underground passage from Zenaide's house to his own mansion so that they could pass to and fro without

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being subjected to the inclemency of the weather. Princess Caroline Murat, daughter of Joseph's nephew, Lucien Charles Murat, writing in 1902, thus remembers Point Breeze: "As an old woman, I look back through the long vista of years, and although I have seen many beautiful estates in Europe, I have seen nothing on this side of the Atlantic that compares to Point Breeze."

When he took possession of his New Jersey estate Joseph was forty-eight years of age. In person he closely resembled Napoleon, although he was taller and less stout than his brother. He had the fair, smooth, woman-like complexion which marked all the Bonapartes. His manners were elegant and he was, like all the Bonapartes, fond of the company of women. Visitors to Point Breeze relate how Joseph delighted to take them on a tour of his mansion. In a secret hidden cabinet in his library he kept a splendid collection of jewels. There, too, could be seen the crown and rings he wore when King of Spain. The art gallery had a notable collection of paintings with masterpieces by Teniers, Bassano, Bidault, Vernet and Rubens. The most valuable of the paintings, however, was the "Nativity of our Saviour" by Raphael Mengs. This painting had been executed as an altar piece for one of the kings of Spain. Among the paintings that hung on the walls of Joseph's mansion was a copy of David's celebrated "Passage of the Alps."

One of the visitors to Point Breeze gives this amusing account of how Joseph took her one day into his private apartments: "The curtains, canopy and furniture were

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of light blue satin, trimmed with silver. Every room contained a mirror, reaching from the ceiling to the floor. Over the bed hung a splendid mirror and also one over the table. The walls were covered with oil paintings, principally of young females, with less clothing about them than they or you would have found comfortable in our cold climate, and much less than we found agreeable when the Count without ceremony led us before them and enumerated the beauties of the paintings with the air of an accomplished amateur. In every room of the house there were statues of Napoleon in different positions and in various sizes. There were also statues of his father and mother and all the family. To the statue of Pauline, in particular, the Count called our attention and asked us to admire it. He stood some time perfectly enraptured before it, pointing out to us what a beautiful head Pauline had, what hair, what eyes, nose, mouth, chin, what a throat, what a neck, what arms, what a magnificent bust, what a foot, enumerating all her charms, one after another, and demanding our opinion of them. Necessity made us philosophers, and we were obliged to show as much sang-froid on the subject as himself, for it was impossible to get him away without our prudery exciting more attention than would have been pleasant. When the Count was satisfied with the eulogiums we bestowed upon his fair sister, he led us on, remarking as we turned away from the statue: 'Ah, she was very beautiful, very beautiful was Pauline, but too ambitious, nothing could satisfy her. She always felt as if my poor brother was

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robbing her of a kingdom instead of bestowing one upon her; but she was so beautiful."

Joseph was an early riser. He had coffee and toast served in his room at seven o'clock. He was engaged until eleven in his library, writing and reading, when he had breakfast with his friends. After that he went over the grounds of the estate. Luncheon was at two, dinner at eight, and supper at ten. The two princesses, Zenaide and Charlotte, were generally with him; also some of the Murat family. A sixteen-oar barge presented to Joseph by Stephen Girard brought his guests up or down the Delaware River from Philadelphia, Trenton, and other nearby towns. Among Joseph's American friends were Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams, Admiral Charles Stewart, Richard Stockton, General Thomas Cadwalader, and Joseph Hopkinson, of Bordentown, the author of "Hail Columbia."

Joseph had a keen sense of humor. He had once conducted through his art gallery the ladies of a family that resided in the neighborhood of the Park: "Sometime afterwards, upon due notice, to the wonder of the neighbors and consternation of the family, the Count with his whole household and retinue in several carriages returned the visit. A super-cargo in the East India trade had presented to the family a full-sized bust of Helena, which stood on a pedestal in the dining room. One of the ladies of the family very carefully covered the breast up with a light shawl and invited the Count and his party into their 'statue gallery' to view it, which caused much merriment, the Count enjoying the hit heartily."



JOSEPH'S PHILADELPHIA HOME

Sign at left of gate, 260 South Ninth Street, says: "Joseph Bonaparte  
Rented This House for Two Years. Built 1812"

*(Phila. Public Ledger Photo)*

## JOSEPH BONAPARTE AT BORDENTOWN

The first and the most elaborate mansion built by Joseph was destroyed by fire in January, 1820. A guest at the mansion had gone off to Philadelphia and left a wood fire burning in his bed chamber, taking the key to the room with him. Through William Snowden, Joseph addressed a letter to the citizens of Bordentown thanking them for their zeal in saving valuable statues, paintings, plate, and books from the conflagration. He said: "This event has proved to me how much the inhabitants of Bordentown appreciate the interest I have always felt for them, and shows that men, in general, are good, when they have not been perverted in their youth by a bad education; when they maintain their dignity as men, and feel that true greatness is in the soul and depends upon ourselves. I cannot omit on this occasion what I have said so often, that the Americans are, without contradiction, the most happy people I have known; still more happy if they understand well their own happiness."

Joseph himself consistently was the good neighbor to his friends of Bordentown. He ministered to their material needs and comforts, even to the extent of "making" work for them to do, such as unnecessary landscaping and woodchopping. He was popular, deservedly.

Joseph willed Point Breeze to his grandson Joseph, the son of Charles Lucien Bonaparte and his daughter Zenaide. In 1847 the Prince sold Point Breeze to Thomas Richards of Philadelphia, who in turn sold it in 1850 to Henry Beckett. Beckett razed the Bonaparte mansion.

There recently appeared in the press the headline,

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“Bonaparte Estate Sold for \$200 on New Jersey Court Order.” By this sale, a place that had cost Joseph and succeeding holders about one million dollars was disposed of for a couple of hundred; but alas, there was also a Court decree for almost \$135,000 and an alleged item of unpaid taxes. The place was bid in, and what its next incarnation will be we do not know. Its latest owner, who bought it in 1912, was the son of a famous international engineer. It is not the house that was built and occupied by Joseph, nor is the present place an extraordinary one in appearance, though it and the grounds surrounding it very possibly represent to three men a million at the least, over \$300,000 to Joseph alone. Yet for its rare associations and native beauty, Bonaparte Park today is one of the most to be desired country seats in America.

Here lived on a slightly different building site and a hundred years ago, Joseph and the young Princess Zenaide, who married Cousin Charles Lucien Bonaparte. The main buildings of Joseph, which were burned, stood on a hundred-foot bluff at the junction of the Delaware River and Crosswicks Creek. It was to this tidewater creek that the famous and largely misunderstood upper tunnel led—a tunnel which was more for his daughter’s convenience than his own in going from one house to another, thence if desired to a dock at the water-side. Many thought it was used by the Bonapartes to bury treasure; in the past century there have been treasure hunters but no treasure there, where begins open water reaching to France itself.

The present place was built the middle of the last



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century by Henry Beckett, who though English by birth was a long-time resident of the United States, a son of the British consul in Philadelphia, and the husband of a Philadelphia girl. He built well from the standpoint of longevity, because the house still stands, though it was much improved by the last owner, who added to its size and appurtenances.

To visit Bonaparte Park today you will need to get permission from the caretaker, but first you may drive to picturesque old Bordentown. You enter the town from the south, passing on the right the Bordentown Military Institute. The town and Bonaparte Park are off the main highway now, a quiet village backwater, past which, a scant mile to the east, modern traffic passes Joseph's door. If you would like to see what Bonaparte Park looks like today—this house and estate that brought just \$200 (plus mortgage) in 1937—drive by a circuitous route to the house which stands back from the road. Two vast boxwoods which, one on each side, guard the entrance of the new house, were planted by Joseph, builder of the old, and later Beckett built where Joseph planted. The present place is a hundred yards or so from the Joseph site itself, that much farther from Crosswicks Creek, and so much nearer the highway.

If you enter the house today you will find a vast pile which only a rich man could support. There are approximately thirty rooms including ten for servants, seventeen fireplaces, which are located even in the bathrooms; there is a lady's bath in pink marble, a \$30,000

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bathroom with octagonal walls and a pink marble tub. In 1935 the furniture was removed, so today all that the large library holds is shelves; all that the rooms contain, crystal electroliers and fixtures. There is a master's bedroom, a tremendous drawing room, a splendid staircase. In the center of the house is a dome with illumination from the sky itself. This three-storied rotunda makes a well of light today in the dark old shuttered home. Vacant as it is, there is nothing left to see save two Carrara chimney-pieces, carved in colored marble with cherubs and other figures, and supposedly worth \$50,000. These were given Joseph by his uncle Cardinal Fesch, and are the only original objects to remain from Joseph's day.

From the roof you can see the Delaware River, and Trenton six miles to the north. You can also see the blue swimming pool thirteen feet deep, painted the blue of Naples, devised for filtered water but filled now with dead leaves. There is a boxwood hedge from the house to the pool and all around the house, a rose garden, a small pool, a larger lake with a quarry effect. A rock garden was started, and there are two great greenhouses and a tennis court. The house still stands in the midst of a wooded park, nearly two hundred and fifty acres in all, one hundred about the house itself. Possibly \$300,000 more has been spent in the last generation on this stucco-over-brick house with its flat roof, two stories on one side and three stories on the other, with its brick walks set in concrete, its frigidaire, wine-cellar, and oil burners, its \$16,000 summer house with openwork sides of hand-wrought iron—this house

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which, nearly a century old, has been remodeled periodically and has little in it of Joseph. Nevertheless on the grounds and at the gate there is an old house also of stuccoed brick which dates from Joseph's day. The woods too are much the same. There are trees of beech, oak, tulip poplar, birch and hemlock, many of which must have stood in Joseph's time, and there are beautiful specimens of cherry, dogwood, magnolia and rhododendron. The trees alone may have been seen by Joseph—silent witnesses of the day when kings and princes were "Jerseyites," and Jerseyites found them good neighbors.

Wherever Joseph went and built him a home there was hunting, and even today pheasants and rabbits abound in the woods which border the park along the mile and a quarter stretch of highway marking its eastern boundary. The tidal waters of Crosswicks Creek and the railroad tracks beyond are to the west, and it is pointing in this direction that we still find about forty feet of open brick tunnel, a well-built tunnel too and worthy of a king's masons.

As such stands Bonaparte Park today, waiting for another rich man not without his riches, or another uncrowned king without his country and with only an ex-king's customary wealth remaining to him. All is not lost by kingship while honor or an honorarium remains, as it usually does.

During the first part of his stay at Bordentown, Joseph had his town house in Philadelphia at 260 South Ninth Street. This was an old-fashioned Philadelphia dwelling with high-ceilinged rooms, a basement kitchen

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and a lawn. Now, if you visit it, you will see a place in good repair, but you will spend a moment or two working the latch before you can open the iron gate. Behind the slatted blinds of this town house Joseph entertained his American and his French friends. The only relics of his stay at the Ninth Street house are an old sideboard and some canvases brought from France. Joseph also resided in a house at the southeast corner of Eleventh and Market Streets, and which afterwards became the Bingham Hotel. It was in this house that Joseph's grandson, Joseph Lucien Charles Napoleon, son of Charles Lucien and of Joseph's daughter, Zenaide, was born February 13, 1824. This was the first legitimate Bonapartist birth in the United States.

One of Joseph's principal Philadelphia friends was Stephen Girard, the famous merchant and founder of Girard College. Girard was Joseph's banker. He purchased his wines for him, bought lumber for his building operations at Bordentown, and advised him as to wages to be paid the laborers. Joseph Bonaparte asked Girard to buy his French estate, "Mortfontaine." In regard to this offer Girard said to the Baring Brothers, "It does not suit me to figure as a great land owner in a country to which I shall never go, and under government hostile to Republicans."

The *Sunday Dispatch* of Philadelphia, of January 28, 1877, contains the following interesting account of an attempt made by Joseph to purchase a block of real estate from Stephen Girard: "One day at a dinner given to Girard by the Count de Survilliers—which was the ex-King's title in this country—the subject was broached

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and the Count offered to pay Girard any fair price he would ask. Girard said, 'Well, now, what will you give? What do you consider a fair price?' 'I'll tell you,' said the Count, 'I will cover the block from Eleventh to Twelfth, and from Chestnut to Market streets, with silver half dollars!' Girard, who was sipping his soup at the time, balanced his spoon for a second on the end of his finger, and, with a calculating look out of his one eye, said very slowly, 'Yes, Monsieur le Comte—if you will stand them up edgeways.' Needless to say, this bargain was not closed. Girard did indeed set a high value on the property, for by his will he directed that the College afterwards erected where it now stands, in the northern section of the city, should be built in the centre of this square."

Though most intimate with Stephen Girard, with whom he often dined, supped and visited, Joseph had certain good Philadelphia friends, four of whom—including Joseph Hopkinson—he was to mention in his last will and testament. Another warm friend was General Thomas Cadwalader, and there were others, though Joseph's Philadelphia acquaintance was notable for its careful selection more than its size, and characterized by friendship rather than society. He was known to many children, however, who never failed to point him out as "the good Mr. Bonaparte."

In discussing Joseph's will, mention should be made of a mysterious bequest of ten thousand dollars, to be dispensed and disposed of by the faithful Mailliard. According to a long ago writer in the *Newark Advertiser*, "This ten thousand dollars was designed to be and

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was paid over for the benefit of the offspring of Joseph Bonaparte by a Miss Savage." The same writer denies that "Joseph was a Saint," and titles his contribution to the *Advertiser*, "Left-Handed Marriage at Borden-town." Morganatic, "left-handed," or otherwise irregular, it seems sufficiently clear that Joseph had made himself at home in the New World as Bonapartes did in the Old, from time to time.

Julie-Marie, Queen of Naples and Spain, Joseph's good and gentle wife, never had joined him in America, and they were destined not to meet again until Joseph had returned to her on the other side. Julie faithfully if fearfully had intended to make the westward crossing in 1817, but physicians forbade the long, hard sea trip, as it certainly was at that time, and she never afterward was able to make the attempt successfully. In her place, then, came to Joseph the fair Annette Savage, American, and of all things, Quaker. The matter is well described, if naively, by a native son of those sections frequented by Joseph: "It is generally known that Joseph's wife did not accompany him to America, but he took for his American wife a Quakeress named Savage, and to them was born a daughter. It was characteristic of the Bonapartes to have a wife in every country where they spent much time." It would not be as difficult as it might be unfair to give further vital statistics in support of the above, but it does seem clear that the seed of Joseph and Annette did grow to maturity, did flourish, did marry and have other descendants of this long ago American mating, descendants who have led quiet, useful and respected lives in memory of

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a king who, like many such, was first a man, and of his pretty Quaker consort.

Joseph's home at Bordentown became the center for the French refugees who had come to America after Waterloo. In the Point Breeze mansion Marshal Grouchy, the Lallemand brothers, Clausel, Bernard, Lefebvre-Desnouettes, and other famous French officers were frequently to be seen. There they renewed their great memories of the past and planned and plotted for the future.

In the month of July, 1830, when Joseph was on his way to Saratoga, travelling on the steamer *Lady Clinton*, an old grenadier of Napoleon, hearing Joseph and his secretary Louis Mailliard speaking French, came up to them and, giving a military salute, asked if they had seen a little French woman whom he had lost on the preceding evening. Joseph asked him how long he had been in America. The grenadier replied that he had just come from France, and was on his way to ask King Joseph for a farm, for he had heard that Joseph gave farms to all soldiers of the Emperor who made application to him. Joseph spoke of the great hardships in pioneer farming, and wondered if the grenadier, at his age, would be fit for it. The old soldier told him that he had earned his living by sawing trees and that he had no doubt as to his ability to run a farm in the American wilderness. He went on to say that he had been one of the Six Hundred who had accompanied the Emperor to Elba and had returned with him on the brig *Inconstant*. After the disaster at Waterloo he had managed to save his Cross, his Eagle, and his Diploma

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of the Legion of Honor—in proof of this he removed his hat and drew from it those treasured relics of the Empire.

After hearing his story, Joseph told him that he would not find King Joseph at Bordentown, as he was absent and would not return for some time. The old soldier showing great distress at this, Joseph told Mailiard to give him twenty dollars. When he did so, he told him that he had been talking with none other than King Joseph himself. At that the old veteran fell at the feet of Joseph and covered them with kisses.<sup>1</sup>

Joseph was a good liver and liked gay company. In his "Life and Letters of Fitz-Greene Halleck," General Wilson relates what Halleck told him of a wedding in New York at which Joseph was present:

"This story was followed by an account of the wedding party of a member of the Bonaparte circle at Villegrand's, in Warren Street, New York. Halleck was the only American present, all the others being French. Among the company was Count Survilliers, the title assumed in this country by Joseph Bonaparte; Marshal Grouchy, who, according to the ex-king's testimony, said Halleck, 'was not a traitor to Napoleon;' Generals Renaud, St. Jean d'Angely, Van Dam, Desnouettes, Lallemand, and other expatriated followers of the emperor, who sought a refuge in the United States. The count talked to Halleck on this and other occasions without reserve, referring to his former situations as 'Quand j'étais roi d'Espagne,' or 'Dans mes

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<sup>1</sup> F. Marion Crawford, *Joseph Bonaparte in Bordentown, Century Magazine*, May, 1893.



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belles affaires.' In the course of the evening the party became quite hilarious, and enjoyed themselves as no other men on the face of the earth but Frenchmen could have under similar circumstances. The ex-king made a trumpet of a newspaper, and blew it vigorously; the marshal sang songs, all present joining in the chorus; the famous cavalry leader, Lallemand, jumped about on all fours, with a four-year old boy on his back; while another Waterloo general gave laughable imitations of a stuttering French soldier, and other comicalities. They romped and played like children, and although some of the party were old, others elderly, they were all full of youthful spirit. Halleck modestly refrained from stating in what manner he contributed to the enjoyment of the evening, which he characterized as the 'raciest and most amusing night I ever passed.'"<sup>1</sup>

When Joseph was at Bordentown a deputation from Mexico, then in revolt against Spain, came to offer him the Mexican crown. Joseph made this answer to the deputation: "I have worn two crowns; I would not take a step to wear a third. Nothing can gratify me more than to see men who would not recognize my authority when I was at Madrid now come to seek me in exile; but I do not think that the throne you wish to raise again can make you happy. Every day I pass in this hospitable land proves more clearly to me the excellence of the Republican institutions for America. Keep them as a precious gift from Heaven; settle your internal commotions; follow the example of the United

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, *Life and Letters of Fitz-Greene Halleck*. D. Appleton & Co., N. Y. 1869.

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States and seek among your fellow citizens a man more capable than I am of acting the great part of Washington.”<sup>1</sup>

When Napoleon heard of this proposal at St. Helena he made the following comment: “Joseph will refuse. He is too fond of the pleasures of life to bother himself again with the burden of a crown; and yet it would be a stroke of luck for England that the whole problem of Spanish-America should be solved in this way, for if Joseph were to become King of Mexico, a breach with France and Spain would be inevitable. For myself, his acquiescence would be weighted with consequences. He loves me and would use his position as a weapon to coerce England into treating me differently. Unfortunately, he will refuse.”

James K. Paulding, Secretary of the Navy under Van Buren, litterateur and follower of Irving, relates an interview he had with Lafayette at a dinner in New York in 1824. At this dinner Lafayette referred to the political parties in France and spoke of the “Orleans party,” “to which I belong.” Joseph Bonaparte got word of this meeting and conversation between Lafayette and Paulding, and went to call on the latter. He told him of what Lafayette had said when he visited him at Bordentown in 1824. “The Bourbon dynasty,” said Lafayette to Joseph, “cannot last. It too openly wounds the national feeling. In France we are all persuaded that the son of the Emperor alone can represent all the interests of the Revolution. Place two millions

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<sup>1</sup> Abbot, *Joseph Bonaparte*, p. 334. Harper & Bros., N. Y. 1869.

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at the disposal of our committee, and I promise you that with this sum in two years Napoleon II will be on the throne of France.”<sup>1</sup>

Joseph declined the proposal, partly because he did not think the Revolution was so near, and partly because he could not afford the sum which Lafayette named. “It seems, however,” said Joseph to Paulding, “that at the moment he was announcing to the people of the United States that he was a Republican, and at your brother’s table that he was an adherent of the Duke of Orleans, he made me an offer of placing my nephew on the throne of France for two million francs. I have long believed Lafayette devoid of faith, and now I am satisfied.”

When Joseph heard of the Revolution of 1830, that the Duke of Orleans, Louis Philippe, had been put on the throne, and that Lafayette had used his influence to that end, he addressed to Lafayette a letter in which he reminded him of their conversation of six years before. “You will recall,” wrote Joseph, “our interview in this hospitable and free land. My sentiments are as invariable as yours and those of my family. *Everything for the French people.* Doubtless I cannot forget that my nephew, Napoleon II, was proclaimed by the Chamber which in 1815 was dissolved by the bayonets of foreigners. I ask for the abolition of that tyrannic law which has shut out from France a family which had opened the kingdom to all those Frenchmen whom the Revolution had expelled. Adieu, my dear General.

<sup>1</sup> *Harper’s Magazine*, v. 131, p. 813.

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My letter proves to you the justice I rendered to the sentiments you expressed to me during the triumphant journey you made among this people, where I have seen for fifteen years that liberty is not a chimera, that it is a blessing which a nation, moderate and wise, can enjoy when it wishes.”<sup>1</sup>

In explaining to Joseph the part he had taken in putting the Duke of Orleans upon the throne of France, Lafayette wrote to him: “You know that in home affairs as foreign affairs no one can do just what he wishes to have done. Your incomparable brother, with his power, his character, his genius, experienced this himself.” Lafayette then went on to express his disapproval of the dictatorship of Napoleon and of the aristocracy which he had introduced.

To this Joseph replied from Point Breeze, under date of January 15, 1831: “Napoleon never doubted your good intentions; but he thought that you judged too favorably of your contemporaries. He was forced into war by the English, and into the dictatorship by the war. These few words are the history of the Empire. Napoleon incessantly said to me, ‘When will peace arrive? Then only can I satisfy all and show myself as I am.’ The aristocracy of which you accuse him was only the mode of placing himself in harmony with Europe. But the old feudal aristocracy was never in his favor. The proof of this is that he was its victim and that he expiated at St. Helena the crime of having wished to employ all the institutions in favor of the people; and

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<sup>1</sup> Abbot, *Joseph Bonaparte*, p. 342. Harper & Bros., N. Y. 1869.

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the European aristocracy contrived to turn against him even those very masses for whose benefit he was laboring.”<sup>1</sup>

In February, 1832, Joseph wrote from Point Breeze to his nephew, Napoleon's son, the King of Rome, a letter in which he urged him to claim his right as Emperor of France: “Let his Imperial Majesty (the Emperor of Austria) consent to entrust you to my care. Let him send me a passport that I may come to him, and to you. I will quit my retreat to respond to his confidence, to yours, to the sentiment which commands me to spare no efforts to restore to the love of the French the son of the man whom I have loved the most of any one upon earth. My opinions are well known in France. They are in harmony with those of the Nation. If you enter France with me, and a tri-color scarf, you will be received there as the son of Napoleon.”<sup>2</sup>

When he heard of the serious illness of Napoleon's son, the Duke of Reichstadt, or the King of Rome, Joseph left his home in New Jersey and sailed for England. There he learned the sad tidings that the King of Rome had died on the 22nd of July, 1832, aged 21. Joseph was joined in England by his two brothers, Lucien and Jerome, and his nephew, Louis Napoleon. It was while Joseph was in England that Louis Napoleon made his ill-starred attempt at Strasbourg. In 1837, Joseph returned to Bordentown where he resided until 1839, when he returned to England. In 1841 he was permitted to take up his residence in Genoa, being

<sup>1</sup> Abbot, *Joseph Bonaparte*, p. 342. Harper & Bros., N. Y. 1869.

<sup>2</sup> Abbot, *Joseph Bonaparte*, p. 357.

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conveyed thither by an English ship. After a brief stay at Genoa, he joined his wife and children at Florence. There, tenderly cherished and nursed by Queen Julie and his brothers, Louis and Jerome, Joseph died, July 28, 1844, aged 76 years.

At St. Helena, Napoleon once thus summed up the character of his brother Joseph: "Joseph rendered me no assistance, but he is a very good man. His wife, Queen Julie, is the most amiable creature that ever existed. Joseph and I were always attached to each other and kept on very good terms. He loves me sincerely, and I doubt not that he would do everything in the world to serve me; but his qualities are only suited to private life. He is of a gentle and kind disposition; possesses talent and information, and is altogether a very amiable man. In the discharge of the high duties which I confided to him he did the best he could. His intentions were good; and therefore, the principal fault rested not so much with him as with me, who raised him above his proper sphere. When placed in important circumstances he found his strength unequal to the task imposed on him."<sup>1</sup>

In a letter which he wrote to his brother Louis, Joseph, seeking to comfort him, said this: "It is necessary then for us to perceive what we are in this life, and not what we could wish to be. Being men, we are destined to live, that is to say, to suffer. But we can preserve our own self-respect and the esteem of the friends who appreciate us. So long as that continues, one is not abso-

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<sup>1</sup> Las Cases, *Napoleon*. Eckler, N. Y. 1900.

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lutely unhappy." Taught by adversity, Joseph had cut over the pavilion on his Bordentown estate this Latin motto, the words of Dido to Aeneas—"Non ignara Mali, Miseris Succurrere Disco," or, "Familiar with misfortune, I have learned to help the wretched."

Joseph had with him at Bordentown his two daughters, Zenaide and Charlotte. Charlotte, the younger, married her cousin Napoleon Louis, the second son of Louis Bonaparte, and the brother of Napoleon III. Zenaide married Charles Lucien, son of her father's brother, Lucien Bonaparte. Lucien Bonaparte was often spoken of as the ablest of the Emperor's brothers. His first wife was Catherine Boyer, daughter of an innkeeper. His second wife was Marie de Bleschamps, the divorced wife of a Paris stock broker with whom he had already been living before their marriage. This marriage enraged the Emperor, as we know, and Lucien was barred from the succession and quit France. In 1811 Lucien set sail for the United States, but his ship was captured by a British cruiser and he was taken first to Malta and then to England. Lucien was reconciled to Napoleon during the Hundred Days. After Waterloo he took up his residence in Italy, where he died June 27, 1840. The British government had refused his request that he be permitted to go to St. Helena and reside there with his brother, the Emperor.<sup>1</sup> Pierre Napoleon, Lucien's son by his second wife, and his brother Louis

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<sup>1</sup> One of Lucien's daughters, Princess Laetitia, at the age of sixteen married Sir Thomas Wyse of Waterford, Ireland. One of their five sons was Lucien-Napoleon Bonaparte-Wyse, who, with officers of the French Navy and Army, secured from the Government of Colombia, in 1878, a concession giving him the right to build a canal and a railroad at Panama from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He afterwards transferred this concession to Ferdinand de Lesseps.

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Lucien, both fell in love with a beautiful peasant girl while hunting in the Corsican mountains. At an inn they gambled as to which one should possess her. Pierre lost and went to America to forget his sorrows. He spent some time at Bordentown with his Uncle Joseph.

Pierre was in New York at the same time that his cousin, Louis Napoleon, was there, and when Louis Napoleon had become Emperor, many of the excesses and escapades of the depraved and dissipated Pierre were attributed to him. In 1870, Pierre Bonaparte shot a journalist, Victor Noir. The trial and subsequent acquittal occasioned great excitement in France.

Lucien Bonaparte's eldest son, Charles Lucien, who married Joseph's daughter Zenaide, attained a high reputation as an ornithologist. He lived with Joseph at Bordentown from 1822 to 1828. It was in the forests of his uncle's estate at Point Breeze that he began to study American birds. This led to the publication of his "Ornithology of American Birds." It was published as a continuation of the great work of the Scottish-American ornithologist, Alexander Wilson. Charles Lucien Bonaparte befriended Audubon and introduced him in 1824 to the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia. He was one of the first subscribers to Audubon's celebrated work, "The Birds of America."

When Napoleon abdicated in 1814, Joseph retired to Switzerland, where he purchased an estate, Prangins Castle, at Nyons. Called back to Paris during the Hundred Days, Joseph and his secretary Louis Mailliard, before leaving Prangins, buried all his jewels in an iron box in a corner of the estate. After Waterloo





THE FIRST "POINT BREEZE"  
Mansion and Park, from a Hill  
*(From "Bonaparte's Park, and the Murats")*



LAKE BONAPARTE, NEW YORK  
Still Wild and Rugged

## JOSEPH BONAPARTE AT BORDENTOWN

Joseph, of course, had no opportunity to recover his treasure. But in 1817 Louis Mailliard, armed with papers from Stephen Girard, which made it appear that he was transacting business for him, went from Bordentown to Europe in one of Girard's ships. When he reached Prangins he passed himself off as an English coal speculator who wished to prospect for a coal mine on the estate. With a few workmen he dug a hole where the treasure had been buried. After the workmen had gone home, Mailliard returned in the darkness with one companion and recovered the iron box. In due time the casket with its jewels, chiefly diamonds, was safe in Joseph's mansion at Bordentown. The stones were worth close to five million francs. Louis Mailliard's son, Adolph, settled at San Rafael, California, in 1867.

It was at Bordentown that Joseph received word of the death of Napoleon at St. Helena in May, 1821. Joseph tenderly loved the Emperor and was much moved by the tidings of his death. He received a noble and touching letter from General Bertrand giving an account of the last days of Napoleon. In an autobiographic passage written at Point Breeze, Joseph said: "Having attained a somewhat advanced age and enjoyed good health, disabused of many of the illusions which enabled me to bear the storms of life, and replacing those illusions by that tranquility of soul which results from a good conscience and from the security which is afforded by a country admirably constituted, I regard myself as having reached the port. Before disembarking upon the shores of eternity I wish to render an account to myself of the long voyage.

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“I venture to affirm that it is the love of truth which leads me to undertake this writing. It is a sentiment of justice which I owe to the man who was my friend, and whom human feebleness had disfigured in a manner so unworthy. Napoleon was, above all, a friend of the people, and he was a just and good man, even more than he was a great warrior and administrator. It is my duty as his elder brother, and one who has not always shared in his political opinions, to speak of that which I know, and to express convictions which I profoundly cherish.”

Such, then, is the story of Joseph and Bordentown. Exactly a hundred years have passed since Joseph left his New Jersey home for the last time. In those hundred years Joseph has shrunk in stature, while his brother Napoleon grows taller and taller. The name of Joseph Bonaparte lives on only because the echo of the Emperor's name becomes greater and greater. The lordly Delaware still rolls seaward, flowing silently away like the river of a man's life, and passing as it flows the fields and forests where the friends and worshippers of the Emperor built their homes and sang the songs of France. But the place that once knew them now knows them no more forever.

## V

### JOSEPH AND LAKE BONAPARTE

**“WELL** I remember you spoke to me formerly of your great possessions in the United States. If you have them still, I should like very much to have some in exchange for a part of that silver I have there in those wagons, and which may be pillaged at any moment. Take four or five hundred thousand francs and give me the equivalent in land.”

“I cannot do so. It is impossible to make a bargain when only one party knows what he is about.”

“Oh, I know you well, and I rely more on your word than my own judgment.”<sup>1</sup>

The first speaker was Joseph Bonaparte—Joseph of Naples and Spain. The second was Count James Donatien Le Ray de Chaumont; and the “great possessions in the United States” consisted of huge holdings of wild, undeveloped and mostly forest land in Northern New York State, where Count de Chaumont had owned approximately 350,000 acres in Franklin, St. Lawrence, Jefferson, and Lewis Counties. How he came to own this land goes back to “Castorland,” a land development of noble and clerical exiles which was an attempt of certain ones in troubled France to create a retreat in the New World, to which they hoped to escape. They formed “La Compagnie de New

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<sup>1</sup> Sylvester, *Historical Sketches of No. N. Y.* W. H. Young, Troy. 1877.

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York" in August, 1792, and the same month purchased from William Constable an immense tract in the Black River Valley of Northern New York. Their maximum holdings were 630,000 acres, and subsequently stock certificates and lots were sold, each share of fifty acres selling for about one hundred and fifty dollars.

The first exiles sailed from Havre July 4, 1793, reaching New York September 7, 1793. On their way up-country they were greeted warmly by Baron von Steuben, who in his log home, some fifteen miles north of Utica, was hard at work endeavoring to clear and cultivate part of the 16,000 acres received from the State. Castorland, unfortunately, was a complete, prompt failure, financially and otherwise, and in 1800 Gouverneur Morris of New York took it over as agent. He interested de Chaumont, and much of this property finally became his. Count Le Ray de Chaumont, an old friend of Joseph Bonaparte, had many connections with the American Colonies which became the United States. Count de Chaumont, of an old and noble family, was the son of the man who gave Benjamin Franklin a home at Passy when Franklin was American Commissioner to the French Court. The younger de Chaumont's father had helped the Colonies in other ways, and indeed it is said that he expended a large portion of a considerable fortune in their behalf. The name "Chaumont" is familiar to millions of living Americans, since that was the site of the American "G. H. Q." in the World War.

The young Count de Chaumont, not long after the end of the American Revolution, came to America to

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see things for himself and in due course he became one of the greatest land-holders in the new country. With an associate he also purchased a smaller tract in Otsego County, and there they installed a Judge Cooper as their agent. Judge Cooper was the father of James Fenimore Cooper, future American novelist.

All the Bonapartes had large resources—and their wives, their cousins, and their aunts—to set themselves up anew in a new world. Then as now it seemed a custom of ex-kings, whether a Bonaparte, a Selassie, a Wilhelm, an Alphonso, or a Duke of Windsor. Only Napoleon himself lost all, but he gave to his family the resources they required to cushion the shock of their involuntary exile, even unto the third and fourth generation, for it takes money to keep money, even to marry money, and the Bonapartes always have been wealthy.

At the time of which we write, 1815, Joseph Bonaparte was still in France. Count de Chaumont heard that he was in Blois and hastened thence. It was at dinner that there occurred the conversation which was to make Joseph an up-State New Yorker. Whether or no he gave de Chaumont a wagon-load of silver, or as other authorities say, about one hundred thousand dollars, is not known, but it is known that Joseph did purchase from de Chaumont approximately 150,000 acres, and the center of his purchase was the body of water which was to become Lake Bonaparte. Joseph is supposed to have made the purchase that same year, 1815, using his American name of Count de Survilliers, although other authorities claim that it was not until December 1818 that Joseph's land was purchased for

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him by Pierre S. Duponceau, his agent. Actually, Joseph was not authorized by the State of New York to own land in his own name until 1825, although the State of New Jersey conferred on him this right, which was his without the necessity of becoming an American citizen, in 1817. Joseph of course had reasons for retaining his French nationality and citizenship. The New York Legislature had bestowed on Joseph his land-holding right by a special Act following a petition to them which had read: "Not being of the number of those who would wish to abandon this land of hospitality, where the best rights of man do prevail, I am nevertheless bound to my own country by ties which misfortunes render sacred."<sup>1</sup>

A certain amount of weight is lent the 1818 purchase date, or at least the date when Joseph actually put cash "on the line," by the fact that his resources when fleeing France were said to be far from as great as reported. His contribution to the Hundred Days, so it was related, had reduced his readily available possessions to only "a little land, a collection of objects of art, and precious stones, by the sale of which he purchased his property in the United States."<sup>2</sup> Probably this refers to his New Jersey holdings. When, in 1818, Mailliard returned from his excavating at Prangins Castle with five millions in diamonds, Joseph really was in funds, if indeed he had not been before. Kingly "poverty" is only relative.

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<sup>1</sup> E. T. Tomlinson, *The Independent*. N. Y. 1902.

<sup>2</sup> F. Marion Crawford, *Joseph Bonaparte in Bordentown*. *Century Magazine*, N. Y. 1893.

## JOSEPH AND LAKE BONAPARTE

Even Joseph, however, was not immune to the laws of supply and demand, inflation and deflation, whatever called then. Joseph's silver, with which may well have been mixed some diamonds, had bought him 150,000 Northern acres. "Later, in 1820, when the silver and diamonds took one of their peculiar and unaccountable falls in value, for the silver problem was not unknown even in those days, the number of acres which Joseph owned was reduced to 26,840."<sup>1</sup> From beginning to end, Bonaparte and de Chaumont dealt fairly and squarely, as well as according to the land and money markets.

When Joseph bought his inland empire, Napoleon hoped to accompany him, and it is said that their scheme was to create a great manufacturing establishment along the Black River Valley. It seems ridiculous enough now and in a way not a little pathetic to reflect that it was their hope thus to become a manufacturing rival of England. Napoleon however never reached Lake Bonaparte nor did the industrial kingdom of the brothers' dreams. Yet it was not forgotten and was more than once discussed at dinners given there by Joseph and also by Count de Chaumont, who himself had a chateau near the Black River and who entertained there a son of Marshal Murat, de Chaumont's guest and another Adirondack dreamer.

Chaumont's chateau was located at Le Rayville, about ten miles east of Watertown, and the Count and his family had been permanent residents of the United States

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<sup>1</sup> Tomlinson, *The Independent*.



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from about 1808. To his home came courtiers, clergy, princes and even kings, before most of whose names "ex" belonged. Yet his home was hospitable and he, like his father, a true friend of the new nation. Democratically, he was known usually as simply Le Ray or Chaumont instead of *M. le Comte*.

While a true friend of the Colonies, it is said nevertheless that the real reason for his first visit to our shores was his father's natural desire to collect certain "war debts" from the new Government of the United States. Young Chaumont, born at the Chateau de Chaumont November 13, 1760, came over several times. He had wed Miss Grace Coxe, a New Jersey girl, February 21, 1790. A son and daughter were born to them, the son Vincent assisting his father in his American affairs. It was not until 1810 that he went home to France, there to stay, his son Vincent remaining in America as his representative. Vincent is said to have been thoroughly successful in this, and from now on in American annals is found the name of Vincent Le Ray rather than James D. Le Ray, Comte de Chaumont.

Although Joseph had been in America since 1815, it was not until about 1828 that he first visited his new country home. A trip then was not so simple as today, when to go from Bordentown to Lake Bonaparte by fast train or automobile is but a short and pleasant journey, by airplane a matter of two or three hours. From Bordentown, then, in 1828 and later, he pursued his way to New York City, up the Hudson River by boat to Albany, drove through the Mohawk Valley to Utica (with an occasional Saratoga Springs stop-over), north to

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Carthage, and thence to his own domain. Here it was necessary, writers of the time remind us, to cut his own way through the woodland. His great traveling coach is said to have been drawn by six horses. He was accompanied by courtiers and friends of better days, and "dressed in his elegant green hunting suit, with gilded trappings to match, he seemed indeed a prince among the hunters." So elaborate was his turn-out and spectacular his progress, that contemporary writers compared his summer exodus to the journeyings of the old French kings from Fontainebleau to Blois in the preceding century. He dined on the way, wherever he happened to be, perhaps in the woods from golden dishes, which accompanied him and regarding which, under the stands of virgin pine and hardwood, he could reflect on all he had lost, and his hopes for recovery. During the four or five summers when he went north, he visited more than once at the home of an ancestor of one of the authors of this book, and it seems he was partial to the American cheese and other dairy products which they gave him. He got no golden dishes there. They were Quaker folk from Philadelphia. Joseph always had a jolly company with him. Once after a stop at a hostelry in the Mohawk Valley, the innkeeper presented Joseph with his bill—"To making in mine house one big fuss—\$200."

When Joseph reached Carthage, he was able to leave his coach and six for a gondola and six. From Carthage in those days the Black River was navigable upstream for thirty to forty miles, and indeed small steamboats were able to go up it, so that it was no trick to carry

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Joseph smoothly and swiftly in his six-oared gondola to his lake, the boat being portaged from the river.

On one occasion Joseph and party halted at Pine Plains, now the site of a great Army camp and training area. Then there was nothing but mountain, plain, forest and stream in the North of New York. Joseph's Lake, which promptly was named Bonaparte, by or for him, covers about twelve hundred acres. Now, as then, the shore line is wild and rugged. There are rocky islets and the waters of the lake have been compared to those in the Highlands of Scotland. The lake itself is in the township of Diana, Lewis County, and the name of the goddess of huntsmen was given the town at the request of Joseph, whose favorite sport was Diana's.

When Joseph's "liveried gondoliers and gay trap-pings" had got him finally to his own waterway, he was under the necessity of building himself a hunting lodge. This he did in the same year of 1828, erecting also a summer house at the lake's outlet. The village of Alpine later marked this site. Finally he built a second summer house on Indian River at Natural Bridge. This is some seven miles to the south of the Lake, and his Natural Bridge home is said to have contained "bullet-proof sleeping rooms." If so, this is another American "first" in a land which has tried to accustom itself to bullet-proof motor cars, windshields, and vests. Although there were no racketeers as we know them in those days—called "good old days"—Joseph may have had his enemies. Yet he never was harmed in a country

## JOSEPH AND LAKE BONAPARTE

which welcomed him and which in his own time he left voluntarily.

To this wilderness Sans Souci, Joseph took his beautiful Quaker girl, Annette Savage, destined to be the mother of the first more-or-less kingly scion to be born in these United States. Local tradition mentions their daughter,<sup>1</sup> and you hear that she was born to them at Natural Bridge, that she grew up, married well, and had a son, Joseph's American grandson. They said there of Annette that "she was always known as his wife while at Lake Bonaparte."

Among those who gathered at Joseph's New York retreat were Marshal Grouchy, Count Real, Napoleon's Prefect of Police—Duc de Vincennes—and the astronomer, M. Pigeon, who had vowed when leaving France that he would never wear a covering on his head until the Emperor Napoleon should come into his own again.

For his principal Lake home, Joseph chose a rocky height near the head of the Lake. The building was long and well-furnished. What is left of this log lodge, which was burned, still may be seen—a forlorn little pile of foundation stones. Only the view remains. The view will always be there, let us hope, and there are also summer visitors whose hundred cottages now dot the Lake. Joseph's place at the outlet of the Lake was a frame structure in a clearing of some thirty acres. It had a cellar, an icehouse, the usual out-buildings—all rotted down.

In those days he could enjoy without difficulty the

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<sup>1</sup> Supposed to have been pensioned by Napoleon III.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

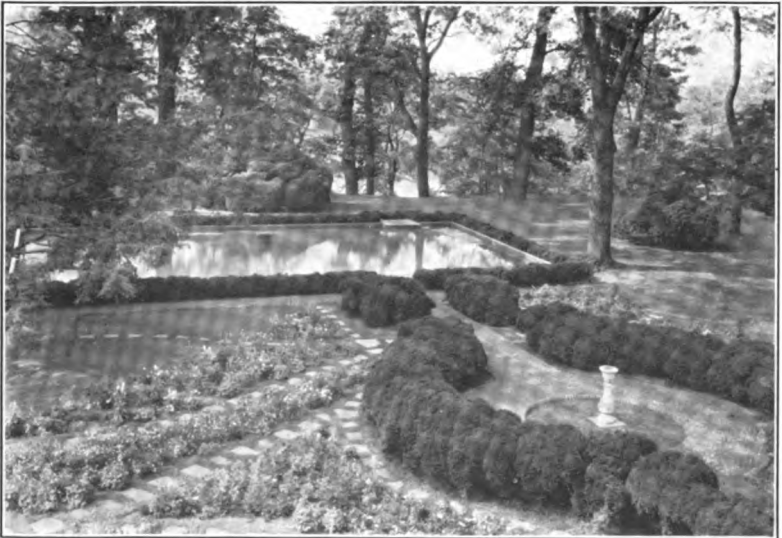
hunting of deer, partridge and duck, and in the lake or nearby streams excellent fishing for pike, bass, salmon and speckled trout. The Lake has a coast line of about twenty-five miles, is four miles long, and reaches an extreme depth of five hundred feet. It is some eighteen hundred feet above sea level; the shores of it from one hundred to two and even three hundred feet in height. From the Lake can be seen the famous Adirondack skyline all about.

Nearby is a cave, located on Green Pond about half a mile from the Lake. At the time of one of Joseph's visits, about 1830, natives say, a friend and companion of Bonaparte fell in love with a girl, likewise French. We do not know their names now, only the fate that befell them. The local legend has it that they never returned from a boat ride which they took one day, and their friends supposed that they drowned. A score of years later, however, hunters found two skeletons in the Green Pond cave, together with a goldpiece of Napoleon and sufficient evidence in addition to identify the dead lovers. It never was known whether they were the victims of wild animals which had dragged them to the cave, or of a suicide pact. Since suicide is deemed romantic, that is the more popular local theory, though the cave is said to be the old-time haunt of Adirondack panther and bear.

Should you go to Lake Bonaparte today you will find there a hotel which can accommodate a large number of guests. You will not need to go like Joseph, in a coach and six, for you can travel swiftly and smoothly in your motor car over Route 3 from Carthage north-



THE PRESENT "POINT BREEZE"  
The Manor House at "Bonaparte Park"  
*(Photo by Mattie Edwards Hewitt, N. Y.)*



"BONAPARTE PARK"—GARDEN AND GROUNDS  
A pool, aging trees, a sun-dial, and flagged walks are hall-marks of  
beauty near Joseph's old home  
*(Photo by Mattie Edwards Hewitt, N. Y.)*

## JOSEPH AND LAKE BONAPARTE

east to Natural Bridge and on to Lake Bonaparte. The nearest good-sized city is Watertown, near Ogdensburg and the St. Lawrence, due north. Some of the most famous peaks and resorts of the Adirondacks are to the east, at Tupper Lake, Cranberry, Saranac, and Placid. Canada is not far to the north, just across the St. Lawrence River, and Bonaparte is one of a cluster of three little lakes, Bonaparte, Indian and Sylvia.

Not only had Napoleon, Joseph and Chaumont been interested in the North, but it is said that Prince Murat, who lived near Joseph at Bordentown, had visions of a great project near the Black River. Here he hoped to see a city—"Joachim"—a city of the grand and wealthy. The natural advantages were there and nothing was lacking, except unfortunately every one else. No one would invest. He himself had a little cash, though on his Northern project he also expended some forty thousand dollars secured from an American sister of Madame Murat. This grandiose colonizing scheme based largely on "other people's money" was by no means the first to be tried and to fail. But it seems that land plans involving aristocrats only are doomed. Poor men's projects have failed too, but more often have succeeded, while the rich man's "exclusive" colony on the other hand practically always has failed here, and doubtless always will.

Joseph enjoyed four or five summer visits to his Northern home, and then in 1835 he disposed of everything to John La Farge, wealthy merchant of New York City, through his agent, Judge Joseph Boyer. Prior to this Joseph had sold and given away many acres, how-

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ever, including the land for "Joachim." Napoleon's favorite brother, who was said to resemble him more than any of the others, commanded the respect, indeed the liking, of his neighbor settlers and the stray hunters. He was well liked by all; nevertheless it was a neighbor who sued him in Jefferson County Court for clearing a piece of land. Joseph paid the bill without going to law. This displeased him greatly, although we cannot believe that this alone could have caused him to abandon life in the wilds. In the beginning Joseph had planned and started to build for wintering as well as summering in his bucolic retreat, but the deep snows and robust winters of up-State New York soon proved, early in the first Fall, too much for Joseph's Latin blood.

Today the French "northlanders" all are gone: Joseph, Chaumont, Murat, others. Only their names remain. Yet it is scarcely more than a hundred years since these representatives of European royalty sighted a gun and tested a rod in the democratic fastnesses of the Adirondack foothills.

A house which its builder hoped would be honored by the presence of the Emperor was built on the border of Northern New York. Where Lake Ontario empties into the St. Lawrence River, at the beginning of the Thousand Islands, is the village of Cape Vincent. It is located opposite Wolf Island, on the other side of which is Kingston, Ontario, Canada. To the south are Chaumont Bay and the town of Chaumont, wherein again we meet our friend and Bonaparte benefactor, de Chaumont. Not only did Chaumont and his



## JOSEPH AND LAKE BONAPARTE

friends visit these parts and inhabit many of these places, but later immigrants from France came over in considerable numbers from about the year 1830. Joseph Bonaparte, not to mention these many French friends and emigres, indeed had been called "perhaps the first of the summer sojourners in the region of the St. Lawrence River and the Thousand Islands."<sup>1</sup>

In Cape Vincent itself were two famous homes: first, the "Cup and Saucer House" which stood on the bank of the St. Lawrence at the foot of Kanady Street; and the other, the "Stone House," which remains. The Cup and Saucer House was called such because of the fact that it resembled a saucer bearing an inverted cup. It was built before 1818 by Count Pierre Francois Real, who lived in it and who intended that Napoleon should live in it with him. Count Real, with several friends, reached America in 1816. He had been an important man in France, a member of the Council of State, Minister, and during the Hundred Days, the Prefect of Police. He was much attached to Napoleon, as Napoleon to him. It was Real supposedly who thwarted Georges Cadoudal's gunpowder plot against First Consul Bonaparte's life in 1800. At one time Count Real received from the Emperor a half-million francs to buy himself a house, a house which is now said to be the residence of a Baron Rothschild. It is related that Count Real and friends, following their successful transfer to America, here planned to welcome Napoleon from his rocky prison. The Count

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<sup>1</sup> Tomlinson, *The Independent*.

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alone was destined to inhabit the Cup and Saucer House which, catching fire in 1867 from a parlor fire-place, is now no more.

Count Real seems to have been a talented Frenchman as well as a devoted one, and is said to have furnished the house as well as he was able, financially and architecturally, that it might be worthy of his Emperor. Napoleon's room had been made and reserved especially for him, but he was not to occupy it. Joseph Bonaparte and Count Real, however, met several times, and the Count, finally returning to France, died in 1831 in Paris.

The Stone House, standing today and owned by a New Yorker, has French, though not Bonaparte, associations, and was built in 1815 by de Chaumont himself, by whom it was sold to three former officers of Napoleon, the brothers Peugnet. Descendants of the Peugnets may still be found in America, and one of them has the Legion of Honor decoration awarded a Peugnet by Napoleon; another, a similar decoration presented by Marshal Murat. Two of the brothers founded in New York a school for boys, where the future Confederate General Beauregard first studied Army regulations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Casler, *Cape Vincent and Its History*. 1906.

## VI

### THE MURATS

**O**N the 13th of October, 1815, a tall handsome man of commanding presence stood in the bright Italian sunlight at Pizzo, facing a firing squad. He kissed tenderly a carnelian on which was cut the head of his wife. Then looking upon the soldiers who were facing him, he said, "Save my face. Aim at my heart." There was a crash of musketry and Joachim Murat, one of Napoleon's most famous marshals and his greatest cavalry general, fell dead.

Joachim Murat was the son of a French innkeeper. He was born March 25, 1767, in Bastide. Through the influence of Talleyrand, in whose family his father had been a steward, Murat was admitted to the College of Cahors as a student for holy orders. He showed, however, little aptitude for study and no fitness whatever for the priesthood. After leaving the College at Cahors, he entered another school at Toulouse. There he fell in love with a girl of the town, fought for her favors and lived with her secretly for some time. This ended his theological studies, and he enlisted in a regiment of chasseurs. He soon tired of this and leaving the army was for a time a hostler in his father's stables. The flames of the Revolution were beginning to burst forth in France, and Murat obtained an appointment in the Constitutional Guard of Louis XVI. He was then twenty-two years of age, of martial bearing, and attrac-

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tive in figure and face. He served through the Reign of Terror and became a major in the army of the Republic. In 1795 he met Napoleon, who took him as an aide-de-camp to Italy, where he distinguished himself in the campaigns of 1796 and 1797.

In 1798 Napoleon took Murat with him to Egypt. At the battle of the Pyramids, he made the first of the cavalry charges for which he was famous. At Aboukir he charged in person the camp of the Turkish commander Mustapha Pasha, and taking him captive carried him off a prisoner into the French camp. In the campaign in Syria, Murat played an important part in the battle of Mt. Tabor, charging again and again through the Turkish cavalry. He seemed like one of the old crusading knights come to life again. Murat said of the battle on the plain of Esdraelon, at the foot of Mt. Tabor, where our Lord was transfigured, that in the midst of the battle he thought of Christ and His transfiguration, and that by that recollection visions of glory rose before him and his strength and courage were multiplied a hundredfold.

Returning to France with Napoleon, he took a prominent part in the stirring events of the 18th Brumaire, when he dispersed the Council of Five Hundred with sixty of his grenadiers. In 1800 he married Caroline, Napoleon's sister, who preferred him to the high-born and celebrated General Moreau, who when in disfavor with Napoleon lived for a time at Morrisville, Pennsylvania, and lost his life at the battle of Dresden fighting with the Allies against Napoleon. Murat commanded the cavalry at the battle of Marengo and hence-

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forth took a prominent part in all campaigns of Napoleon. As the Governor of Paris he played a part in the tragic story of the Duc d'Enghien. In a statement, however, on the day of his death Murat declared that he was altogether innocent in the death of the Duc. In 1804 Napoleon made him a Marshal of the Empire, and for his exploits in the German campaign of 1805 he was made the Duc of Berg and Cleves. He led the cavalry in the great battles of Jena, Eylau, and Friedland, and in 1808 was made King of Naples in place of Joseph Bonaparte who was promoted to the throne of Spain.

Napoleon had Murat with him as commander of his cavalry in the disastrous Russian campaign of 1812. General de Caulaincourt, who served on Napoleon's staff in that campaign, says that Murat, who knew that the cavalry was beginning to waste away, once ventured some remarks to that effect to the Emperor. But when he saw that it displeased Napoleon he "kept to himself the wise reflections which he had voiced to us alone. He soon forgot them entirely. Always at the forefront of the skirmishers and eager to thrust his ostrich plumes and fantastic uniform beneath the very noses of the Cossacks, he succeeded in ruining the cavalry, ended by causing the loss of the army and brought France and the empire to the brink of an abyss."<sup>1</sup>

Murat was the source of never-ending wonder and admiration on the part of the Cossacks, who were amazed at his wild charges and took great delight in his

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<sup>1</sup> Caulaincourt, *With Napoleon in Russia*, p. 64. Wm. Morrow & Co., N. Y. 1935.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

fantastic uniform. This uniform consisted of scarlet pantaloons embroidered with gold, boots of yellow leather, and a girdle of gold brocade, from which hung a straight diamond-hilted sword. The collar of his coat was ornamented with gold, and on his head he wore a three-cornered hat surmounted by a towering plume of ostrich and heron feathers. Over this gorgeous uniform he wore in winter a cloak of green velvet lined with sable. His horse, too, was always richly caparisoned with blue trappings, and the saddle and bridle were of the richest Turkish design. When Murat and Napoleon rode the lines of the army together, men were struck with the contrast between the magnificent Murat, and Napoleon with his plain three-cornered hat, his leather breeches and his green coat. In the thickest of the fight the white plume of Murat could be seen waving above the smoke of battle.

A Cossack prisoner taken on the march to Moscow said to Napoleon, "The Cossacks like the King of Naples, for he is a brave fellow and always the first to come under fire. Word is gone round that he is not to be killed. But they do want to take him prisoner." Yet one day an imperfectly instructed Cossack fired point-blank at Murat, and henceforth he had to be more circumspect in his movements.

When Napoleon left the army on the retreat from Moscow he made Murat its commander. The choice seems to have been between the Prince Eugene and Murat. At this distance it seems an extraordinary choice, for Napoleon himself had a poor opinion of the ability of Murat. "He's a brave man on the battle-

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field," Napoleon said, "but he has no head." No doubt Napoleon was influenced by Murat's rank and standing with the soldiers, and also by the fact that Berthier, his chief of staff, recommended Murat as commander of the army. Berthier soon regretted his recommendation, said Caulaincourt, and fell sick with chagrin and mortification. Murat showed himself totally unfitted for the task of leading the army out of Russia. On January 16, 1813, he deserted the army at Posen, leaving it without a commander, and fled in disguise to Naples.

Despite this extraordinary conduct we find Murat fighting bravely by the side of Napoleon in the great battle of the nations at Leipzig. Colletta makes the claim that Murat saved Napoleon's army at Leipzig. After that campaign Murat returned to Naples and entered into an agreement with Austria, by which he was to keep his kingdom on the condition he would furnish troops for the Allies. During the Hundred Days after the escape of Napoleon from Elba, Murat made his way to France. Napoleon scorned his offer of help. After the battle of Waterloo he had a price on his head and hid in disguise for a time near Toulon. From there he made his way to Corsica, and from Corsica to Pizzo, where with a few followers, only thirty men, he hoped to start a campaign to win back his Kingdom of Naples. He was at once captured, court-martialed, and shot, October 13, 1815.

On the last day of his life he wrote a noble letter to his wife:

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

“My dear Caroline—My last hour has arrived; in a few moments more I shall have ceased to live—in a few moments more you will have no husband. Never forget me; my life has been stained by an injustice. Farewell my Achille, farewell my Letitia, farewell my Lucien, farewell my Louise. I leave you without kingdom or fortune, in the midst of the multitude of my enemies. Be always united; prove yourselves superior to misfortune; remember what you are and what you have been, and God will bless you. Do not reproach my memory. Believe that my greatest suffering in my last moments is dying far from my children. Receive your father’s blessing; receive my embraces and my tears.

“Keep always present to you the memory of your unfortunate father.

JOACHIM MURAT.

“Pizzo, 13th October, 1815.”<sup>1</sup>

Caroline Bonaparte, Murat’s wife, was Napoleon’s youngest sister. She was still a child when her brother rose to power, and only sixteen when she first came to Paris. At eighteen she was married to the handsome and dashing Murat. Like her sisters, she was full of ambition and intrigue, and was probably a much abler queen than Murat was a king. Madame Juno thus describes Caroline: “Caroline Bonaparte was a very pretty girl. Fresh as a rose—not to be compared for the regular beauty of her features to Pauline, though more pleasing perhaps by the expression of her counte-

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<sup>1</sup> *Berkeley Men, Napoleon Dynasty*, p. 526, Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., N. Y. 1857.



## THE MURATS

nance and the brilliancy of her complexion, but by no means possessing the figure whose perfection distinguished her elder sister. Her head was disproportionately large. Her bust was too short, her shoulders were too round, but her hands and her arms were models, and her skin resembled white satin seen through pink glass. Her teeth were fine, as were those of all the Bonapartes. Her hair was light. As a young girl Caroline was charming. When her mother brought her to Paris in 1798 her beauty was in all its rosy freshness. Magnificence did not become her—brocade did not hang well on her figure, and one feared to see her delicate complexion fade under the weight of diamonds and rubies.”

Caroline and Murat were married in January, 1800. On Christmas eve of that year Caroline was driving with the Emperor's party to the opera when an infernal machine hidden in a cart exploded. This was the famous Cadoudal plot. None of the Emperor's party was injured, but all the glass in Caroline's carriage was shattered, and she suffered greatly from shock. Her oldest son was born soon after and suffered for a time from epileptic attacks and a feeble constitution due to the terror of that tragic night.

In the disputes between her husband and Napoleon, Caroline naturally took the part of her brother, although as late as the battle of Dresden in August, 1813, she wrote Murat a loyal and affectionate letter. When Napoleon's empire was crumbling in the spring of 1814 Caroline, mounted on a spirited horse, reviewed the troops at Naples and tried in vain to rally them to the

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support of her husband. Taking the title of Countess of Lapino, she took up her residence in Austria. In 1830, when it was supposed her mother was near death, she was permitted to visit Rome for a month, after which she returned to Austria. Finally she was allowed to take up her abode at Florence, where in 1839 she died of cancer, scourge of the Bonapartes.

To Murat and Caroline there were born two sons: the elder, Napoleon Achille Murat, born in 1801; and the second, Napoleon Lucien Charles Murat, born in 1803. Achille, the elder son, was the first to come to America, arriving here in 1823, and he at once applied for American citizenship. The second son, Lucien Charles, lived for a time with his mother in Austria, and in 1824 started to join his brother in America. His ship was wrecked off the coast of Spain and he was cast into prison. His brother Achille secured the good offices of President Monroe and Lucien was set free. He arrived in Boston in 1825. In 1827 he married at Baltimore a well-to-do and well connected American girl, Carolina Georgina Fraser, the daughter of Major Thomas Fraser, who had served in the British army during the American Revolution, and who was living at Bordentown, New Jersey, where Murat took up his residence. Prince Lucien Murat greatly displeased his Uncle Joseph by his indiscretions and extravagance, and when he was married to Carolina Fraser, Joseph made good his threat that Lucien would have to support himself. His wife's fortune was soon dissipated by him, and it became necessary for them to conduct a fashionable boarding school for girls.

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Lucien Charles Murat is described as a good-natured man of enormous size, six feet two in stature, and of stalwart build. He was noted for an extraordinary pair of boots which he was wont to wear on hunting expeditions. Murat went out of the way to put himself on an equality with his democratic neighbors, and unlike his Uncle Joseph, who thoroughly condemned his course of life, sought to forget that he was a prince.

His over-democratic manners won for him an insolent reply from a stable hand whom he had ordered to do something. The enraged Murat thereupon kicked the man through the stable door. The groom brought suit for assault and battery. When the case came to trial, the groom testified that he had been kicked as many as six times by the enormous boot of Murat. Murat, who conducted his own case, demanded that he show the precise spot where the injury was inflicted. He sought to evade this demand, but Murat insisted, and he therefore indicated the lowest possible part of the spine. Murat rested his case. The attorney for the prosecution then addressed the jury, ringing eloquent changes on "monarchical oppression," the "Star Spangled Banner," the rights of the meanest citizen, etc. Murat then made the following remarkable address to the jury:

"My lord, de judge, and gentlemen of the jury, dere has been great efforts and much troubles to make everybody believe me a very bad man; but dat is of no consequence. De man tells you I kick him six times! six times! so low as possible. I very sorry of the necessity to make him show how low it was, but I could not avoid

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it. Now, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, you see this part of the human skeleton." (Taking from the enormous pocket of his hunting coat a human pelvis with the os coccyges complete and articulated with wires.) "Here are de bones. Dese little bones vat you see here" (shaking them to the jury like the end of a rattlesnake's tail), "dese leetle bones are de very place vere de tail of de animal shall grow; dat is to say, if de man who sue me were to be a veritable jack—vot you call it! ah! jack-horse, and not only very much resemble dat animal, vy you see dese leetle bones, if dey were long enough, would be his tail!"

The court was convulsed with laughter, and the Prince, knowing that now he had the best of it, concluded his speech by "stretching out his enormous leg, armed with his sporting boot up to his knee, and clapping his hand on his massive thigh so that it resounded through the court room," exclaimed: "My lord and gentlemen, how absurd to say I could give him even von kick vid dat, and not to break all to pieces his leetle tail!"

"It was some time," says the chronicler, "before the judge could gather enough dignity to sum up, when the fellow got six cents damages and the Prince three cheers."

The Revolution of 1848 gave Lucien Charles the opportunity to return to France where he was elected a member of the constituent assembly and of the legislative assembly, and was appointed minister plenipotentiary at Turin. On the proclamation of the Empire he was recognized by Napoleon III as a Prince of the

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blood royal with the title of Prince Murat. In 1870 Murat joined the army under Marshal Bazaine, was with him in Metz when that city capitulated, and was made a prisoner of war. He died in England on April 10, 1878.

A grandson, Prince Joachim Murat, died recently in Paris at the age of 52. Prince Joachim served with distinction in the French army during the World War and was decorated for bravery by France and Italy. Until his death he was the representative, in France, of the Bonapartist cause. His house at Paris was placed at the disposal of President Wilson during the Peace Conference and the President used it as his residence during his first visit to Paris.

Murat's wife was well received in Paris. She and her husband always showed kindness and hospitality to all friends from Bordentown who came to visit them. They had three sons and two daughters. The eldest of the sons served in the Crimean, the Italian, and the Prussian wars and in 1872 obtained leave to serve in the Swedish army. An infant daughter of the Murats lies buried in the graveyard of Christ Church in Bordentown. On the headstone are cut these words: "Murat—December 20, 1844." The four children born at Bordentown were Caroline, Baroness de Chassiron; Anna, Duchess de Mouchy; Achille, husband of the Princess Dadian de Mingrelia; and Joachim, the Prince Murat.

After the Fall of the Third Empire Carolina brought suit for separation of estate from her husband, styling herself "Princess Murat, by birth Carolina Georgina

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Fraser." She succeeded in this suit, but continued to live happily with her husband, whom she survived less than a year.

Achille Murat, the first-born son of Marshal Murat and the first to come to the United States, settled near Tallahassee, Florida. He had happened to meet at Washington Richard Kirk Call, the territorial representative from Florida. It was at Call's advice that he took up his abode at Tallahassee. In the Seminole War he served as an aide-de-camp on General Call's staff. When Lafayette was in America and Murat was traveling with him, Lafayette introduced him to Catherine Gray, a sixteen year old widow, the daughter of Colonel Byrd Willis and on her mother's side a grand-niece of George Washington, to whom she bore a marked resemblance. Achille and Catherine were married July 30, 1826, and made their home on Murat's Florida estate, Lipona, near Tallahassee. There Murat served both as postmaster and mayor. Prince Murat bore striking resemblance to his uncle, the great Emperor; so much so that once when he was in Europe, and was made Colonel of a regiment in the Belgian army, old soldiers of Napoleon frequently stopped him in public and covered his hands with kisses.

Achille Murat, like his younger brother, Lucien Charles, was a man of eccentric ways. He never cleaned his boots and never changed them till they were worn out. A shaggy dog which he kept was used as a spittoon. He cooked and ate all kinds of animals and experimented on his slaves with a diet of cherry tree sawdust. Among Murat's curious experiments was "alligator-tail



**PRINCE ACHILLE MURAT**  
Nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte  
*(Copyright The Fountain of Youth Museum,  
St. Augustine, Florida)*



**PRINCESS ACHILLE MURAT**  
Grand-niece of George Washington  
*(Copyright The Fountain of Youth Museum,  
St. Augustine, Florida)*

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soup,"—"a little better," he said, "than turkey buzzard soup." On one occasion his wife, upon arriving home, found him bending over a huge kettle, where he was experimenting with a dye, having thrust into the kettle everything he could lay hands on—sheets, tablecloths, pillowcases, and even some of his wife's dresses. Murat had a curious aversion to water, taken either internally or externally. He said that water was intended only for the beasts of the field, and he never drank it without adding whisky to it. On one occasion he fell into a syrup vat on the plantation he owned near Baton Rouge. Those who stood about were fearful lest he should be scalded; but Murat's only comment was, "Kate will make me wash."<sup>1</sup>

Like many of the Bonapartes, Achille Murat had a flair for authorship and wrote, "Exposition of the Principles of Republican Government as brought to Perfection in America." This book ran through fifty editions, and enjoyed a great reputation in Europe. Continental Europe's ideas of American manners and institutions were derived from this and other books of Murat as much as from any other source. Murat also wrote "Moral and Political Essays on the United States of America." Of American religions he has this to say: "Methodism equalizes everything, so that you may see an old Negress preaching to her master, a Negro praying by his young mistress. You think I am joking, that I am speaking to you of the farces of Mederd which made so much noise in the time of Voltaire. But what

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<sup>1</sup> McConnell, *The Prince and Princess Achille Murat in Florida*. *Century Magazine*. 1893.



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will you say when you know that among a people eminently reasonable this sect is most diffused and reckons three times as many members as any other? It augments every day and will probably in a few years be the only religion among the ignorant classes of the people.

“Unitarianism on the other hand is likely to become the predominant sect among enlightened persons; although its followers are not yet very numerous, it nevertheless makes rapid progress. Nothing can be more simple than their doctrines. They have at their head at the present time a man of the rarest merit and of exemplary virtue, a genuine Plato—Dr. Channing. Nothing can surpass his eloquence or his purity of morals and doctrine which distinguish his preaching.

“Of all the sects in the United States the most formidable is that of the Presbyterians. Its bilious children, austere disciples of the gloomy Calvin, have inherited all his gall and venom and do not scruple to invest the divinity with their spirit of vengeance and satanic wickedness.”

Of a temperance society Murat writes as follows :

“This last society in particular is very singular and very much extended. The members engage never to drink any distilled liquor, nor to permit its use in their families. But nothing hinders them from drinking wine. In that they mistake the Creator for a bad chemist.”

Of the Sabbath-keeping Puritans of New England, he writes : “They are in this respect so scrupulous that a brewer was reprovved in church for having brewed on a Saturday, by which the beer had been exposed to work on the Sabbath.” One can easily imagine what

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interest these caricatures of American life and manners must have awakened in Europe.

Of American society he writes, "Once married, the young lady entirely changes her habits. Farewell gaiety and frivolity. She is not less happy, but her happiness is of a serious character, she becomes a mother, is employed in her household, becomes quite the center of domestic affection, and enjoys the esteem of all who know and surround her. Society everywhere in the United States may be considered as divided into two very distinct classes: that of unmarried persons of both sexes whose principal occupation is courtship and the finding a suitable companion with whom to make the voyage of life; the other, of people who have already made that choice."

In his "America and the Americans," Murat gives an amusing account of the appearance of the ballet on American shores: "From the moment of its introduction the waltz was looked upon as most indelicate, and, in fact, an outrage on female delicacy. Even preachers denounced in public the circumstance of a man who was neither lover nor husband encircling the waist and whirling a lady about in his arms, as an heinous sin and an abomination. Nobody can forget the excitement created by the arrival of the ballet corps in New York from Paris! I happened to be at the first representation. The very appearance of dancers in short petticoats created an indescribable astonishment; but at the first 'pirouette,' when these appendages, charged with lead at the extremities, whirled round, taking a horizontal position, such a noise was created in the theater,

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that I question whether even the uproar at one of Musard's carnival 'bals infernal' at Paris, could equal it. The ladies screamed out for very shame, and left the theater, and the gentlemen, for the most part, remained crying and laughing at the very fun of the thing! while *they* only remarked its ridiculousness. They had yet to learn and admire and appreciate the gracefulness and voluptuous ease of a Taglioni, Cerite and a Fanny Elssler." <sup>1</sup>

In his various books Murat made interesting comments on "American Cities." Of New Orleans he has this to say, "New Orleans forms in itself a striking contrast to all the other large cities—little intellectual conversation is met with here—very little instruction—and it contains (1832) only three libraries to a town of 60,000 inhabitants, while the book-stores contain works of the worst description of French literature. If there is little conversation, however, ample means are afforded for eating, playing, dancing, and making love. In one particular institution in this town, periodical balls are held, where the free women of color alone are admitted to have the honor of dancing with their white masters; while men of color are strictly excluded." <sup>1</sup>

Murat thought little of North Carolina. "North Carolina," he wrote, "is a bad imitation of Virginia. Its interest and politics are the same, and it navigates in its own waters." Saratoga he describes as a place where "the greater part of the visitors reside in immense establishments, many of whom however are wretchedly

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<sup>1</sup> Murat, *America and the Americans*. S. W. Benedict, N. Y. 1849.

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accommodated, or caged in rooms six feet square. The public saloons however are magnificent, while the exteriors of these buildings have quite a monumental appearance. The visitors rise early and proceed to drink or assume the intention of drinking the waters, then return to a general breakfast. While the papas and mammas have an air of ennui, the young ladies amuse themselves with music, or listen to the more melodious notes of the young gentlemen, or amuse themselves by making various excursions in the neighborhood of the Springs.”<sup>1</sup>

Charleston, South Carolina, was to Murat as to many others “the city par excellence” of American society and luxury. There “the company in general is composed of planters, lawyers, doctors, etc., forming the most agreeable society I was ever in. The manners of the South are elegant to perfection, and the mind highly cultivated, while their conversation runs through a variety of topics with the greatest ease, fluency and grace. There is no frivolous affectation of foreign manners here—no religious hypocrisy or pedantry—all is intellectual, virtuous, and rational. Charleston forms the ordinary residency of many of the most distinguished members of the Senate and State throughout the Union; who are ever willing to impart information and instruction to their fellow-citizens.”

On a trip to Florida for his health, Ralph Waldo Emerson made the acquaintance of Achille Murat and a warm friendship sprang up between them. In his

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<sup>1</sup> Murat, *America and the Americans*. S. W. Benedict, N. Y. 1849.

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“Journal” for April 6, 1827 Emerson makes this entry:

“A new event is added to the quiet history of my life. I have connected myself by friendship to a man who with as ardent a love of truth as that which animates me, with a mind surpassing mine in the variety of its research, and sharpened and strengthened to an energy for *action* to which I have no pretension, by advantages of birth and practical connexion with mankind beyond almost all men in the world—is, yet, that which I had ever supposed only a creature of the imagination—a consistent Atheist—and a disbeliever in the existence, and, of course, in the immortality of the soul. My faith in these points is strong and I trust, as I live, indestructible. Meantime I love and honour this intrepid doubter. His soul is noble, and his virtue, as the virtue of a Sadducee must always be, is sublime.”<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to his brother, written at Charleston, South Carolina, April 26, 1827, Emerson tells of a voyage from St. Augustine to Charleston, and how he had for a shipmate none other than Achille Murat:

“My dear Brother:

“I arrived here yesterday, after a direful passage of nine days from St. Augustine. The ordinary one is one or two days. We were becalmed, tempest-tossed, and at last well nigh starved, but the beloved brother bore it not only with equanimity, but pleasure, for my kind genius had sent me for my shipmate Achille Murat, the eldest son of the old King Joachim. He is now a planter

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<sup>1</sup>*Emerson's Journals*, II, p. 183. Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston.

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at Tallahassee and at this time on his way to visit his uncle (Joseph Bonaparte) at Bordentown. He is a philosopher, a scholar, a man of the world; very skeptical but very candid, and an ardent lover of truth. I blessed my stars for my fine companion and we talked incessantly. More of him when I shall see you.”<sup>1</sup>

This somewhat singular friendship flourished for a number of years. Emerson's pale Unitarianism appealed to Murat and he wanted him to come to Tallahassee and propagate its doctrines there. In a letter to Emerson, Murat tells of hearing William Henry Furness, Abolitionist, grandfather of the Shakespearian scholar of that name, and a life-long friend of Emerson, preach in the Unitarian Church at Philadelphia: “I have been in Philadelphia to hear Mr. Furness preach and heard him with great pleasure. Your church is increasing very rapidly in Georgia—why should it not extend to Tallahassee, and you come there, to substitute reason, learning and morality, to nonsense, ignorance, fanaticism; even those who do not think as you do, would be glad of it for decency's sake; then we are far from that age of reason, where truth alone, resplendent, unblemished, unmixed with errors, will be the proper food for man. I thank you very much for the interest you take in my welfare, and I assure you that feeling is perfectly reciprocal. We have met by chance, but I hope that the friendship you have inspired in me, and you tell me I can claim from you, will be not the less lasting for it. Mrs. Murat appreciates

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<sup>1</sup> *Emerson's Journals*, II, p. 182. Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston.

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your kind remembrances and has not forgotten to threaten me with your name whenever a harsh expression finds its way up my throat.

Your friend and servant,

ACHILLE MURAT."<sup>1</sup>

Murat once fought a duel in which his second was Governor Long of Florida. As he took his pistol he said quietly, "You know I expect nothing hereafter," and stood up to give and receive fire, which happily was without fatal results to either combatant. But at his death Murat seems to have recanted of his rationalistic and Unitarian ideas, and a Catholic priest was summoned to administer the last rites of the Church. In this respect he was like his renowned uncle who frequently gave utterance to rationalistic opinions, but at the end had a Catholic chaplain in attendance at St. Helena and signified that he died in the Catholic faith. Achille Murat died April 15, 1847 and was buried in the Episcopal churchyard at Tallahassee. His wife, Catherine Gray, went frequently to France, where she was graciously received by Napoleon III, who called her "Cousin Kate" and settled a much needed annuity upon her. When Florida seceded from the Union in 1861, Catherine was assigned the honor of firing the cannon which announced to the world that Florida was now a "sovereign and independent nation." Catherine died August 6, 1867, and was buried by the side of her husband in the Tallahassee churchyard.

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<sup>1</sup> *Emerson's Journals*, II, p. 187. Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston.

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On her last visit to France, Catherine Murat entertained Napoleon III with tales of The War between the States. His disposition to intervene in that struggle on the side of the Confederacy was well known, and constituted a real menace to the Union, until McClellan's victory at Antietam on September 17, 1862 prompted Lincoln to issue his Proclamation of Emancipation. After that no European government could have intervened on behalf of the South without the risk of a popular uprising. This is confirmed by what Napoleon III himself said to Catherine Murat on her last visit to Paris: "Cousin Kate, you had all my warmest sympathy and hopes for your success. But on account of slavery I did not dare to send an army to your assistance. Had I done so, I should have had a mob in Paris."



## VII

### NAPOLEON III

**I**THOUGHT him a dull fellow, which he certainly was while among men, but sprightly enough when surrounded by young ladies. He would sometimes say, 'When I shall be at the head of affairs in France,' or, 'When I become Emperor,' and I then looked upon him as being as mad as a March hare."

Thus the poet Fitz-Greene Halleck recorded his impressions of the young Louis Napoleon when he met him in New York in 1837. Fitz-Greene Halleck was not the only man who thought that Louis Napoleon with his imperial ambitions was as mad as a March hare. This was the opinion of a great number, both in France and without, after the Strasbourg fiasco, and again after the landing at Boulogne. But ambition was justified of her children. Eleven years after Fitz-Greene Halleck recorded this impression, Louis Napoleon was President of the French Republic, and fifteen years after, he was proclaimed Emperor of the French.

Napoleon III was the youngest son of Napoleon's brother, Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland, and Hortense, daughter of Josephine. Louis Bonaparte was born at Ajaccio, September 2, 1778, and was thus nine years younger than his renowned brother. He was the object of especial care on the part of Napoleon, who dealt with him more as a son than a brother. At a

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tender age he was sent to a military school at Chalons. One day, when he was supposed to be at his mathematics, Napoleon entered his study and found him reading Rousseau, whereupon he threw that philosopher's book out of the window and put his brother under arrest. Louis is described as a "boy tender-hearted, romantic, averse to show and pomp, hating war and given to the shady paths and peaceful scenes of a retired country life, who was led off in his 'teens to artillery practice."

At the age of fifteen he was an aide-de-camp of Napoleon in the first Italian campaign. He showed courage and spirit, but evinced no liking for war. St. Pierre's beautiful tale of "Paul and Virginia" greatly moved him, and at the age of eighteen Louis wrote to Pierre a letter, in which he said: "This work (*Harmonies de la Nature*) deeply affected me. But Paul and Virginia cost me many tears, and I have no doubt Paul didn't shed more when he was separated from his sister. If, Citizen, I have dared to write to you, it is only to ask you the facts of this work, which has not been the fruit of your imagination. You say there is some truth in it. What is true? What is false? This is my object; this is what I have wished to learn, in order that another time when re-reading it I may be able to say to myself, to soothe my distressed sensibility, 'This is true—this is false.' O wise and happy man! O man of nature! forgive the liberty I take, but respect my motives. I have the honor to be, Citizen, with the profoundest esteem for the man and the author, your very humble and very obedient servant and friend,

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Louis Bonaparte, age eighteen years, of Ajaccio in Corsica.”<sup>1</sup>

To this letter the celebrated author wrote a kind reply. This was the beginning of a long friendship between the two men.

Louis Bonaparte's first love seems to have been Emilie de Beauharnais, cousin and schoolmate of Hortense at Madame Campan's school for girls. As her father, the Marquis de Beauharnais, was an emigre, such a marriage was not to be thought of. "This marriage," said Napoleon long after, "would have shocked public opinion and have given rise to the attacks of party men, who were already watching me with alarm. I did not think it possible to teach reason on this subject to a young man of twenty, so I thought the better course would be to feign entire ignorance of the matter and to send him away on a military mission. The next day a post-chaise put the hundred leagues which separated Lyons from Paris between the lovers. But in spite of this precaution, neither absence nor the Egyptian campaign, nor even the marriage of Mademoiselle de Beauharnais with M. de Lavalette during his absence in 1796, could stay the ravages of this first love—which exercised a fatal influence on Louis' future." What Napoleon meant by "fatal influence" was probably the souring of Louis' naturally amiable and friendly disposition, so that he became a moody and suspicious man.

Louis went to Egypt with Napoleon, and while there

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<sup>1</sup> Jerrold, *Napoleon III*, p. 10. Longmans Green & Co., London. 1874.

### NAPOLEON III

was completely disillusioned as to the "state of nature" about which Rousseau and Pierre and the philosophers of that day talked so much. In one of his letters from Egypt, commenting on the inhumanity of the Arabs, Louis writes: "O Jean Jacques Rousseau! why was it not thy fate to see those men whom thou callest the 'men of nature'? Thou wouldst sink with shame and start with horror at the thought of having once admired them! Oh! how many misanthropes would be converted, if chance could conduct them into the midst of the deserts of Arabia!"<sup>1</sup>

It was after Napoleon returned from his Italian conquest at Marengo that the marriage between his brother Louis and Josephine's daughter Hortense was first discussed. By that time Napoleon had given up hopes of having an heir by Josephine. Hortense was then seventeen years of age. When Josephine first suggested the marriage to Napoleon he replied: "We may never have children. I brought up Louis myself. I look on him as a son. Your daughter is what you cherish most on earth. Their children shall be our children. We will adopt them, and this adoption will console us for not having any of our own. But it is necessary that our plan meet with the young people's approval."

Unfortunately, neither of the young people took to this proposal. Hortense had her own ideas of romance. She had been greatly stirred by the romantic marriage of the handsome cavalryman, Joachim Murat, to Napoleon's sister, Caroline. "It afforded me," she wrote,

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<sup>1</sup> Berkeley Men, *Napoleon Dynasty*, p. 424. Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., N. Y. 1857.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

“food for thought. Here were two people who seemed to have achieved complete felicity, since the love of her husband is the only perfect happiness within a woman’s grasp. Yet can such happiness be complete when our parents disapprove of the choice we have made? Could I experience a happiness my mother did not share? On the other hand, to be led to the altar blindly, to approach it in a spirit of obedience, to surrender oneself without love, this was a sacrifice more cruel than anything I was prepared to endure. Therefore, I hope to be able to satisfy both the dictates of my heart and the wishes of my family.”

The personality of Hortense charmed all who knew her, all, that is, with the exception of her cruel and suspicious husband. She was well educated at Madame Campan’s famous school, and knew how to dance, embroider, sing, play the harp and the piano, and was a gifted composer of songs. The Duchess D’Abrantes thus describes her about the time of her marriage: “Hortense de Beauharnais was at this time about seventeen years of age. She was fresh as a rose, and though her fair complexion was not relieved by much color, she had enough to produce that freshness and bloom which was her chief beauty. A profusion of light hair played in silken locks around her soft and penetrating blue eyes. The delicate roundness of her slender figure was set off by the elegant carriage of her head. Her feet were small and pretty; her hands very white, with pink, well-rounded nails. But what formed the chief attraction of Hortense was the grace and suavity of her manners. She was gay, gentle, and amiable. She had

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wit, which, without the smallest ill temper, had just malice enough to be amusing. A polished education had improved her natural talents. She drew excellently, sang harmoniously, and performed admirably in comedy. In 1800 she was a charming young girl. She afterwards became one of the most amiable princesses of Europe. I have seen many, both in their courts and in Paris, but I never knew one who had any pretensions to equal talents.”<sup>1</sup>

In forwarding the marriage of Hortense with Louis Bonaparte, Josephine no doubt hoped that if a son were born to Louis and Hortense, she would be more likely to escape the divorce which was then appearing as a cloud on the horizon. Hortense had other suitors, among them the famous soldier, Duroc, and Lucien, Napoleon's brother, at that time a widower. Josephine opposed the match with Duroc because she was ambitious for a higher rank for her daughter. “I cannot imagine hearing you spoken of as Madame Duroc,” Josephine said. “Are you in love with him? I should be sorry if you were.”

When the marriage was under discussion, Louis wrote Hortense an extraordinary twenty-page letter in which he told the story of his life, and especially how it had gravitated about a young woman named Sophia, whom he described in detail, and also her tastes and habits. He told Hortense that he had grave fears about their happiness, for he saw all the world at her feet, and could not believe that simple domestic existence

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<sup>1</sup> Berkeley Men, *History of the Bonaparte Family*, Cornish, Lamport & Co., N. Y. 1852.

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would appeal to her. Louis concluded his letter by asking Hortense in return to tell him all about her past life. With dignity and common sense Hortense wrote in reply "that for a long time her life had been known to him, and that as far as her tastes were concerned, she did not consider that happiness and brilliant social position went together."<sup>1</sup>

Amid mutual gloom and forebodings, Hortense and Louis were married January 4, 1802. At the religious ceremony following the civil marriage, General Murat, who had been married to Caroline Bonaparte by a civil ceremony only, asked the Cardinal Legate Caprara to unite him and Caroline by the rites of the Church. The forebodings of both bride and groom were quickly realized, for never was there a more unhappy marriage. Hortense speaks of the first rift in these words: "It was four days after my marriage. I was trying on a corset in my bedroom. Louis came in. Blushing, I slipped a scarf over my shoulders. I interrupted my toilet. He wished me to continue dressing. I refused. He insisted. I became more and more embarrassed, and he left the room in a temper. When I saw him again, instead of speaking gently to me and telling me what I had done to hurt his feelings, he addressed me severely. 'Do you not know, Madame, that a wife should not be prudish in the presence of her husband? Can you not imagine what the women around you will think of your attitude? They will tell everyone that you do not love me, that you married me against your will.' I did not

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Queen Hortense*, Chapter III. Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, N. Y.

### NAPOLEON III

know what reply to make. My mind was in a whirl. How was I to have foreseen such a dispute? I remained motionless with fear and surprise.”<sup>1</sup>

Bourrienne, who knew all the Bonaparte brothers, speaks of Louis as “by all odds the best of them.” But the picture which Hortense paints of Louis shows him to have been little short of monstrous in his cruelty, jealousy, and persecution. Napoleon himself severely arraigned Louis for his treatment of his gifted wife. Their first son, Napoleon Louis Charles, was born October 10, 1802. It was a great event, for this child was the first male child in the second generation of the Bonapartes. Their second son, Napoleon Louis, who died in Italy in 1831, was born October 11, 1804, and the third son, Charles Louis Napoleon, afterwards Napoleon III, was born April 20, 1808. The jealous and suspicious conduct of Louis before the birth of this third child led to a final separation between husband and wife, although through all their married life they had spent little time together.

In 1806 Louis was made King of Holland. Her brief reign as a queen was perhaps the most unhappy period in the life of Hortense. Her royal husband stationed guards about her day and night, so that it became almost impossible for her to have any social intercourse. In a remarkable letter written April 4, 1807, Napoleon berates Louis both for his policies as a king and for his treatment of his wife. He tells him: “Your quarrels with the Queen are becoming known to the public.

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Queen Hortense*, Chapter IV.



## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

Keep in your home that paternal and effeminate character that you show in your government; and show in public affairs that rigor which you exhibit in your family. You treat a young woman as a regiment should be commanded. . . . You have the best and most virtuous of wives, and you make her unhappy. Let her dance as much as she pleases—it belongs to her age. I have a wife who is forty; from the field of battle I write to her to go to balls; and you wish a wife who is only twenty, who sees her life passing with all its illusions, to live in a cloister; or, like a nurse, to be always washing her child. You are too much yourself in your home and not enough in your Administration. I should not say all this to you if I were not interested in you. Make the mother of your children happy. There is only one way. Show her thorough esteem and confidence. Unfortunately, you have a wife who is too virtuous; if she were a coquette she would lead you by the nose. But you have a proud wife who grieves and revolts at the bare idea that you have a bad opinion of her. You should have had a wife like some I know in Paris. She would have deceived you and at the same time kept you at her knees. It is not my fault, as I have often told your wife.”<sup>1</sup>

Before, and at the time of, the birth of the first child, Napoleon Louis Charles, there were ugly rumors about the relationship of Napoleon and Hortense. The same slanders were circulated in connection with the birth of Louis Napoleon, or Napoleon III.<sup>2</sup> These rumors

<sup>1</sup> Jerrold, *Napoleon III*, I, p. 48. Longmans, Green & Co., London. 1874.

<sup>2</sup> Ambes, *Intimate Memoirs*.

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greatly shocked and enraged Napoleon, especially when they made their appearance in England. Both Hortense and Bourrienne relate an extraordinary device of Napoleon to give the lie to these gross calumnies. Napoleon gave a ball at Malmaison, his Sans Souci, when Hortense was seven months pregnant. In spite of his antipathy to see women in that situation in public, he asked Hortense to dance. She at first declined; but he was so importunate that she at length consented. The day after the ball, one of the newspapers contained some verses on Hortense's dancing. When she complained to Napoleon, and wondered how the lines could have been written and printed respecting a circumstance which had occurred only the night before, Napoleon smiled but gave her no answer. But when she talked with Bourrienne about it, he told her that the lines had been written at Napoleon's direction, and indeed that the ball had been prepared for the verses! "He adopted this strange contrivance for contradicting an article which appeared in an English journal announcing that Hortense was delivered. Bonaparte was highly indignant at that premature announcement, which he clearly solved was made for the sole purpose of giving credit to the scandalous rumors of his imputed connection with Hortense. Such were the petty machinations which not unfrequently found their place in a mind in which the grandest schemes were revolving."<sup>1</sup>

The part the English press played in this scandal about Hortense contributed greatly to Napoleon's

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<sup>1</sup> Bourrienne, *Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte*, II, p. 221. Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y. 1891.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

hatred of England, and also to his hatred of a free press. To Bourrienne, Napoleon said one day in 1804: "By the by, the report of my connection with Hortense is still kept up. The most abominable rumors have been spread after her first child. I thought at the time that these reports had only been admitted by the public in consequence of the great desire that I should not be childless. Since you and I separated, have you heard them repeated?"

"Yes, General, often times, and I confess I could not have believed that this calumny would have existed so long."

"It is truly frightful to think of. You know the truth. You have seen all, heard all. Nothing could have passed without your knowledge. You were in her full confidence during the time of her attachment to Duroc. I therefore expect if you should ever write anything about me that you will clear me from this infamous imputation. I would not have it accompany my name to posterity. I trust in you. You have never given credit to the horrid accusation?"

"No, General, never."

Bourrienne fulfilled Napoleon's desire, and when he wrote his memoirs of Napoleon, vindicated his chief from this hateful calumny. "I freely declare," he says, "that did I entertain the smallest doubt with regard to this odious charge, of the existence of which I was well aware before Napoleon spoke to me on the subject, I would candidly avow it. He is no more, and let his memory be accompanied only by that, be it good or bad, which really belongs to it. Let not this reproach be

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one of those charged against him by the impartial historian. I must say, in concluding this delicate subject, that the principles of Napoleon on points of this kind were rigid in the utmost degree, and that a connection of the nature that was charged against him was neither in accordance with his morals nor his tastes.”<sup>1</sup>

The fact that so soon after their marriage Louis and Hortense lived much apart, and that Hortense made her home with Josephine and Napoleon, would naturally give rise to such a rumor in evil-minded persons. But there is little doubt that those who conceived and brought forth this shameful calumny were the other Bonapartes, who hated all the Beauharnais and foresaw that with Napoleon childless, and Joseph having only daughters, a son born to Louis and Hortense would be a person of great importance. For this reason they spread the revolting tale; and strange as it may seem, Josephine herself, thinking that if Hortense's son were supposed to be Napoleon's she might be spared the fate of divorce, played her part in the vile slander.<sup>2</sup>

Years after, Napoleon, referring to this matter, said to Las Cases at St. Helena, “Such a connection would have been wholly repugnant to my ideas. Those who knew anything of the morality of the Tuileries must be aware that I need not have been reduced to so unnatural and revolting a choice.”<sup>3</sup>

An eight-months' child, Louis Napoleon was very frail as an infant and had to be bathed in wine and

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<sup>1</sup> Bourrienne, *Memoirs of Napoleon*, II, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> Bourrienne, *Memoirs of Napoleon*, II, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Las Cases, *Napoleon*, II, p. 190.

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wrapped in cotton. Born in 1808, Louis could remember something of the stirring events of the Hundred Days. When Napoleon left Malmaison to join the army at Waterloo, the young Louis burst into tears and begged the Emperor not to leave for the war. When Hortense led him away, Napoleon turned to Marshal Soult and said, "He will be a good soul, and perhaps the hope of my race."

During Napoleon's exile at Elba, Hortense and her two children remained at Paris, where she received marked courtesy from the Allied sovereigns, especially the Emperor Alexander of Russia. So intimate were Alexander and Hortense that Hortense even took upon herself to speak to the Emperor about the estrangement between himself and his wife. After a brief period of enjoyment in the sunlight of imperial splendor during the Hundred Days, Hortense was compelled by the Bourbons to leave Paris. She took up her abode at Arenenberg on Lake Constance in Switzerland. There Louis Napoleon was carefully educated under the influence of his accomplished mother. He had for tutors two army officers who had served under Napoleon.

In 1831 there was a rising in Italy against Austria. Louis Napoleon and his older brother, Napoleon Louis, took an enthusiastic part in the rebellion, which was quickly suppressed by Austrian troops. During these exciting days Napoleon Louis contracted an illness from which he died. Louis Napoleon and Hortense escaped to France, thence to England, and from England returned to their home in Switzerland. On July 22, 1832, Napoleon II, the ill-fated King of Rome, the Duke

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of Reichstadt, died at Vienna at the age of twenty-one. This was the son in whom Napoleon had vested all his hopes for the future, and for whose sake he was content to suffer at St. Helena. The death of the Emperor's son and heir made a great change in the position of Louis Napoleon. By the law of succession adopted when Napoleon was Emperor, the imperial title passed to his two brothers, Joseph and Louis, and their sons. Jerome and Lucien had been excluded from the succession. Thus three times the intervention of death, first the death of Louis' oldest son, Napoleon Charles; and now the death of the Emperor's son, the King of Rome, had removed obstacles between Louis Napoleon and the head of the family. Since neither Joseph nor Louis Bonaparte made any claim to succeed the Emperor, and Joseph had only daughters, Louis Napoleon considered himself the head of the family and the heir of the great Emperor. Henceforth all his actions are to be considered in the light of that fact.

In 1834 Louis Napoleon became a captain in the Swiss Army, and published a manual on artillery which received wide recognition, although it was probably written as much for political effect in France as for the advance of the science of artillery. In his imperial ambitions Louis Napoleon received encouragement from that famous weathervane, Lafayette. Lafayette, who had helped to put Louis Philippe on the throne, and who had presented to the Chambers the motion for the dethronement of the Emperor Napoleon, now wrote to the Emperor's nephew: "The government cannot continue. Your name is the only one which is popular."

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Louis Napoleon was well aware of the marvellous revival of the Napoleonic legend in France, and felt sure that sooner or later the reigning house would be overthrown. In this confidence he made his first bid for empire at Strasbourg on October 30, 1836. It is not clear to what extent Hortense was acquainted with the conspiracy. But when he bade good-bye to her at Arenenberg she placed on his finger as a talisman the marriage ring of Napoleon and Josephine. In his bold stroke at Strasbourg Louis Napoleon hoped to repeat in a way the miracle of the return from Elba. He counted on the revived strength of the Napoleonic legend, and was confident that once he declared himself on the soil of France he would have a powerful following. In what was perhaps his greatest achievement as a rhetorician and an orator, his proclamation to the army after he had come from Elba, Napoleon had said, "Victory shall march at a charging step. The Eagle with the national colors shall fly from steeple to steeple till it reaches the tower of Notre Dame." Now his nephew thought that once the Eagles were loosed at Strasbourg they would fly from steeple to steeple until they reached Paris.

He had previously sounded out the commander of the garrison at Strasbourg, General Voirol, whose only reply was that he would give the Emperor's nephew half an hour to recross the Rhine. This did not discourage him. He and his fellow conspirators, displaying an Eagle which had belonged to the Seventh Regiment of the Line, made their appearance before the Fourth Regiment of Artillery whose Colonel, Vaudrey,

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had already been won over. This regiment, which had thrown open the gates of Grenoble to Napoleon on his return from Elba, received his nephew with great enthusiasm and loud shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" Louis and his companions then marched off to the headquarters of General Voirol and displayed the Eagle before him. But he repulsed it, and told the conspirators that they were making a great mistake. "Prince," he said, "you have been deceived. The army knows its duties, and I will go at once to prove it to you." The next regiment to which they made their appeal remained unmoved, and amid considerable confusion, and with no little danger to his person, Louis Napoleon was placed under arrest.

The French government, unwilling to make a martyr of Prince Louis, instead of trying him, put him on board a French frigate which put to sea with sealed orders, which were to be opened after the ship had crossed the line. The Strasbourg attempt was a complete and ridiculous failure, like the early efforts of Hitler a century later at Munich. Yet, had it succeeded, it would have been hailed as a stroke of genius. Louis Napoleon spoke truly in the letter addressed shortly afterwards to his mother, when he said, "What care I for the cries of the vulgar multitude, who will call me mad because I have not succeeded, and who would have exaggerated my merit if I had triumphed?"

The frigate *Andromede* on which the Prince had sailed touched at Madeira and the Canaries, and then, according to orders, proceeded to Rio de Janeiro. There the frigate took on stores, but the Prince was not per-



## THE BONAPARTÈS IN AMERICA

mitted to land. Sailing through the South Atlantic, Louis Napoleon thought much of St. Helena, and wrote of how the winds from that island blew constantly over his ship, and yet he was not permitted to visit the prison and tomb of his renowned uncle.

On the 30th of March, 1837, the *Andromede* reached Norfolk, Virginia, where Prince Louis was put ashore. The city authorities gave him an official welcome, and he was treated with every distinction. From Norfolk he proceeded by steamboat on Chesapeake Bay to Baltimore. In a letter to his mother Prince Louis thus describes his journey:

“My dear Mother: The second of April the captain and officers conducted me to the steamboat that conveyed me up Chesapeake Bay to Baltimore. We left at four o'clock in the afternoon. There were two hundred passengers on board. The cabin, a narrow room, about 160 feet in length, extends the entire length of the boat. Supper was served at seven. Half an hour later, the tables were taken away and beds were made for everybody. The women have cabins apart.

“About four in the morning, being very hot, I got up and went on deck to get some fresh air. I had hardly reached the deck, when I saw a gentleman following me in his shirt, who wished to speak to me. After having made the tour of the ship twice he at length accosted me. He began with the customary, ‘A very beautiful night, sir.’ Then he said, ‘Would you have the kindness, sir, to relate to me your history?’ I almost laughed in his face; but I restrained myself, and answered that the remembrance of what had befallen me was too painful

## NAPOLEON III

to allow of my complying with his request. So we talked of other things; and presently, the wind being very cold, he deemed it prudent to get his coat.

“We arrived at Baltimore at six o'clock in the morning, and started again immediately upon another boat. At the end of the bay we found a railroad that conveyed us to the Delaware River, where we again took the boat to Philadelphia. From Philadelphia to New York we travelled in the same way, partly by railway and partly by boat. I passed before Point Breeze, the residence of my uncle. It is a pretty little house on the banks of the Delaware, but the surrounding country is flat. The only fine features are the width of the stream, and the steam-boats, which are magnificent.”<sup>1</sup>

Upon his arrival in New York, Prince Louis went to Washington Hall, which stood on Broadway between Chambers and Reade Streets. It was at this hotel that the “Bread and Cheese Club,” founded by James Fenimore Cooper in 1824, was accustomed to meet. In the same block were two stores of the well known merchant, A. T. Stewart. Stewart's stores finally took in the whole block.

On the night of Louis Napoleon's arrival in New York, General James Watson Webb, then editor of the *Courier and Inquirer*, was entertaining a party of friends at the City Hotel, which stood on the west side of Broadway, just north of Trinity Church. This was the General Webb who afterwards negotiated with Napoleon III a treaty for the removal of French troops

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<sup>1</sup> Jerrold, *Napoleon III*, vol. 2, p. 4. London. 1874.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

from Mexico during the tragic reign of Maximilian.<sup>1</sup> Learning that Prince Louis was at Washington Hall, Webb invited him to dine that night at the City Hotel. Among the guests were General Winfield Scott and General Webb's two brothers-in-law, the Rev. C. S. Stewart, who had been a chaplain in the Navy, and L. Stewart. The Stewart brothers acted as the guides and friends of Prince Louis during his stay in New York.

Count Arese, the friend of Victor Immanuel and lifelong friend and counsellor of Prince Louis, awaited him in New York; also his faithful servant Charles Thelin. Prince Louis met the chief people in New York under the guidance of Webb and the Stewarts. He was greatly interested in the experiments then being made in electro-magnetism. When he became Emperor of France in 1852, one of his first acts was to offer a premium for improvements in the electro-magnet.

During his stay in America, which he expected to be prolonged, Prince Louis visited his Uncle Joseph's estate at Bordentown, New Jersey. Joseph at that time was in England. Prince Louis addressed his uncle a letter in which he sought the favor of Joseph and explained and defended his Strasbourg adventure.

"My dear Uncle: Upon my arrival in the United States, I hoped to have found a letter from you. I confess to you that I have been deeply pained to learn that you were displeased with me. I attempt one of those bold enterprises, which alone could reestablish that which twenty years of peace have caused to be forgotten. I throw myself into the attempt, ready to

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<sup>1</sup> See page 188.

## NAPOLEON III

sacrifice my life, persuaded that my death even would be useful to our cause. I escape, against my wishes, the bayonets and the scaffold; and, having escaped, I find on the part of my family only contumely and disdain.

“I know you too well, my dear uncle, to doubt the goodness of your heart, and not to hope that you will return to sentiments more just in respect to me, and in respect to those who have compromised themselves for your cause. My enterprise has failed; that is true. But it has announced to France that the family of the Emperor is not yet dead; that it still numbers many devoted friends: in fine, that their pretensions are not limited to the demands of a few pence from the government, but to the reestablishment, in favor of the people, of those rights of which foreigners and Bourbons have deprived them. This is what I have done. Is it for you to condemn me? Never doubt my unalterable attachment to you.

Your tender and affectionate nephew,

Louis Napoleon.”<sup>1</sup>

To his father he wrote as follows:

New York, April 10, 1837.

“My dear Father: I landed at Norfolk on March 30, after having been four and a half months at sea. When I arrived here I found your letter in which you send me your blessing. It was the most consoling thing to

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<sup>1</sup> Jerrold, *Napoleon III*, vol. 2, p. 11.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

my heart I could find here. I have received many letters, and I feel very happy in finding so many people that show a real affection towards me in my misfortune. All my female cousins have sent me charming letters, except Mathilde!

“By next packet I will write to you at greater length. Today I am pressed for time, and yesterday I was still suffering from an illness which attacked me on reaching this place.

“I have been unfortunate, but rely upon it that I have done nothing contrary to honour or derogatory to the dignity of the name I bear.

“Receive, my dear father, the expression of my sincere attachment.

Your affectionate and respectful son,  
Louis Napoleon.”

“Except Mathilde!” This Mathilde, whose silence in the Prince’s misfortune so surprised him, was his cousin, the daughter of Jerome Bonaparte by Princess Catharine. At one time there had been something of a romance between the cousins, but Mathilde’s silence at the time of Louis’ exile put an end to it.

Americans are accustomed to have their habits, laws and manners described by Europeans who have spent a few weeks in the country and have visited a few cities on the Eastern coast. But the young Prince Louis established a record for a quick digest and discovery of American life, for he had been in the United States hardly a month when he thus summed up American history and easily forecast its future:

### NAPOLEON III

“The United States believed themselves to be a nation as soon as they had a government elected by themselves, a president and chambers. They were, and are still, only an independent colony. The transition is going on daily; the worm is casting his skin and taking to wings that will raise him. But I do not think the transition will be completed without crises and convulsions.

“But now the population has thickened. It is composed of an American type that is sharply defined, and of daily arriving immigrants who have no education, no popular traditions, and mostly no patriotism. No industry and commerce have destroyed equality in fortunes. Great cities have been raised, in which man has not to contend against the soil, but with man his neighbor. Now, in short, the moral world begins to rise upon the physical world. Today we find, here and there, that the reign of ideas is opening on this side of the Atlantic. In the midst of this world of traders (a term his uncle had applied to Americans, as well as to the English), where there is not a man who is not a speculator, it has entered the head of a few honest men that slavery is a bad thing, although it is highly profitable; and for the first time, the heart of America has vibrated for an interest that is not a money one.”<sup>1</sup>

Fitz-Greene Halleck met the Prince at a dinner party given in his honor by Chancellor Kent and was perhaps his most intimate American friend during his brief stay in the country. They frequently dined together,

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<sup>1</sup> Jerrold, *Napoleon III*, v. 2, p. 6.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

the Prince with Halleck at Villegrand's and Halleck with the Prince at the City Hotel. General James Grant Wilson, famous cavalry leader in the Civil War, writes: "I was a lad of a few years of age when I first saw Napoleon III in 1837. He was pointed out to me by my father as he passed along Broadway in company with his poet friend, Fitz-Greene Halleck. At that time he was living at the Washington Hotel, but receiving a great deal of attention from many of the best New York families. I remember Halleck speaking of dining with him at Chancellor Kent's and of accompanying him on a pleasant visit to Washington Irving at Sunnyside on the Hudson. Several gentlemen who met the Emperor in New York now recall him as a dignified and somewhat silent person, as fond of dancing, and as a favorite among the ladies. He was much lionized, and many dinners, balls, and other entertainments were given in his honor by the Bayards, Livingstons, Schuylers, and other leading families of the city."<sup>1</sup>

Pierre Irving tells of the visit the Prince had at Sunnyside, or the "Roost," with Irving. He was accompanied by Count Arese and Anthony Constant, with whom he had been staying. Irving enjoyed his visit and "was much interested in the peculiar position of his somewhat quiet guest, though little anticipating the dazzling career which awaited him."<sup>2</sup> Long afterward, writing to a niece in Paris who had described to

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of General Wilson to Blanchard Jerrold.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Irving, *Life and Letters of Washington Irving*, Putnam Sons Co., N. Y.

## NAPOLEON III

him the wedding of Napoleon III and Eugenie Marie de Montijo de Guzman, granddaughter on her mother's side of William Kirkpatrick, United States Consul at Malaga, Irving recalled the Prince's visit at Sunnyside, and also how he had often held Eugenie on his knee when living in Spain.

Halleck was amazed at the Prince's frequent expression, "When I become Emperor," and thought him as "mad as a March hare." To Alfred Pell he said that the Prince was "a rather dull man, of the order of Washington."<sup>1</sup>

When the then exiled Prince became President, then Emperor, of France there were many stories current in America of the profligate life he led when in New York. It was said that at the low resort of an abandoned Frenchwoman, Mercier, he formed an attachment for a lovely Spanish Jewess, Josephine Ballabo. At the same time that Prince Louis was in New York, his cousin, Pierre Bonaparte, son of Lucien, came to visit the United States. Pierre, a wild and dissipated fellow, was a frequent guest at the police stations of New York. No doubt many of the roistering Pierre's escapades were attributed to his cousin, Prince Louis. In 1856, General Webb published in the *National Intelligencer* of Washington a vindication of the Prince. "His associations," wrote Webb, "were almost exclusively confined to our old families; and he always exhibited a fondness for ladies' society. He also mixed occasionally in a small but refined French circle. I never heard of his

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, *Life and Letters of Fitz-Greene Halleck*. D. Appleton & Co., N. Y. 1869.



## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

having committed any imprudence; and he always sought the company of persons older than himself, and preferred grave subjects of conversation. With me, politics and government were his favorite topics, arising no doubt from my being in public life."

The Rev. C. S. Stewart, the Prince's clerical guide when in New York, also wrote a vindication of him, and out of close association with him said: "I never heard a sentiment from him and never witnessed a feeling that could detract from his honor and purity as a man or his dignity as a prince; on the contrary, I often had occasion to admire the lofty thoughts and exalted conceptions which seemed most to occupy his mind. His favorite topics when we were alone were his uncle, the Emperor, his mother, and others of his immediate family in whom he had been deeply interested. He seemed ever to feel that his personal destiny was indissolubly linked with France: or, as his mother, Hortense, expressed it in her will, 'to know his position;' and the enthusiasm with which at times he gave utterance to his aspirations for the prosperity, the happiness, and the honor of his country, and to the high purposes which he designed to accomplish for her as a ruler, amounted, in words, voice, and manner, to positive eloquence. Had I taken notes of some of these conversations they would be considered now, when his visions of power and earthly glory are realized, scarcely less epigrammatic, elevated in thought, or, as related to himself, less prophetic, than many which have been recorded from the lips of the exile of St. Helena."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jerrold, *Napoleon III*, v. 2, p. 14.

## NAPOLEON III

Louis paid a visit to Niagara and in a flour boat crossed the river under the Falls. He was planning extensive travels when he received the following letter from his mother :

“My dear Son: I am about to undergo an operation. In case it should not terminate successfully, I send you in this letter my blessing. We shall meet again—shall we not?—in a better world, where you may come to join me as late as possible! And you will believe that in quitting this world I regret only leaving yourself and your fond, affectionate disposition, which alone has given any charm to my existence. It will be a consolation to you, my dear friend, to reflect that by your attentions you have rendered your mother as happy as circumstances could allow her. You will think also of all my affection for you, and this will inspire you with courage. Think this, that we shall always have a benevolent and clear sighted feeling for all that passes in this world below, and that assuredly we shall meet again. Reflect upon this consolatory idea; it is one which is too necessary not to be true. And that good Arese, I send him my blessing as to a son. I press you to my heart, my dear one. I am calm, perfectly resigned; and I would still hope that we may meet again, even in this world. The will of God be done.

Your affectionate mother,

HORTENSE.”<sup>1</sup>

April 3, 1837.

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<sup>1</sup> Berkeley Men, *Napoleon Dynasty*, p. 558.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

On the back of the envelope, Dr. Conneau, the friend of mother and son, had written the words—"Venez! Venez!" Prince Louis took passage in the first vessel leaving New York, the *George Washington*, and sailed for England June 12. From London he hurried to Switzerland and arrived at Arenenberg August fifth. There he tenderly nursed his mother until her death, October 5, 1837. The body of Hortense was taken to France and laid to rest in the church of Ruel, near Paris, and by the side of the mother whom she so adored.

Before leaving the United States, Prince Louis addressed the following letter to President Van Buren:

New York, June 6, 1837.

"Mr. President: I cannot leave the United States without expressing to your Excellency the regret I feel in not having been to Washington to make your acquaintance. Although unhappy fate led me to America, I hoped to profit by my new exile to know her distinguished men. I wished to study the manners and institutions of a people who have made more conquests in commerce and industry than we have made in Europe by arms.

"I hoped under the aegis of your protecting laws to travel through a country which has excited my sympathy, since its history and prosperity are so intimately bound up with the memory of our French glory; but an imperious duty calls me back to the old world. My mother being dangerously ill, and no political consideration binding me here, I am going to England; thence I shall endeavor to repair to Switzerland.

## NAPOLEON III

“It is with pleasure, Mr. President, that I enter into these details with you, for you might have given credit to certain calumniating suppositions that tended to make people believe I had contracted engagements with the French Government.

“As I value the esteem of the representatives of a free country, I am glad it should know that, with the name I bear, it is impossible for me to stray one moment from the path which my conscience, my honour, and my duty trace.

“I beg your Excellency to receive this letter as a proof of my respect for the man who occupies the seat of George Washington. Accept the expression of my consideration and of my distinguished sentiments.

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.”<sup>1</sup>

Soon after the death of his mother Louis Napoleon withdrew from Switzerland and took up his residence in London. The French Government had protested to Switzerland against that nation harboring an enemy of the French state so near to the borders of France. Rather than involve the Swiss Government in difficulty with France, the exile voluntarily removed to England. After watching events for three years in England, Louis decided that the hour had come to loose the eagles in France once more.

Early on the morning of August 6, 1840, a customs officer, watching the coast for smugglers, saw a steamer standing off and on the shore near Boulogne. Presently

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<sup>1</sup> Jerrold, *Napoleon III*, v. 2, p. 22.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

a boat was lowered from the vessel and stood in for the shore. When hailed, the men in the boat said they were soldiers of the 40th Regiment of the Line, bound for Cherbourg. Soon a second boatload appeared. When the men landed they displayed one of the Napoleonic eagles, and one of the men had with him a live eagle. There was a story current at the time that the Prince had a piece of bacon under his helmet to keep the eagle hovering near his head.

The soldier with the eagle, and the leader of this band of fifty-six men, was Prince Louis Bonaparte, and with him was Count Montholon, who had closed Napoleon's eyes at St. Helena. They marched to the barracks, where they shouted, "Long live Napoleon!" and "On to Paris!" But there was no response. The Colonel of the regiment appeared sword in hand, and Prince Louis and his men were soon in full retreat to the shore and their boats. The boat of Prince Louis was fired on and upset. The Prince and his companions then swam to their ship, the *City of Edinburgh*, where they were made prisoners by the French. Thus ignominiously ended his descent upon Boulogne. It was at Boulogne that the Emperor Napoleon had assembled his army and his boats for his threatened invasion of England in 1804. Napoleon was not a fool, and he himself declared that it was pure bluff. "Under favorable conditions," he said, "I might have landed in England and might have won a battle; but what then?" Now at Boulogne his nephew, aspiring to his uncle's greatness, tried to invade France with fifty-six men!

The French government was not so lenient with the



LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE (NAPOLEON III)

Last Emperor of the French

(From "The Napoleon Dynasty")

## NAPOLEON III

Prince this time as it was after the Strasbourg fiasco. He was sentenced to "perpetual imprisonment" at the gloomy fortress of Ham on the Somme. For six years he lived at the fortress engaging his mind with the beet sugar industry and the projected Nicaragua Canal. On the morning of May 25, 1846, leaving a dummy in his bed, disguised in the sabots and blouse of a workman, and with a plank over his shoulder, the enterprising Louis walked coolly out past the guard at the gates of the fortress and was soon over the frontier into Belgium and back again in London.

It was during this stay in London that Louis first fell in with the lovely Miss Howard, daughter of a riding master. Two years later, Miss Howard aided Louis in his enterprise in France by pawning her jewels. When he came to power Louis did not forget this generosity, for he repaid the loan and created her Comtesse de Beauregard. He was undoubtedly truly in love with this woman, but when he was married to Eugenie the police compelled Miss Howard to leave Paris before the day of the wedding, lest she should create a scene. Napoleon III married Eugenie, Countess of Montijo, at Notre Dame, January 30, 1853.

When the Revolution of 1848 toppled Louis Philippe from his throne, Louis Napoleon came at once to France.<sup>1</sup> Out of seven million votes cast for President, the much mocked at adventurer of Strasbourg and Boulogne received more than five million. Then, in December, 1851, came the Coup d'Etat, and soon he was

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<sup>1</sup> He was elected a member of the Chamber of Deputies, then President for ten years, and later President for life.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

Emperor of the French. As Octavius planned to consolidate the conquests of his great uncle Julius, and on those foundations build a vast structure of law and peace, so Louis Napoleon hoped to bless France and Europe with the full development and application of the Napoleonic Idea. He reigned for eighteen years, during which he joined with England in the war against Russia in the Crimea, helped to establish Italian independence by defeating the Austrians in battle at Magenta and Solferino in 1859, and almost brought about war with the United States by his intervention in Mexico. In 1870 the crafty Bismarck maneuvered him into a war for which France was ill prepared. The French armies were quickly defeated in the field or straitly shut up in their fortress strongholds.

On a bright September day in 1870, a broken and diseased man, tortured with the stone, drove in a hired caleche along the poplar-bordered highway near the village of Donchery. Three officers were with him in the caleche and three followed on horseback. Presently a group of German officers coming from the opposite direction drew up by the side of the caleche. The leader of them, a towering grim-faced man, saluted the man in the carriage, and then removed the spiked helmet from his head. It was Bismarck. The French Empire was no more.

Napoleon III died at Chislehurst in England, January 18, 1873, aged sixty-five years. His son and the last of his line, the Prince Imperial, Eugene Louis Napoleon, volunteer with an English force in South Africa, got off his horse on a June day in 1879 to select



### NAPOLEON III

a camping place on the Blood River. The Prince was attempting to remount his horse as he heard the shouts of the Zulus. The saddle girth broke, and in a moment, unable to vault to his horse's back and thrust through and through by the spears of the Zulus, he lay dead and mutilated on the African veldt. The Empress Eugenie lingered on from decade to decade. She lived through the crash of the World War and reached the end of her journey at Madrid, July 11, 1920, aged ninety-four years.

Always on the person of Napoleon III, down to the day of his death, there was a worn leather wallet. In the wallet were some letters of Eugenie, a few pictures of Saints, scribblings of the little Prince Imperial, and the letter which his mother wrote to him when he was in New York, thinking that she might not see him again, and across which Dr. Conneau had written, "Venez! Venez!" This letter had accompanied Napoleon III, on all his wanderings; it had been wet with the brine of the sea at Boulogne and was carried into battle at Sedan. In that letter Hortense had written: "We shall meet again—shall we not?—in a better world, where you may come to join me, as late as possible."

"As late as possible!" There breathed the true spirit of Hortense, full of affection for her son, yet ambitious that he should have his full day upon earth, ere the night came down. Now that hour, beyond which it is not possible for either peasant or Emperor to stay, had come.

## VIII

### NAPOLEON III AND THE MEXICAN CRISIS

WHEN Napoleon was in New York as a young man in 1837, he had written in his sketch on American institutions and customs that in the discussions then prevalent over slavery the United States had for the first time in its history given its attention to a moral issue. But when The War Between the States broke out, his sympathies as Emperor were strongly with the Southern Confederacy. In April, 1862, he tried to have England join him in some kind of demand on the United States. Slidell, of Slidell and Mason and *Trent* fame, the Confederate agent at Paris, assured Napoleon that even if war came with the United States, the French battleships *Gloir* and *Normandie* could lay Boston and New York under contribution. But Napoleon feared to move as his sympathies dictated.

The Confederate reverse at the battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862, with the subsequent preliminary Proclamation of Emancipation by Lincoln, was a great disappointment to Napoleon. Two weeks after that battle he formally invited England and Russia to join with France in requesting the North and the South to agree to an armistice for six months. Great Britain declined, and Russia was non-committal. In January, 1863, Napoleon made another proposal: this time that commissioners from the North and the South meet on neutral ground. Seward, our Secretary of State, taking

## NAPOLEON III AND THE MEXICAN CRISIS

some liberties with the truth, in rejecting Napoleon's proposal replied that there were really no North and no South, and no Northern and Southern states, but "only an insurrectionary party," and that the government would soon rally its great resources to crush the revolt. Then Seward added one of those noble sentences which were the glory of his conduct of the Department of State during that crisis of our history: "It is a great mistake European statesmen make, if they suppose this people are demoralized."

Lincoln's Proclamation of Emancipation in January, 1863, gave the war an anti-slavery character in the minds of the peoples of Europe, and effectually spiked the guns of intervention on the part of either England or France, for the masses of the people of Europe were now in sympathy with the North. Vicksburg and Gettysburg, the great Union victories of the summer of 1863, were a sufficient demonstration to all European statesmen that the nation was not to be divided.

Among Louis Napoleon's schemes of empire, none was more tragic and ill-fated than his intervention in Mexico. French exiles who came to the United States after Waterloo had schemed for an empire in Mexico with Napoleon as emperor, or Joseph, then at Bordentown, New Jersey, perhaps as a temporary emperor, until Napoleon could be brought from St. Helena. This enterprise was wrecked in the disasters which befell the French exiles in their settlement in Texas at Champ d'Asile. It fell to the great emperor's nephew, Napoleon III, to revive the dream of a French empire in the realm of Montezuma and Cortez.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

The series of revolutions in Mexico and the struggles between the clerical faction and the party of that remarkable Indian, Benito Juarez, had wrought considerable injury to the interests of foreign powers, and in 1861 England, Spain and France sent troops and ships to Vera Cruz to seize the Customs and exact satisfaction for their claims. England and Spain soon came to an agreement with Mexico and withdrew their forces in April, 1862; but France made demands which she knew Mexico could not meet, and the French army marched on Mexico City. The French were repulsed at Puebla; then, heavily reinforced to the number of thirty-five thousand, they entered Mexico City in June, 1863. General Forney was the French commander, with Bazaine, afterwards Marshal Bazaine, who commanded the French troops in the final disasters of the War of 1870, as his chief subordinate. When Forney withdrew, Bazaine became his successor. Forney set up a provisional government whose leaders were opposed to the republic headed by Juarez. This was followed by an Assembly of Notables which declared Mexico an Empire and offered the crown to the likable and attractive Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, and younger brother of the Austrian Emperor, Francis Joseph. Maximilian said he would accept the crown if the Empire were confirmed by a plebiscite. This confirmation was never secured. Nevertheless, in June, 1864, Maximilian made his entry as Emperor into Mexico City.

This intervention by France in the affairs of Mexico, and the setting up of an empire across our borders was, of course, viewed with great apprehension by the

## NAPOLEON III AND THE MEXICAN CRISIS

government and the people of the United States. But the nation was then in the death grapple of The War Between the States, and in no position to prosecute a war with France. Seward, the Secretary of State, in a cautious way let it be known to Napoleon that the course of events in Mexico was repugnant to the United States, but he made no demand or threat. The negotiations of Seward at this time show him at his best. The main objective was to avoid European intervention in the struggle then raging in the United States. Among our people there was much popular resentment towards France. McDougal, Senator from California, introduced a resolution in the Senate declaring that the United States by force of arms should drive the French troops out of Mexico; and the Republican National Convention of 1864 adopted a plank which stated that "the people of the United States view with extreme jealousy, as menacing to the peace and independence of their own country, the efforts of any European power to obtain new footholds for monarchical governments, sustained by military force, in near proximity to the United States."

The Resolutions dealing with the situation in Mexico were laid on the table in the Senate on the motion of Charles Sumner, who said that if the Resolutions meant anything at all, they meant war. In the House of Representatives, however, a Resolution was passed stating that the members of the House were unwilling by their silence to "leave the world under the impression that they were indifferent spectators of the deplorable events transpiring in the Republic of Mexico, and

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

thought fit to declare that it did not accord with the policy of the United States to acknowledge any monarchy erected in America upon the ruins of any Republic under the auspices of any European power."

This action by the House aroused the French Government, which inquired directly of our minister, "Do you mean peace or war?" Partisans of the Confederacy in Paris rejoiced at the passing of the Resolution and hoped that it would bring war with France. But the wise Seward instructed the American Minister to inform the French Government that the question of the recognition of a monarchy in Mexico was a purely executive one, and belonged "not to the House of Representatives, or even to the Congress, but to the President of the United States," and that although the House of Representatives was within its rights in expressing its opinion, the President did not contemplate any change in the policy hitherto followed with regard to France and Mexico.

Despite popular clamor, Seward pursued his wise and patient policy, biding his time until the United States could speak to Napoleon with the accents of invincible authority. In one of his sage comments on the situation, Seward said, "Nations no more than individuals can wisely divide their attention upon many subjects at the same time." In other words his sane and safe policy was, "One fight at a time."

Seward's policy towards Mexico, however, was almost shipwrecked by Lieutenant General Grant, at the end of the Civil War. The action of Grant reveals how almost unconsciously in great crises the civil govern-

## NAPOLEON III AND THE MEXICAN CRISIS

ment is replaced by the military. Grant regarded the French operations in Mexico as an act of war against the United States. "I myself," he wrote in his *Memoirs*, "regarded this as a direct act of war against the United States by the powers engaged, and supposed as a matter of course that the United States would treat it as such when their hands were free to strike."

Accordingly, after the surrender of Lee, Grant, as Commander of the Army, sent Sheridan to Texas and the Rio Grande to force the surrender of the Confederates under General Kirby Smith. At the same time he told Sheridan that there was another motive in sending him to Texas, and that was to assist Juarez in expelling the French from Mexico. He told Sheridan he would have to act with great circumspection since Secretary of State Seward was opposed to any display of force on the border that would be likely to involve the United States in war with France. Without waiting even to lead his command in the Grand Review at Washington, May 23 and 24, 1865, Sheridan set out for Texas and the Rio Grande. There he proceeded to do all he could to bring on hostilities and to assist the Mexican forces under General Juarez. He called upon the Maximilian General Mejia, commanding at Matamoras, to return munitions of war which had been turned over to him by ex-Confederates. He opened communications, too, with President Juarez, and in such a public way that it created the impression among the followers of Maximilian that Sheridan was about to cross the Rio Grande and join the rebels under Juarez. This led to the abandonment of much territory

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in Northern Mexico by the Imperialists. A Mexican colonization scheme was being planned at Cordova. Promoters of the enterprise were ex-Confederate Generals, Price, Magruder, Maury, and other prominent persons. Sheridan nipped this in the bud by prohibiting the embarkation from ports in Louisiana and Texas for ports in Mexico of any person without a permit from his headquarters. During the winter and spring of 1866 Sheridan covertly supplied munitions of war in large quantities to the army of Juarez, 13,000 muskets being sent from the Baton Rouge Arsenal alone. Sheridan, commenting on the part he played in the final drama in Mexico, said: "I doubt very much whether such results could have been achieved without the presence of an American army on the Rio Grande, which, be it remembered, was sent there, because in General Grant's words, 'the French invasion of Mexico was so closely related to the rebellion as to be essentially a part of it!'"<sup>1</sup>

General Sherman also played a part in the last scenes in Mexico. President Johnson, perhaps to get rid of Grant, ordered him in September, 1866, to escort the newly appointed Minister, Lew Campbell of Ohio, to the headquarters of Juarez, the President-elect of Mexico. Grant sent for Sherman and said that he would not obey the order, for he regarded it as a plot to get rid of him. Sherman informed President Johnson of this, and advised him not to break with Grant, and volunteered to go in his place. Taking over Grant's

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<sup>1</sup> Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, II, p. 228.



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instructions, Sherman and the newly appointed Minister set sail for Vera Cruz, where they made ineffectual attempts to contact Juarez. Sherman thought that under the pretext of Grant's well-known antagonism to the French occupation of Mexico, Johnson hoped to be rid of Grant, who was looming up as a candidate for the Presidency.

During the last months of the Civil War, that veteran and shrewd negotiator, Francis Blair, Sr., received from Lincoln this pass, "Allow the bearer, F. P. Blair, Sr., to pass our lines, go South and return. A. Lincoln. Dec. 28, 1864."

Armed with this pass, Blair took his carpet bag and made his way to Richmond, where he had a long interview with Jefferson Davis. In this interview Blair revived the idea, which was now so far from the mind of Seward, but which he himself had suggested to Lincoln at the beginning of the conflict—that is, uniting the North and South by a foreign war. Blair reminded Davis of the schemes of Napoleon III to make the Latin race supreme in the Southern section of North America. He told Davis that he was "the fortunate man who now holds the commanding position to encounter this formidable scheme of conquest and whose fiat can at the same time deliver his country from the bloody agony now covering it with mourning." Blair's plan as suggested to Davis was, first of all, an armistice between the North and the South, and then the transfer of a part of the Southern army to Texas, thence to enter Mexico and drive out Maximilian and the French. Jefferson Davis could even be made Dictator of Mex-

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ico. If Davis took the lead in this expedition, delivered Mexico out of the hands of the French, and united the North and the South, he would go down in history with a fame not second to that of Washington and Jackson.

Blair found Davis in a soft and accessible mood, for Davis spoke of his devotion to the old flag, and how when he was present at the battle of Bull Run and saw the United States flag unfurled in the breeze he thought for a moment that it was his own flag. He told Blair, too, that no circumstances would have a greater effect than to see the "arms of our countrymen North and South united in a war upon a foreign power," and he was convinced that the European nations were quite willing that the Northern and Southern States should exhaust their energies and destroy their governments in fighting each other, "thus making them a prey to potentates of Europe." But one of the chief obstacles in the way of reconciliation, Davis said, was the bitterness engendered by the outrages of the Northern armies in their invasion of the South.

The result of this interview was the famous Fortress Monroe Conference on the *River Queen* between Alexander Stephens, Vice-President of the Confederacy, and David Hunter, representing Davis; and Lincoln and Seward on the Northern side. At this interview Stephens revived the proposed crusade against the French in Mexico. Once the States ceased to fight each other, he thought the Union could be restored. But Lincoln was adamant on the question of an armistice, and nothing came of the Conference.

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In December, 1865, Seward politely told France to get out of Mexico or fight. Napoleon tried in vain to secure recognition of Maximilian by the United States as a condition of the withdrawal of the French troops. On April 5, 1866, *Le Moniteur*, Napoleon's official organ, announced the scheduled withdrawal of the troops in three detachments, November, 1866, and March and November, 1867. But when the time came for the first third to be called back to France, Napoleon announced that he had decided to postpone the withdrawal until the spring of 1867. To this Seward would not consent. The troops of Juarez were steadily winning in northern Mexico and the fall of Maximilian's Empire was only a question of time. On January 18, 1867, Napoleon made a final proposal of a provisional government, with both the Maximilian faction and the Juarez faction excluded. This also was rejected by the United States. The next month the French evacuated Mexico City. This sounded the doom of Maximilian and his short-lived Empire. He was captured by the troops of Juarez, and on June 19, 1867, "carrying a cross,"<sup>1</sup> fell before a firing squad at Queretaro, murmuring as he fell, "Poor Carlotta!" The United States through Seward had made a half-hearted attempt to secure clemency for the Emperor, and when the fall of Maximilian's kingdom was imminent, Napoleon sent a special envoy, General Castlanelle, to Mexico to plead with Maximilian to abdicate his throne.

Carlotta, the Archduchess, and daughter of the King of the Belgians, had gone to France in 1866 to plead

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<sup>1</sup> *Life*, April 11, 1938.

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with Napoleon to uphold the throne of her husband. Repulsed by Napoleon, she went to Rome and sought an audience with the Pope. There she declined to leave the Vatican and created a most embarrassing scene. Obviously deranged, the unfortunate woman later on shut herself in her apartments and refused the food that had been prepared for her, convinced that the emissaries of Napoleon were trying to poison her. She was afterwards removed to a villa near Brussels, where her long agony came to an end only on January 19, 1927. She had endured the World War in Belgium, survived all the chief actors in her own great tragedy, and outlived her dead love by three score empty, mercifully beclouded years.

In the negotiations which finally led to the withdrawal of the French troops from Mexico in 1867, a prominent part was played behind the scenes by Napoleon's old New York acquaintance, General James Watson Webb. At the outbreak of the War Lincoln appointed Webb our Minister to Austria. The appointment was not confirmed by the Senate, and Webb was then appointed Minister to Brazil. On his way to Rio Janeiro, Webb was instructed by Lincoln to wait on Napoleon at Paris and ascertain his views as to the blockade of Southern ports which the United States had established. The Emperor at that time took no exceptions to the methods being pursued by our government.

In 1863 General Webb, as an old friend of the Emperor, wrote Napoleon pointing out the mistakes of his policy in Mexico, and telling him that the United States would never consent to a Roman Catholic empire across

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our borders. To this Napoleon, writing under date of March 22, 1863, replied as follows:

“My dear General:

“I received your letter of March 8 and the intimate note enclosed therein; which, after perusal, I burned immediately, according to your wishes, and without mentioning the subject to anyone.

“The questions you treat of are very important and very delicate; still I will answer them in all frankness. You are greatly mistaken if you believe that any motive of ambition or cupidity has led me to Mexico. Engaged in this enterprise by Spain, and led by the doings of Juarez, I reluctantly sent, first, ten thousand men; afterwards, the national honor being compromised, my troops were increased to eighteen thousand; finally, the repulse at Puebla having engaged our military honor, I sent over thirty-five thousand men.

“It is, therefore, much against my inclination that I am compelled to wage war at such a distance from France; and it is in no way for the purpose of taking possession of the mines of Sonora that my soldiers are fighting. But now that the French flag is in Mexico, it is difficult for me to foretell what may happen. At all events, it is my intention to withdraw as soon as honor and the interests now engaged allow me. It would be wrong in the United States, therefore, to make my being there a matter of dispute; for a menace would then change all my plans, which now are disinterested.

“As regards the war which desolates your country, I profoundly regret it; for I do not see how and when

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it will end; and it is not the interest of France that the United States should be weakened by a struggle without any good results possible. In a country as sensible as America it is not by arms that domestic quarrels should be settled, but by votes, meetings, and assemblies. Be persuaded, my dear General, of my interest in your country, as well as my friendship, and the high esteem which I profess for your character.

“With these sentiments, I remain

Yours, etc.,

NAPOLEON”<sup>1</sup>

Webb showed this letter to Lincoln, who relied on Napoleon’s promise to withdraw. What Napoleon wrote to Webb about a “menace” on the part of the United States changing the attitude of France was evidently in the mind of Seward as he carried on his cautious negotiations with the Emperor in the crisis over the French intervention in Mexico. When The War Between the States had come to a close, and the United States was able to back up its demand with force, Seward took a more positive stand. Yet even then he was careful not to irritate France, for a war with her had in it the dread possibility of the breaking out again of the still smouldering flames of the American Civil War.

At the time of the crisis over Mexico, General Webb had a memorable interview with Napoleon at St. Cloud on November 10, 1865. At this conference Napoleon

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<sup>1</sup> Jerrold, *Napoleon III*, v. 3, p. 343.

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agreed to withdraw his troops in twelve, eighteen, and twenty-four months. One condition was that Dayton, our minister to France, should know nothing of the agreement, and that even Seward was to have no official knowledge of it. Webb was to notify President Johnson and wire Johnson's assent. The next April Napoleon publicly announced the withdrawal of his army from Mexico. The settlement of the Mexican and French crisis was thus not so much a triumph of the State Department under the leadership of Seward as it was an interesting and dramatic illustration of the influence of a personal friendship in the affairs of nations. Little could either Napoleon or General Webb have foreseen, as they went about New York City together in 1837, that their friendship was to play a great part in the peaceable settlement of a difficult and dangerous dispute between the United States and France, and at a crucial point in America's history.

Grant had a poor opinion of Napoleon III, and rightly blamed him rather than France for the scheme to erect a monarchy upon the ruins of the Mexican Republic. That, Grant says, "was the scheme of one man, an imitator without genius or merit. He had succeeded in stealing the government of his country, and made a change in its form against the wishes and instincts of his people. He tried to play a part of the first Napoleon without the ability to sustain that role. He sought by new conquests to add to his empire and his glory; but the signal failure of his scheme of conquest was the precursor of his own overthrow.

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“Like our own War Between the States, the Prussian War was an expensive one; but it was worth to France all it cost her people. It was the completion of the downfall of Napoleon III. The beginning was when he landed troops on this continent. Failing here, the prestige of his name—all the prestige he ever had—was gone. He must achieve a success or fall. He tried to strike down his neighbor, Prussia, and fell.

“I never admired the character of the first Napoleon; but I recognize his great genius. His work, too, has left its impress for good on the face of Europe. The third Napoleon could have no claim to having done a good or just act.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Grant, *Memoirs*, II, p. 547.



## IX

### THE NAPOLEONIC EXILES IN ALABAMA

**T**HE thunder of the guns of Waterloo scattered the Imperial Eagles to the four quarters of the earth. One of the last acts of the notorious Fouche, the treacherous Duke of Ottranto, was to prepare for Louis XVIII a list of the followers and officers of Napoleon who were to be proscribed. Fouche drew up a list of a hundred names. This was afterwards reduced to eighty, and then to fifty-nine. Fouche, a traitor to whomever he served, warned many of those whose names were on the list of the proscribed, and "only the most obstinate or the most foolhardy fell into the hands of the police." The ordinance of proscription as proclaimed July 24, 1815, was as follows:

"Desirous of conciliating the interests of our subjects, the dignity of our crown, and the tranquillity of Europe, we order, first, that the generals and officers who have betrayed the King before the 22nd of March, or who have betrayed or attacked France and the government by force of arms, and those who by violence have possessed themselves of power, shall be seized and brought before competent courts-martial in their respective divisions, viz., Ney, Labedoyere, Lallemand senior, Lallemand junior, Drouet d'Erlon, Lefebvre-Desnouettes, Armeil, Brayer, Gilly, Mouton-Duvernet, Grouchy, Clausel, Laborde, Debeille, Bertrand, Drouot, Cambronne, Lavallette, and Rovigo."

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Thirty-nine others were ordered to leave Paris in thirty days and remain in the country under the eye of Fouché until expelled from France or brought to trial. Among those on this second list were Real, Vandamme, Dirot, Cluis, and Garnier de Saintes. Ten of the officers named on these two lists made their way to America. The first notable French refugee general to arrive in America was Marshal Grouchy. Accompanied by his two sons, Colonels Alphonse and Victor, Grouchy arrived at Baltimore in January, 1816. Traveling under the assumed name of Charles Gauthier, Grouchy wrote to Stephen Girard in Philadelphia asking him to honor a draft on Lafitte and Company, Paris bankers. This Girard was reluctant to do; but when he learned that his correspondent was none other than the renowned Marshal Grouchy, he changed his tone and showed him every courtesy and accommodation. At Waterloo, Grouchy had command of the entire right wing of the Grand Army. In pursuing the Prussians after Ligny he moved with extraordinary slowness, neither joining the main army, then in the death grapple with Wellington, nor cutting off the Prussians. Some attributed his action, or inaction, to stupidity, others to treachery. Gourgand published in Europe severe reflections on the conduct of Grouchy at Waterloo, and this opinion was shared by the Emperor. When in the United States Grouchy wrote a reply to Gourgand, "Observations on the Campaign of 1815," which was published in Philadelphia.

Like most Frenchmen, Grouchy was interested in Thomas Jefferson, and in the autumn of 1817 he set out

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to visit Jefferson at Monticello. When he reached Wilmington, where he was entertained by the du Ponts of gunpowder fame, one of his sons was taken sick and the journey had to be given up. Writing to Jefferson he said: "If anything can lessen the bitterness with which a distant exile overwhelms me, and the state of degradation and servitude of my native land, it is to see yours happy, powerful, free, and respected, and all through institutions founded upon the very same principles for the establishment of which I have so often needlessly shed my blood." Jefferson wrote a courteous note in reply, expressing the hope that the Marshal would be able to make the visit at a future date.

When a speaker at a public dinner in New York referred to Grouchy as "Marshal Grouchy," the French Minister at Washington protested to the American government against this offense to the government of France. About the same time France withdrew her consul at Baltimore because the postmaster of that city in a Fourth of July speech had said some unpleasant things about the Bourbons. "No public agent," wrote de Richelieu to our minister at Paris, Albert Gallatin, "could be maintained in a town where His Majesty had been so publicly insulted." Grouchy returned to France in 1821. When in the United States he was on intimate terms with Joseph Bonaparte, who did not regard him in any way as a traitor to Napoleon.

In some respects the most interesting and most noted of the exiled generals were the two Lallemands, Charles and Henri. Charles, the older, had served in Egypt, San Domingo, and in the European campaigns

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of Napoleon, rising to the rank of general. When Napoleon was at Elba, Lallemand, with his brother Henri and Lefebvre-Desnouettes, serving under the restored monarchy, formed a conspiracy to seize the arsenal at La Fere. They were apprehended and thrown into prison and only the return of Napoleon saved them from death. At Waterloo Lallemand commanded the Chasseurs of the Guard. In one of O'Meara's last conversations with Napoleon at St. Helena, the Emperor said to him: "Lallmand, whom you saw in the *Bellerophon*, was employed by me at Acre as a negotiator with Sydney Smith, during which he displayed considerable address and ability. After my return from Elba he, like Labedoyere, declared for me in a moment of greatest danger, and excited a movement of primary importance amongst the troops of his division, which would have succeeded, had it not been for the indecision of Davoust and some others who had agreed to join with him, but who failed when the hour of trial arrived. Lallemand has great decision, is capable of movements on a large scale, and there are few men more qualified to lead a hazardous enterprise. He has the sacred fire."<sup>1</sup>

His younger brother, Henri Dominique Lallemand, commanded the artillery of the Guard at Waterloo. Both brothers were on the proscribed list and both made their way to the United States. Charles asked permission to accompany the Emperor to St. Helena, but was taken to Malta, and there set at liberty. Both appeared

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<sup>1</sup> O'Meara, *A Voice from St. Helena*.



LETIZIA BONAPARTE  
Madame Mère, Mother of Kings and Queens  
*(From "The Napoleon Dynasty")*

## THE NAPOLEONIC EXILES IN ALABAMA

at Philadelphia and were the leaders of the refugees. Henri was a favorite guest at Stephen Girard's Water Street house and married Girard's niece, Henrietta.

Another picturesque leader among the exiles in the United States was Lefebvre-Desnouettes. In the Spanish campaign Desnouettes was captured and taken a prisoner to England. In 1811 he escaped from England and joined Napoleon on the Russian campaign as a leader of the cavalry. At Waterloo he commanded the lancers and was one of the last to leave the field. Associated with the Lallemands and Desnouettes was General Rigaud. Taken prisoner at Chalons, Rigaud was carried to Frankfort, but escaped and came to America in 1817.

In the fall of 1816 the French exiles in and about Philadelphia organized the French Agricultural and Manufacturing Society, known also as the Society for the Cultivation of the Vine and the Olive, and the French Emigrant Association. General Charles Lallemand was elected president and Colonel Nicholas Parmentier secretary. A deputation traveled through Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh and thence down the Ohio in quest of a suitable location. When in Kentucky they were advised to locate on the Tombigbee River, now Alabama. The Congress made them a grant of four townships, each six miles square. A nominal price of two dollars an acre was charged. There were to be two hundred and eighty-eight settlers, one for each half-section. Final title to the lands was to be given to the agent of the Society only upon condition that each settler had fulfilled the terms of the contract. This hard

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clause was inserted to prevent speculation in the lands, but it no doubt was an obstacle to the ultimate success of the enterprise.

The officers of the Society applied to Jefferson for a constitution, or plan of government. This he courteously declined to provide. Jefferson foresaw the hardships the settlers would meet. "That their emigration may be for the happiness of their descendants, I can but believe; but from the knowledge I have of the country they have left, and its state of social intercourse and comfort, their own personal happiness will undergo severe trial." With high-sounding words about Lycurgus not being able to write a constitution for the Athenians, nor Locke for the Carolinas, Jefferson asked to be excused from writing the Society's plan of government for the projected commonwealth in the Alabama wilderness. "Every people have their own particular habits, ways of thinking, manners, etc., which have grown up with them from their infancy, are become a part of their nature, and to which the regulations to make them happy must be accommodated." Jefferson wants to know too just what it is they have in mind: "Is it proposed that this shall be a separate state? Or a county of a state? Or a mere voluntary association, as those of the Quakers, Dunkards, Mennonites? A separate state it cannot be, because from the tract it asks it would not be more than twenty miles square, and in establishing new states regard is had to a certain degree of equality in size. If it is to be a county of a state, it cannot be governed by its own laws, but must be subject to those of the state of which it is a part. If merely a

## THE NAPOLEONIC EXILES IN ALABAMA

voluntary association, the submission of its members will be voluntary also, as no act of coercion would be permitted by the general law." Having the credit for the writing of the Declaration of Independence, and having had a part in the making of the Constitution of the United States, Jefferson evidently thought his fame as maker of constitutions and giver of laws well established, and did not care to try his aging hand at another.

The main body of the settlers left Philadelphia in the schooner *McDonough* in April, 1818, taking with them quantities of vines and olive plants. The schooner was driven ashore by a gale at the mouth of Mobile Bay, but the cargo and the passengers were saved, the soldiers of Ft. Bowyer assisting in the rescue. In a government barge the settlers were taken up the Tombigbee River to White Plains, where they laid out a town and built cabins. Count Real named the place Demopolis, the City of the People. A mistake however had been made in the location, for it was outside the bounds of the tract given them by the government. Demopolis therefore was abandoned, and the unfortunate emigrants moved further into the forest, where they made a settlement to which they gave this time a name of military reminiscence rather than political prophecy, Aigleville, the City of the Eagles. There Napoleon's veterans founded their home in the Alabama forests and made their pathetic effort to turn their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

It was soon evident that this grand enterprise was doomed to complete failure. The martial veterans of



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Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Dresden, Beresina and Waterloo were ill equipped to drain swamps, clear out stumps and conquer the wilderness. The land proved unsuitable both for the vine and the olive. Titles were inaccurate, and ere long the accents of the boulevards and the salons of France were heard no more in those leafy solitudes. Not a few of the wives of the exiles had gone with them to Alabama, where they made a brave but futile effort to exchange their harps for the distaff, and empire gowns for the coarse habiliments of the wilderness. The settlers drifted hither and yon in that primitive land, not a few of them finding a home at Mobile. Surrounded by rough frontiersmen and Choctaw savages, wasted by strange sicknesses and baffled by the hostility of nature, the Alabama colony soon languished and died.

The Lallemands themselves did not go with the settlers to Alabama. The two chief personalities there were Raoul and Lefebvre-Desnouettes. Raoul, who commanded the advance of Napoleon on his return from Elba, remained for some years in Alabama as a ferryman over the Tombigbee at French Creek. He was last heard of fighting with the revolutionists in Mexico. Desnouettes had the largest tract of land and the best house in the settlement. In a log cabin hard by his house the general had a collection of Napoleonic relics, swords, pistols, flags, and a bust of his Emperor. In 1822 Desnouettes was granted permission to return to France and set sail on the *Albion*. The ship went down in a gale off the Head of Kinsale in the Irish Sea, April 22, with thousands of spectators on the cliffs

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watching the tragedy.<sup>1</sup> Lefebvre-Desnouettes perished with the rest. The names of an Alabama county and village are all that remain today to remind the Alabama traveler that once in the fastnesses of the Tombigbee, Napoleon's veterans hanged their harps and swords on the willows and sighed when they thought on France and the vanished glory of the Empire.

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<sup>1</sup> In this same shipwreck perished the brilliant young Yale mathematician and astronomer, Alexander Metcalf Fisher. He was the fiance of Catherine Beecher, the gifted sister of Henry Ward Beecher, and it was her worries and beliefs as to the destiny in the next world of her lover, that led to her writing "The Minister's Wooing" and "Old Town Folks."

## X

### TEXAS AND CHAMP D'ASILE

**G**ENERAL Charles Lallemand, although president of the Society for the Cultivation of the Vine and the Olive, never went himself to Alabama. He had a grander project in mind than vineyards and olive trees on the banks of the Tombigbee River. On the 17th of December, 1817, the schooner *Huntress*, under command of General Rigaud, and with a cargo of powder, muskets, sabres and cannon, sailed from Philadelphia for the Gulf of Mexico. This was the expedition which, under the leadership of Charles Lallemand, made a settlement on the Trinity River, Texas, famous ever afterwards as the Champ d'Asile, or Field of Refuge.

All that was back of that expedition will probably never be known. But we can be sure that Lallemand had in mind something more than just another agricultural enterprise, for had that been all, the Alabama settlement would have sufficed. As we shall see, Champ d'Asile was associated with a move against Spain in Mexico, and the rescue of Napoleon, perhaps the making of him or Joseph King of Mexico, or Emperor of all the South Americas.

In August, 1817, the French Minister at Washington, Hyde de Neuville, came into possession of a package addressed to "Monsieur le Comte de Survilliers, pour lui seul." It was sealed with the insignia of the Con-

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vention, the liberty cap on the head of a pike. About this device were the words, "Lakanal, Deputy to the National Convention." There were six documents in the package, all in the same handwriting. De Neuville first took the package to Richard Rush, Acting Secretary of State, and then to the Secretary, John Quincy Adams. Both de Neuville and Adams were satisfied that the documents were in the handwriting of Lakanal, whose name appeared about the seal on the package.

Who was Lakanal? Originally a priest and professor in the Pyrenees, Joseph Lakanal was a member of the National Convention and one of those who voted for the death of Louis XVI. For a time out of favor with Napoleon, he was afterwards made steward of the Lycee Bonaparte, and was the first member elected to the Institut de France. He became Inspector General of Weights and Measures and extended the use of the metric system. Proscribed as a regicide after the second restoration, Lakanal came in 1816 to the United States. He brought with him a letter of introduction to Jefferson from Lafayette. Lafayette speaks of him as "an officer of the University and Inspector General of the Metrical System, who abandons those functions and a handsome treatment to become a settler in the State of Kentucky. He has for several years been in the Representative Assemblies of France, and is going to seek in the United States Liberty, Security and Happiness." Lakanal did not present this letter to Jefferson, but went at once to Kentucky, where he purchased a farm in Gallatin County, on the Ohio River. On June 1, 1816,

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he wrote to Jefferson, enclosing the letter from Lafayette. In his letter to Jefferson, Lakanal says:

“Your Excellency: I have the honor to address you a letter which I had hoped to have the inestimable benefit of presenting to you personally; but events over which I have no control have changed my plans. Here I am upon the banks of the Ohio, upon an estate which I have just purchased: Gallatin County, in the vicinity of the French colony of Vevay. In this pleasant retreat I shall divide my time between the cultivation of my lands and that of letters. I purpose writing the history of the United States, for which I have been collecting materials for the past ten years. The spectacle of a free people supporting with obedience the salutary yoke of law will lessen the grief which I feel in being exiled from my country. She would be happy if your pacific genius had guided her destinies. The ambition of a single man has brought the enraged nations upon us. My country, prostrate, but struck by the wisdom of your administration, wishes for such as you of the new world to raise herself from her ruins. I hope that in writing your history and that of your predecessors, more or less illustrious, the picture will prove the painter, and that, sustained by the beauty of my subject rather than by my own ability, I shall be able to say, ‘I have reared a memorial which shall endure forever.’ Deign, your Excellency, to receive the tender and respectful homage of your very humble and very obedient servant, Lakanal.”

The life of the American nation seemed so short in comparison with the hoary kingdoms of Europe, that

## TEXAS AND CHAMP D'ASILE

a clever man like Lakanal thought it no task to write the history of the Republic when resident in a Kentucky wilderness, and with a thousand miles between him and documentary sources. But Jefferson took him seriously, and replying said: "I am happy that in your retirement the subject to which you propose to avert your mind is an interesting one to us. We have not as yet a good history of our country, since its regenerated government. Marshall's is a mere party diatribe, and Botta's only as good as could have been expected from such a distance. I fear your distance from the depositories of authentic materials will give you trouble. It may, perhaps, oblige you at times to travel in quest of them. Should your researches bring you into this section of the country, and anything here be worth your notice, we shall be glad to receive you as a guest at Monticello and to communicate freely anything possessed here."

Sympathizing with the French scholar on the banks of the Ohio, Jefferson said to him: "The affliction of such a change of scene as that of Paris for the banks of the Ohio, I can well conceive. But the wise man is at home everywhere, and the mind of the philosopher never wants occupation. I weep indeed for your country, because, although it has sinned much (for we impute of necessity to a whole nation the wrongs of which it permits an individual to make it the instrument) yet its sufferings are beyond its sins, and their excesses are now become crimes in those committing them. We revolt against them the more too, when we see a nation equally guilty wielding the scourge instead of writhing under its infliction at the same stake. But this cannot

last. There is a day of judgment for that nation, and of resurrection for yours. My greatest fear is of premature efforts. It is an affliction the less for you, that you now see them from a safe shore; for to remain amidst sufferings which we cannot succor is useless pain."

The intercepted documents which Hyde de Neuville brought to the State Department, and signed by Lakanal, consisted of the following:<sup>1</sup>

1. A letter headed Ultimatum. The letter addresses one as "Your Majesty," and speaks of "Your August Dynasty." The "King is to have nothing to do with the mysterious enterprise," but he is to expect "everything from the goodness of his cause, and the attachment of the brave Spaniards, seconded by all the friends of the cause of nations arrayed against Power imposed by Force."

2. A Report. This is addressed to His Majesty, the King of Spain and the Indies, by his Faithful Subjects, the citizens composing the Napoleonic Confederation. The Report goes on to speak of possible difficulties in passing through the lands of the Indians, and the attacks of the Spaniards. But "at the present moment our success is ascertained, or there is nothing certain on earth." His Majesty, King Joseph, is humbly entreated to put 65,000 francs at the disposal of the Commissioners in the near future.

3. A Petition. The Petition asks Joseph to exercise his rights of sovereignty, distribute crosses, ribbands,

<sup>1</sup> *Bagot to Castlereagh*, 1817, Hudson Lowe Papers, British Museum.

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create marquisates and confer on Lakanal a "Spanish distinction."

4. A vocabulary of the Indians on the Mexican frontier.

5. A list of the Indian tribes in northern Louisiana.

6. A Mysterious Vocabulary, or cipher, made up of forty columns of alphabets, with a Latin word corresponding to each letter. All correspondence is to be headed with the word "Oratio," or Prayer, which will make the correspondence appear to be an abstract of the Lord's Prayer and have a good effect upon the minds of the Spaniards, "who are generally attentive to all religious forms."

It is small wonder that this document created an immense stir in French and Spanish official circles at Washington. When the matter was brought to the attention of President Monroe, he made inquiry of William Lee, formerly United States Consul at Bordeaux and on friendly terms with the Napoleonic exiles. Lee reports that French officers have sounded out Mexican patriots as to a plan to have the French exiles assist them in a rising against Spain; that the two Lallemands and Colonel Galabert are at the head of the scheme and that eighty French officers and one thousand men have already been engaged. The settlement on the Tombigbee River, according to Lee, was part of the general plan, for few of the grants were ever occupied, and the sale of shares of that settlement was to help finance the Mexican expedition. Lee tells Monroe that many of the higher French officers are not in sympathy with the project. In a conversation with Lallemand, that



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general said that all he proposed against the Spanish in Mexico was with the expectation that the United States Government would wish well to a revolution in Spanish America. In this, Lallemand was not mistaken. In a later report Lee writes to Monroe that there is a plan to make a base of the Danish Island, St. Thomas, and thence launch an expedition at Panama into Peru, and another against Mexico.

Thoroughly alarmed, both the Spanish Minister, Onís, and the French, de Neuville, asked Monroe to take vigorous measures to suppress the conspiracy. Adams finally suggested to the President that the documents be published, with a prefatory note by the Secretary of State. Adams wrote the note, and in it said, referring to the documents: "The projects which they disclosed are of a nature to excite in no common degree the merriment as well as the indignation of our readers. That foreigners, scarcely landed on our shores, should imagine the possibility of enlisting large numbers of the hardy Republicans of our Western States and Territories in the ultra-quixotism of invading a territory bordering upon their country, for the purpose of proclaiming a phantom King of Spain and the Indies, is a perversity of delirium, the turpitude of which is almost lost in its absurdity."

Upon further deliberation, Monroe decided not to publish the documents. General Lallemand himself came to Washington and assured Adams that he had no thought of any project contrary to the laws and the peace of the United States. If the Government of the United States regarded him as an object of suspicion, he

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would seek another asylum. Adams reassured him, but told him that his name had been connected with a scheme to put Joseph Bonaparte on the throne of Mexico. As for the mysterious Lakanal documents, Lallemand said he did not know Lakanal and that Joseph Bonaparte had refused to receive the documents, and that that was the cause of their being intercepted. Nicholas Biddle of Philadelphia was asked by Monroe to keep a close watch on the Lallemands and their associates. Biddle reports the sailing of the expedition in December, 1817, and that the Lallemands have gone to New Orleans. Monroe wonders if the conspiracy sketched in the Lakanal documents is not in reality one which is to be undertaken by the Spaniards against the United States. But Biddle thinks that the Lallemands are cruising about in the Gulf of Mexico, waiting to see if Onis, the Spanish Minister, will pay them to go to the aid of the Loyalists in Mexico, or, if not, go on in favor of the rebels.

Whatever the fog of mystery about the Lakanal documents, there is no dispute as to the facts of the Champ d'Asile settlement on the Trinity River. We have seen that General Rigaud sailed on the *Huntress* from Philadelphia, December 17, 1817. In the spring of 1818 Rigaud and his companions, and not a few women, reached Galveston, where the notorious corsair, and the scourge of the English and the Spaniards, Lafitte, had his lair. The French were warmly welcomed by Lafitte and his buccaneers, who assisted them to make a temporary camp. Some of the French, it is true, were alarmed at these allies. One of the expedition speaks

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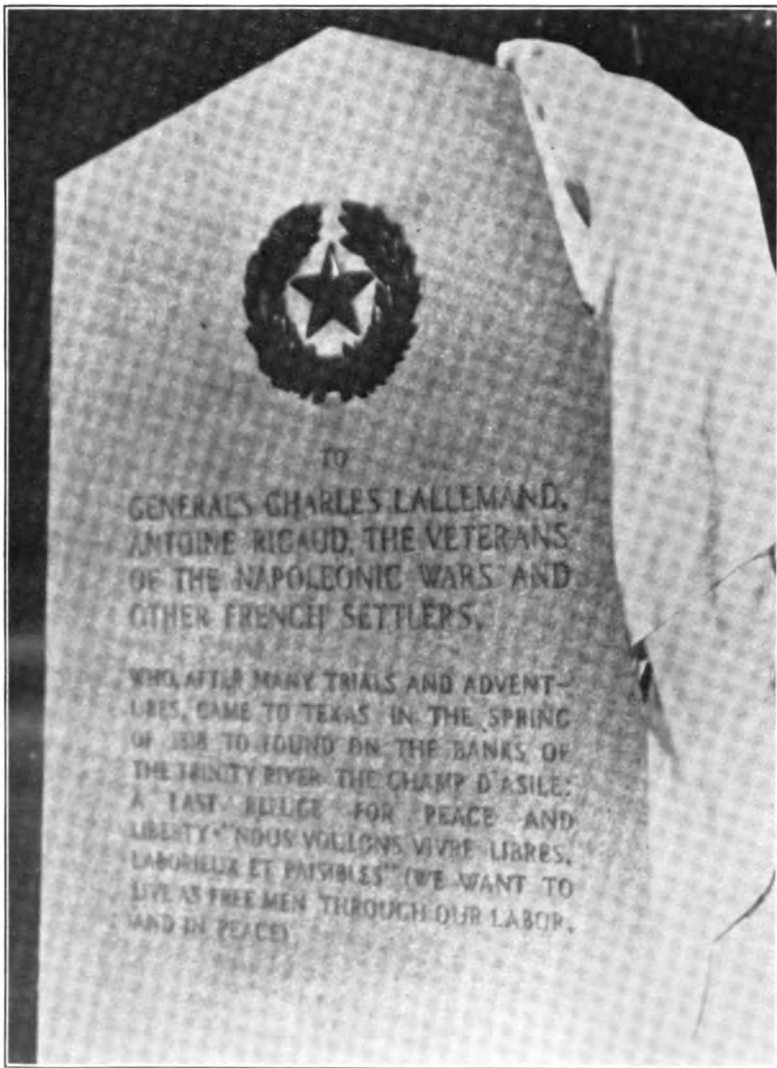
of the followers of Lafitte as "freebooters gathered from among all the nations of the earth and determined to put into practice the traditions of the buccaneers of old. They gave themselves up to the most shameless debauchery and disgusting immorality, and only their chief, by his extraordinary strength and indomitable resolution, had the slightest control over their wild and savage natures. Thanks to him, the pirates became harmless neighbors to the exiles, with whom they often exchanged marks of political sympathy, crying amicably, 'Long live Liberty.'"

General Lallemand arrived at the Galveston camp in March and there was great rejoicing. "Songs of glory were sung. We drank to our fatherland, to our friends, who remained there, to our own good fortune, to the success of our enterprises, and the prosperity of the colony of which we were the founders."<sup>1</sup>

The settlers, to the number of four hundred, set out for the site on the Trinity River chosen by Lallemand; and now began their sorrows and woes. Crossing the bay in boats loaned by Lafitte, the expedition was driven up and down by a gale. Some of the boats were lost and some of the settlers were drowned. Lallemand then divided his company into two divisions, one going with the stores by boat up the Trinity River, the other with him overland. Soon they were lost in the tangles of the Texas wilderness. Out of supplies, they ate greedily of a poisonous plant which resembled lettuce, and scores lay groaning on the ground. An

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<sup>1</sup> Girard, *Adventures of a French Captain, Formerly a Refugee at Camp Asylum*.



CHAMP D'ASILE MONUMENT

Recently dedicated to the French colonists, Trinity River, Texas

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Indian, seeing the men in such distress, was shown the plant they had eaten. Raising his hands to heaven, the savage gave a cry of sorrow, disappeared, and presently returned with some herbs. Under his direction the smitten emigrants drank of his brew of herbs and presently recovered and took up the march.

Six days after they set out from Galveston, Lallemand and his party reached the site for the colony, where they found the boats and the supplies awaiting them. It is described as "An immense uninhabited plain, several leagues in extent and surrounded by a belt of woods down to the river. A fruitful soil, an abundance of tropical plants and flowers, a river as wide as the Seine, but full of alligators, a sky as pure and a climate as temperate as that of Naples—such were the advantages of the place we had chosen and which we now christened Champ d'Asile."

"A river as wide as the Seine, *but full of alligators.*" Ominous words! But at first all went well. Everyone had a mind to work, and when they were not working they were drilling. Lallemand issued a Proclamation in which he said: "Gathered together by a series of similar misfortunes, which at first drove us from our homes and then scattered us abroad in various lands, we have now resolved to seek an asylum where we can remember our misfortunes in order to profit by them. Strong in adversity, we claim the first right given by God to man, that of settling in this country, clearing it, and using the produce which nature never refuses to the patient laborer."

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“We attack no one and harbor no warlike intentions. We ask peace and friendship from all those who surround us and we shall be grateful for the slightest token of their good will. We shall call the new settlement, ‘Champ d’Asile.’ This name, while it will remind us of our misfortunes, will also express the necessity which we have of providing new homes, in a word, of creating a new Fatherland.”

In France a public subscription was opened for the benefit of the colony, and by July, 1819, amounted to one hundred thousand francs. Around their camp fires at night the emigrants in fancy once more followed the Emperor from Spain to Russia and from Germany to Syria. “At such times the settlement of Texas seemed far enough from their thoughts. They were eager to serve under the Mexican flag and to help that country throw off the Spanish yoke, after which they could easily persuade the Mexicans to give them a fast sailer with which to storm the island of St. Helena, carry off the Emperor in triumph, and crown him Emperor of Mexico.”

But dreams of an empire in the realms of Cortez, and dreams of delivering Napoleon from his St. Helena prison, vanished with the approach of an armed force from the Spanish garrison at San Antonio. General Lallemand and his followers said farewell to Champ d’Asile and withdrew to Galveston. There a terrible tropical storm engulfed their island refuge and swept away their last comforts and their last hopes. Some reached New Orleans by the grace of Lafitte, who loaned them a ship; the rest toiled overland through

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the Texas wilds till they reached the Louisiana settlements, where they were received with no little kindness. Through sickness, perils by the sea, perils by the wilderness, and perils among the savages the original company had been reduced to a mere handful.

Rigaud, called a "Martyr of Glory" by Napoleon, who left him a hundred thousand francs, remained in New Orleans, where he died in 1820. Lakanal, who was not with the Texas settlement, but whose name figured so prominently in the plans for the "Napoleonic Confederation," became president of the College of Orleans at New Orleans, the beginning of the University of Louisiana. His service was brief, for there was a popular prejudice against him when it became known that he was an apostate priest. The younger Lallemand wrote at New Orleans a treatise on artillery, the favorite theme of the Napoleonic writers. He afterwards removed to Bordentown, New Jersey, where he died in 1823. Charles Lallemand returned to Europe and fought with the revolutionists in Spain. Returning to America, he conducted a school in New York. The revolution of 1830 made it possible for him to return to France. The last post held by the commander of the veterans at Champ d'Asile, the man who possessed the "sacred fire," was that of military governor of the island of Napoleon's birth.

Napoleon's death in 1821 forever put an end to the dreams and the plots of his followers in America to rescue him from his prison and place another crown on his head. So great had he been to them that it did not seem possible that any prison could hold him. As the

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exiled Jew by the waters of Babylon sighed "when Zion he thought on," and said, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember not thee above my chief joy," so the veterans of Napoleon, wherever fate had driven them, warmed their hearts with the recollection of the fame and glory to which the Emperor had led them. All vanished now, that fame and glory; yet in its afterglow henceforward they trod the path of life.

In his song which was much sung on the boulevards of Paris in 1818, "Champ d'Asile," Beranger does not exaggerate what that glory meant to Napoleon's veterans. Freely translated, and in prose, this is what Beranger imagines the settlers of the Champ d'Asile as saying to the "savages" of Texas:

"A Captain of courageous exiles, craving a refuge afar, thus to distrustful savages spake:

"Europe has banished us. Happy children of the forests, hear the tale of our sorrows and our woes. Savages, we are Frenchmen. Have pity on our Glory.

"Still our Glory makes kings tremble and exiles us from our humble homes, those homes from which we went forth to defend our rights. Twenty kingdoms fell before us, and we were rushing to conquer Peace, which, alas, ever fled before Victory. Savages, we are Frenchmen. Have pity on our Glory.

"In far-off India, England trembled when the songs of our conquering soldiers disturbed the ancient echoes of the Pyramids. Ages upon ages will not suffice to tell



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the story of our deeds. Savages, we are Frenchmen. Have pity on our Glory.

“At last, One Man from out our ranks thus spake to all the earth: ‘I am the god of this world!’ Kings on their thrones heard and fled apace, saluting from afar his sceptre, and dreading the awful wrath of his thunderbolts. Savages, we are Frenchmen. Have pity on our Glory.

“Alas, he fell; and we who followed him upon a hundred battlefields, weeping over our prostrate Fatherland, and praying for its resurrection from the dust, now land upon your distant shores. Savages, we are Frenchmen. Have pity on our Glory.

“The Captain ceased. Then spake the savage chief: ‘Peace, warriors of France! God stills the wildest tempest. Behold our treasures: these shady groves, these fields with plenty blessed, these rivers full of life; all, warriors, all are yours. Upon this Tree of Peace let us engrave these words you speak: Savages, we are Frenchmen. Have pity on our Glory.’

“Thus with words of love and peace was the Field of Refuge set apart. Arise, then, new City of our hopes! Against the fickleness of fortune be thou an everlasting rest! Who knows, but at some distant age, our sons, who shall recount the glory of the past, here may say—‘We are Frenchmen. Have pity on our Glory.’”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Beranger, *Poems*, Lippincott Co., Phila. 1889.

## XI

### MARSHAL NEY AND NORTH CAROLINA

**W**AS Marshal Ney shot by the Bourbons? A plain stone in the Luxembourg Gardens says that he was, December 7, 1815. But another stone in the cemetery of the Third Creek Presbyterian Church, in Rowan County, North Carolina, says that he was not, and that his ashes rest in that quiet churchyard.<sup>1</sup>

Crossing the lawn in front of this church, where the inscription over the doorway reads, "Holiness to the Lord," and passing the little brick Session House where many an anxious applicant for church membership was questioned as to his knowledge of Justification, Sanctification, and the Decrees of God, we enter the churchyard, where the names on the tombstones, the "Macs" of all degrees and kinds, speak of the Scotch-Irish pioneers. In the midst of these graves is a stone on which we read the following epitaph:

In Memory  
of  
Peter Stewart Ney  
A Native of France  
And Soldier of the French Revolution  
under  
Napoleon Bonaparte  
Who departed this life  
November 15, 1846

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<sup>1</sup> The authors pass no verdict on the North Carolina tradition, but merely present the facts which are the basis of the belief in the minds of not a few that Ney escaped execution and came to America.

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All through the Carolinas there are intelligent persons who are fully and firmly convinced that this Peter Stewart Ney, schoolmaster and wanderer, was none other than Michel Ney, Napoleon's Marshal, and that Ney therefore was not executed, as has been generally supposed, on a dark morning of the 7th of December, 1815, in the Luxembourg Gardens, but escaped to America, where he lived as a schoolmaster for thirty-one years, until his death in 1846.

Very soon after Ney's supposed death before the firing squad, stories that he had not been shot began to make their appearance. In his "Memoirs of Napoleon," Bourrienne, the Emperor's secretary, refers to these rumors, and says, "It was impossible to get the public to believe that Ney had really been killed in this manner, and nearly to this day we have had fresh stories recurring of the real Ney being discovered in America."

Michel Ney, son of a cooper, Duke of Elchingen and Marshal of France, was born at Saarlouis, January 10, 1769. He had some schooling, and at an early age, because of his fine hand, was made the town notary. At nineteen years of age he enlisted in a regiment of Hussars at Metz, and in 1794 commanded a special corps of light troops under Kleber. He commanded a division in Hoche's army, fought in the Swiss campaign of Massena and, "On Linden when the sun was low" fought in the battle of Hohenlinden. When Napoleon declared himself Emperor, Ney was made a Marshal of France. After Napoleon's victory over the Russians at Friedland, he bestowed upon Ney the title, "The bravest of the brave." Ney was close to Napoleon all

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through the disastrous Russian campaign, and in the retreat commanded the rear guard. When the last thirty soldiers he had gathered about him at Wilna deserted him, Ney fought his way singlehanded through the town and was the last Frenchman to cross the Niemen. After the fall of the Empire, Ney became an ardent adherent of the Bourbons. When he heard of Napoleon's return from Elba he assured Louis XVIII of his loyalty and boasted that he would bring Napoleon to Paris in an iron cage. But when the two warriors met at Lons-le-Saulnier, old memories and affections overcame Ney, and he went over to Napoleon with all his troops. This marked him as a traitor in the eyes of the Bourbons and the Allies.

At the Battle of Waterloo, Ney led in person and on foot the charge of the Old Guard against the center of the Allied armies. He was arrested on the 5th of August and brought to trial for treason. Among many equally guilty, Ney was selected as the victim to appease the anger of the Allies and the Bourbons. His arrest was a violation of the Treaty, one article of which was that no person should be molested for his political conduct or opinions during the Hundred Days. The attempt to try him by martial law failed because of the refusal of many of his former brothers-in-arms to serve on the court-martial. But the Chamber of Peers found him guilty of treason, and he was sentenced to be shot on the morning of December 7, 1815, near the Observatory in the Luxembourg Gardens.

When they were reading to Ney his sentence and calling off his numerous titles, he broke in, "Why cannot

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you simply call me Michel Ney, now a French soldier, and soon a heap of dust?" As an officer was about to bandage his eyes, Ney stopped him and said, "Are you ignorant that for twenty-five years I have been accustomed to face both ball and bullets?" In a calm voice he cried, "I declare before God and man that I have never betrayed my country. May my death render her happy. *Vive la France!*" Then, placing his hand on his heart, he said, "My comrades, fire on me!" Ten balls pierced him and he fell dead.

The tombstone in the Presbyterian churchyard in North Carolina finds no fault with this history, up to the crash of the muskets of the firing squad in the Luxembourg Gardens. But what is generally supposed to have followed the crash of those muskets, the death of Ney, and his burial in Pere la Chaise Cemetery, it denies. The true history, says this stone in the Carolina churchyard, is that Marshal Ney escaped execution, fled with two companions to Bordeaux and took passage in a vessel sailing for America. His companions, Pasqual Luciani and Count Charles Lefebvre-Desnouettes, left the ship at Philadelphia, but Ney continued on to Charleston, South Carolina. Henceforth, his career was that of a schoolmaster and wandering gentleman. He conducted schools in North and South Carolina, and later prepared young men for Davidson College, which was founded in 1837. There is no doubt that a person passing under the name of Peter Stewart Ney did land in Charleston and became a well known personality in the Carolinas. There is no doubt either that there was a mystery about his past and his personality;

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and no doubt whatever that a great number of his friends and pupils were convinced that Peter Stewart Ney was Napoleon's old Marshal. This Peter Stewart Ney died at the house of Osborne Foard, in Rowan County, in 1846, and was buried in the churchyard of the Third Creek Presbyterian Church.

Is it then possible that this Peter Stewart Ney could have been Napoleon's Marshal? If so, then he must have escaped execution on that December day in the Luxembourg Gardens. This itself is not beyond the bounds of possibility, whatever one may think of probability. Ney was the idol of the French officers and troops, and it would have been possible, through collusion with those in charge of the execution, to go through a mock execution and a mock burial. We know, at least, that many of Ney's comrades did not want him executed; that his execution violated the treaty made by the Allies, safe-guarding the persons of those who took part in the events of the Hundred Days; and it is hard to believe that Wellington, who was in command of the Allies, could have desired the death of Ney. It is a matter of history that the French King feared that Wellington would intervene, and for this reason refused to grant him an audience, much to the indignation of Wellington.

The escape of Ney thus was within the realm of possibilities. The question is, "What sound reason is there to believe that Ney actually did escape execution, and came to America, where he lived and died under the name of Peter Stewart Ney?"

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First of all, there is the testimony of those who had known Ney in France. A man's claim as to his identity, in itself, would not be sufficient. It would have to be corroborated by those who were familiar with him. One of those whose testimony is of interest is Pasqual Luciani. Luciani's grave is in Oakwood Cemetery, Montgomery, Alabama. On the stone is this inscription :

Pasqual Luciani

Born

July 22, 1786

Died

Oct. 21, 1853

A faithful soldier for nine years  
under Napoleon I

Luciani was appointed French Consul at Philadelphia, and afterwards settled in Montgomery, Alabama. Together with Count Charles Lefebvre-Desnouettes, he helped to establish a French colony at Demopolis, Alabama. Luciani's daughter married Herman Arnold, a notable musician of German extraction. When Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as the President of the Confederacy at Montgomery, Alabama, Arnold was asked to play suitable music. At his wife's suggestion, he played "Dixie," which was a transcription of an old German hymn. Arnold had written the music on the wall of the old theater in Montgomery, where he led the orchestra. Dan Emmett, a then noted minstrel, was impressed by the music, and when he returned to his

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home in Ohio, wrote the words of the famous song. Jefferson Davis was highly pleased with the orchestration of Dixie, and complimented Arnold on his production. Henceforth, Dixie was the national anthem of the Confederacy.

In 1926 Arnold's wife, the daughter of Luciani, made an affidavit concerning the history of her father. In this she asserts that her father, together with Lefebvre and Ney, escaped to Bordeaux and came to America. Luciani frequently related to his family the incidents of Ney's escape. When they reached Bordeaux, Luciani was about to give his watch to a peasant as payment for food, but Ney interposed, saying, "Don't give him your watch, just give him the outer case." This watch, minus the outer case, is now in the family of one of Luciani's grandchildren.

Another supposed link, in the chain of evidence that Peter S. Ney in reality was Marshal Ney, is the declaration of Dr. E. M. C. Neyman that he was a son of the Marshal. This Dr. Neyman graduated from Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, in 1836. He practiced medicine at Saltillo, Indiana, where he died January 4, 1909, aged 101 years. He was regarded in Indiana as a remarkable man, not only for his great age, but for his character and intelligence. He frequently declared that he was a son of Marshal Ney, and the inscription on his grave reads: "E. M. Neyman, Son of Marshal Ney of France." In 1876, Dr. Neyman made a visit to Peter S. Ney's grave in the Third Creek Presbyterian Churchyard, and sought permission to remove the remains. This permission was not granted. Before his



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death he spoke of documents which would prove that he was the son of Ney. These documents have never come to light.

Col. J. J. Lehmanowsky, a Pole by birth, and an officer under Napoleon, escaped the firing squad after Waterloo, came to America and became a minister of the Lutheran Church. Sitting one day on the porch of his house at Knightstown, Indiana, he saw a man coming down the street who at once reminded him of Marshal Ney. Knowing that the Marshal had been executed, Lehmanowsky thought that he saw a ghost. But when Ney spoke to him in French he at once knew him to be the Marshal and the next moment had him in his arms.

Questions will be asked as to similarity in appearance, battle wounds, and handwriting. In each instance there is a sufficient similarity to make the identification of Peter Stewart Ney with Marshal Ney possible, although not conclusive. Competent handwriting experts after a study of the handwritings of Marshal Ney and Peter Stewart Ney have expressed the conviction that they are by one and the same person. Among the experts who so testified was David N. Carvalho, whose testimony played so important a part in the trial of Dreyfus.

Ney was noted in the French army as a swordsman. As a youth he was selected by his regiment to challenge the fencing master of another regiment for a real or fancied insult. He wounded him in the hand so that he was unable to follow his profession and was reduced to poverty. But in the day of his prosperity the magnanimous Ney settled on the disabled fencing master a pen-

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sion for life. Scholars of Peter Stewart Ney in North Carolina frequently referred to his great skill in fencing. On one occasion a French fencing master appeared at Ney's school and wished to form a class. The boys told him that they would join a class if he would fence with their teacher. After a few passes, Ney cut the fencing master's beaver hat in two, whereupon he threw down his sword and exclaimed, "Gentleman, you have a master and don't need me."

In 1887, Peter Stewart Ney's grave in the Third Creek Presbyterian Church graveyard was opened in search of evidences of identification of the body with the Marshal's. A silver plate, left in Ney's head after a trepanation, was being sought; but the work was done carelessly and nothing of importance was discovered.

We turn now to the testimony of Peter Stewart Ney himself. He showed the greatest familiarity with the campaigns of Napoleon and recounted with enthusiasm the part played by Marshal Ney, although keeping his identity in the background. Several times, however, when under the influence of drink, he declared himself to be Napoleon's Marshal. On one occasion Thomas F. Houston found Ney lying intoxicated in the snow near his father's house. Houston had Ney lifted out of the snow and placed across his horse's shoulders, in front of a negro boy. Awakening from his stupor, Ney exclaimed, "What! put the Duke of Elchingen on a horse like a sack? Let me down!" With that, he struck the negro, got down from the horse, and walking a few paces to the fence, leaned on the rails, weeping bitterly

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at his humiliation.<sup>1</sup> A daughter of a Colonel John Swift Meroney remembered having heard her father say that he had been a pupil of Peter Stewart Ney, and that sometimes, when under the influence of liquor, he would thrill his hearers by his grand soldierly bearing and his orders for action—to the Old Guard.

In the vaults of the library of Davidson College is a history of Napoleon by L'Ardesche, with an interesting inscription by Peter Stewart Ney. On one of the pages is a portrait of Marshal Ney. It is one of the characteristic portraits of the period, showing Ney in full uniform, with the right hand thrust in the breast of his coat. On the upper left hand corner of this page, Peter Stewart Ney drew a bust of himself and wrote under it, "Ney, by himself." Under the other likeness he wrote: "He was bald. This is not a true likeness, but I am not surprised at it. I have not read the book. I have only turned the leaves."

On several occasions Peter Stewart Ney referred to the circumstances of his escape from the firing squad in the Luxembourg Gardens. When he walked by the file of soldiers, who had belonged to his old command, he whispered to them, "Aim high!" His familiar command to them in battle had always been, "Aim low—at the heart." Ney had secreted in his bosom a small sack filled with a reddish fluid. It is a well certified fact that before he gave the order to fire, Ney placed his hand under his coat and over his heart. According to what he related to Thomas F. Houston and Valentine

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<sup>1</sup> Smoot, *Ney Before and After Execution*, p. 438. Queen City Printing Co., Charlotte, N. C. 1929.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

Stirewalt, scholars in his North Carolina school, Ney, when he gave the command "Fire!" struck the sack with his right hand and the liquid spurted out on his face and clothes, as if the blood came from his wounds. He fell to the ground, was pronounced dead, and his body delivered to his friends for interment.

Col. John A. Rogers, one of Ney's pupils in his school at Florence, S. C., related that when a boy brought a newspaper to the schoolroom telling of the death of Napoleon at St. Helena in 1821, Ney fell to the floor in a faint. The next morning he was found in his bedroom with his throat cut. When resuscitated, he was asked by Col. Benjamin Rogers why he had attempted to take his life. He answered, "I was overcome by my troubles, Colonel. It was a cowardly act; but I lost control of myself. I had set my heart upon returning to France and my family, and when I read of the death of Napoleon I was overcome with despair."

In 1832, when he was living at the home of Thomas Foster, near Mocksville, North Carolina, Ney read in a newspaper an account of the death of Napoleon's son, "l'Aiglon," Francis Joseph Napoleon. The tidings overwhelmed him with grief, and so distraught was he that his friends watched him day and night lest he should put an end to his life. This immense sorrow and distress is understandable if he were indeed Marshal Ney and saw in the death of Napoleon's son the end of the Napoleonic dynasty.

When Peter Stewart Ney was on his deathbed in the home of Osborne Foard, on a November day in 1846,

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Dr. Matthew Lock, his physician and a former pupil, said to the dying man, "Mr. Ney, you have but a short time to live, and it is my duty to tell you." Ney responded, "I know that, Matthew. I'm not afraid to die. I believe in the Christian religion." Dr. Locke then said, "You know you have lived among us a long time in great mystery, and as you are about to leave us forever, will you please tell me who you really are?" With that Ney raised his head and said, "I am Marshal Ney. I am Marshal Ney of France."

Dying soldiers have often called by name their comrades in arms. When he lay dying in the Lacy house after Chancellorsville, Stonewall Jackson cried out, "Order A. P. Hill to prepare for action!" In his last hours at Lexington, Lee was murmuring orders to this same corps commander, A. P. Hill. On his deathbed Ney exclaimed, "Bessieres is dead, and the Old Guard is defeated. Now let me die!" Bessieres was one of Napoleon's marshals and commanded the Guard Cavalry in the retreat from Moscow. He was killed by a musket ball on the evening before the battle of Lutzen, May 2, 1813.

On his deathbed Peter Stewart Ney told Foard, in whose house he was living, that in his writing desk he would find a manuscript which would "tell all and startle the world." The desk was broken open and the manuscript was found, but being written in shorthand, no one could read it. Some time afterward, one Pliny Miles, a lecturer on tour in North Carolina, secured from Foard the loan of the manuscript, promising that

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he would get some French scholar in New York to decipher it, and that he would send back the original with the transcription. After a series of communications between Foard in North Carolina and Miles in New York, there was silence on the part of Miles and nothing more was heard of the manuscript. Should this lost manuscript ever be found, it may throw light on the mystery of that grave under the trees in the little Presbyterian churchyard in North Carolina.<sup>1</sup>

It is not impossible that Peter Stewart Ney was none other than the Bravest of the Brave, Napoleon's Marshal. Conclusive proof, however, probably will never be forthcoming. If the grave of Marshal Ney in Pere la Chaise Cemetery could be opened, that would settle the question; but it is unlikely that the grave ever will be opened. If Peter Stewart Ney was not Marshal Ney, who was he? This much we know, at least, that whoever he was, he was a man of genius, a man who had passed through great world events, and also a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. His sorrows, his struggles, and his hopes are summed up in the two verses he wrote in the autograph album of Anne Stirewalt of Catawba, North Carolina, September 1, 1842. On the page is a picture showing the sail of a ship tossed on an angry sea, with the moon appearing through the clouds. Above and below this picture of the night storm are the following lines:

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<sup>1</sup> In the introduction to LeGette Blythe's recent book, *Marshal Ney—a Dual Life*, Dr. Frank Graham, president of the University of North Carolina, writes that Richard F. Little, of Richmond County, N. C., is deciphering recovered notes which may solve the mystery of Peter Stewart Ney.

MARSHAL NEY AND NORTH CAROLINA

*“Hope shall not die, though tempest tossed,  
With foresail rent and mainmast lost;  
The ship still darts along the main,  
And hopes the distant port to gain.*

*“Thus man through life’s temptestuous waves,  
The fury of misfortune braves;  
While hope sustains his Solitude,  
To struggle for Beatitude.”<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> *Ney Before and After Execution*, p. 228. Queen City Printing Co., Charlotte, N. C. 1929.

## XII

### NAPOLEON AND THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

**F**ROM this day the United States take their place among the powers of the first rank."

That was the comment of Robert Livingston, then United States Ambassador to France, as he signed the Treaty, April 30, 1803, which transferred the vast territory known as Louisiana from France to the United States for the trifling sum of \$15,000,000. Thus it came about that, indirectly, Napoleon Bonaparte was one of the great builders of the United States as we know it today. It is true, of course, that if Napoleon had not sold Louisiana to the United States, England would have taken it from him, but it by no means follows that if England had secured that vast territory it would now be under the flag of the United States.

The French first settled in the Louisiana Territory at Biloxi, now Mississippi, in 1699. Afterwards the Mississippi Company was granted the monopoly of all trade with Louisiana for twenty-five years. This company made an effort to introduce white settlers and also negroes. Germans were settled in Arkansas. In 1732 the Mississippi Company resigned Louisiana to the French Crown. By an act passed at Fontainebleau, November 3, 1762, the King of France ceded to the King of Spain the "whole country known as Louisiana, together with New Orleans and the island on which the said city is



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situated." On November 13, at the Escorial, the King of Spain accepted the cession of Louisiana by France. Spain did not take full possession until 1769. In 1794 Spain, hard pressed by the French and the British, made a treaty with the United States whereby Spain recognized the Mississippi River as the western boundary of the United States, separating it from Louisiana, and the free navigation of the Mississippi was granted to citizens of the United States for three years, with the right to bring their merchandise to the port of New Orleans and export it without paying any duty.

Three years later, the Spanish governor of Louisiana refused the right to the United States longer to use New Orleans as a place of deposit and export. This caused great excitement in the United States and there were proposals in Congress to seize by force the whole of Louisiana. This might have been done had not Spain restored the right of export.

Meanwhile, Napoleon Bonaparte had become First Consul. Ambitious to re-establish the Colonial Empire of France, Napoleon secured from Spain the retrocession of Louisiana in 1800, and had formed a plan for taking immediate possession of New Orleans with an armed expedition. Livingston, the American Minister in France, advised the United States Government to this effect. President Jefferson realized at once the threat and menace France would be to the United States if in possession of New Orleans and the Louisiana territory, and instructed Livingston to do what he could to secure from France a portion of Louisiana, especially the island of New Orleans.

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Under date of April 18, 1802, in a letter to Livingston, Jefferson gives expression to his great anxiety. He says: "The cession of Louisiana and the Floridas to France works most sorely on the United States. It completely reverses all the political relations of the United States and will form a new epoch in our political course. Of all nations of any consideration, France is the one which hitherto has offered the fewest points on which we could have any conflict of right. From these causes we have ever looked to her as our natural friend. Her growth, therefore, we viewed as our own; her misfortunes, ours. There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market, and from its fertility it will ere long yield more than half of our whole produce and contain more than half of our inhabitants. France, placing herself in that door, assumes to us the attitude of defiance. Spain might have retained it quietly for years. Her pacific dispositions, her feeble state, would induce her to increase our facilities there. . . . The day that France takes possession of New Orleans fixes the sentence which is to restrain her forever within her low water mark. It seals the union of two nations who in conjunction can maintain exclusive possession of the ocean. From that moment we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation." Then he goes on to say that if France is not willing to hand over Louisiana as a whole, perhaps she would be willing to cede the island of New Orleans and the Floridas.

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It was to secure the Floridas and New Orleans that Livingston, assisted later by James Monroe, carried on his negotiations. To Livingston's great surprise, Marbois, Bonaparte's representative, said that Napoleon would treat for the sale of the whole of Louisiana. Napoleon was not ignorant of the value of the Louisiana territory; but his colonial schemes had met with disaster in Santo Domingo, and he was persuaded that he could not hold New Orleans against the British fleet, if, as seemed imminent then, the peace of Amiens should be ended and war break out between France and England. "Irresolution and indetermination," said Napoleon, "are no longer in season. I renounce Louisiana. It is not only New Orleans that I will cede; it is the whole colony without reservation. I know the price of what I abandon, and I have sufficiently proved the importance that I attach to this province, since my first diplomatic act with Spain had for its object the recovery of it. I renounce it with the greatest regret. To attempt to retain it would be folly."<sup>1</sup>

A few days after the treaty of cession was signed, Napoleon said to his negotiator, Marbois, "I would that France could enjoy this unexpected capital, that it may be employed in works beneficial to her marine. This accession of territory strengthens forever the power of the United States, and I have just given to England a maritime rival that will sooner or later humble her pride."

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<sup>1</sup> *Harper's Encyclopaedia of U. S. History*, vol. v, p. 483. Harper and Brothers, N. Y. 1902.

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Jefferson was somewhat troubled by this the greatest achievement of his administration, and described by Henry K. Adams as the greatest diplomatic success recorded in American history. He did not believe that the Constitution gave the Federal Government the right to acquire or incorporate territory and favored a submission to the states of a Constitutional amendment, but finally yielded to the advice of his political friends that no amendment was necessary, and that any delay in the settlement would be perilous. In a letter to Wilson C. Nicholas, September 7, 1803, Jefferson wrote: "I confess, then, I think it important in the present case to set an example against broad construction by appealing for new power for the people. If, however, our friends should think differently, certainly I shall acquiesce with satisfaction; confiding that the good sense of our country will correct the evil of construction when it shall produce ill effects."

Thus for the sum of \$15,000,000 an empire was purchased and added to the territory of the United States. Out of that territory, five times the area of continental France, were carved, in time, the states of Louisiana, Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Oklahoma, and most of Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. The shadow of the Bonapartes is deep upon the domain of the United States of America.

### XIII

#### NAPOLEON'S AMERICAN SON

**R**UMOR attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte not a few illegitimate children. Among these, chiefly sons, who were commonly spoken of as the offspring of Napoleon, and who so declared themselves, were Bloch Bonaparte, of Bordeaux, where the boys on the street, struck with his resemblance to Napoleon, would shout after him, "When are you going to mount your white horse and ride to Paris?"; also a Colonel Duval, who, according to the report, even managed to get to St. Helena, where he served in the kitchens at Longwood as an under cook until expelled by Hudson Lowe, who sent him on an American brig to Rochelle. From Rochelle, Duval went to Baltimore. There, when on August 1, 1821, he heard of the death of his father, the Emperor, he drowned himself in the sea. Napoleon's first-born was said to have been a half black son, his child by a woman of color when he was in Egypt. Germany, too, had its backdoor Bonaparte in the person of Mlle. Falkenberg, who lived at Lindenthal, near Cologne, and was supposed to have been born in the Archbishop's Palace at Cologne.

Whatever may be the lack of historical proof as to many of the alleged children of Napoleon, there is no doubt as to Leon, the son of Napoleon and Eleonore Denuelle de la Plaigne. A beautiful girl, Eleonore Denuelle was at Madame Campan's school at the time

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Napoleon's sister, Caroline, and Josephine's daughter, Hortense, were there. A young widower, a Quartermaster captain in the army, Francois Revel, saw her one night at the theatre and fell violently in love with her. They were married on January 15, 1805. After a brief honeymoon, Revel suddenly found his lovely young wife cold to his affections and advances. Shortly after this Revel was arrested on a charge of peculation. It was then known in the intimate Bonaparte circles that Napoleon was having an affair with Eleonore. Their son was born December 13, 1806, and named Leon, after the second part of the father's first name. He was brought up under the name of Macon, a French general who had died of his war wounds in 1805.

Napoleon, then in Poland, was vastly delighted at the news brought him by a courier of Caroline Bonaparte that he was the father of a son by Eleonore Denuelle. It removed all doubt as to his ability to beget children, and played an important part in the subsequent divorce of Josephine. As he grew to boyhood Leon became the living image of his illustrious father. Portraits of him taken when he was well along in life reveal a remarkable resemblance.

Leon made himself a pest to the brothers and other legitimate relatives of Napoleon, constantly soliciting funds from them. He was repelled by Joseph Bonaparte, and by Napoleon III when he was a refugee in London. Leon challenged his cousin to fight a duel, but Louis spurned him. However, when Louis became Napoleon III, he paid Leon an annuity to compensate

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him for the unpaid legacy left him by the will of his father when he died at St. Helena. Thoroughly disreputable, Leon died in poverty at Paris, April 14, 1881, surrounded by portraits of the Emperor and Eleonore Denuelle.<sup>1</sup> He had several children. One son was for a time in the United States, and returned to Europe as a leading man in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Shows.

At about the same time that Napoleon received the glad tidings in Poland that he was the father of a son by Eleonore Denuelle, he met the lovely Polish girl, Countess Walewska. The scruples of the beautiful Countess were overcome by the urging of Polish statesmen that if she gave herself to Napoleon she would thereby render a patriotic service to Poland. Of this alliance was born Count Alexander Florin Walewski,<sup>2</sup> who, in striking contrast to his half-brother, Leon, rose to eminence in France and was Minister of Foreign Affairs under Napoleon III.

Still another son of Napoleon whose paternity has been accepted by a noted historian was John Gordon Bonaparte. In his life of Napoleon, August Fournier, Viennese professor, thus refers to John Gordon Bonaparte: "Count Alexander Florin Walewski, Minister of Foreign Affairs under Napoleon III, was born May 4, 1810. He was not the only son of the Emperor born out of wedlock. We know certainly of the following:

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<sup>1</sup> Emil Ludwig, in his *Napoleon*, page 664, writes, apparently without authority, "Leon was to end his ne'er do well life in America as the husband of a cook."

<sup>2</sup> A half-brother of Count Alexander Walewski, Count Nicholas Walewski, had a son, Alexander Ziwet, who took his mother's name. He was a professor at the University of Michigan and died about ten years ago.

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a Count Leon, born in 1806, whose mother, Frau Revel, belonged in the suite of Princess Caroline; also a certain Devienne, born in 1802 at Lyons; and, finally, a Mr. Gordon. Gordon Bonaparte died in 1886 at San Francisco, as a watchmaker."

Buried in an obscure corner of Laurel Hill Cemetery in San Francisco, John Gordon, if indeed begotten by the Emperor, was the youngest of the sons of Napoleon. The accounts of John Gordon all allege that he was begotten by the Emperor at St. Helena. There is a disagreement, however, when it comes to the person of Mrs. William Gordon, wife of an Edinburgh watchmaker, who had a housekeeper's post at St. Helena. Most of the accounts of John Gordon make this woman his mother; but one account names a certain "Princess" Louise as the mother, and says that the infant was given into the keeping of the Scotch housekeeper. But whether his real mother, or a mother by adoption, this Scotch housekeeper took the child to Edinburgh, where she married William Gordon, who gave his name to Napoleon's son and taught him the trade of watchmaker. The child's appearance and bearing made his resemblance to Napoleon unmistakable.

John Gordon married a Martha Jones, of London. Afterwards he came to the United States and settled at New London, Conn., where he established himself as a successful and well known watchmaker. The New London Directory of 1853-54 gives his place of business as 45 State Street and his home at 28 Bradley Street. The directory of 1855-56 lists the firm of Gordon and





JOHN GORDON BONAPARTE

Taken in Scotland, 1871, there is noted a striking resemblance to Napoleon

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Bennett, Jewellers, Cor. State and Main, and the home of John Gordon at 1 Jay Street. His last appearance in the New London Directory was for the year 1870-71. Gordon was spoken of, too, as the inventor of a Gordon watch, and of the first fog-horn used on Long Island Sound. Financial difficulties led him to leave New London and migrate to California. He arrived in San Francisco about the year 1874. There he was for a time associated with Tucker's Jewelry Shop, then at Sutter and Market Streets. He afterwards established his own business on Kearney Street. His residence was on Sacramento Street, near Clay.

John Gordon Bonaparte rarely referred to his paternity; but his family and friends knew the secret. His portrait shows a Napoleonic likeness, and that of one of his five children, a daughter, to an extraordinary degree. He lost a fortune in his business, and was reimbursed to the amount of \$500,000 by his closest friend, Darius Ogden Mills, pioneer California financier, with the injunction that he was not to waste it in stock gambling. This Gordon at once proceeded to do. He died in 1886 and was buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery in a grave that was not identified until 1913.

Every year thousands upon thousands go to the Hotel des Invalides, and pausing under the golden dome, look down upon the magnificent sarcophagus of the Emperor Napoleon, with the shot-torn standards of Marengo, Austerlitz and Jena standing as sentinels about his resting place. Is it possible that in an obscure grave in a lonely corner of Laurel Hill Cemetery in San Fran-

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

cisco sleeps John Gordon Bonaparte, watchmaker and jeweler, the last begotten of the conqueror's sons? <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The San Francisco *Morning Call* for December 12, 1885, mentions the death of a John Gordon, a native of Edinburgh, Scotland, aged 58 years, and asks the New London, Connecticut, papers to copy. If this is the supposed son of Napoleon, he would have been born six years after Napoleon's death. Other records and traditions give Lone Mountain Cemetery, the Laurel Hill Cemetery, and the Masonic Cemetery as his burial place. The Masonic Cemetery Association of San Francisco records the interment in the Old Masonic Cemetery of a John Gordon, aged 59, who died December 10, 1885. In this conflict of records, the one arresting fact is the undoubted and remarkable likeness of John Gordon to Napoleon Bonaparte. August Fournier, who places John Gordon on the same plane as the completely authenticated Count Leon and Count Walewski, is a historian of high standing; but he gives no references or authorities for his statement.

## XIV

### AMERICAN PLOTS TO RESCUE NAPOLEON <sup>1</sup>

**W**HEN a young sub-lieutenant at Auxonne in 1788, Napoleon, making some notes about English possessions, entered in his copy-book these words, "St. Helena." This entry was followed by a blank page. Twenty-seven years later Fate filled in the blank space.

St. Helena was one of the places under consideration by the Congress of Vienna when Napoleon was sent to Elba in 1814. The Tower of London, Dumbarton Castle on the Clyde, and Fort St. George in Scotland were some of the spots suggested as a prison for the Emperor after Waterloo. England was determined there should be no repetition of the escape from Elba and the Hundred Days. "The best place," wrote Liverpool to Castlereagh, "would be one far removed from Europe. The Cape of Good Hope or St. Helena would seem to serve the purpose best." When word came to Napoleon on board the *Bellerophon* that he was to be banished to St. Helena he exclaimed, "St. Helena! The very idea fills me with horror. To be relegated for life to an island within the tropics, at a vast distance from any continent, cut off from all communication with the world, and from all that it holds that is dear to my heart. That is worse than the iron cage of Tamerlane."

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<sup>1</sup> Careful search by the authors in the Hudson Lowe papers in the British Museum resulted in the discovery of facts about these plots never before made public.

## THE BONAPARTES IN AMERICA

On Sunday morning, the 14th of October, 1815, Napoleon came on deck and saw rising out of the sea before him an immense lava rock, with angry waves breaking against it. St. Helena was a masterpiece of isolation. To the east the nearest mainland to St. Helena was Africa, 1140 miles away. To the west the ocean rolled for 1800 miles before it washed the shores of Brazil. Yet even this remoteness of the island was not considered a sufficient safeguard from an attempt to rescue Napoleon, for one of the first things Admiral Cockburn did was to seize Ascension Island, 1200 miles north of St. Helena, and then the island of Tristan d'Acunha, a mere spot in the lonely Atlantic, hundreds of miles to the south. Such was to be the prison of him "who had cast a doubt on all past glory and made future glory impossible."

Was the escape of Napoleon from St. Helena ever a possibility? The policy pursued by the British Government shows that it always took into consideration the chance of an attempt to rescue Napoleon. The tiny island was garrisoned with as many as 3,000 troops; fast sailing cruisers circled the island day and night; no one was allowed abroad after nine in the evening. Napoleon's presence at Longwood had to be reported twice daily, and after nine in the evening sentinels were posted in the gardens of the estate. Sir Hudson Lowe had devised an elaborate system of communication. Every mountain and every high hill was a signal station. One flag meant, "General Bonaparte is at Longwood House;" two flags, "He has just crossed the four-mile limit;" three flags, "He has just crossed the twelve-mile

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limit with escort;" four flags, "He has just crossed the twelve-mile limit without an escort;" five flags, "He has disappeared." When this signal appeared, a blue flag was to be displayed and the troops and the ships were to assemble immediately at their stations. Lowe issued orders that failure to report any plot to escape would be regarded as complicity in it, and by an Act of Parliament, April 11, 1816, death "without benefit of clergy" was to be the punishment for any one who was convicted of an attempt at rescue. Talking one day with Sir Pulteney Malcolm, Napoleon pointed to a sentinel on a distant hill and exclaimed, "What you are doing at St. Helena is absurd, ridiculous. Look here, that soldier on the tip of the rock over there, what good is he? Do you fear that I shall escape? Could even a bird escape?"

Confined and guarded by a small army and navy on a bit of volcanic rock twenty-eight miles in circumference, it would indeed seem that escape was altogether impossible. But over against this there must be placed the fact of Napoleon's desire to escape, the ardent longing of his friends, the fervent wish of thousands of admirers in all countries of the world, and last but by no means least, the potent influence of money. Before he left the island one of Napoleon's chief companions, General Gaspard Gourgaud, had the following conversation with Baron Sturmer, the Austrian Commissioner at St. Helena.

Sturmer: "Does he speak sometimes of his future?"

Gourgaud: "He is convinced that he will not stay at St. Helena."

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Sturmer: "Do you think he can escape from St. Helena?"

Gourgaud: "He has had opportunity ten times, and he still has it at this moment."

Sturmer: "I confess that does not seem impossible."

Gourgaud: "What is not possible when one has millions at one's disposal? He can escape alone and go to America whenever he wishes."

When he reached London, Gourgaud had a talk with Marquis D'Osmond, French Ambassador. To Gourgaud's declaration that it was possible for Napoleon to escape, the Ambassador commented, "Easily said." "No," replied Gourgaud, "easily done, and in all kinds of ways. Supposing, for instance, that Napoleon were placed in one of the barrels that are sent to Longwood full of provisions and returned to Jamestown every day without being inspected. Do you believe it impossible to find a captain of a craft who for a bribe of one million francs would undertake to carry the barrel on board a vessel ready to sail?"

Another plan proposed was to disguise the Emperor as one of the Chinamen who carried the garbage from Longwood's kitchens to a distant ravine. The sentinels saw the coolies do this every day and their suspicions would not have been aroused. Moreover, since they did not know Napoleon by sight, they would not have been able to recognize him in this disguise. On the way to the shore Napoleon was to change from his coolie disguise to that of a sailor, and at a little cove embark in a small boat which was carrying barrels of water to a ship in the offing. When inquiry for the Emperor would be

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made at Longwood, the answer was to have been that he was not well, and to fortify this deception, a request was to have been made for an unusual supply of water for the warm baths of which he was known to be so fond.

There is little reason to doubt that such a plan of escape would have been successful, had Napoleon consented to the humiliation which it involved. It is certain that he never would have done so. At Rochefort the Emperor had declined a proposal that he be hidden in casks being loaded on a vessel bound for the United States. The coolie disguise was unthinkable.

Discussing one day with Montholon some of these plans of escape and how he might get away from "this damnable country," Napoleon said, "It is all very alluring, alas! it is foolishness. I must die here, or France must come and deliver me."

Napoleon told his doctor, O'Meara, that his chances of escape were five out of a hundred, and on several occasions he let drop remarks which created the impression that he regarded his escape as impossible. These remarks filtered through to Sir Hudson Lowe and the English authorities, and it may well have been that the friends of Napoleon were trying to create in the minds of his English guards the idea that Napoleon and all his companions regarded an attempt at escape as preposterous, while all the time they hoped for it and discussed it. On the whole, we may conclude that while escape would have been a most difficult thing, it was quite within the bounds of possibility. An important fact to remember is the friendly attitude towards Napoleon



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on the part of the natives of the island and of even the troops stationed there.

When in 1822 Sir Hudson Lowe sued Dr. O'Meara after the publication of his book, "Napoleon in Exile," Major Poppleton of the 53rd Regiment, and two captains and two lieutenants, not only testified against Lowe, but attacked his administration. The troops on the island had a great admiration for their prisoner. On one occasion, when Napoleon expressed astonishment that a young Irish lieutenant, Fitzgerald, had the drums beaten and presented arms as he passed by, the officer exclaimed, "Yes, certainly we salute you, all of us, Monsieur l'Empereur." When the officers and soldiers of the 53rd Regiment were leaving St. Helena after a stay of two years, seeing the Emperor for the last time, they shouted, "Hurrah for the Emperor!" It seems well established also that Dr. O'Meara when he quit St. Helena had won over several of the officers of the garrison to his project for the release of Napoleon. When Balcombe returned to England he paid, upon Napoleon's order, the debts of two officers, amounting to six thousand francs. The inference is that these officers were in the plan to deliver the Emperor.<sup>1</sup>

One of the first to plot for the rescue of Napoleon was his physician, Barry O'Meara. After a quarrel with Sir Hudson Lowe, O'Meara left St. Helena and went to London. There he made serious accusations against Lowe, charging that Lowe had tried to persuade him to "get rid" of Napoleon. He was dismissed from the

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<sup>1</sup> Brice, Medecin General, *Les Espoirs de Napoleon*, p. 181. Payot, Paris.

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British service, and then turned his attention to the project of accomplishing the release of the Emperor. He was in correspondence with Napoleon's mother and Cardinal Fesch, Napoleon's uncle. Napoleon's mother was willing to invest in the project, but would pay only when the rescue was an accomplished fact; and Cardinal Fesch told O'Meara that if it pleased God that his nephew should be delivered, he would be delivered "without any human combinations."

One of O'Meara's co-conspirators was Maceroni, a former officer in Murat's army and a refugee in London. Maceroni was later the inventor of a steam carriage. Steamboats were then just coming into use and Maceroni wrote concerning the plot to rescue Napoleon, "The mighty powers of steam were mustered to our assistance." O'Meara also had enlisted the help of a former smuggler, Johnstone. Johnstone had escaped from Newgate Prison, and at the battle of Copenhagen was a pilot for Nelson's ships. He had once planned to kidnap Napoleon at Flushing and deliver him to a British cruiser. As early as that, St. Helena was mentioned as the island to which Napoleon might be taken. Johnstone commenced the construction of a submarine craft on the Thames for accomplishing the rescue of Napoleon; but his operations aroused suspicion and the craft was seized by the government. Johnstone's craft was to be so constructed that it could be sunk or raised by manipulating weights. His plan was to sink the boat by day, thus eluding the British cruisers, and then approach the island by night.

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Every wind that blew over St. Helena carried with it some rumor of an attempt to rescue Napoleon. Many of these were, of course, wild imaginations and absurd fantasies. It was in the two Americas that the serious plots were conceived and developed for the release of the Emperor from his island prison. We know that a delegation from Mexico came to Bordentown, New Jersey, and offered Joseph Bonaparte, former King of Spain, the throne of Mexico. This was regarded, particularly by the French, as a scheme associated with the plot to rescue Napoleon. The French Ambassador at Washington, Baron Hyde de Neuville, linked the insurrectionary movements in Mexico and in Brazil with schemes to effect the rescue of Napoleon. There is no doubt about such association in the case of Brazil. As to Mexico the facts are not so clear. To one of the French Ministers, de Neuville wrote, "Where should we be if this marvellous man reached Mexico to find it already conquered?"

Until Napoleon went on board the *Bellerophon* and gave himself up to the English, his friends and family all took it for granted that he would go to the United States. Passports had been promised him and two French frigates had been put at his disposal. Lying in his hot bath, where he spent so many hours during the days of indecision and vacillation after Waterloo, Napoleon one day said to Lavalette at the Elysee, "Where am I going? Why not America?"

"Because Moreau went there!" answered Lavalette.

Moreau was a name Napoleon hated. When he was banished from France for alleged complicity in a royal-

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ist plot against Napoleon's life, Moreau went to America and lived for a time at Morrisville, Pa. Returned to Europe, he joined the armies of the Allies, and was fatally wounded by a cannon ball as he stood by the side of the Russian Czar at the battle of Dresden. It was said that Napoleon himself aimed the gun that took Moreau's life. When a dog with Moreau's name on its collar and with Moreau's boot in his mouth came into the French lines, Napoleon exulted over these tokens of the death of Moreau and felt that his star was again in the ascendancy.

But in spite of Lavalette's suggestion, Moreau's brief exile in Pennsylvania had not spoiled the United States as a place of refuge for the Emperor. Lucien, now reconciled to Napoleon, wrote to his sister Pauline a few days after Waterloo, June 26, 1815; "You will have known of the recent disaster to the Emperor, who has just abdicated in favor of his son. He will depart for the United States of America, where all of us will join him." In similar tone Cardinal Fesch, Napoleon's uncle, wrote to Pauline: "Lucien set off yesterday for London in order to get passports for the rest of the family. Joseph and also Jerome will wait for their passports. Lucien has left here his second daughter, who has just arrived from England; she will set off again in a few days. I foresee the United States will be the end of the chase."

The British frigates, both on the French coast and off New York, had been warned to watch for Napoleon in his attempted flight to the United States. The frigates which afterwards stopped or pursued the ship on which

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Joseph went to America were looking of course for Napoleon. The rumor of Napoleon's coming to the United States reached America before it was known that he had been condemned to St. Helena. A Colonel King of Somerset County, Maryland, according to popular report at the time, had sent a ship to La Rochelle to bring Napoleon to America. He was to be brought to Accomac County, Virginia, where Stephen Girard was believed to have selected a residence for him. On the strength of the rumor that Napoleon had escaped to America, Colonel King marched the local Maryland militia down to the Virginia line to greet him.

It was fortunate for Napoleon's fame that he did not escape to the United States; but there is no doubt that had he done so, he would have received a warm welcome, although some of the more thoughtful of our citizens might have had serious misgivings. Napoleon himself expressed regret that he had not gone to the United States. "In America," he said, "I should have established the center of a new French fatherland. Within a year I should have had sixty thousand men grouped around me. It would have been the most natural place of refuge—a land of vast expanse, where a man can live in freedom. If I had a fit of the blues, I should have mounted a horse, ridden hundreds of miles and enjoyed travel with the ease of a private individual lost amid the crowd."

As long as Napoleon lived, the possibility of his escape to the United States was in the minds of all his old officers and followers, many of whom had already found asylum there. Philadelphia was the scene of the chief

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plot in the United States for the release of Napoleon. It was devised by French refugees in and about Philadelphia and was to be carried out in cooperation with plotters in Brazil. Two Americans involved in the plot were a Captain Jesse Hawkins and Joshua Wilder. The knowledge of the conspiracy was communicated to George Robertson, the British Consul at Philadelphia, who in turn sent the documents to Charles Bagot, the British Minister at Washington. These documents, or copies of them, can be seen today in the Hudson Lowe papers in the British Museum.

The first appearance of the plot is in a letter addressed by Hawkins to James Carret, the secretary of Joseph Bonaparte, then living at Bordentown, New Jersey. In this letter of May 29, 1817, Carret writes that the Count of Surveilliers (the name Joseph Bonaparte took in America) is ignorant of any interviews Hawkins may have had with "some persons," and that he has made it a rule "not to interfere in the business alluded to." This "business" had to do with plans for the release of Napoleon. The next we hear of Captain Hawkins is in a letter written to him from New York, July 24, 1817, by one Samuel Burrell. Burrell tells Hawkins of his arrival in New York from Baltimore, where he had received a draft on a house in Boston for \$1,050. He says that he has "settled his business" there, and that a schooner sailed a few days before for Galveston, Texas.

This information was secured by the always efficient British Secret Service through the treason of Joshua Wilder, who gave up letters which Hawkins had re-

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ceived, or written, to George Robertson, British Consul at Philadelphia.

Wilder, evidently bought by British agents, had stolen the documents from Hawkins. On the 28th of July, 1817, Wilder made a declaration that he had been boarding in the same chambers as Hawkins for several months, and that Hawkins had shown him the letters which had passed between him and the French officers. He also told of an interview he had with Joseph Bonaparte, who would not forward money himself, but promised Hawkins that if the plan succeeded he should not want for money. Two fast sailing vessels were to be fitted out and chartered by Hawkins, as if for the China trade. But instead of going to Canton, they were to hover off St. Helena, and when a favorable opportunity presented itself, launch a boat which was to be carried on one of the vessels. This boat, a very fast sailer, was to be forty feet in length, made of cedar and birch plank, and decked over with Spanish rawhides. The plan was to hide the small boat in a cove and then contact a man who knew the island well and was acquainted with a Col. Bouker, living at "The Briars." General Lallemand, one of the French refugee generals, was to supply Hawkins with the necessary money.

Hawkins had arranged with an agent to go to Europe and take passage from England to the East Indies in the stores ship. When the ship stopped at St. Helena, he was to leave descriptions written in cipher, and so placed that they could be found when Hawkins and his party landed. As much as \$1,000 was to be laid out in plate to be used by Napoleon on the trip from St.

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Helena. If they succeeded in getting Napoleon off the island, they would take him at once to France, or, if that seemed at the time impossible, to South America, to join the patriots in Brazil in rebellion against Portugal. Hawkins expected to make the attempt in January or February, 1818. Early in August, 1817, the British Ambassador in Washington, Bagot, wrote to Lord Castlereagh at the British Foreign Office, enclosing copies of letters about the conspiracy which had been received from Robertson, Consul at Philadelphia. Bagot states that there is no doubt that an active correspondence was being carried on between the French officers in the United States and the disaffected in France and in other parts of Europe.

The next important clue to the Philadelphia plot is found in a letter in French written at Philadelphia, July 24, 1817. This important letter, unsigned, was forwarded to the British Foreign Office by Charles Stuart, British Ambassador at Paris, who had received it from the Duke de Richelieu, the French Foreign Minister. Stuart speaks of this letter as having been "taken" from General Raoul, one of the chief figures in the plot.

According to this letter, the plot to kidnap Napoleon was conceived by Joseph Bonaparte and its execution committed to General Raoul. One of Napoleon's personal servants at St. Helena, Rousseau, had come recently to America with an engraved map of the island of St. Helena. Lefebvre-Desnouettes, another of the refugee generals, was to purchase two schooners of 310 tons burden, armed with twelve guns. The brothers Lallemand were to recruit the officers and the men, who



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were to assemble at Annapolis, where Galabert, a former colonel of the 50th regiment of the Line, and Adolphe de Pontecoulant, a nephew of Marshal Grouchy, had already established themselves. The rendezvous of the expedition was to be the island of Fernando Norona, a convict station seventy leagues off the coast of Brazil. Colonel Latapie, one of the chief figures in the plot, was already at Pernambuco in Brazil with thirty-two officers. The French officers, all of them Napoleon's veterans, were to number eighty, and the United States recruits seven hundred. A frigate of seventy-four guns, with eight hundred sailors, was to be under the command of Lord Cochrane, a former British Admiral. The ships of the conspirators were to attack the English cruisers guarding St. Helena and then make their attack on the island. A sham attack against Jamestown was to be followed by the principal attack at the middle of the island. A third party was then to go to Longwood, seize Napoleon, place him on the fastest ship and sail for the United States.

A light fast-sailing schooner, armed with four 12-inch guns, was preparing to leave Philadelphia to observe the position of the British cruisers at St. Helena, ascertain the strength of the English garrison, and then come back to meet the expedition sailing from Brazil and report its findings. This ship was being fitted out by Stephen Girard, whose niece married General Henri Lallemand. The vessel's articles were made out as if for privateering against the Spaniards. Rousseau and Archambault, Bonaparte's servants at St. Helena, had

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reported all that was transpiring there and the friendly feeling of the island's inhabitants toward Napoleon.

This letter reveals also a plot on the part of Paoli, an ex-Colonel of the French Army and commander of the fort near Genoa, to kidnap the King of Rome, Napoleon's son, and take him to Lucien, Napoleon's brother. Joseph Bonaparte had supplied money to William Cobbett to write articles against England. Cobbett, a former English soldier, had published the *Weekly Register*, in London, and afterwards edited the paper *Peter Porcupine* in Philadelphia. He was many times in prison in England, and in 1832 was elected to the House of Commons. He wrote among other works "The American Gardener," said to be one of the best books on rural agriculture. Neuville informed Bagot, the British Minister, that Cobbett was the principal agent in the plot to rescue Napoleon.

The account of the plot contained in this French letter "taken" from General Raoul is supplemented by further information secured by the French and British Secret Services. M. Hyde de Neuville, French Ambassador at Washington, got hold of papers addressed to Joseph Bonaparte in the writing of Joseph Lakanal, the French politician and educator, former member of the National Assembly, afterwards President of the University of Louisiana, and at this time resident at Lexington, Kentucky. These papers told of the organization of an association of French refugee officers called the Napoleonic Confederation.<sup>1</sup> Neuville had Richard Rush, Acting Secretary of State, identify the

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter X.

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handwriting as that of Lakanal. Through bribery Neuville secured further information about a plot to put Joseph Bonaparte on the throne of Mexico. Neuville was convinced that this was all part of the conspiracy to release Napoleon from St. Helena. He secured an interview with President Madison and requested him to take steps to quell the conspiracy and prevent citizens of the United States from assisting in it. The Alabama settlement of the French refugees on the Tombigee River was regarded by Neuville as one of the bases for the conspiracy against Spain and Mexico. Madison told Neuville that as the conspiracy existed thus far only in design, nothing could be done to suppress it without violating the principles of individual liberty. The President said he would have the movements of the supposed conspirators watched. But it is quite evident that he intended to take no strong measures, for one of the things he had to consider was the popular feeling against Spain in the Western States. The British Minister, Bagot, in forwarding to Castlereagh an account of these proceedings, adds that Joseph Bonaparte had gone to Niagara Falls, so as to appear unconnected with the conspiracy, but says Neuville was convinced that his purpose in going to Niagara was to be nearer to the Mississippi when the hour struck.

The Philadelphia letter of July 24, 1817, which gave a detailed account of the conspiracy, speaks of a "Colonel Latapie, who has already gone with thirty-two officers to Pernambuco." We hear much of this Col. Latapie in a communication to Castlereagh from H. Chamberlain, the British Charge d'Affaires at Rio de

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Janeiro. A copy of this letter was sent by British warship to Sir Hudson Lowe. This communication tells of the arrest of Col. Latapie and his companions at Pernambuco. In the fall of 1817 an American schooner landed four refugees at Pernambuco. They turned out to be Frenchmen and were put under arrest. Under examination they acknowledged that they had come from America for the purpose of obtaining employment in the army in Brazil, then in revolt against Portugal. The leader of these men was Col. Latapie. He and one of his companions were sent down to Rio de Janeiro by a warship. Latapie had been a Lieutenant-Colonel in the French Army, and his companion, an Austrian, had been a Captain in the French Cavalry. The Brazilian Minister of State, believing that Latapie was implicated in the revolt at Pernambuco, and with the hope of getting fuller information about that conspiracy, offered him his liberty and free passage to the United States if he would disclose the whole object of his coming to Pernambuco.

Latapie thereupon related how he had planned to assist the rebels in Brazil in establishing their independence, and that he had hoped to become the commander of their troops. His true purpose was not hostility to the King of Portugal, but that he might establish an independent post south of the line for a base to carry out his design for the liberation of Napoleon. All the Frenchmen in America, he said, were determined to make this effort, as they regarded Napoleon as their lawful sovereign and were ready to "sacrifice the last drop of their blood" for his release. After an inde-

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pendent state had been established in Brazil, fast-sailing vessels were to be fitted out and manned by adherents of Napoleon. On these vessels small "steamboats" were to be carried. When the ships reached the vicinity of St. Helena, the steamboats were to be sent off at night, with the hope that one of them might be fortunate enough "to succeed in setting their late emperor at liberty."

The British representative at Rio de Janeiro, Chamberlain, comments that "the notion of employing steamboats upon such an expedition is entirely new and is worth attention, particularly when a landing is to be made at St. Helena." The steamboat project was not impossible, for steamboats at that time were running regularly from London to Margate. One would think, however, that steamboats approaching the island at night would be more likely to betray the plot than small sailing boats. Not only steam boats, but submarines, were in the thoughts of those who were planning to carry off Napoleon. This, as we have seen, was the plan of Johnstone, whose ship was seized at London by the British government. Admiral Plampin, Commander of the British Squadron at St. Helena, sent to London a letter he had received from Captain Sharpe, commanding the *Hyacinthe*, which told of a young man recently come from Brazil who had brought designs of a submarine boat which could be rowed under water and carried six men.

Colonel Latapie did not get the free trip to America he had been promised, but on November 20, 1817, was sent to Lisbon, and confined there until the wishes of

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the French government concerning him could be made known. The arrest and deportation from Brazil of Colonel Latapie was undoubtedly a chief factor in the failure of the Philadelphia and Brazil plots to rescue Napoleon.

The Philadelphia letter mentions also a General Brayer. This General Brayer was a distinguished soldier who rose to the rank of Division General. During the Hundred Days he was Governor of Versailles and the Trianon. After the Bourbon restoration he went to South America and reorganized the armies of the government of Buenos Aires. Brayer was to send to the rendezvous near Pernambuco French officers who were under his command in Buenos Aires. The arrest of Latapie prevented the cooperation of Brayer, and the French and English agents kept him under strict surveillance at Buenos Aires.

Another sidelight on the Philadelphia-Brazil plot is found in letters to Hudson Lowe from London telling of a correspondence between persons at Bahia, a city on the coast of Brazil between Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco, and St. Helena, via the Cape of Good Hope. The Bahia correspondent had been twice at St. Helena and had interviews with persons at Longwood. A notorious privateer, the *True-Blooded Yankee*, had put in at Bahia and its crew had disclosed their intention to take part in an expedition to rescue Napoleon. It was on the ground of this information that the British Admiral, Sir Pulteney Malcolm, was ordered to occupy the tiny island of Tristan d'Acunha at once. American whalers were accustomed to stop there for turtles. The

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letter informing Hudson Lowe of all this, May 14, 1816, expresses great anxiety lest the American schooner which had put in at Bahia should seize and occupy Tristan d'Acunha before Malcolm could get there. Bathurst, the British Secretary of State for War, wrote to Lowe warning him against persons coming from Bahia to St. Helena and saying, "There is no doubt that measures have been in contemplation to proceed with a party of French and other adventurers from Pernambuco to St. Helena for the rescue of General Bonaparte."

The Philadelphia documents which had been seized by British and French agents spoke of a scout schooner which was to lie off St. Helena, secure what information it could, and then return to meet the expedition. A dispatch to Hudson Lowe from the British government tells of a report of an East India captain to the effect that an American ship had put into St. Helena on the plea of distress. But her only lack was water, and it was supposed that this deficiency had been purposely created. At the same time a vessel had been observed off St. Helena. She was a fast sailer, and outran all the cruisers by whom she was chased. After being chased, she would reappear in her original station and continue for some time to hover around the island. Hudson Lowe communicated with Admiral Plampin about this same suspicious ship which had appeared in the offing. The mysterious craft was probably one of the scouts of the Philadelphia-Brazil expedition to kidnap and rescue the Emperor.

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Napoleon had many partisans and supporters in South America. Among them was Madame Foures, who had been Napoleon's mistress in Egypt, also called "Cleopatra" by the army, and who under the Empire became Madame de Ranchoup. In 1816 she abandoned her husband and went to Rio de Janeiro, where she was in the company of a former officer of the Guard. She spent her whole fortune on plots to rescue Napoleon. Another friend and supporter of Napoleon in South America was General Dick van Hogendorf, who had been Minister of War in Holland for a brief period and was Napoleon's aide-de-camp during the Waterloo campaign.

Among those mentioned as having a part in the Philadelphia-Brazil plot was Lord Cochrane. According to the Philadelphia letter, he was to have command of a frigate of seventy-four guns, with eight hundred sailors on board. Lord Cochrane, tenth Earl of Dundonald, was one of the famous and picturesque admirals of the British Navy. He had distinguished himself in the French wars and took part in the expedition which burned Washington, D. C. Together with an uncle and other associates, he was found guilty of perpetrating a fraud on the Stock Exchange by circulating a false report of the death of Napoleon, and was expelled from Parliament and deprived of the Order of the Bath. In 1817, the year that his name appears in connection with the plot to rescue Napoleon, he took command of the naval forces of the Chileans in their revolt against Spain and performed many feats of valor. He then entered the service of Brazil in its revolt against Portugal. Af-



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ter that he served in the Greek Navy, and in 1832 was reinstated in the British Navy. If there was a man living who could have carried out a successful raid on St. Helena, that man was Lord Cochrane. It seems, however, altogether unlikely that a British admiral, although at that time dismissed and in disgrace, would have laid himself open to the charge of treason by attacking a British post. On the other hand, there must be considered the appeal that there was for a man of Cochrane's nature in the St. Helena plot. According to the information which Neuville sent Bagot, Lord Cochrane and Sir Robert Wilson were deeply engaged in the plot, and a correspondence was carried on through the agency of a female relative of Wilson, who resided in Brussels.

Another magnetic name which appears in connection with American plots to carry off Napoleon is that of the renowned Commodore Stephen Decatur, who in the conflict with Tripoli and in the War of 1812 had written his name in letters of gold. Decatur was associated with one of the Napoleonic generals, Clausel, in a plan to rescue the Emperor. Lakanal says this plan was submitted to Joseph Bonaparte, but he rejected it because of his pusillanimity and greed.<sup>1</sup>

There have been some who have raised a question as to the loyalty of Joseph Bonaparte to his brother the Emperor and to the French refugees who were plotting in America for his release. In 1817, Maurice Persat, a former cavalry captain under Napoleon, and who had

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<sup>1</sup> Aubry, *St. Helena*, p. 430. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia. 1936.

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received from his hand the Legion of Honor, hearing that Joseph Bonaparte was preparing an expedition for the release of Napoleon, took with him what fortune he had, some thousands of francs, and sailed for America, where he repaired at once to Joseph at Bordentown. There Joseph assured him in touching terms that he would have given his life and fortune for the deliverance of the Emperor, but that he had been compelled to abandon the project because of information he had received from London that the British Government had issued barbarous orders, to the troops at St. Helena, that in case of an attack on the island Napoleon was to be put to death. Joseph advised Persat to enter business in New York. But business did not appeal to a former captain of cavalry under Napoleon, and Persat, after serving with a company of filibusters in an attack on Florida, became a follower of Bolivar in his war for independence in Colombia.

New Orleans was the center of a plot headed by the then Mayor of New Orleans, Nicholas Girod. He and other well-to-do Frenchmen built a fast sailing schooner, the *Seraphine*, and fitted her out for a voyage to St. Helena. To disarm suspicion, the *Seraphine* was put in commission for pleasure cruises in the Gulf of Mexico. The crew were all ardent admirers of Napoleon, picked men, whose valor and desperate courage were established. The vessel was under the command of Captain Boissiere. Boissiere's father had been an officer under Rochambeau at Yorktown. "He thought and dreamed of nothing but scaling the heights of St. Helena with his cutlass between his teeth, his trusty

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pistols under his belt, and followed by his desperadoes, rushing upon the guard and breaking into Napoleon's chamber, securing his person, and bearing it to the chair attached with a rope to block and tackle, and lowering him upon the deck of the *Seraphine*, which, taking advantage of the dark night, had eluded the guard ships and crept noiselessly into the position assigned in the carefully drawn plan. When once deposited on the deck of the *Seraphine* he could trust to her heels and defy pursuit by the whole British navy." <sup>1</sup>

Associated in the same enterprise was Dominique Yon, a comrade of Lafitte, the notorious filibuster of Southern waters.<sup>2</sup> Dominique had charge of a 24-pounder when Jackson repelled the British attack at New Orleans. His gun crew was made up of ex-privateers from Lafitte's Baratarian Colony. "Old Hickory" said of this gun crew, "I wish I had fifty such guns on this line, with five hundred such devils as those fellows behind them." Dominique Yon was buried in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2. A high-sounding epitaph, in French and in verse, proclaims him, "The intrepid hero of a hundred battles on land and sea, who without fear, and without reproach, will one day view unmoved the destruction of the world." <sup>3</sup>

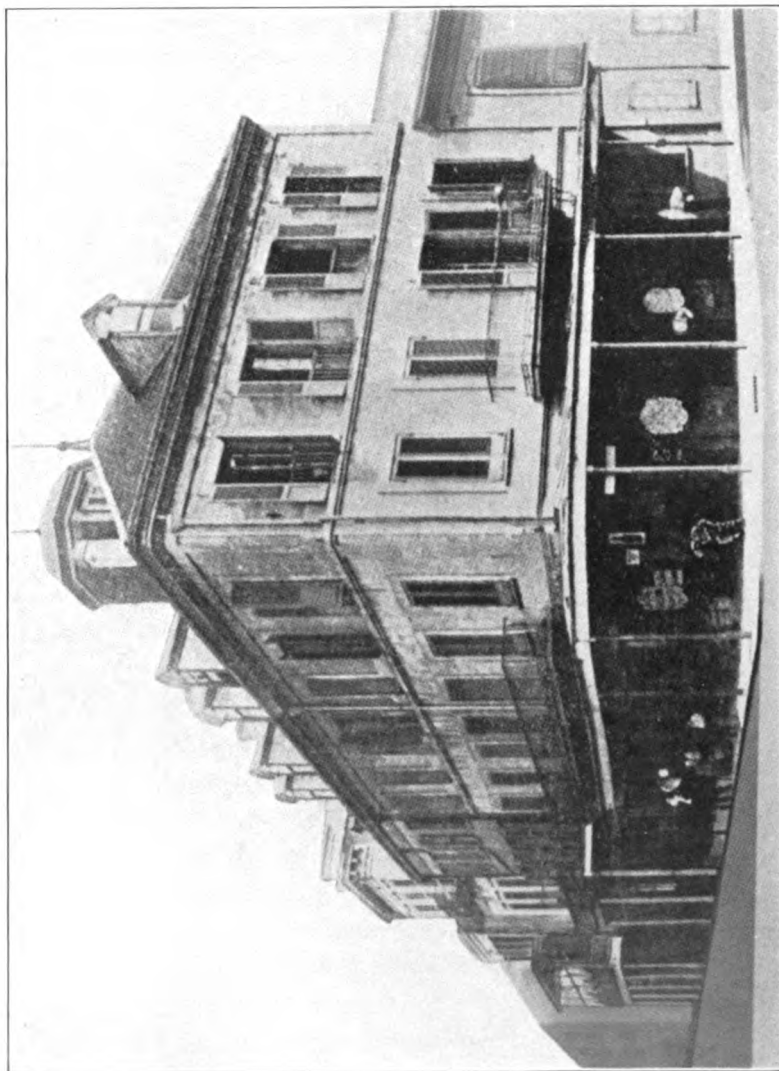
So confident were Girod and his companions of the success of their enterprise, that they built in New Or-

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<sup>1</sup> W. H. Coleman, *Historical Sketch Book of New Orleans*.

<sup>2</sup> Kendall, *History of New Orleans*, and Castellano, *New Orleans as it Was*, name Yon as the captain of the *Seraphine*. Coleman's *Historical Sketch and Guide Book to New Orleans* names Boissiere as captain. Aubry, *St. Helena*, names Yon as the captain.

<sup>3</sup> Saxon, *Lafitte the Pirate*. Century Co., N. Y. 1930.



**THE "NAPOLEON HOUSE," NEW ORLEANS**

At Chartres and St. Louis Streets

(From "The Logical Point," Vol. I, 1910; Press of Steeg Publishing Co., New Orleans.)

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leans a handsome house for Napoleon. The house still stands at the corner of Chartres and St. Louis Streets. It is in excellent state of preservation and is a fine relic of Southern Colonial architecture, with its mansard and the octagonal cupola roof surmounting it.

The New Orleans plot to rescue Napoleon was known to Napoleon's companions at St. Helena. Antommarchi, his Italian physician, and Marshal Bertrand visited New Orleans some years after the death of Napoleon and so testified. Antommarchi presented to the city a marble bust of the Emperor as a token of his appreciation of the friendly feeling of New Orleans toward Napoleon. It was long preserved in the City Hall. "Marshal Bertrand, who visited the city in the forties, and was accompanied by young Ney, the Duke of Moskowa, and was received with great eclat and the most enthusiastic demonstrations by the old Napoleonists, often referred to the plot which had been concocted in New Orleans, and which he believed would have been successful; and repeated Napoleon's frequent expressions of his great desire to spend the remainder of his days in that great free country, and among the noble Republican people of the United States of America."<sup>1</sup>

Before the *Seraphine* was ready to sail on its great expedition, another and a greater Rescuer, one not to be denied, made his appearance at St. Helena. Napoleon died on the 5th of May, 1821.

During Napoleon's stay at his rock prison in the South Atlantic, there were many false and fantastic rumors of his escape. The liberal opposition in France

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<sup>1</sup> *The Logical Point*, Vol. I.

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encouraged these legends because they increased the feeling against the government. A General Canuel, commanding the department of the Rhone, in order to strengthen his position with the government, denounced a pretended conspiracy which he himself had invented. According to the supposed information of his spies, Napoleon had escaped from St. Helena and with five regiments was at Tabago in the West Indies. The Emperor of Austria, the Kings of Saxony, Bavaria and Spain were associated in the conspiracy, the object of which was the destruction of all the nobles and priests. Pamphlets published in 1817 under the title, "The Christ of the People," announced that according to American papers Napoleon had been set free. A proclamation signed "Napoleon," and countersigned "Lallemand," affirmed that Divine Providence and brave soldiers had delivered him from the English, and that American vessels were bringing him to France where his companions in arms would rejoin him. The proclamation concluded with these words, "I will come to deliver you, be calm! Do not light the flame of Civil War. Wait for the opportune time." Among other absurd reports that found currency, was the tale that sailors disguised as Turks had set out on a ship for St. Helena under command of a son of Marshal Ney. Another report had it that Napoleon had been delivered by the Emperor of Morocco in recognition of the kindness that Napoleon had shown his son when in Egypt. This legend went so far as to name one of the English ships which had been taken, *Le Coq*, and its captain, Bacon. At Lyons the police seized a proclamation of

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Napoleon to the Americans, of which this was the grandiloquent address: "Ocean, on board the *Grand Amiral* of the combined fleets of Africa and America, we, by the grace of God, Emperor of the French, King of Italy, President of the Grand Congress of Africa and America, Commanding General of the Orient, Amiral of Asia, of Africa and America—" <sup>1</sup>

According to a book published in Paris in 1816, "Napoleon at St. Helena," as related by James Tyder, Surgeon in the English Navy, Napoleon boasted that he could escape any time he wished, in a balloon. He planned to go to Africa and there found a kingdom. This book inspired another, published in London in 1840, called "Napoleon's Second Life," where Napoleon becomes Emperor of the Kaffirs.

The tales of the supposed escape of Napoleon from his island prison take their place beside the legends that Lord Kitchener did not perish in the North Sea when the cruiser *Hampshire*, on which he was traveling on a World War mission to Russia, was torpedoed in 1916; that John Wilkes Booth was not shot in the Virginia barn by Sergeant Corbett after the assassination of Lincoln; and that the Czar Alexander I, Napoleon's great adversary and real conqueror, because the Czar was the head and front of the Allied opposition, did not die in 1825 at Taganrog, the far-off Crimean village on the Black Sea whither he had gone for the sake of the Czarina's health, but went instead to a far-off monastery in Palestine or Siberia, there to expiate his sin of

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<sup>1</sup> Brice, *Les Espoirs de Napoleon a St. Helene*, p. 238. Payot, Paris. 1938.

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having participated in the murder of his father, Czar Paul I. Indeed, the wonder is that there were not more tales and rumors about the escape of Napoleon, seeing he was so extraordinary a person and had cast so deep a spell over his age.

Napoleon was said to have had a double who took his place on certain occasions. This double, Francois Eugene Robeaud, had been a soldier under Bonaparte, was about the same age, and was born at Baleycourt in the Department of the Meuse. He is recorded in the town registry of Baleycourt to have died at St. Helena, date not given. According to the legend, Robeaud, in the year 1818, substituted himself for Napoleon at St. Helena and died there, supposedly the Emperor, in 1821.

Another, and even more absurd tale, made the pseudo Napoleon a cousin, who went to St. Helena in the guise of a priest and there died of cancer of the stomach. But, if the English jailers were deceived as to the man who died at Longwood on that wild night in May, 1821, what became of the real Napoleon? One tale was that he made his way to Verona in Italy and there opened an optical shop, and on the night of September 5, 1823, was shot by a sentinel as he was attempting to scale the wall of the park at Schonbrunn, the Austrian royal palace near Vienna. The unknown man died murmuring the words, "Duke of Reichstadt—king—son—" Napoleon's son, the King of Rome and Duke of Reichstadt, was at that time being brought up at the Austrian court of his father-in-law, Francis I. Another fantastic tale finds the liberated Napoleon the



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commander of the Turkish army at Iraktscha in the war between Turkey and Russia in 1828. The passage of time, no doubt, will add to the number of these wild tales of the escaped Napoleon.

Did Napoleon wish to escape? Would he have availed himself of an opportunity to escape if one had offered itself to him? On this, as on so many other subjects, the sayings of Napoleon are often contradictory and irreconcilable. There were times when he indulged his fancy in plans for escape, and there is no doubt that he hoped for a change of government in France and a change of policy in England which would result in his formal release. In the pathetic letter written to Joseph Bonaparte informing him of the death of Napoleon, Count Bertrand says: "The hope of leaving this dreadful region often presented itself to his imagination. He sometimes fancied we were on the eve of starting for America. We read travels, we made plans, we arrived at your house, we wandered over that great country where alone we might hope to enjoy liberty. Vain hopes, vain projects, which only made us feel doubly our misfortune."

Napoleon frequently spoke as if he regarded escape as altogether impossible. Yet every sail seen on that lonely ocean must have stirred his hopes. What we do know is that he definitely declined one offer of escape. Montholon tells of a naval captain whose vessel was returning from the Indies, and who had made arrangements to receive the Emperor in a boat at an agreed upon place and to convey him to his ship, without any risk of being detected. This captain asked no reward

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for himself, but wanted one million francs for the unnamed person whose concurrence and assistance were necessary. The money was not to be paid, however, until the Emperor reached America. He was to be accompanied by only two persons. Napoleon asked Montholon to get further and full information. When they brought him this, he paced to and fro in silence several times, and then said to Montholon, "You must decline the offer." He asked Montholon to thank the captain but said that his resolution not to struggle against his "destiny" was immovable.

On another occasion when the matter of escape was being discussed, Napoleon said to Montholon: "I should not be six months in America without being assassinated by the Count d'Artois' creatures. Remember the Isle of Elba. Did he not send Bruard thither to organize my assassination? Had it not been for the brave man whom chance had placed master of the quarters of the gendarmery in Corsica, and caused me to be warned of the mission of this life guardsman, who confessed everything, I should have been assassinated. And besides, we should always obey our destiny. Everything is written in heaven. It is my martyrdom which shall restore the crown of France to my dynasty. I see in America nothing but assassination or oblivion. I prefer St. Helena."

It was the opinion of Gourgaud that Napoleon would never make a real effort to escape. He had grown soft, he said, and while he might compromise any number of people, "at the garden gate he would say that he was too tired and did not want to be a target for gunshot."

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The chief obstacle in the way of escape, according to Montholon, was indeed the mental attitude of Napoleon, whose mistrust was such that he would never confide himself to any one but a member of his own family, or former servants, "for," said Montholon, "if he gets on board, who knows whether when he was three leagues distant from the land he might not be thrown into the sea?"

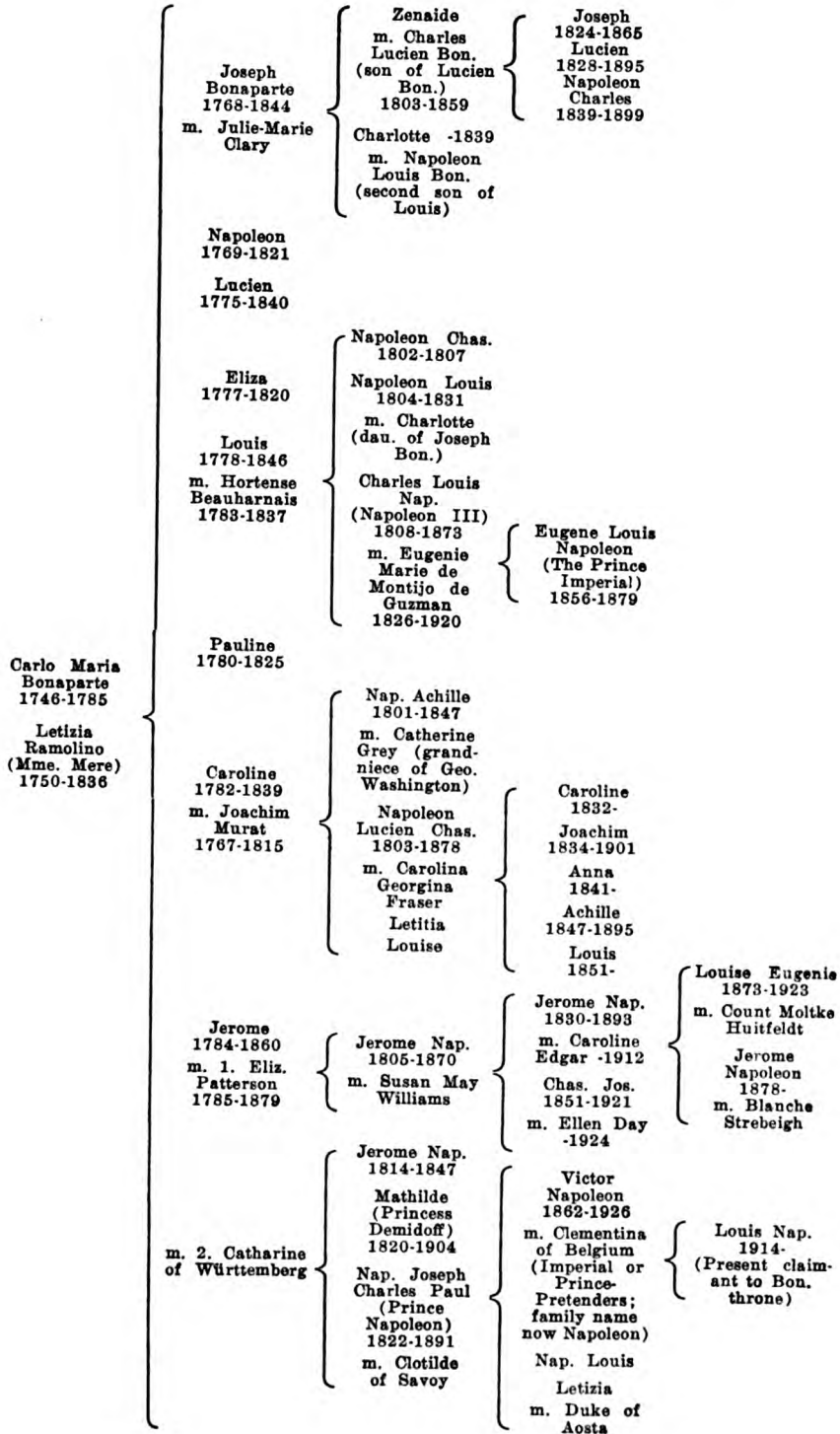
In his not infrequent exalted and prophetic moments, moments when he thought of the future grandeur of his name and the opinion of posterity, Napoleon clearly saw that captivity and death at St. Helena were infinitely to be preferred to the lot of a rich planter in the United States or that of a revolutionary leader in Mexico or South America. "If I were in America with Joseph," he once sighed, "instead of suffering here, nobody would ever think of me and my cause would be lost. If Christ had not died on the Cross, He would not have become the Son of God." This same thought was ably expressed by Napoleon III in his "Idees Napoleoniennes," where, writing of the sufferings and death of Napoleon at St. Helena, he says: "Great men have this in common with the Divinity, that they do not wholly die. Their spirit survives them, and the Napoleonic idea has sprung from the tomb of St. Helena, as the moral of the Evangelist rose triumphant from the agony of Calvary."

Although he chafed against the bars of his wave-washed prison, Napoleon foresaw that St. Helena would add a lustre to his name not second to that of Marengo, Austerlitz and the Pyramids. Fate, which

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seemed so cruel to Napoleon in that it exiled him to a lonely South Atlantic rock, was, after all, kind to him. Had any of the plots to rescue him from St. Helena been carried out, the gorgeous and solemn Sacrament of Entombment under the gilded dome of des Invalides would never have been celebrated.

THE (AMERICAN) BONAPARTES; OTHER BRANCHES OF THEIR FAMILY  
TREE ARE NOT INCLUDED



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*Jerome*

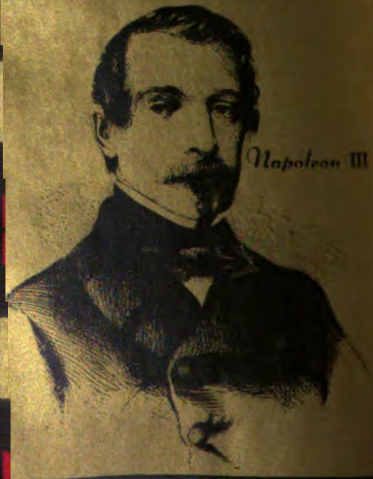


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