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NAPOLEON'S MARSHALS

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INTRODUCTION

It is a melancholy but instructive fact to remember that, in the opinion of him whom nature had adorned with the greatest intellect that the world has yet seen, selfishness and self-interest lie at the root of all human action. "For," as Napoleon said, "in ambition is to be found the chief motive force of humanity, and a man puts forth his best powers in proportion to his hopes of advancement." It was on this cynical hypothesis therefore, with a complete disregard of those higher aspirations of self-sacrifice and self-control which raise man above the mere brute, that the Corsican adventurer waded through seas of blood to the throne of France, and then attempted, by the destruction of a million human beings, to bind on his brow the imperial crown of Western Europe. In spite of loud-sounding phrases and constitutional sleight-of-hand, none knew better than Napoleon that by the sword alone he had won his empire and by the sword alone he could keep it. Keen student of history, it was not in vain that again and again he had read and re-read the works of Cæsar, and pondered on the achievements of Charlemagne and the career of Cromwell. The problem he had to solve was, how to conceal from his lieutenants that his dynasty rested purely on their swords, to bind their honours so closely to his own fortune that they should ever be loyal; so to distribute his favours that his servants should never become so great as to threaten his own position. It was with this object in view that at the time he seized for himself the imperial crown he re-established the old rôle of Marshal of France, frankly confessing to Roederer that his reason for showering rewards on his lieutenants was to assure to himself his own dignity, since they could not object to it when they found themselves the recipients of such lofty titles. But, with the cunning of the serpent, while he gave with one hand he took away with the other. He fixed the number of Marshals at sixteen on the active list and added four others for those too old for active service. Hence he had it in his power to reward twenty hungry aspirants, while he robbed the individuals of their glory, since each Marshal shared his dignity with nineteen others. Plainly also he told them that, lofty though their rank might appear to others, to him they were still mere servants, created by him and dependent for their position on him alone. "Recollect," he said, "that you are soldiers only when with the army. The title of Marshal is merely a civil distinction which gives you the honourable rank at my court which is your due, but it carries with it no authority. On the battlefield you are generals, at court you are nobles, belonging to the State by the civil position I created for you when I bestowed your titles on you." It was on May 19, 1804, that the *Gazette* appeared with the first creation of Marshals. There were fourteen on the active list and four honorary Marshals in the Senate. Two bâtons were withheld as a reward for future service. The original fourteen were Berthier, Murat, Moncey, Jourdan, Masséna, Augereau, Bernadotte, Soult, Brune, Lannes, Mortier, Ney, Davout and Bessières; while on the retired list were Kellermann, Lefèbvre, Pérignon, and Serurier. The list caused much surprise and dissatisfaction. On the one hand there were those like Masséna who received their congratulations with a grunt and "Yes, one of fourteen." On the other hand were those like Macdonald, Marmont, Victor, and many another, who thought they ought to have been included. An examination of the names soon explains how the choice was made. Except Jourdan, who was too great a soldier to be passed over, all those who could not forget their Republican principles were excluded. Masséna received his bâton as the greatest soldier of France. Berthier, Murat, and Lannes had won theirs by their talents, as much as by their personal devotion. Soult, Ney, Davout, and Mortier were Napoleon's choice from among the coming men, who in the camps of the Army of the Ocean were fast justifying their selection. Bessières was included because he would never win it at any later date, but his doglike devotion made him a

priceless subordinate. Augereau and Bernadotte received their bâtons to keep them quiet. The names of Moncey, Brune, Kellermann, Pérignon, and Serurier were intimately connected with glorious feats of the republican armies, and so, though only fortunate mediocrities, they were included in the first creation, while Lefèbvre, the republican of republicans, now under the glamour of Napoleon's power, was placed on the list as a stalking-horse of the extreme members of his party. At the time of the first creation, of the great soldiers of the Republic, Moreau was branded as a traitor; Hoche, Marceau, Kléber, Desaix, and Pichegru were dead; Carnot, the organiser of victory, was a voluntary exile; while staunch blades like Leclerc, Richepanse, Lecourbe, Macdonald, Victor, St. Cyr, and Suchet were all more or less in disgrace. By the end of the Empire, death and the necessity of rewarding merit added to the list of Marshals until in all twenty-six bâtons were granted by the Emperor. In 1808 Victor was restored to favour and received his bâton. After Wagram, Macdonald, Oudinot, and Marmont received the prize, while the Spanish War brought it to Suchet, and the Russian campaign to St. Cyr. In 1813 the Polish prince, Poniatowski, was sent his truncheon on the field of Leipzig, while last of all, in 1815, Grouchy was promoted to one of the vacancies caused by the refusal of many of the Marshals to cast off their allegiance to the Bourbons.

It was a popular saying in the Napoleonic army that every private soldier carried in his knapsack a Marshal's bâton, and the early history of many of these Marshals bears out this saying. But while the Revolution carried away all the barriers and opened the highest ranks to talent, be it never so humble in its origin, the history of the Marshals proves that heaven-born soldiers are scarce, and that the art of war, save in the case of one out of a million, can only be acquired by years of patient work in a subordinate position. Of the generals of the revolutionary armies only four, Moreau, Mortier, Suchet, and Brune, had no previous military training, and of these four, Moreau and Suchet alone had claim to greatness. The rough unlettered generals of the early years of the war soon proved that they could never rise above the science of the drill-sergeant. Once discipline and organisation were restored there was no room for a general like the gallant Macard, who, when about to charge, used to call out, "Look here, I am going to dress like a beast," and thereon divest himself of everything save his leather breeches and boots, and then, like some great hairy baboon, with strange oaths and yells lead his horsemen against the enemy. A higher type was required than this Macard, who could not understand that because an officer could sketch mountains he could not necessarily measure a man for a pair of boots.

Of the twenty-six Marshals, nine had held commissions ranging from lieutenant-general to lieutenant in the old royal army, one was a Polish Prince, an ex-Austrian officer, while one had passed the artillery college but had refused to accept a commission; eleven had commenced life as privates in the old service, and of these, nine had risen to the rank of sergeant; and four had had no previous military training. It must also be remembered that the standard of the non-commissioned rank in the royal army just before the Revolution was extremely high. The reforms of St. Germain and the popularity of the American War had enticed into the ranks a high class of recruits, with the result that the authorities were able to impose tests, and no private could rise to the rank of corporal, or from corporal to sergeant, without passing an examination. Further, since the officers of the ancient régime left the entire organisation, discipline, and control in the hands of the non-commissioned officers, and seldom, if ever, visited their companies either in barracks or on the parade ground, the non-commissioned officers, in everything save actual title, were really extremely well-trained officers. It was this class which really saved France when the old officers emigrated and the incapable politicians in Paris did their best to ruin the army. Hence it was that, without prejudice to the service, a sergeant might one day be found quietly obeying the orders of his company officer, and the next day with the rank of lieutenant-colonel commanding his battalion.

The art of war can only be truly learned in the field, and the officers of the French army had such an experience as had never fallen to the lot of any other nation since the days of the Thirty Years' War. With continuous fighting winter and summer, on every frontier, military knowledge was easily

gained by those who had the ability to acquire it, and the young generals of brigade, with but three years' service in commissioned rank, had gone through experiences which seldom fall to the lot of officers with thirty years' service. The cycle of war seemed unending. From the day on which, in 1792, France hurled her declaration of war on Austria, till the surrender of Paris, in 1814, with the exception of the year of peace gained at Amiens, war was continuous. It began with a light-hearted invasion of France by Austria and Prussia in September, 1792, which ended in the cannonade of Valmy, when Dumouriez and Kellermann, with the remnant of the old royal army, showed such a bold front that the Allies, who had never expected to fight, lost heart and ran home. The Austro-Prussian invasion sealed the King's death-warrant, and France, in the hands of republican enthusiasts, went forth with a rabble of old soldiers and volunteers to preach the doctrine of the Equality of Man and the Brotherhood of Nations. But the sovereigns of Europe determined to fight for their crowns, and the licence of the French soldiers and the selfishness of these prophets of the new doctrine of Equality soon disgusted the people of the Rhine valley; so the revolutionary mob armies were driven into France, and for two years she was busy on every frontier striving to drive the enemy from her soil. It was during these years that the new French army arose. The volunteers were brigaded with the old regular battalions, the ranks were kept full by calling out all fit to bear arms, and the incompetent and unfortunate were weeded out by the guillotine. By 1795 France had freed her own soil and had forged a weapon whereby she could retaliate on the Powers who had attempted to annex her territory in the hour of her degradation. The Rhine now became her eastern frontier. But Austria, whose Archduke was Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, would not give up the provinces seized from her; so from 1795 to 1797, on the headwaters of the Danube and in Italy, the representative of the Feudal Ages fought the new democracy. It was the appearance of the great military talent of Bonaparte which decided the day. On the Danube the Austrians had found that under the excellent leading of the Archduke Charles they were fit to defeat the best French troops under capable generals like Jourdan and Moreau. But the military genius of Bonaparte overbore all resistance, and when peace came, practically all Italy had been added to the dominion of France. Unfortunately for the peace of Europe, the rulers of France had tasted blood. They found in the captured provinces a means of making war without feeling the effects, for the rich pillage of Italy paid the war expenses. But, grateful as the Directors were to Bonaparte for thus opening to them a means of enriching themselves at the expense of Europe, they rightly saw in him a menace to their own power, and gladly allowed him to depart on the mission to Egypt. From Egypt Bonaparte returned, seized the reins of government, and saved France from the imbecility of her rulers, and, by the battle of Marengo, assured to her all she had lost in his absence. Unfortunately for France the restless ambition of her new ruler was not satisfied with re-establishing the Empire of the West and reviving the glories of Charlemagne, but hankered after a vast oversea dominion, to include America and India. Hence it was that he found in Great Britain an implacable enemy ever stirring up against him European coalitions. To cover his failure to wrest the dominion of the sea from its mistress, Napoleon turned his wrath on Austria, and soon she lay cowed at his feet after the catastrophe at Ulm and the battle of Austerlitz. Austria's fall was due to the lethargy and hesitation of the courts of Berlin and St. Petersburg. But once Austria was disposed of, Prussia and Russia met their punishment for having given her secret or open aid. The storm fell first on Prussia. At one fell swoop on the field of Jena, the famed military monarchy of the great Frederick fell in pieces like a potter's vessel. From Prussia the invincible French legions penetrated into Poland, and after Eylau and Friedland the forces of Prussia and Russia could no longer face the enemy in the field. The Czar, dazzled by Napoleon's greatness, threw over his ally Prussia and at Tilsit made friends with the great conqueror. In June, 1807, it seemed as if Europe lay at Napoleon's feet, but already in Portugal the seeds of his ruin had been sown. The Portuguese monarch, the ally of Great Britain, fled at the mere approach of a single Marshal of the Emperor. The apparent lethargy of the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula and the unpopularity of the Spanish Bourbons tempted Napoleon to establish his brother on the throne of Spain. It was a fatal error, for though the Spanish

people might despise their King, they were intensely proud of their nationality. For the first time in his experience the Corsican had to meet the forces of a nation and not of a government. The chance defeat of a French army at Baylen was the signal for a general rising throughout the Peninsula, and not only throughout the Peninsula, but for the commencement of a national movement against the French in Austria and Germany. England gladly seized the opportunity of injuring her enemy and sent aid to the people of Spain. Austria tried another fall with her conqueror, but was defeated at Wagram. Wagram ought to have taught the Emperor that his troops were no longer invincible as of old, but, blind to this lesson, he still attempted to lord it over Europe and treated with contumely his only friend, the Czar. Consequently, in 1812, while still engaged in attempting to conquer Spain, he found himself forced to fight Russia. The result was appalling; out of half a million troops who entered Russia, a bare seventy thousand returned. Prussia and Austria at once made a bid to recover their independence. Napoleon, blinded by rage, refused to listen to reason, and in October, 1813, was defeated by the Allies at Leipzig. Even then he might have saved his throne, but he still refused to listen to the Allies, who in 1814 invaded France, and, after a campaign in which the Emperor showed an almost superhuman ability, at last by sheer weight of numbers they captured Paris. Thereon the French troops refused to fight any longer for the Emperor. Such is a brief outline of what is called the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the finest school the world has yet seen for an apprenticeship in the trade of arms.

SYNOPSIS OF THE MARSHALS

Name.	Born.	Marshal.	Titles.	Died.	Age.
Berthier,	Nov. 20,	May 19,	Prince of Neuchatel	Accident,	62
Louis	1753	1804	and Valangin,	June 1, 1815	
Alexandre					
			Prince of Wagram,		
			Dec. 31, 1809		
Murat, Joachim	Mar. 25,	"	Prince,	Shot at Pizzo,	48
	1767		Feb. 1, 1805;	Oct. 13, 1815	
			Grand Duke of Berg,		
			Mar. 15, 1806;		
			King of Naples,		
			Aug. 1, 1808		
Moncey,	July 31,	"	Duke of Conegliano,	Natural cause,	88
Bon Adrien	1754		July 2, 1808	April 20, 1842	
Jeannot de					
Jourdan,	April 29,	"	Count, Mar. 1, 1808	Natural cause,	71
Jean Baptiste	1762			Nov. 1833	
Masséna, André	May 6,	"	Duke of Rivoli,	Natural cause,	61
	1756		April 24, 1808;	April 4, 1817	
			Prince of Essling,		
			Jan. 31, 1810		
Augereau,	Oct. 21,	"	Duke of	Natural cause,	59
Charles Pierre	1757		Castiglione,	June 12, 1816	
François			April 26, 1808		
Bernadotte,	Jan. 26,	"	Prince of	Natural cause,	81
Jean Baptiste	1763		Ponte Corvo,	Mar. 8, 1844	
Jules			June 5, 1806;		
			Crown Prince		
			of Sweden,		
			Aug. 21, 1810;		
			King, Feb. 18, 1818		
Soult, Jean de	Mar. 29,	"	Duke of Dalmatia,	Natural cause,	82
Dieu Nicolas	1769		June 29, 1808	Nov. 26, 1851	
Brune, Guillaume	May 13,	"	Count, Mar. 1, 1808	Murdered	52
Marie Anne	1763			at Avignon,	
				Aug. 2, 1815	
Lannes, Jean	April 11,	"	Duke of Montebello,	Died of wounds	40
	1769		June 15, 1808	at Vienna,	
				May 31, 1809	
Mortier, Adolphe	Feb. 13,	"	Duke of Treviso,	Killed by	67
Édouard	1768		July 2, 1808	infernal machine	
Casimir Joseph				at Paris,	
				July 28, 1835	
Ney, Michel	Jan. 10,	"	Duke of Elchingen,	Shot at Paris,	46
	1769		May 5, 1808;	Dec. 7, 1815	
			Prince of Moskowa,		
			Mar. 25, 1813		
Davout,	May 10,	"	Duke of Auerstädt,	Natural cause,	53
Louis Nicolas	1770		July 2, 1808;	June 1, 1823	
			Prince of Eckmühl,		
			Nov. 28, 1809		
Bessières,	Aug. 6,	"	Duke of Istria,	Killed	45
Jean Baptiste	1768		May 28, 1809	at Lützen,	
				May 1, 1813	
Kellermann,	May 28,	"	Count,	Natural cause,	85
François	1735		Mar. 1, 1808;	Sept. 13, 1820	
Christophe			Duke of Valmy,		
			May 2, 1808		
Lefèbvre,	Oct. 15,	"	Count,	Natural cause,	65
François	1755		Mar. 1, 1808;	Sept. 14, 1820	
Joseph			Duke of Dantzig,		

I
LOUIS ALEXANDRE BERTHIER, MARSHAL, PRINCE OF WAGRAM, SOVEREIGN PRINCE OF NEUCHÂTEL AND VALANGIN

To be content ever to play an inferior part, to see all honour and renown fall to the share of another, yet loyally to efface self and work for the glory of a friend, denotes a sterling character and an inflexibility of purpose with which few can claim to be endowed. Nobody doubts that, if it had not been for Napoleon, Berthier, good business man as he was, could never have risen to the fame he attained; still it is often forgotten that without this admirable servant it is more than doubtful if the great Emperor could have achieved all his most splendid success. Berthier, controlled by a master mind, was an instrument beyond price. Versed in the management of an army almost from his cradle, he had the gift of drafting orders so clear, so lucid, that no one could possibly mistake their meaning. His memory was prodigious, and his physical endurance such that he appeared never to require rest. But above all he alone seemed to be able to divine the thoughts of his great master before they were spoken, and this wonderful intuition taught him how, from a few disjointed utterances, to unravel Napoleon's most daring conceptions and work out the details in ordered perfection. Napoleon called his faithful Achates a gosling whom he had transformed into an eagle, but history proclaims that long before the name of Bonaparte was known beyond the gate of the military academy at Brienne, Berthier had established a record as a staff officer of the highest promise; while, before the young Corsican first met him in Italy, the future major-general of the Grand Army had evolved that perfect system of organisation which enabled the conqueror of Italy to control every movement and vibration in the army, to be informed of events as soon as they happened, and to be absolutely sure of the despatch and performance of his orders.

Alexandre Berthier had seen twenty-three years' service in the old royal army before the Revolution broke out in 1789. Born on November 20, 1753, at the age of thirteen he received his commission in the engineers owing to his father's services in preparing a map of royal hunting forests. But the boy soon forsook his father's old regiment, for he knew well that the highest commands in the army seldom if ever fell to the scientific corps. When in 1780 the French Government decided to send out an expeditionary corps to assist the revolted colonies in their struggle with Great Britain, Berthier, after serving in the infantry and cavalry, was employed as a staff captain with the army of Normandy. Eager to see active service, he at once applied to be attached to the expedition, and offered, if there was no room for an extra captain, to resign his rank and serve as sub-lieutenant. Thanks to powerful family influence and to his record of service his desire was gratified, and in January, 1781, he found himself with the French troops in America employed on the staff of General Count de Rochambeau. Returning from America in 1783 with a well-earned reputation for bravery and ability, Captain Berthier was one of the officers sent to Prussia under the Marquis de Custine to study the military organisation of the great Frederick. Continuously employed on the staff, he had the advantage of serving as brigade major at the great camp of instruction held at Saint Omer in 1788, and in that year received as a reward for his services the cross of Saint Louis. The year 1789 saw him gazetted lieutenant-colonel, and chief of the staff to Baron de Besenval, commanding the troops round Paris.

When, after the capture of the Bastille, Lafayette undertook the work of organising the National Guard, he at once bethought him of his old comrade of American days, and appointed Berthier assistant quartermaster-general. Berthier found the post well suited to him; inspired by the liberal ideas which he had gained in America, he threw himself heart and soul into the work. Soon his talent

as an organiser became widely recognised; many prominent officers applied to have him attached to their command, and, after holding several staff appointments, he was entrusted in 1791 with the organisation and instruction of the thirty battalions of volunteers cantonned between the Somme and Meuse. When war broke out in 1792 he was despatched as major-general and chief of the staff to his old friend Rochambeau, and when the Count resigned his command Berthier was specially retained by Rochambeau's successor, Luckner. But the Revolution, while giving him his chance, nearly brought about his fall. His intimate connection with the nobles of the old royal army, his courage in protecting the King's aunts, and his family connections caused him to become "suspect." It was in vain that the leaders at the front complained of the absolute disorder in their forces, of the necessity of more trained staff officers and of their desire for the services of the brilliant soldier who had gained his experience in war time in America and in peace time in Prussia. In vain Custine wrote to the Minister of War, "In the name of the Republic send Berthier to me to help me in my difficulties," in vain the Commissioners with the army reported that "Berthier has gained the esteem and confidence of all good patriots." Vain also was the valour and ability he showed in the campaign against the Royalists in La Vendée. Bouchotte, the incapable, the friend of the brutish, blockheaded Hébert, the insulter of the Queen, the destroyer of the army, decreed that his loyalty to the Republic was not sincere, and by a stroke of the pen dismissed him; thus during the whole of the year 1793 the French army was deprived of the service of an officer who, owing to his powers of organisation, was worth fifty thousand of the butcher generals.

In 1795, with the fall of the Jacobins, Berthier was restored to his rank and sent as chief of the staff to Kellermann, commanding the Army of the Alps, and before the end of the year the staff work of Kellermann's army became the pattern for all the armies of the Republic. When in March, 1796, Bonaparte was appointed commander of the Army of Italy, he at once requisitioned Berthier as the chief of the staff, and from that day till April, 1814, Berthier seldom if ever left the future Emperor's side, serving him with a patience and cheerfulness which neither ill-will nor neglect seemed to disturb. Though over forty-two years of age and sixteen years older than his new chief, the chief of the staff was still in the prime of his manhood. Short, thick-set and athletic, his frame proclaimed his immense physical strength, while his strong alert face under a mass of thick curly hair foretold at a glance his mental capacity.

A keen sportsman, in peace he spent all his leisure in the chase. Hard exercise and feats of physical endurance were his delight. Fatigue he never knew, and on one occasion he was said to have spent thirteen days and nights in the saddle. To strangers and officials he was silent and stern, but his aloofness of manner hid a warm heart and a natural sincerity, and many a poor officer or returned émigré received secret help from his purse. Though naturally of a strong character, his affection and respect for his great commander became the dominating note in his career; in fact, it might almost be said that, in later years, his personality became merged to such an extent in that of Napoleon that he was unable to see the actions of the Emperor in their proper perspective. From their first meeting Bonaparte correctly guessed the impression he had made on his new staff officer, and aimed at increasing his influence over him. Meanwhile he was delighted with him, he wrote to the Directory, "Berthier has talents, activity, courage, character – all in his favour." Berthier on his side was well satisfied; as he said to a friend who asked him how he could serve a man with such a temper, "Remember that one day it will be a fine thing to be second to Bonaparte." So the two worked admirably together.

Bonaparte kept in his own hands the movement of troops, the direction of skirmishes and battles, commissariat, discipline, and all communications from the Government. Berthier had a free hand in the organisation and maintenance of the general staff, the headquarter staff, and the transmission of orders, subject to inspection by Bonaparte; he also had to throw into written form all verbal orders, and he alone was responsible for their promulgation and execution. It was his ability to work out in detail and to reduce into clear, lucid orders the slightest hint of his commander which,

as Napoleon said later, "was the great merit of Berthier, and was of inestimable importance to me. No other could possibly have replaced him." Thanks to Berthier's admirable system, Bonaparte was kept in touch with every part of his command. One of the first principles laid down in the staff regulations was, "That it was vital to the good of the service that the correspondence of the army should be exceedingly swift and regular, that nothing should be neglected which might contribute to this end." To ensure regularity of communication, divisional commanders and officers detached in command of small columns were ordered to report at least twice a day to headquarters. With each division, in addition to the divisional staff, there were officers detached from the headquarters staff. All important despatches had to be sent in duplicate; in times of great danger commanding officers had to send as many as eight different orderly officers each with a copy of despatches.

But it was not only as an organiser and transmitter of orders that Berthier proved his usefulness to his chief. At Lodi he showed his personal courage and bravery among the band of heroes who forced the bridge, and Bonaparte paid him a fine tribute when he wrote in his despatches, "If I were bound to mention all the soldiers who distinguished themselves on that wonderful day, I should be obliged to mention all the carabiniers and grenadiers of the advance guard, and nearly all the officers of the staff; but I must not forget the courageous Berthier, who on that day played the part of gunner, trooper, and grenadier." At Rivoli, in addition to his staff duties, Berthier commanded the centre of the army, and fought with a stubbornness beyond all praise. By the end of the campaign of 1796 he had proved that he was as great a chief of the staff as Bonaparte was a great commander. Doubtless it is true that before the commencement of a campaign an army possesses in itself the causes of its future victory or defeat, and the Army of Italy, with its masses of enthusiastic veterans and the directing genius of Bonaparte, was bound to defeat the Austrians with their listless men and incompetent old generals; but, without the zeal, activity, and devotion which Berthier transfused through the whole of the general staff, success could not have been so sudden or so complete.

After Leoben the conqueror of Italy employed his trusty friend on numerous diplomatic missions in connection with the annexation of Corfu and the government of the Cisalpine republic. Meanwhile he was in close communication with him in regard to the proposed descent on England and the possible expedition to the East. To Berthier, if to any one, Bonaparte entrusted his secret designs, for he knew that he could do so in safety. Accordingly, in 1798, finding an invasion of England impossible at the moment, he persuaded the Directory to send Berthier to Italy as commander-in-chief, his object being to place him in a position to gather funds for the Egyptian expedition. From Italy Berthier sent his former commander the most minute description of everything of importance, but he found the task difficult and uncongenial, and prayed him "to recall me promptly. I much prefer being your aide-de-camp to being commander-in-chief here." Still he carried out his orders and marched on Rome, to place the eight million francs' worth of diamonds wrung from the Pope to the credit of the army. From Rome he returned with coffers well filled for the Egyptian expedition, but leaving behind him an army half-mutinous for want of pay; his blind devotion to Bonaparte hid this incongruity from his eyes.

As in Italy in 1795 so in Egypt, Berthier was Bonaparte's right-hand man, methodical, indefatigable, and trustworthy. But even his iron frame could scarcely withstand the strain of three years' continuous active service, the incessant office work day and night, and the trials of an unaccustomed climate. After the battle of the Pyramids he fell sick, and before the Syrian expedition, applied to return to France. Unkind friends hinted that he longed for his mistress, Madame Visconti, but Bonaparte, knowing that it was not this but sheer overstrain which had caused his breakdown in health, gave him the desired leave and made all arrangements for his journey home. However, at the moment of departure Berthier's love for his chief overcame his longing for rest, and, in spite of ill-health, he withdrew his resignation and set out with the army for Syria. As ever, he found plenty of work, for even in the face of the ill-success of the expedition, Bonaparte determined to administer Egypt as if the French occupation was to be for ever permanent; and Berthier, in addition to his

ordinary work, was ordered to edit a carefully executed map from the complete survey which was being made of the country.

It was to Berthier that Bonaparte first divulged his intention of leaving Egypt and returning to France, and his determination to upset the Directory. Liberal by nature, but essentially a man of method and a disciplinarian, the chief of the staff was quite in accord with his commander's ideas on the regeneration of France, and loyally supported him during the *coup d'état* of the 18th Brumaire. Thereafter the First Consul appointed his friend Minister of War, a position that gave full scope to his talents. All the administrative services had at once to be reorganised, the frontier fortresses garrisoned and placed in a state of defence, and the army covering the frontiers supplied with food, pay, equipment, and reinforcements, while the formation of the secret Army of Reserve was a task which alone would have occupied all the attention of an ordinary man; in fact, the safety of France hung on this army. Consequently, since, by the constitution, the First Consul was unable himself to take command in the field, in April, 1800, he transferred Berthier from the War Office to the head of this most important force. It is not generally known that the idea of the passage of the Alps by the St. Bernard Pass actually originated with Berthier, and had first been projected by him as early as 1795. So it was at the execution of what was really his own idea that for two months Berthier slaved. At times even his stout heart quailed, as when he wrote to the First Consul, "It is my duty to complain of the position of this army on which you have justly spent so much interest, and which is paralysed because it can only rely on its bayonets, on account of the lack of ammunition and means to transport the artillery." Incessant work and toil were at last rewarded; but when the Army of the Reserve debouched on the Austrian lines of communication, the First Consul appeared in person, and, though nominally in command, Berthier once again resumed his position of chief of the staff. Without a murmur he allowed Bonaparte to reap all the glory of Marengo, for he knew that without the First Consul, however excellent his own dispositions were, they would have been lacking in the driving power which alone teaches men how to seize on victory. After Marengo, Berthier was despatched as Ambassador Extraordinary to Madrid, "to exhort Spain by every possible means to declare war on Portugal, the ally of England." The result of this mission was eminently successful; a special treaty was drawn up and Spain sold Louisiana to France. By October the ambassador was once again back in Paris at his old post of Minister of War – a post which he held continuously during peace and war till August, 1807. The position was no light one, for even during the short years of peace it involved the supervision of the expedition to San Domingo, the defence of Italy, the reorganisation of the army, and the re-armament of the artillery, in addition to the ordinary routine of official work. Moreover, the foundations of the Consulate being based on the army, it was essential that the army should be efficient and content, and consequently the French soldier of that day was not, as in other countries, neglected in peace time. The officers in command of the troops were constantly reminded by the War Minister that "the French soldier is a citizen placed under military law" – not an outcast or serf, whose well-being and comfort concern no one.

On the establishment of the Empire Berthier, like many another, received the reward for his faithfulness to Napoleon. Honours were showered upon him. The first to receive the Marshal's bâton, he was in succession created senator by right as a dignitary of the Empire, grand officer of the palace and grand huntsman to the crown, while at the coronation he carried the imperial globe. But though the Emperor thus honoured, and treated him as his most trustworthy confidant, the cares of state to some extent withdrew Napoleon from close intimacy with his old companion. At the same time the Marshal was insensibly separated from his former comrades-in-arms by his high rank and employment, which, while it tended to make him more the servant than the friend of the Emperor, also caused him to be regarded as a superior to be obeyed by those who were formerly his equals. At all times a strict disciplinarian, and one who never passed over a breach of orders, the Marshal, as voicing the commands of the Emperor, gradually began to assume a stern attitude to all subordinates, and spared neither princes or marshals, when he considered that the good of the service required that

they should be reprimanded and shown their duty. So strong was the sense of subordination in the army and the desire to stand well with Napoleon, that even the fiery Murat paid attention to orders and reprimands signed by Berthier in the name of the Emperor.

Meanwhile the work of the War Minister increased day by day. The organisation and supervision of the Army of the Ocean added considerably to his work, which was much interfered with by visits of inspection in company with the Emperor, or far-distant expeditions to the frontiers and to Italy for the coronation at Milan.

On August 3rd, 1805, the Emperor created the Marshal major-general and chief of the staff to the Army of the Ocean, and himself assumed command of the Army and held a grand review of one hundred thousand men. Everybody thought that the moment for the invasion of England had arrived. Berthier, and perhaps Talleyrand, alone knew that Austria, not England, was the immediate quarry, and all through August the major-general was busy working out the routes for the concentration of the various corps in the valley of the Danube; whilst at the same time as War Minister he was responsible for the supervision of all the troops left in France and in garrison in Italy, Belgium, Holland, and Hanover. Consequently he had to divide his staff into two sections, one of which he took with him into the field, the other remaining in Paris under an assistant who was capable of managing the ordinary routine, but who had to forward all difficult problems to the War Minister in the field. Even during the drive to the frontier there was no abatement of the strain; during the journey the Emperor would give orders which had to be expanded and written out in the short stoppages for food and rest. By day the major-general travelled in the Emperor's carriage; at night he always slept under the same roof with him, to be ready at any moment, in full uniform, to receive his commands and expand and dictate them to his clerks. Everyone knew when the major-general was worried, for he had a habit of biting his nails when making a decision or trying to solve a problem, but otherwise he never showed any sign of feeling, and whether tired or troubled by the Emperor's occasional outbursts of temper, he went on with his work with the methodical precision of an automaton. To belong to the general staff when Berthier was major-general was no bed of roses, no place for gilded youth, for with Napoleon commanding and Berthier directing, if there was often fighting there was plenty of writing; if there was galloping on horseback by day, to make up for it by night there were hours of steady copying of orders and no chance of laying down the pen until all business was finished. Thanks to this excellent staff work, Napoleon's ambitious plans were faithfully accomplished, the Austrians were completely taken in by the demonstration in the Black Forest, the French columns stepped astride of their communications on the Danube, and Mack was forced to surrender at Ulm. But Ulm was only the commencement of the campaign, and even after Austerlitz Napoleon pursued the enemy with grim resolution. This was one of the secrets of his success, for, as Berthier wrote to Soult, "The Emperor's opinion is that in war nothing is really achieved as long as there remains something to achieve; a victory is not complete as long as greater success can still be gained."

After the treaty of Pressburg, on December 27, 1805, Napoleon quitted the army and returned to Paris, leaving the major-general in command of the Grand Army with orders to evacuate the conquered territory when the terms of the treaty had been carried out by the Austrians; but the Emperor retained the real control, and every day a courier had to be despatched to Paris with a detailed account of every event, and every day a courier arrived from Paris bearing fresh orders and instructions. For Napoleon refused to allow the slightest deviation from his orders: "Keep strictly to the orders I give you," he wrote; "execute punctually your instructions. I alone know what I want done." Meanwhile the major-general was still War Minister and had to supervise all the more important business of the War Office; while he also found time to edit an official history of the campaign of 1805, and to superintend the execution of a map of most of the Austrian possessions. The work was immense, but Berthier never flagged, and the Emperor showed his appreciation of his zeal when on March 30th, 1806, he conferred on him the principality of Neuchâtel with the title of Prince and Duke, to hold in full possession and suzerainty for himself, his heirs and successors, with one

stipulation, that he should marry. He added that the Prince's passion for Madame Visconti had lasted too long, that it was not becoming to a dignitary of the Empire, and that he was now fifty years old and ought to think of providing an heir to his honours. The Prince Marshal never had time to visit personally his principality, but he sent one of his intimate friends, General Dutaillis, to provide for the welfare of his new subjects, and to the best of his ability he saw that they were well governed, while a battalion of picked troops from Neuchâtel was added to the Imperial Guard. But, orders or no orders, the Prince could never break himself free from the trammels of his mistress, and Napoleon gave him but little leisure in which to find a congenial partner, so that it was not till after Tilsit, in the brief pause before the Peninsular War, that Berthier at last took a wife. His chosen Princess was Elizabeth, the daughter of William, Duke of Bavaria, brother of the King. She was married with all due solemnity in March, 1808, and though the exigencies of war gave her but little opportunity of seeing much of her husband, affection existed between them, as also between Berthier and his father-in-law, the Duke of Bavaria. All cause of difficulty was smoothed over by the fact that in time the Princess herself conceived an affection for Madame Visconti.

By September, 1806, the Grand Army had evacuated Austria, and the Prince Marshal was hoping to return to Paris when suddenly he was informed by the Emperor of the probability of a campaign against Prussia. On the 23rd definite orders arrived indicating the points of assembly; by the next day detailed letters of instructions for every corps had been worked out and despatched by the headquarters staff. Napoleon himself arrived at Würzburg on October 2nd, and found his army concentrated, but deficient of supplies. At first his anger burst out against the chief of the staff, but a moment's reflection proved to him that there was not sufficient transport in Germany to mass both men and supplies in the time he had given, and he entirely exonerated Berthier, who by hard work contrived in three days to collect sufficient supplies to allow of the opening of the thirty days' campaign which commenced with Jena and ended by carrying the French troops across the Vistula. The fresh campaign in the spring of 1807 was attended by an additional difficulty, there existed no maps of the district, and the topographical department of the staff was worked off its legs in supplying this deficiency. Meanwhile, during the halt after Pultusk, the major-general was busy re-clothing and re-equipping the army and hurrying up reinforcements; while in addition to the work of the War Office he had to supervise the French forces in Italy and Naples. After Tilsit, as after Pressburg, Napoleon hurried back to France and left the Prince of Neuchâtel to arrange for the withdrawal of the Grand Army, and it was not till July 27th that Berthier at last returned to Paris.

The Prince came back more than ever dazzled by the genius of the Emperor; not even Eylau had taught him that there were limits to his idol's powers. But with more than eight hundred thousand men on a war footing, with divisions and army corps scattered from the Atlantic to the Niemen, from Lübeck to Brindisi, it was impossible for one man to be at once chief of the staff and Minister of War. Accordingly, on August 9th the Emperor made General Clarke Minister of War, and, to show that this was no slight on his old friend, on the same day he created the Prince of Neuchâtel Vice-constable of France. For the next three months Berthier was able to enjoy his honours at his home at Grosbois, or in his honorary capacity at Fontainebleau, but in November the Emperor carried him off with him to Italy on a tour of inspection. During the whole of this holiday in Italy the Prince was busy elaborating the details of the coming campaign in Spain, and it was the Spanish trouble which cut short his honeymoon, for on April 2nd he had to start with the Emperor for Bayonne. From the outset the Prince warned the Emperor that the question of supplies lay at the root of all difficulties in Spain; but Napoleon clung to his idea that war should support war, and Berthier knew that it was hopeless to attempt to remove a fixed idea from his head, and, still believing in his omnipotence, he thought all would be well. Meanwhile, as the summer went on, it was not only Spain that occupied the Prince's attention, for the conquest of Denmark had to be arranged, and the passes in Silesia and Bohemia carefully mapped, in view of hostilities with Prussia or Austria. Early in August Berthier was at Saint Cloud making arrangements to reinforce Davout in Silesia, owing to the growing hostility

of Austria, when, on the 16th, arrived the news that Joseph had had to evacuate all the country west of the Ebro. But Napoleon and Berthier could not go to his help until after the imperial meeting at Erfurt in September. However, on reaching Spain, the magic of the Emperor's personality soon restored the vigour and prestige of the French arms. Still the Prince Marshal could not hide from himself that all was not as it used to be; Napoleon's temper was more uncertain, and the Marshals, smarting under reprimands, were not pulling together. When the Emperor returned to France, after having missed "the opportunity of giving the English a good lesson," he left Berthier behind for a fortnight "to be sure that King Joseph had a proper understanding of everything." But trouble was bound to come, for the Emperor himself was breaking his own canon of the importance of "the unity of command" by nominally leaving Joseph in control of all the troops in Spain, but at the same time making the Marshals responsible to himself through the major-general.

In 1809 Napoleon made another grave mistake. He had calculated that Austria could make no forward movement before April 15th, and accordingly he sent Berthier early in March to take temporary command of the Grand Army, with instructions to order Davout to concentrate at Ratisbon and Masséna at Augsburg. His idea was that there would be ample time later to order a concentration on either wing or on the centre. But the Austrians were ready quite a fortnight before he had calculated. The major-general kept him well informed of every movement of the enemy, and pointed out the dangerous isolation of Davout. Still the Emperor did not believe the Austrian preparations were so forward; and a despatch from Paris, written on April 10th, which arrived at headquarters at Donauwörth on the 11th, ordered the major-general to retain Davout at Ratisbon and move his own headquarters there, "and that in spite of anything that may happen." Unfortunately, a semaphore despatch sent a few hours later, when Napoleon had really grasped the situation, went astray and never reached Berthier. The Prince of Neuchâtel understood as clearly as any one the dangerous position of Davout; the Duke of Eckmühl himself thought that the major-general was trying to spoil his career by laying him open to certain defeat; depression spread through all the French corps. But after years of blind devotion to his great chief Berthier could not steel himself to break distinct orders, emphasised as they were by the expression "in spite of whatever may happen," and a great catastrophe was only just averted by the arrival of Napoleon, who at once ordered Davout to withdraw and Masséna to advance. Berthier himself was visited by the full fury of the Emperor's anger. But the cloud soon passed, for Berthier was as indispensable as ever, and more so when, after the failure at Aspern-Essling, immense efforts had to be made to hurry up troops from every available source. At the end of the campaign the Emperor justly rewarded his lieutenant by creating him Prince of Wagram.

Once again Napoleon left Berthier to arrange for the withdrawal of the army, and it was not till December 1st that the Prince of Wagram regained Paris and took up the threads of the Peninsular campaign. His stay there was short, for by the end of February he was back again in Vienna, this time not as major-general of a victorious army, but as Ambassador Extraordinary to claim the hand of the Archduchess Marie Louise for his master, the Emperor Napoleon, and to escort her to her new home. For the next two years the Prince remained at home at Grosbois or on duty at Fontainebleau, but in spite of great domestic happiness he was much worried by the terrible Spanish war. No one saw more clearly that every effort ought to be made to crush the English, but he was powerless to persuade the Emperor, and he had to endure to the full all the difficulties arising from breaking the "unity of command." No one understood better what hopeless difficulties would arise when Napoleon ordered him to write, "The King will command the army… The Guard does not form part of the army." To add to these troubles, it became more and more evident that Germany was riddled with secret societies and that war with Russia was inevitable. So it was with a sigh of relief that in January, 1812, he received the order to turn his attention from Spain and resume his functions as major-general of the Grand Army. Not that he desired further active service; like many another of the Emperor's soldiers, he mistrusted the distant expedition to Russia, and feared for the honour and safety of France. Already in his sixtieth year, there was little he could gain personally from war. As he said to

Napoleon, "What is the good of having given me an income of sixty thousand pounds a year in order to inflict on me the tortures of Tantalus? I shall die here with all this work. The simplest private is happier than I." The Emperor, knowing the attitude of many of his Marshals, and himself feeling the strain of this immense enterprise, was unusually irritable. Consequently relations at headquarters were often strained, and the Marshals were angry at the severe reprimands to which they were subjected. The controlling leaders being out of gear the machine did not run smoothly: there was nothing but friction and tension. The Marshals were inclined to attribute their disgrace to the ill-will of Berthier and not to the temper of Napoleon. Particularly was this the case with Davout, who since 1809 had suspected that Berthier desired to ruin his reputation. Accordingly the Prince of Eckmühl set down the succession of reprimands which were hurled at his head to the machinations of the major-general, and not, as was the case, to Napoleon's jealousy of him, because people had prophesied he would become King of Poland. This misunderstanding was most unfortunate, for it prevented Berthier from effecting a reconciliation between Davout and the Emperor. Hence Napoleon was driven more and more to trust to the advice of the rash, unstable King of Naples. The major-general's lot through the campaign was most miserable. Working day and night to supervise the organisation of the huge force of six hundred thousand men; mistrusted by his former comrades; blamed for every mishap by the Emperor, whatever the fault might be, he had to put up with the bitterest insults, and while working as no other man could work, to endure such taunts as, "Not only are you no good, but you are in the way." Everything that went wrong "was the fault of the general staff, which is so organised that it foresees nothing," whether it was the shortcomings of the contractors or the burning of their own magazines by the Russians. But what most moved Napoleon's anger against the chief of the staff was that Berthier, with "the parade states" before him, emphasising the enormous wastage of the army, constantly harped on the danger of pressing on to Moscow. So strained became the relations between them, that for the last part of the advance they no longer met at meals. But during the hours of the retreat the old friendship was resumed. Berthier bore no malice, and showed his bravery by himself opposing the enemy with musket and bayonet; and on one occasion, with Bessières, Murat, and Rapp, he saved the Emperor from a sotnia of Cossacks.

When Napoleon quitted the army at Vilna he left the major-general behind to help the King of Naples to withdraw the remnant of the Grand Army. Marching on foot through the deep snow, with fingers and nose frostbitten, the sturdy old veteran of sixty endured the fatigue as well as the hardiest young men in their prime; and in addition to the physical fatigue of marching, had to carry out all the administrative work, and bear the moral responsibility for what remained of the army; for the King of Naples, thinking of nothing but how to save his own crown, when difficulties increased, followed the example of Napoleon and deserted his post. Thereon the major-general took on himself to nominate Prince Eugène as Murat's successor. But in the end his health gave way, and the Emperor himself wrote to Prince Eugène telling him to send the old warrior home.

Berthier reached Paris on February 9th, much broken down in health; but his wonderful physique soon enabled him to regain his strength, and by the end of March he was once again hard at work helping the Emperor to extemporise an army. With his complete knowledge of this force, no one was more astonished than Berthier at the successes of Lützen and Bautzen, and no one more insistent in his advice to the Emperor to accept the terms of the Allies during the armistice; but he advised in vain. Then followed the terrible catastrophe of Leipzig, due undoubtedly to Berthier's dread of acting without the express orders of the Emperor. The engineer officer charged with preparing the line of retreat reported that the one bridge across the Elster was not sufficient. The major-general, knowing that the Emperor desired to hide any signs of retreat from the Allies, replied that he must await the Emperor's orders, so, when, after three days' fighting, the retreat could no longer be postponed, a catastrophe was inevitable.

Yet, in spite of everything, the Emperor refused to acknowledge himself beaten, and by the commencement of 1814 was once again ready to take the field, though by now the Allies had invaded

France. Loyal as ever, Berthier worked his hardest; but he once again incurred the Emperor's anger by entreating him to accept the terms offered him at Châtillon. Still, when the end came and Napoleon abdicated, Berthier remained at his side, and it was only when the Emperor had released his Marshals from their allegiance that on April 11th he sent in his adhesion to the new government. When all save Macdonald had deserted the fallen Emperor, Berthier stayed on at Fontainebleau, directing the withdrawal of the remnants of the army, and making arrangements for the guard which was to accompany Napoleon to Elba. But though he remained with him until the day before he started for Elba, Berthier refused to share his exile, and at the time Napoleon was magnanimous enough to see that, owing to his age and the care of his children, he could not expect such a sacrifice.

So far, the Prince had done all that honour and affection could demand of him. But, unfortunately for his fame, instead of withdrawing into private life, he listened to the prayers of his wife, who keenly felt the loss of her title of "Serene Princess." It was at her desire that he continued to frequent the Bourbon court and actually accepted the captaincy of one of the new companies of royal guards. This and the fact that, as senior of the Marshals, Berthier had led his fellow Marshals to meet the King at Compiègne, caused the Prince of Wagram to be regarded as a traitor by Napoleon and the Imperialists. Moreover, the Prince Marshal now saw in Napoleon the disturber of the peace of Europe, so when the Emperor suddenly returned from Elba he withdrew from France, and retired to Bamberg, in his father-in-law's dominions.

It is commonly supposed that Berthier committed suicide, but the medical evidence shows that his fall was probably the result of giddiness arising from dyspepsia. It was on June 1st that the accident happened. He was watching a division of Russian troops passing through the town, and was much distressed by the sight, and heard to murmur, "My poor country!" Ever interested in soldiers, he got on a chair on the balcony before the nursery windows to get a better view of the troops, and while doing so lost his balance and fell to the ground.

For the moment the tragic death of the Marshal was the talk of Europe, but only for the moment, for the fate of the world was hanging on the issues of the great battle which was imminent in Belgium. If the Prince of Wagram had been there, it is more than conceivable that the scales would have fallen other than they did; for it was the indifferent staff work of Soult and the bad drafting of orders which lost the French the campaign. Of this, Napoleon was so firmly convinced that he never could efface it from his memory; again and again he was heard saying, "If Berthier had been here I should never have met this misfortune." The Emperor, in spite of the fact that in 1814 he had told Macdonald that Berthier could never return, was convinced that he would, and had told Rapp that he was certain he would come back to him. It was this failure to return which so embittered the fallen Emperor against the Prince of Wagram, and led to those cruel strictures on his character to which he gave vent at St. Helena. Moreover, Napoleon, so great in many things, was so jealous of his own glory that he could be mean beyond words. Even in the early years when he heard people praising Berthier's work in 1796, he told his secretary, Bourrienne, "As for Berthier, since you have been with me, you see what he is – he is a blockhead." At St. Helena, forgetting his old opinions, "Berthier has his talents, activity, courage, character – all in his favour." Forgetting that he himself had taught Berthier to be imperious, he derided his rather pompous manner, saying, "Nothing is so imperious as weakness which feels itself supported by strength. Look at women." Berthier, with his admirably lucid mind, great physique, methodical powers and ambition, would have made his name in any profession. He undoubtedly chose to be second to Napoleon; he served him with a fidelity that Napoleon himself could not understand, and he won his great commander's love and esteem in spite of the selfishness of the Corsican's nature. "I really cannot understand," said Napoleon to Talleyrand, "how a relation that has the appearance of friendship has established itself between Berthier and me. I do not indulge in useless sentiments, and Berthier is so uninteresting that I do not know why I should care about him at all, and yet when I think of it I really have some liking for him." "It is because he believes in you," said the former bishop and reader of men's souls. It was this belief in Napoleon which in

time obsessed the Prince of Wagram's mind, which killed his own initiative and was responsible for his blunders in 1809 and at Leipzig, and turned him into a machine which merely echoed the Emperor's commands. "Monsieur le Maréchal, the Emperor orders." "Monsieur, it is not me, it is the Emperor you ought to thank." These hackneyed phrases typified more than anything else the bounds of the career which the Marshal had deliberately marked out for himself. In Berthier's eyes it was no reproach, but a testimony to his own principles, "that he never gave an order, never wrote a despatch, which did not in some way emanate from Napoleon." It was this which, with some appearance of truth, pointing to his notable failures, allowed Napoleon to say of him at St. Helena, "His character was undecided, not strong enough for a commander-in-chief, but he possessed all the qualities of a good chief of the staff: a complete mastery of the map, great skill in reconnaissance, minute care in the despatch of orders, magnificent aptitude for presenting with the greatest simplicity the most complicated situation of an army."

II
JOACHIM MURAT, MARSHAL, KING OF NAPLES

Stable-boy, seminarist, Marshal, King, Murat holds the unchallenged position of Prince of Gascons: petulant, persevering, ambitious and vain, he surpasses D'Artagnan himself in his overwhelming conceit. The third son of an innkeeper of La Bastide Fortunière in upper Quercy, Joachim Murat was born on March 25, 1767. From his earliest childhood Joachim was a horse-lover and a frequenter of the stables; but his parents had higher aims for their bright, smiling, intelligent darling, and destined him for the priesthood. The young seminarist was highly thought of by the preceptors at the College of Saint Michel at Cahors and the Lazarist Fathers at Toulouse; but neither priest nor mother had truly grasped his dashing character, and one February morning in 1787 Joachim slipped quietly out of the seminary doors and enlisted in the Chasseurs of the Ardennes, who were at the moment billeted in Toulouse. Two years later this promising recruit, having fallen foul of the military authorities, had to leave the service under a cloud. A post as draper's assistant was a poor exchange for the young soldier, who found the cavalry service of the royal army scarcely dashing enough, but the Revolution gave an outlet which Murat was quick to seize. For three years the future King harangued village audiences of Quercy on the iniquities of caste and the equality of all men; so that when, in February, 1792, the Assembly called for volunteers for the "Garde Constitutionnelle" of Louis XVI., what better choice could the national guard of Montfaucon make than in nominating Joachim Murat, the handsome ex-sergeant of the Chasseurs of the Ardennes?

In Paris, Joachim soon found that the royal road to success lay in denouncing loudly all superior officers of lack of patriotism. Soon there was no more brazen-voiced accuser than Murat. In the course of a year he worked his way out of the "Garde Constitutionnelle," and by April, 1793, he had attained the rank of captain in the 12th Chasseurs. Meanwhile, he had been selected as aide-de-camp by General d'Ure de Molans. Having seen no service, he owed his appointment largely to his conceit and good looks. Blue-eyed, with an aquiline nose and smiling lips; with long chestnut curls falling over his well-poised head; endowed with great physical strength, shown in his strong, supple arms and in the long flat-thighed legs of a horseman, he appeared the most perfect type of the dare-devil, dashing cavalry soldier. The moderate republican general, d'Ure de Molans, was useful to him for a time, but the young Gascon saw that the days of the extremist were close at hand; accordingly, he allied himself with an adventurer called Landrieux, who was raising a body of cut-throats whose object was plunder, not fighting. The Convention, which had licensed Landrieux to raise this corps of patriotic defenders of the country, accepted his nomination of Murat as acting lieutenant-colonel. But they soon fell out, for Murat had the audacity to try and make these patriots fight instead of merely seeking plunder. The consequence of this quarrel was that, early in 1794, he found himself accused as a ci-devant noble. Imprisoned at Amiens, and brought before the Committee of Public Safety, in a fit of republican enthusiasm he changed his name to Marat. But this did not save him, and he owed his life to a deputation from his native Quercy, which proved both his humble birth and his high republicanism.

The 13th Vendémiaire was the turning-point in Murat's life, for on that day, for the first time, he came in contact with his future chief, the young General Bonaparte, and gained his attention by the masterly way he saved the guns at Sablons from the hands of the Royalists. The future Emperor ever knew when to reward merit, and on being appointed to command the army in Italy he at once selected him as his aide-de-camp. So far he had seen little or no war service. But the campaign of 1796 proved that Bonaparte's judgment was sound, for by the end of the year there was no longer any necessity for Murat to blow his own trumpet. In the short campaign against the Sardinians he showed his talent as a cavalry leader by his judgment in charges at Dego and Mondovi. He had no cause to

grumble that he was not appreciated, for his general selected him to take to Paris the news of this victorious campaign and of the triumphant negotiations of Cherasco. He returned from Paris in May as brigadier-general, in time to take part in the crossing of the Mincio and to rob Kilmaine of some of his honours. The commander-in-chief still kept him attached to the headquarter staff, and constantly employed him on special service. His enterprises were numerous and varied – one week at Genoa on a special diplomatic mission, a week or two later leading a forlorn attack on the great fortress of Mantua, then commanding the right wing of the army covering the siege, he showed himself ever resourceful and daring. But during the autumn of 1796 he fell under the heavy displeasure of his chief, for at Milan and Montebello Josephine had shown too great favour to the young cavalry general. Murat accordingly had no scruples in intriguing with Barras against his chief. But his glorious conduct at Rivoli once again brought him back to favour, and Bonaparte entrusted him with an infantry brigade in the advance on Vienna, and later with a delicate independent mission in the Valtelline. But Murat, unlike Lannes, Marmont, and Duroc, was not yet indispensable to Bonaparte, and accordingly was left with the Army of Italy when the general returned in triumph to Paris. It was mainly owing to Masséna's enthusiastic report of his service in the Roman campaign, at the close of 1797, that he was selected as one of the supernumerary officers in the Egyptian expedition.

So far, Murat had not yet been able to distinguish himself above his comrades-in-arms. Masséna, Augereau, Serurier, and Laharpe left him far in the rear, but Egypt was to give him the chance of proving his worth, and showing that he was not only a dashing officer, but a cavalry commander of the first rank. He led the cavalry of the advance guard in the march up the Nile, and was present at the battle of the Pyramids and the taking of Cairo. But so far the campaign, instead of bringing him fresh honours, nearly brought him disgrace; for he joined the party of grumblers, and was one of those who were addressed in the famous reprimand, "I know some generals are mutinous and preach revolt … let them take care. I am as high above a general as above a drummer, and, if necessary, I will as soon have the one shot as the other."

On July 27, 1798, Murat was appointed governor of the province of Kalioub, which lies north of Cairo; to keep order among his turbulent subjects his whole force consisted of a battalion of infantry, twenty-five cavalrymen, and a three-pounder gun. His governorship was only part of the work Bonaparte required of him, for he was constantly away organising and leading light columns by land or river, harrying the Arabs and disbanded Mamelukes, sweeping the country, collecting vast depôts of corn and cattle, remounting the cavalry – proving himself a past master in irregular warfare. So well did he do his work that the commander-in-chief selected him to command the whole of the cavalry in the Syrian expeditionary force. Thanks to his handling of his horsemen, the march through Palestine occasioned the French but little loss. During the siege of Acre he commanded the covering force, and pushed reconnaissances far and wide. So feared was his name that the whole Turkish army fled before him on the banks of the Jordan, and left their camp and immense booty in the hands of the French. But though he had thus destroyed the relieving force, Acre, victualled by the English fleet, still held out, and Bonaparte had to retreat to Egypt.

It was at Aboukir that Murat consolidated his reputation as a great commander. The Turkish general had neglected to rest the right flank of his first line on the sea, and Murat, seizing his opportunity, fell on the unguarded flank with the full weight of his cavalry, and rolled the unfortunate Turks into the water. Thereafter, by the aid of a battery of artillery, the centre of the second line of the Turkish army was broken, and the French horse dashing into the gap, once again made short work of the enemy, and their leader captured with his own hands the Turkish commander. Bonaparte, in his despatch, did full justice to his subordinate. "The victory is mainly due to General Murat. I ask you to make him general of division: his brigade of cavalry has achieved the impossible." Murat himself was much distressed at being wounded in the face, as he feared it might destroy his good looks; however, he soon had the satisfaction of writing to his father: "The doctors tell me I shall not

be in the least disfigured, so tell all the young ladies that even if Murat has lost some of his good looks, they won't find that he has lost any of his bravery in the war of love."

His grumbles forgiven, Murat left Egypt among the chosen band of followers of whose fidelity Napoleon was assured; his special mission was to gain over the cavalry to the side of his chief. He it was who, with Leclerc, on the 18th Brumaire, forced his way into the Orangerie at the head of the grenadiers and hurled out the deputies. The First Consul rewarded him amply, appointing him inspector of the Consular Guard, and, later still, in preference to his rival, Lannes, gave him in marriage his sister Caroline. Murat had met Caroline Bonaparte at Montebello during the Italian campaign of 1796, and had at once been struck by her beauty. Like many another cavalier, he had a flame in every country, or rather, in every town which he visited. But by 1799 the gay Gascon saw that it was time to finish sowing his wild oats, since destiny was offering him a chance which falls to the lot of few mortals. It was by now clear that the First Consul's star was in the ascendant. Already his family were reaping the fruits of his success. Ambition, pride and love were the cords of the net which drew the willing Murat to Caroline. As brother-in-law to the First Consul, Joachim felt secure against his bitter rival, Lannes. To add point to this success, he knew that the victor of Montebello was straining every nerve to gain this very prize. Moreover, Fortune herself favoured his suit. Bonaparte had offered the hand of Caroline to the great General Moreau, but the future victor of Hohenlinden refused to join himself to the Corsican triumph. To cover his confusion the First Consul was glad to give his sister's hand to one of his most gallant officers, especially as by so doing he once and for all removed the haunting fear of an intrigue between him and Josephine. Accordingly, on January 25, 1800, Murat and Caroline were pronounced man and wife in the temple of the canton of Plailly, by the president of the canton. Though Caroline only brought with her a dot of forty thousand francs, she stood for what was better still, immense possibilities.

Murat's honeymoon was cut short by the Marengo campaign. In April he started, as lieutenant-general in command of the cavalry, to join the Army of the Reserve at Dijon. Once the corps of Lannes had, by the capture of Ivrea, secured the opening into Italy, the cavalry were able to take up their rôle, and with irresistible weight they swept down the plains of Lombardy, forced the river crossings, and on June 2nd entered Milan. Thence the First Consul despatched his horsemen to seize Piacenza, the important bridge across the Po, the key of the Austrian lines of communication. Murat, with a few troops, crossed the river in some twenty small rowing-boats, and, dashing forward, captured the bridge head on the southern bank, and thus secured not only the peaceful crossing of his force, but the capture of the town and the immense Austrian depôts. At Marengo the cavalry acted in separate brigades, and the decisive stroke of the battle fell to the lot of the younger Kellermann, whose brilliant charge decided the day in favour of the French. The despatches only mentioned that "General Murat's clothes were riddled by bullets."

So far Murat had always held subordinate commands; his great ambition was to become the commander-in-chief of an independent army. His wife, Caroline, and his sister-in-law, Josephine, were constant in their endeavours to gain this distinction for him from the First Consul. But it was not till the end of 1800 that they succeeded; and then only partially, for in December the lieutenant-general was appointed commander of a corps of observation, whose headquarters were at Milan, and whose duty was to overawe Tuscany and the Papal States. His campaign in central Italy is more noticeable for his endeavours to shake himself free from the control of General Brune, the commander-in-chief of the Army of Italy, than for any very brilliant manœuvres. Tuscany and the Papal States were easily conquered, and the King of Naples was only too glad to buy peace at Foligno. Italy lay at the feet of the French general, but what was most gratifying of all, after his successful negotiation with the King of Naples, the First Consul tacitly accepted the title which his brother-in-law had assumed of commander-in-chief of the Army of Naples. Murat had the satisfaction of having under his orders Lieutenant-General Soult, three generals of division and four generals of brigade. For the moment his Gascon vanity was satiated, while his Gascon greed was appeased by substantial

bribes from all the conquered countries of the Peninsula. The "commander-in-chief" was joined at Florence in May, 1801, by his wife, Caroline, and his young son, Achille, born in January, whom he found "charming, already possessed of two teeth." In the capital of Tuscany Murat gravely delivered to the inhabitants a historical lecture on their science, their civilisation, and the splendour of their state under the Medici. He spent the summer in visiting the watering-places of Italy. In August the First Consul raised him to the command of the troops of the Cisalpine Republic, and he retained this post for the next two years, and had his headquarters in Milan, making occasional expeditions to Paris and Rome, and on the whole content with his position, save for occasional quarrels with Melzi, the president of the Italian Republic. Their jurisdictions overlapped and the Gascon would play second fiddle to no one save to his great brother-in-law.

In January, 1804, the First Consul recalled Murat to Paris, nominating him commandant of the troops of the first military division and of the National Guard, and Governor of the city. Bonaparte's object was not so much to please his brother-in-law as to strengthen himself. He was concentrating his own family, clan, and all his most faithful followers in readiness for the great event, the proclamation of the Empire. Men like Lannes, whose views were republican, were discreetly kept out of the way on foreign missions; but Murat, as Bonaparte knew, was a pliant tool. As early as 1802 he had hotly favoured the Concordat, and had had his marriage recelebrated by Cardinal Consalvi; and both Caroline and Joachim infinitely preferred being members of the imperial family of the Emperor of the French to being merely relations of the successful general and First Consul of the French Republic. They were willing also to obey the future Emperor's commands, and to aid him socially by entertaining on a lavish scale, and their residence in Paris, the Hotel Thélusson, became the centre of gorgeous entertainments. While Murat strutted about in sky-blue overalls, covered with gold spangles, invented new uniforms, and bought expensive aigrettes for his busby, his wife showed her rococo taste by furnishing her drawing-room in red satin and gold, and her bedroom in rose-coloured satin and old point lace. They had their reward. Five days after the proclamation of the Empire, after a furious scene, Napoleon conceded the title of Imperial Highness to his sister with the bitter words: "To listen to you, people would think that I had robbed you of the heritage of the late King, our father." Meanwhile the Governor of Paris had received his Marshal's bâton, and in the following February was created senator, prince, and Grand Admiral of France.

The rupture of the peace of Amiens did not affect the life of the Governor of Paris; for two years he enjoyed this office, with all its opportunities of ostentation and display. But in August, 1805, the approaching war with Austria caused the Emperor to summon his most brilliant cavalry leader to his side. In that month he despatched him, travelling incognito as Colonel Beaumont, to survey the military roads into Germany, and especially to study the converging roads round Würzburg, and the suitability of that town as an advance depôt for an army operating on the Danube. From Würzburg Murat travelled hurriedly through Nuremberg, Ratisbon, and Passau, as far as the river Inn, returning viâ Munich, Ulm, the Black Forest, and Strassburg. Immediately on his return the Emperor appointed him "Lieutenant of the Empire, and commandant in his absence" of all the troops cantonned along the Rhine, and of such corps of the Grand Army as reached that river before himself. When war actually broke out Murat's duty was to mask, with his cavalry in the Black Forest, the turning movement of the other corps of the Grand Army which were striking at the Austrian rear. Once the turning movement was completed the Prince was entrusted with the command of the left wing of the army, which included his own cavalry division and the corps of Lannes and Ney. Excellent as he was as cavalry commander in the field, Murat had no head for great combinations. Instead of profiting by the advice of those able soldiers, Lannes and Ney, he spent his time quarrelling with them. He accordingly kept his troops on the wrong side of the Danube, with the result that in spite of Ney's brilliant action at Elchingen, two divisions of the Austrians under the Archduke Ferdinand escaped from Ulm. Prince Murat, however, retrieved his error by his brilliant pursuit of the escaped Austrians, and by hard riding and fighting captured quite half of the Archduke's command.

Impetuosity, perseverance, and dash are undoubtedly useful traits in the character of a cavalry commander, and of these he had his fair share. But his jealousy and vanity often led him astray. During the advance down the Danube, in his desire to gain the credit of capturing Vienna, he lost touch completely with the Russians and Austrians, who had retreated across the Danube at Krems, and he involved the Emperor in a dangerous position by leaving the unbeaten Russians on the flank of his line of communications. But the Prince quickly made amends for his rashness. The ruse by which he and Lannes captured the bridge below Vienna was discreditable no doubt from the point of view of morality. It was a direct lie to tell the Austrian commander that an armistice had been arranged and the bridge ceded to the French. But the fact remains that Murat saved the Emperor and the French army from the difficult and costly operation of crossing the broad Danube in the face of the Allies. A few days later the Prince's vanity postponed for some time the culminating blow, for although he had so successfully bluffed the enemy, he could not realise that they could deceive him, and believing their tales of an armistice, he allowed the Allies to escape from Napoleon's clutches at Hollabrünn. At Austerlitz the Prince Marshal covered himself with glory. In command of the left wing, ably backed by Lannes, he threw the whole weight of his cavalry on the Russians, demonstrating to the full the efficacy of a well-timed succession of charges on broken infantry, and giving a masterly lesson in the art of re-forming disorganised horsemen, by the use he made of the solid ranks of Lannes' infantry, from behind which he issued again and again in restored order, to fall on the shaken ranks of the enemy. At Austerlitz he was at his best. His old quarrel with Lannes was for the moment forgotten; his lieutenants, Nansouty, d'Hautpoul, and Sébastiani, were too far below him to cause him any jealousy. The action on the left was mainly one of cavalry, in which quickness of eye and decision were everything, where a fault could be retrieved by charging in person at the head of the staff, or by a few fierce words to a regiment slightly demoralised. Rapidity of action and a self-confidence which on the battlefield never felt itself beaten were the cause of Murat's success.

It was the fixed policy of Napoleon to secure the Rhine valley, so that never again would it be possible for the Austrians to threaten France. To gain this end he originated the Confederation of the Rhine, grouping all the small Rhineland states in a confederation of which he himself was the Protector, and binding the rulers of the individual states to his dynasty, either by marriage or by rewards. As part of this scheme the Emperor allotted to Murat and Caroline the duchies of Cleves and Berg, welding them into one province under the title of the Grand Duchy of Berg. Thus the Gascon innkeeper's son became in 1806 Joachim, Prince and Grand Admiral of France, and Grand Duke of Berg. He gained this honour not as Murat, the brilliant cavalry general, but as Prince Joachim, the brother-in-law of the Emperor Napoleon. The Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess did not, however, reside long in their capital, Düsseldorf; they infinitely preferred Paris. In their eyes Berg was but a stepping-stone to higher things, a source of profit and a pretext for exalting themselves at the expense of their neighbours. The Grand Duke entrusted the interior management of the Duchy to his old friend Agar, who had served him well in Italy, and who later became Count of Mosburg. Any prosperity which the Grand Duke enjoyed was entirely due to the financial ability of Agar. Murat, however, kept foreign affairs in his own hands. As Foreign Minister, by simply taking what he wanted, he added considerably to the extent of his duchy. But, like all Napoleon's satellites, he constantly found his position humiliating, for in spite of his tears and prayers, he had continually to see his duchy sacrificed to France. It was no use to complain that Napoleon had taken away the fortress of Wesel, which had been handed over to the Grand Duchy by special treaty by the King of Prussia, for, as Queen Hortense wisely asked him, "Who had really made that treaty? Who had given him the duchy, the fortress, and everything?"

In September, 1806, Murat's second and last visit to Düsseldorf was brought to an abrupt close by the opening of the Prussian campaign. On the eve of the battle of Jena his cavalry covered forty miles and arrived in time to give the enemy the coup-de-grâce on the following day, driving them in flight into Weimar. Then followed the famous pursuit across Prussia, in which Murat captured first-

class fortresses with cavalry regiments, and divisions of infantry with squadrons of horse, and ended by seizing Blücher and the whole of the Prussian artillery on the shore of the Baltic at Lübeck. But though his cavalry had thus wiped the Prussian army out of existence, the war dragged on, for, as in 1805, the Russians had entered the field. In November the Emperor despatched his brother-in-law to command the French corps which were massing round Warsaw. The Grand Duke read into this order the idea that he was destined to become the King of a revived Poland; accordingly he made a triumphant entry into Warsaw in a fantastic uniform, red leather boots, tunic of cloth of gold, sword-belt glittering with diamonds, and a huge busby of rich fur bedecked with costly plumes. The Poles greeted him with enthusiasm, and Murat hastened to write to the Emperor that "the Poles desired to become a nation under a foreign King, given them by your Majesty." While the Grand Duke dreamed of his Polish crown, the climate defeated the French troops, and when the Emperor arrived at the front the Prince had to lay aside his royal aspirations. But in spite of his disappointment he was still too much of a Frenchman and a soldier to allow his personal resentment to overcome his duty to his Emperor, and he continued to hope that by his daring and success he might still win his Polish crown. At Eylau he showed his customary bravery and his magnificent talent as a cavalry leader, when he saved the shattered corps of Augereau by a successful charge of over twelve thousand sabres. At the battle of Heilsberg the celebrated light cavalryman, Lasalle, saved his life, but a few minutes later the Grand Duke was able to cry quits by himself rescuing Lasalle from the midst of a Russian charge. Unfortunately for Murat, the prospective alliance with Russia once and for all compelled Napoleon to lay aside all thought of reviving the kingdom of Poland, and when the would-be King arrived with a Polish guard of honour and his fantastic uniform, he was met by the biting words of the Emperor: "Go and put on your proper uniform; you look like a clown."

After Tilsit the disappointed Grand Duke returned to Paris, where his equally ambitious wife had been intriguing with Josephine, Talleyrand and Fouché to get her husband nominated Napoleon's successor, in case the accidents of the campaign should remove the Emperor. But Napoleon had no intention of dying without issue. Thanks to his brother-in-law's generosity, Murat was able to neglect his half-million subjects in Berg and spend his revenues right royally in Paris. But early in 1808 his ambition was once again inflamed by the hope of a crown – not a revived kingship in Poland, but the ancient sceptre of Spain. Napoleon had decided that the Pyrenees should no longer exist, and that Portugal and Spain should become French provinces ruled by puppets of his own. Junot already held Portugal; it seemed as if it needed but a vigorous movement to oust the Bourbons from Madrid. Family quarrels had already caused a revolution in Spain. Charles had fled the kingdom, leaving the throne to his son Ferdinand. Both had appealed to Napoleon; consequently there was a decent pretext for sending a French army into Spain. On February 25th Murat was despatched at a few hours' notice, with orders to take over the supreme command of all the French corps which were concentrating in Spain, to seize the fortresses of Pampeluna and St. Sebastian, and to advance with all speed on Madrid, but he was given no clue as to what the Emperor's ulterior object might be. He was ordered, however, to keep the Emperor daily informed of the state of public opinion in Spain. Prince Joachim very soon perceived that King Charles was rejected by everybody, that the Prime Minister, the Prince of Peace, was extremely unpopular, and that Ferdinand was weak and irresolute: it seemed as if he would follow the example of the King of Portugal, and would flee to the colonies when the French army approached his capital. The only disquieting feature of the situation was the constant annihilation of small parties of French soldiers and the brutal murder of all stragglers. On March 23rd the French army entered Madrid. All was tranquil. Meanwhile the ex-King Charles had retired to Bayonne, and, by the orders of the Emperor, the Prince of Peace was sent there also, whereupon King Ferdinand, fearing that Napoleon might take his father's part, hurried off to France. At Bayonne both the claimants to the Spanish throne surrendered their rights to the Emperor, while at Madrid, Murat, hoping against hope, played the royal part and kept the inhabitants quiet with bull-fights and magnificent fêtes. So far the Spaniards, though restless, were waiting to see whether the

French were friends, as they protested, or in reality stealthy foes. The crisis came on May 2nd, when the French troops were compelled to evacuate Madrid on account of the fury of the populace at the attempted abduction of the little Prince, Don Francisco. Murat showed to the full his indomitable courage, fighting fiercely, not only for his Emperor, but for the crown which he thought was his. Bitter indeed were his feelings when he received a letter dated that fatal day, May 2nd, informing him that Joseph was to be King of Spain, and that he might choose either Portugal or Naples as his kingdom. In floods of tears he accepted Naples, but so cruel was the blow that his health gave way, and instead of hurrying off to his new kingdom he had to spend the summer drinking the waters at Barèges; his sensitive Gascon feelings had completely broken down under the disappointment, and, for the time being, he was physically and morally a wreck.

Murat was in no hurry to commence his reign, and his subjects showed no great anxiety to see their new ruler. But when King Joachim Napoleon, to give him his new title, arrived at Naples he was received with unexpected warmth. The new monarch, with his striking personality and good looks, at once captivated the hearts of his fickle Southern subjects. Joseph had been prudent and cold, Joachim was ostentatious and fiery. The Neapolitans had never really cared for their Bourbon sovereigns. Some of the noblesse had from interest clung to the old dynasty, but the greater part of the nobility cared little who ruled them so long as their privileges were not interfered with. Among the middle class there was a strong party which had accepted the doctrines of the French Revolution. The lower class were idle and lazy, and willing to serve any sovereign who appealed to them by ostentation. The people who really held the key of the hearts of the mass of the population were the clergy. Joseph, with his liberal ideas, had attempted to free the people from clerical thraldom. Joachim, however, with his Southern instincts, refused to deny himself the use of such a powerful lever, and quickly ingratiated himself with his new subjects. From the moment that he arrived at Naples the new King determined, if not to rule Naples for the Neapolitans, at least, by pretending to do so, to rule Naples for himself and not for Napoleon. It is not, therefore, surprising that before the close of the year 1808 friction arose, which was further increased by the intrigues of Talleyrand and Fouché. These ministers, firmly convinced that Napoleon would never return from the Spanish war, had decided that in the event of his death they would declare Murat his successor rather than establish a regency for the young son of Louis Napoleon, the King of Holland.

In pursuance of the plan of winning his subjects' affections Joachim had at once called to his aid Agar, who had so successfully managed the finances of the Grand Duchy of Berg. The difficulties of finance in Naples were very great, and with Agar the King had to associate the subtle Corsican, Salicetti, who had so powerfully contributed to the rise of Napoleon. Taxation in Naples was heavy, for the Neapolitans had to find the money for the war with their old dynasty, which was threatening them from Sicily, aided by the English fleet. To secure the kingdom against the Sicilians and English, a large Neapolitan army of thirty thousand troops had to be maintained along with an auxiliary force of ten thousand French. Moreover, the Neapolitans had to pay for having a King like Joachim and a Queen Consort like Caroline. The royal household alone required 1,395,000 ducats per annum. To meet this heavy expense the ministers had to devise all sorts of expedients to raise money. Regular taxation, monopolies, mortgages, and loans barely sufficed to provide for the budget. Still the King managed to retain his popularity, and in his own way attempted to ameliorate the lot of his subjects. He introduced the Code Napoleon. He founded a military college, an artillery and engineer college, a naval college, a civil engineer college and a polytechnic school. He also instituted primary schools in every commune, and started an École Normale for the training of teachers. He expanded the staff of the University and established an Observatory and Botanical Garden at Naples. He attempted to conciliate the Neapolitan noblesse by gradually dismissing his French ministers and officers and appointing Neapolitan nobles in their place. At the same time he abolished feudal dues and customs. He also attempted to develop industries by giving them protection. Above all, by the strict measures of his minister Manhes he established peace in the interior by breaking down the organised system

of the freebooters and robbers. As time went on he found that the clergy and monks were too heavy a burden for his kingdom to bear, and, at the expense of his popularity, he had to cut down the numbers of the dioceses and parishes and abolish the religious orders.

From the first the new King grasped the fact that his kingdom would always be heavily taxed, and his throne insecure as long as the Bourbons, backed by the English, held Sicily. His plan of campaign, therefore, was to drive his enemy out of the smaller islands, and thereafter to demand the aid of French troops and make a determined effort against Sicily. In October, 1808, by a well-planned expedition, he captured the island of Capri, and caused the English commander, Sir Hudson Lowe, to capitulate. It was not till the autumn of 1810, however, that he was ready for the great expedition. Relying on the traditional hatred of the people of Messina for the Bourbons, he collected a strong force on the Straits, and waited till the moment when, after a gale, the English fleet had not yet arrived from the roads of Messina. On the evening of September 17th he sent away his advance guard of two thousand men in eighty small boats. Cavaignac, the commander of this force, secured the important villages of Santo Stefano and Santo Paolo. But at the critical moment the commander of the French division, acting according to the Emperor's orders, refused to allow his troops to cross. Before fresh arrangements could be made the English fleet reappeared on the scene, and Cavaignac and his force were thus sacrificed for no purpose. Joachim, as time showed, never forgave the Emperor for the failure of his cherished plan.

By the commencement of 1812, the coming Russian campaign overshadowed all other questions. Murat, who had earnestly begged to be allowed to share the Austrian campaign of 1809, was delighted to serve in person. But as King of Naples he refused to send a division of ten thousand men to reinforce the Grand Army, "as a Frenchman and a soldier he declared himself to the core a subject of the Emperor, but as King of Naples he aspired to perfect independence." It was this double attitude which, from the moment Murat became King, clouded the relations between him and Napoleon. But nevertheless, once he rejoined the Emperor at Dantzig, he laid aside all his royal aspirations and became the faithful dashing leader of cavalry.

During the advance on Moscow the cavalry suffered terribly from the difficulties of constant reconnaissances and want of supplies, but in spite of this Murat urged the Emperor not to halt at Smolensk, but to push on, as he believed the Russians were becoming demoralised. Scarce a day passed without some engagement in which the King of Naples showed his audacity and his talent as a leader. Notwithstanding, Napoleon, angry at the constant escape of the Russians, declared that if Murat had only pursued Bagration in Lithuania he would not have escaped. This reproach spurred on the King of Naples to even greater deeds of bravery, and so well was his figure known to the enemy that the Cossacks constantly greeted him with cries of "Hurrah, hurrah, Murat!" At the battle of Moskowa he and Ney completely overthrew the Russians, and if Napoleon had flung the Guard into the action, the Russian army would have been annihilated. In spite of the losses during the campaign, when the French evacuated Moscow Murat had still ten thousand mounted troops, but by the time the army had reached the Beresina there remained only eighteen hundred troopers with horses. When the Emperor deserted the Grand Army, he left the King of Naples in command, with orders to rally the army at Vilna. But Murat saw that it was impossible to re-form the army there, and accordingly ordered a retirement across the Niemen, a line which he soon found it was impossible to hold. On January 10, 1813, came the news that the Prussians had actually gone over to the enemy. It seemed as if Napoleon was lost, and Murat thereupon at once deserted the army, and set out in all haste for Italy, thinking only of how to save his crown.

The King arrived in Naples bent on maintaining his crown and on allowing no interference from the Emperor. But in spite of this he could not decide on any definite line of action. He was afraid the English and Russians would invade his country, but on the other hand his old affection for Napoleon, and a sort of sneaking belief in his ultimate success, prevented him from listening to the insidious advice of the Austrian envoy, whom the far-seeing Metternich had at once sent to

Naples. If Napoleon had not in his despatch glorified Prince Eugène's conduct to the disparagement of the King of Naples, if he had only vouchsafed some reply to the King's persistent letters of inquiry whether he still trusted his old comrade and lieutenant, Murat would have thrown himself heart and soul into the mêlée on the side of his old friend. But in April Napoleon quitted Paris for the army in Germany without sending one line in reply to these imploring letters. Meanwhile on April 23rd came a letter from Colonel Coffin suggesting the possibility of effecting an entente between the English and Neapolitan Governments, or at any rate a commercial convention. Thereupon Murat sent officers to enter into negotiations with Lord William Bentinck, who represented the English Government in Sicily. All through the summer the negotiations were continued, but Murat, in spite of the guarantee of the throne of Naples which the English offered, could not break entirely with his Emperor and benefactor. Still Napoleon, in his blindness, instead of attempting to conciliate his brother-in-law, allowed articles to his disparagement to appear in the *Moniteur*. Nevertheless Murat at bottom was Napoleon's man. Elated by the Emperor's success at Lützen and Bautzen, although he refused to allow the Neapolitan troops to join the Army of Italy under Prince Eugène, he hurried off in August to join the French army at Dresden. There a reconciliation took place between the brothers-in-law. But after the defeat at Leipzig King Joachim asked and obtained leave to return to his own dominions.

His presence was needed at home, for in Italy also the war had gone against the French. Prince Eugène had had to fall back on the line of the Adda, and the defection of the Tyrol had opened to the Allies the passes into the Peninsula. Murat, in his hurry, had to leave his coach snowed up in the Simplon Pass and proceed on horseback to Milan, where he halted but a few hours to write a despatch to the Emperor, which practically foretold his desertion. He declared that if he, instead of Eugène, was entrusted with the defence of Italy, he would at once march north from Naples with forty thousand men. He had indeed never forgotten the slight put upon him by the article in the *Moniteur*, after the Russian campaign, and he was ready to sacrifice even his kingdom if only he could revenge himself on his enemy, Eugène. As Napoleon would not grant him this request, he determined to humiliate Eugène, and, at the same time, to save his crown by negotiating with the enemy. On reaching Naples, he found that his wife, who hitherto had been an unbending partisan of the French, had entirely changed her politics and was now pledged to an Austrian alliance. The King was ever unstable, vanity always governed his conduct: the Queen was always determined, governed solely by a cold, calculating ambition. Negotiations were at once opened with the Austrians. The King protested "that he desired nothing in the world so much as to make common cause with the allied Powers." He promised that he would join them with thirty thousand troops, on condition that he was guaranteed the throne of Naples, and that he should have the Roman States in exchange for Sicily. Meanwhile he addressed an order of the day to his army, stating that the Neapolitan troops should only be employed in Italy. This of course did not commit him either to Napoleon or the Austrian alliance. Meanwhile the Emperor had despatched Fouché to try to bind his brother-in-law to France, but that distinguished double-dealer merely advised the Neapolitan King to move northwards to the valley of the Po with all his troops, and there to wait and see whether it would be best to help the French, or to enter France with the Allies, and perhaps the Tuileries as Emperor.

Joachim Napoleon quietly occupied Rome and pushed forward his troops towards the Po, using the French magazines and depôts, but still negotiating with the Austrians, and, at the same time, holding out hopes to the purely Italian party. For the national party of the Risorgimento were striving hard to seize this opportunity to unite Italy and drive out the foreigner, and no one seemed more capable of carrying out their policy than the popular King of Naples. The Austrians flattered the hopes of "young Italy" by declaring in their proclamation that they had only entered Italy to free her from the yoke of the stranger, and to aid the King of Naples by creating an independent kingdom of Italy. Still Murat hesitated on the brink. As late as the 27th of December he wrote to the Emperor proposing that Italy should be formed into two kingdoms, that he should govern all the peninsula south of the Po, and that the rest of the country should be left to Eugène. Three days later the Austrian

envoy arrived with the proposals of the Allies. But he could not yet make up his mind, and, moreover, the English had not yet guaranteed him Naples. In January, however, these guarantees were given, and against his will he had to sign a treaty. Scarcely was the writing dry when he began to negotiate with Prince Eugène. He used every artifice to prevent a collision between the French and Neapolitan troops. When the campaign opened his troops abandoned their position at the first shot, while he himself took good care not to reach the front until the news of Napoleon's abdication arrived.

But Murat's conduct had alienated everybody. The French loathed him for his duplicity; the Allies suspected him of treachery, and the party of the Risorgimento looked on him as the cause of their subjection to the foreigner; for the Austrian victory had not brought Italy unity and independence, but had merely established the fetters of the old régime. During the remainder of 1814 the lot of the King of Naples was most unenviable. The restored Bourbons of France and Spain regarded him as the despoiler of the Bourbon house of Sicily. Russia had been no party to the guarantee of his kingdom. England desired nothing so much as his expulsion. Austria alone upheld him, for she had been the chief party to the treaty; but Metternich was waiting for him to make some slip which might serve as a pretext for tearing up that treaty. Even the Pope refused the bribe which the King offered him when he proposed to restore the Marches in return for receiving the papal investiture. In despair Murat once again entered into negotiations with the Italian party. A general rising was planned in Lombardy, but failed, as the Austrians received news of the proposed cession of Milan. With cruel cunning they spread the report that the King of Naples had sold the secret. Henceforward Murat had no further hope. Foreigners, Italians, priests, carbonari and freemasons, all had turned against him.

Such was the situation when on March 8, 1815, the King heard that Napoleon had left Elba. As usual he dealt double. He at once sent a message to England that he would be faithful, while at the same time he sent agents to Sicily to try to stir up a revolt against the Bourbons. As soon as the news of Napoleon's reception in France arrived, he set out at the head of forty thousand troops, thinking that all Italy would rise for him. But the Italians mistrusted the fickle King; the Austrian troops were already mobilised, and accordingly, early in May, the Neapolitan army fled homewards before its enemies. King Joachim's popularity was gone. A grant of a constitution roused no enthusiasm among the people. City after city opened its gates to the enemy. Resistance was hopeless, so on the night of May 19th the King of Naples, with a few hundred thousand francs and his diamonds, accompanied by a handful of personal friends, fled by sea to Cannes. But the Emperor refused to receive the turncoat, though at St. Helena he bitterly repented this action, lamenting "that at Waterloo Murat might have given us the victory. For what did we need? To break three or four English squares. Murat was just the man for the job." After Waterloo the poor King fled before the White Terror, and for some time lay hid in Corsica. There he was given a safe conduct by the Allies and permission to settle in Austria. But the deposed monarch could not overcome his vanity. He still believed himself indispensable to Naples. Some four hundred Corsicans promised to follow him thither. The filibustering expedition set out in three small ships on the 28th of September. A storm arose and scattered the armada, but in spite of this, on October 7th, the ex-King decided to land at Pizzo. Dressed in full uniform, amid cries of "Long live our King Joachim," the unfortunate man landed with twenty-six followers. He was at once arrested, and on October 13th tried by court martial, condemned to death, and executed a few hours later.

Joachim Murat met his death like a soldier. As he wrote to his wife, his only regret was that he died far off, without seeing his children. Death was what he courted when landing at Pizzo, for he must have known how impossible it was for him to conquer a kingdom with twenty-six men. Still, he preferred to die in the attempt to regain his crown rather than to spend an ignoble old age, a pensioner on the bounty of his enemies. Murat died as he had lived, brave but vain, with his last words calling out, "Soldiers, do your duty: fire at my heart, but spare my face."

The King of Naples owed his elevation entirely to his fortunate marriage with the Emperor's sister; otherwise it is certain he would never have reached such exalted rank, for Napoleon really

did not like him or trust him, and had a true knowledge of his ability. "He was a Paladin," said the Emperor at St. Helena, "in the field, but in the Cabinet destitute of either decision or judgment. He loved, I may rather say, adored me; he was my right arm; but without me he was nothing. In battle he was perhaps the bravest man in the world; left to himself, he was an imbecile without judgment." Murat was a cavalry leader pure and simple. His love of horses, his intuitive knowledge of exactly how much he could ask from his horsemen, his reckless bravery, his fine swordsmanship, his dashing manners, captivated the French cavalry and enabled him to "achieve the impossible." Contrary to accepted opinion Napoleon believed "that cavalry, if led by equally brave and resolute men, must always break infantry." Consequently we find that at Austerlitz, Jena, and Eylau, the decisive stroke of the day was in each case given by immense bodies of some twenty thousand men under the command of Murat, whose genius lay in his ability to manœuvre these huge bodies of cavalry on the field of battle, and in the tenacity with which he clung to and pursued a beaten enemy. But this was the sum total of his military ability. He had no conception of the use of the other arms of the service, and never gained even the most elementary knowledge of strategy. When trusted with anything like the command of a mixed body of troops he proved an utter failure. Before Ulm he nearly ruined Napoleon's combination by failing to get in contact with the enemy. In the later half of the campaign of 1806 he hopelessly failed to make any headway against the Russians east of the Vistula. In the retreat across the Niemen he proved himself absolutely incapable of reorganising a beaten force. As a king, Murat was full of good intentions towards his people, but his extravagance, his vanity, his indecision cost him his crown. As a man he was generous and extraordinarily brave. In the Russian campaign he used to challenge the Cossacks to single combat, and when he had beaten them he sent them away with some medal or souvenir of himself. He was a good husband, and lived at peace and amity with his wife, and was exceedingly fond of his children. His faults were numerous; he was by nature intensely jealous, especially of those who came between him and Napoleon, and he stooped to anything whereby he might injure his rivals, Lannes and Prince Eugène. His hot Southern blood led him into numerous quarrels. Although extremely arrogant, at bottom he was a moral coward, and before the Emperor's reproaches he scarcely dared to open his mouth. But his great fault, through which he gained and lost his crown, was his vanity. Vanity, working on ambition and an unstable character, is the key to all his career. His blatant Jacobinism, his intrigue with Josephine, his overtures to the Directors, his underhand treatment of his fellow Marshals, his discontent with his Grand Duchy, his subtle dealings in Spain, his system of government in Naples, his opposition to Napoleon's schemes, his dissimulation and desertion, his almost theatrical bravery, and his very death were due to nothing save extravagant vanity.

III
ANDRÉ MASSÉNA, MARSHAL, DUKE OF RIVOLI, PRINCE OF ESSLING

André Masséna, "the wiliest of Italians," was born at Nice on May 6, 1758, where his father and mother carried on a considerable business as tanners and soap manufacturers. On his father's death, when André was still but a small boy, his mother at once married again. Thereon André and two of his sisters were adopted by their uncle Augustine, who proposed to give his nephew a place in his business. But André's restless, fiery nature could not brook the idea of a perpetual monotonous existence in the tanyard and soap factory, so at the age of thirteen he ran away from home and shipped as a cabin boy; as such he made several voyages in the Mediterranean, and on one occasion crossed the Atlantic to Cayenne. But, in spite of his love of adventure, the life of a sailor soon began to pall, and on August 18, 1775, at the age of seventeen, he enlisted in the Royal Italian regiment in the French service. There he came under the influence of his uncle Marcel, who was sergeant-major of the regiment; thanks to his advice and care he made rapid strides in his profession, and received a fair education in the regimental school. In later years the Marshal used to say that no step cost him so much trouble or gave him such pleasure as his promotion to corporal; be that as it may, promotion came rapidly, and with less than two years' service he became sergeant on April 15, 1777. For fourteen years Masséna served in the Royal Italians, but at last he retired in disgust. Under the regulations a commission was unattainable for those who were not of noble birth, and the officers of the regiment had taken a strong dislike to the sergeant, whom the colonel constantly held up as an example, telling them, "Your ignorance of drill is shameful; your inferiors, Masséna, for example, can manœuvre the battalion far better than any of you." On his retirement Masséna lived at Nice. To occupy his time and earn a living he joined his cousin Bavastro, and carried on a large smuggling business both by sea and land; he thus gained that intimate knowledge of the defiles and passes of the Maritime Alps which stood him in such good stead in the numerous campaigns of the revolutionary wars, while the necessity for keeping a watch on the preventive men and thus concealing his own movements developed to a great extent his activity, resource, and daring. So successful were his operations that he soon found himself in the position to demand the hand of Mademoiselle Lamarre, daughter of a surgeon, possessed of a considerable dowry. When the revolutionary wars broke out the Masséna were established at Antibes, where they did a fair trade in olive oil and dried fruits; but a respectable humdrum existence could not satisfy the restless nature of the ex-sergeant, and in 1791 he applied for a sub-lieutenancy in the gendarmerie, and it is to be presumed that, on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, he would have made an excellent policeman. It was at this moment that the invasion of France by the monarchs of Europe caused all patriotic Frenchmen to obey the summons to arms. Masséna gladly left his shop to serve as adjutant of the volunteers of the Var. His military knowledge, his erect and proud bearing, his keen incisive speech, and absolute self-confidence in all difficulties soon dominated his comrades, and it was as lieutenant-colonel commanding the second battalion that he marched to the frontier to meet the enemy. Lean and spare, below middle height, with a highly expressive Italian face, a good mouth, an aquiline nose, and black sparkling eyes, from the very first Masséna inspired confidence in all who met him; but it was not till he was seen in action that the greatness of his qualities could best be appreciated. As Napoleon said of him at St. Helena, "Masséna was at his best and most brilliant in the middle of the fire and disorder of battle; the roar of the cannon used to clear his ideas, give him insight, penetration, and gaiety… In the middle of the dead and dying, among the hail of bullets which swept down all around him, Masséna was always himself giving his orders and making his dispositions with the greatest calmness and good judgment. There you see the true nobility of blood." In the saddle from morning till night, absolutely

insensible to fatigue, ready at any moment to take the responsibility of his actions, he returned from the first campaign in the Riviera as major-general. During the siege of Toulon he commanded the "Camp de milles fourches," which included the company of artillery commanded by Bonaparte, and distinguished himself by taking the forts of Lartigues and St. Catharine, thus earning his step as lieutenant-general while his future commander was still a major in the artillery. In the campaign of 1794 it was Masséna who conceived and carried out the turning movement which drove the Sardinians from the Col de Tenda, while Bonaparte's share in the action merely consisted of commanding the artillery. As the trusted counsellor of Dumerbion, Kellermann, and Schérer, for the next two years, the lieutenant-general was the inspirer of the successive commanders of the Army of Italy. He it was who, amid the snow and storms, planned and carried out the combinations which gained for Schérer the great winter victory at Loano, and thus first taught the French the secret, which the English had grasped on the sea and Napoleon was to perfect on land, of breaking the enemy's centre and falling on one wing with overwhelming force. The campaign of 1796 for the time being altered the current of Masséna's military life. Before the young Corsican's eagle gaze even the impetuous Italian quailed, and from being the brain of the officer commanding the army he had to revert to the position of the right arm and faithful interpreter of orders. Two things, however, compensated Masséna for the change of rôle, for Bonaparte gave his subordinate fighting and glory with a lavish hand, and above all winked at, nay, rather encouraged, the amassing of booty; and wealth more even than glory was the desire of Masséna's soul.

At the very commencement of the campaign Masséna committed a fault which almost ruined his career. After defeating the enemy's advance guard near Cairo, hearing by chance that the Austrian officers had left an excellent dinner in a neighbouring inn, he and some of his staff left his division on the top of a high hill and set off to enjoy the good things prepared for the enemy. At daybreak the enemy attempted a surprise on the French position on the hill, and the troops, without their general and staff, were in great danger. Fortunately, Masséna had time to make his way through the Austrian skirmishers and resume his command. He was greeted by hoots and jeers, but with absolute imperturbability he reorganised his forces and checked the enemy. But one battalion was isolated on a spur, from which there seemed no way of escape save under a scorching flank fire. Masséna made his way alone to this detached post, scrambling up the steep slope on his hands and knees, and, when he at last reached the troops, remembering his old smuggling expedients, he showed them how to glissade down the steep part of the hill, and brought them all safely back without a single casualty. This escapade came to Bonaparte's ears, and it was only Masséna's great share in the victory of Montenotte which saved him from a court-martial.

Bonaparte, at the commencement of the campaign, had ended a letter of instructions to his lieutenant with the words "Watchfulness and bluff, that is the card," and well Masséna learned his lesson. Montenotte, the bridge of Lodi, the long struggle at Castiglione, the two fights at Rivoli and the marshes of Arcola proved beyond doubt that of all the young conqueror of Italy's lieutenants, none had the insight, activity, and endurance of Masséna. But empty flattery did not satisfy him, for as early as Lonato, greedy for renown, he considered his success had not been fully recognised. In bitter anger he wrote to Bonaparte: "I complain of your reports of Lonato and Roveredo, in which you do not render me the justice that I merit. This forgetfulness tears my heart and throws discouragement on my soul. I will recall the fact under compulsion that the victory of Saintes Georges was due to my dispositions, to my activity, to my sangfroid, and to my prevision." This frank republican letter greatly displeased Bonaparte, who, since Lodi, had cherished visions of a crown, and to realise this desire had begun to issue his praise and rewards irrespective of merit, and to appeal to the private soldier while visiting his displeasure on the officers. But Masséna's brilliant conduct at the second battle of Rivoli, for the moment, blotted out all rancour, for it was Masséna who had saved the day, who had rushed up to the commander of the shaken regiment, bitterly upbraiding him and his officers, showering blows on them with the flat of his sword, and had then galloped off and brought up two tried regiments of his

own invincible division and driven back the assailants; from that moment Bonaparte confirmed him in the title of "the spoilt child of victory." In 1797 Bonaparte gave his lieutenant a more substantial reward when he chose him to carry the despatches to Paris which reported the preliminary treaty of Leoben; thus it was as the right-hand man of the most distinguished general in Europe that the Italian saw for the first time the capital of his adopted country.

In choosing Masséna to carry to Paris the tidings of peace, it was not only his prestige and renown which influenced Bonaparte. For Paris was in a state of half suppressed excitement, and signs were only too evident that the Directory was unstable; accordingly the wily Corsican, while despatching secret agents to advance his cause, was careful to send as the bearer of the good news a man who was well known to care for no political rewards, and who would be sure to turn a deaf ear to the insidious schemes of those who were plotting to restore the monarchy, or to set up a dictatorship, and were searching for a sovereign or a Cæsar as their political views suggested. It was for these reasons and because he was tired of Masséna's greed and avarice that Bonaparte refused to admit him among those chosen to accompany him to Egypt. Masséna saw clearly all the secret intrigue of the capital, and found little pleasure in his newly gained dignity of a seat among the Ancients, for he was extremely afraid of a royalist restoration, in which case he feared "our honourable wounds will become the titles for our proscription."

Tired of Paris, in 1798, he was glad to accept the command of the French corps occupying Rome when its former commander, Berthier, was called away to join the Egyptian expedition. On his arrival at Rome, to take over his new command, he found himself face to face with a mutiny. The troops were in rags and badly fed, their pay was months in arrear, and meanwhile the civil servants of the Directory were amassing fortunes at the expense of the Pope, the Cardinals, and the Princes of Rome. Discontent was so widespread that the new general at once ordered all troops, save some three thousand, to leave the capital. Unfortunately Masséna's record was not such as to inspire confidence in the purity of his intentions. Instead of obeying, the officers and men held a mass meeting to draft their remonstrance to the Directory. In this document they accused, first of all, the agents who had disgraced the name of France, and ended by saying, "The final cause of all the discontent is the arrival of General Masséna. The soldiers have not forgotten the extortions and robberies he has committed wherever he has been invested with the command. The Venetian territory, and above all Padua, is a district teeming with proofs of his immorality." In the face of such public feeling Masséna found nothing for it but to demand a successor and throw up his command.

But with Bonaparte in Egypt and a ring of enemies threatening France from all sides, the Directors, whose hands were as soiled as Masséna's, could ill spare the "spoilt child of victory." Accordingly, early in 1799 the general found himself invested with the important command of the Army of Switzerland. This was a task worthy of his genius and he eagerly accepted the post, but refused to abide by the stipulations the Directors desired to enforce on him, as, according to their plan, the Army of Switzerland was to form part of the Army of the Rhine commanded by Joubert. Masséna had obeyed Bonaparte, but he had no intention of playing second fiddle to any other commander, and, after some stormy interviews and letters, he at last had his way. As the year advanced it became more and more evident that on the Army of Switzerland would fall the full brunt of the attack of the coalition, for Joubert was defeated by the Archduke Charles at Stockach and thrown back on the Rhine, Schérer was defeated in Italy at Magnano, and by June the Russians and Austrians had begun to close in on Switzerland. It was clear that, if the French army were driven out of Switzerland, both the Rhine and the Maritime Alps would be turned, and the enemy would be in a strong position from which to invade France. On Masséna, therefore, hung all the hopes of the Directory. Fortunately for France, the general was admirably versed in mountain warfare. Well aware of the difficulty of keeping up communication between the different parts of his line of defence, Masséna skilfully withdrew his outposts, as the enemy pressed on, with the intention of concentrating his troops round Zurich, thereby covering all the possible lines of advance. But early in the summer his difficulties were further

increased by the rising of the Swiss peasantry; luckily, however, the Archduke Charles advanced most cautiously, while the Aulic Council at Vienna, unable to grasp the vital point of the problem, stupidly sent its reserve army to Italy to reinforce the Russians under Suvaroff. By June 5th the Archduke had driven in all the outlying French columns, and was in a position to attack the lines of Zurich with his entire force. Thanks, however, to Masséna's courage and presence of mind, the attack was driven off, but so overwhelming were the numbers of the enemy that during the night the French army evacuated Zurich, though only to fall back on a strong position on Mount Albis, a rocky ridge at the north end of the lake, covered on one flank by the lake and on the other by the river Aar. The two armies for the time being lay opposite to each other, too exhausted after the struggle to recommence operations. The Archduke Charles awaited the arrival from Italy of Suvaroff, who was to debouch on the French right by the St. Gothard Pass. But fortune, or rather the Aulic Council at Vienna, once again intervened and saved France. The Archduke Charles was ordered to leave fifty-five thousand Russians under Korsakoff before Zurich and to march northwards and across the Rhine. Protests were useless; the Court of Vienna merely ordered the Archduke to "perform the immediate execution of its will without further objections." But even yet disaster threatened the French, for Suvaroff was commencing his advance by the St. Gothard. But Masséna at once grasped the opportunity fortune had placed in his power by opposing him to a commander like Korsakoff, who was so impressed by his own pride that he considered a Russian company equal to an Austrian battalion. On September 26th, by a masterly series of manœuvres, the main French force surprised Korsakoff and drove him in rout out of Zurich. Suvaroff arrived just in time to find Masséna in victorious array thrust in between himself and his countrymen, and was forced to save himself by a hurried retreat through the most difficult passes of the Alps.

The campaign of Zurich will always be studied as a masterpiece in defensive warfare. The skilful use the French general made of the mountain passes, the methods he employed to check the Archduke's advance on Zurich, the care with which he kept up communications between his different columns, the skilful choice of the positions of Zurich and Mount Albis, his return to the initiative on every opportunity, and his masterly interposition between Korsakoff and Suvaroff, alone entitle him to a high place among the great commanders of history, and Masséna was rightly thanked by the legislature and hailed as the saviour of the country.

Six weeks after the victory of Zurich came the 18th Brumaire, and Napoleon's accession to the consulate. Masséna, a staunch republican, was conscious of the defects of the Directory, but could not give his hearty consent to the coup d'état, for he feared for the liberty of his country. Still, he said, if France desired to entrust her independence and glory to one man she could choose none better than Bonaparte. The latter, on his side, was anxious to retain Masséna's affections, and at once offered him the command of the Army of Italy. But the conqueror of Zurich foresaw that everything was to be sacrificed to the glory of the First Consul, and it was only after great persuasion, profuse promises, and appeals to his patriotism that he undertook the command, with the stipulation that "I will not take command of an army condemned to rest on the defensive. My former services and successes do not permit me to change the rôle that I have heretofore played in the wars of the Republic." The First Consul replied by giving Masséna carte blanche to requisition whatever he wanted, and promised him that the Army of Italy should be his first care. But when Masséna arrived at Genoa he discovered, as he had suspected, that Bonaparte's promises were only made to be broken; for he found the troops entrusted to his care the mere shadow of an army, the hospitals full, bands of soldiers, even whole battalions, quitting their posts and trying to escape into France, and the officers and generals absolutely unable to contend with the mass of misery and want. In spite of his able lieutenants, Soult and Suchet, he could make no head against the Austrians in the field, and after some gallant engagements was driven back into Genoa, where, for two months, he held out against famine and the assaults of the enemy. While the wretched inhabitants starved, the troops were fed on "a miserable ration of a quarter of a pound of horse-flesh and a quarter of a pound of what was

called bread – a horrible compound of damaged flour, sawdust, starch, hair-powder, oatmeal, linseed, rancid nuts, and other nasty substances, to which a little solidity was given by the admixture of a small portion of cocoa. Each loaf, moreover, was held together by little bits of wood, without which it would have fallen to powder." A revolt, threatened by the inhabitants, was checked by Masséna's order that an assemblage of over five persons should be fired on, and the approaches to the principal streets were commanded by guns. Still he refused to surrender, as every day he expected to hear the cannon of the First Consul's army thundering on the Austrian rear. One day the hopes of all were aroused by a distant roar in the mountains, only to be dashed by finding it to be thunder. It was simply the ascendancy of Masséna's personality which prolonged the agony and upheld his authority, and in bitter earnestness the soldiers used to say, "He will make us eat his boots before he will surrender." At last the accumulated horrors shook even his firm spirit, and on June 4th a capitulation was agreed on. The terms were most favourable to the French; but, as Lord Keith, the English admiral, said, "General, your defence has been so heroic that we can refuse you nothing." However, the sufferings of Genoa were not in vain, for Masséna had played his part and held the main Austrian force in check for ten days longer than had been demanded of him; thus the First Consul had time to fall on the enemies' line of communication, and it may be truly said that without the siege of Genoa there could have been no Marengo. Masséna had once again demonstrated the importance of the individual in war; as Bonaparte wrote to him during the siege, "In such a situation as you are, a man like you is worth twenty thousand men." In spite of this, at St. Helena, the Emperor, ever jealous of his own glory, affected to despise Masséna's generalship and endurance at Genoa, and blamed him for not taking the offensive in the field, forgetting the state of his army and the paucity of his troops. But at the moment he showed his appreciation of his services by giving him the command of the army when he himself retired to Paris after the victory of Marengo. Unfortunately Masséna's avarice and greed were unable to withstand the temptations of the position, and the First Consul had very soon to recall him from Italy and mark his displeasure by placing him on half-pay.

For two years the disgraced general brooded over his wrongs in retirement, and showed his attitude of mind by voting against the Consulate for life and the establishment of the Empire. The gift of a Marshal's bâton did little to reconcile him to the Emperor, for, as he scoffingly replied to Thiebault's congratulations, "Oh, there are fourteen of us." So uncertain was the Emperor of his Marshal's disposition that, on the outbreak of the war with Austria, Masséna alone of all the greater Marshals held no command. But with the prospect of heavy fighting in Italy the Emperor could not afford to entrust the Italian divisions to a blunderer, and he once again posted Masséna to his old command. The Austrians had occupied the strong position of Caldiero, near the marshes of Arcola, and the French in vain attempted to force them from it, but the success of the Emperor on the Danube at last compelled the Archduke John to fall back on Austria. The Marshal at once commenced a spirited pursuit, and ultimately joined hands with the Grand Army, south of the Danube.

After the treaty of Pressburg Napoleon despatched Masséna to conquer Naples, which he had given as a kingdom to his brother Joseph. With fifty thousand men the Marshal swept through Italy. In vain the gallant Queen Caroline armed the lazzaroni; Capua opened its gates, Gaeta fell after twelve days' bombardment, and Joseph entered Naples in triumph. Calabria alone offered a stern resistance, and this resistance the French brought upon themselves by their cruelty to the peasantry, whom they treated as brigands. Unfortunately his success in Naples was once again tarnished by his greed, for the Marshal, by selling licences to merchants and conniving at their escape from the custom-house dues, amassed, within a few months of his entering Naples, a sum of three million francs. Napoleon heard of this from his spies, and, writing to him, demanded a loan of a million francs. The Duke of Rivoli replied that he was the poorest of the Marshals, and had a numerous family to maintain and was heavily in debt, so he regretted that he could send him nothing. Unfortunately, the Emperor knew where he banked in Leghorn, and as he refused to disgorge a third of his illicit profits, the Emperor sent the inspector of the French Treasury and a police commissary to the bank, and demanded that

the three millions, which lay at his account there, should be handed over. The seizure was made in legal form; the banker, who lost nothing, was bound to comply with it. Masséna, on hearing of this misfortune, was so furious that he fell ill, but he did not dare to remonstrate, knowing that he was in the wrong, but he never forgave the Emperor: his titles and a pension never consoled him for what he lost at Leghorn, and, in spite of his cautious habits, he was sometimes heard to say, "I was fighting in his service and he was cruel enough to take away my little savings which I had invested at Leghorn."

From what he called a military promenade in Italy the Marshal was summoned early in 1807 to the Grand Army in Poland, and was present in command of one of the army corps at Pultusk, Ostralenka, and Friedland. In 1808 he received his title of Duke of Rivoli and a pension of three hundred thousand francs per annum, but in spite of this he absented himself from the court. When Joseph was given the crown of Spain he requested his brother to send Masséna to aid him in his new sphere, but the Emperor, full of mistrust, refused, while the Marshal himself had no great desire to serve in Spain. When it was clear that Austria was going to seize the occasion of the Spanish War once again to fight France, Napoleon hastened to send the veteran Duke of Rivoli to the army on the Danube. At Abensberg and Eckmühl, for the first time since 1797, he fought under the eye of Napoleon himself. "Activité, activité, vitesse," wrote the Emperor, and well his lieutenant carried out his orders. Following up the Five Days' Fighting, Masséna led the advance guard to Vienna, and commanded the left wing at Aspern-Essling. Standing in the churchyard at Aspern, with the boughs swept down by grapeshot crashing round him, he was in his element; never had his tenacity, his resource, and skill been seen to such advantage. But in spite of his skill and the courage of his troops, at the end of the first day's fighting his shattered forces were driven out of the heap of smoking ruins which marked all that remained of Aspern. On the morning of the second day he had regained half of the village when news came that the bridge was broken, and that he was to hold off the Austrians while communication with the Isle of Lobau was being established. The enemy, invigorated by the news of the success of their plan for breaking the bridges, strained every nerve to annihilate the French force on the left bank of the river, but Masséna, Lannes, and Napoleon worked marvels with their exhausted troops. The Duke of Rivoli seemed ubiquitous: at one moment on horseback and at another on foot with drawn sword, wherever the enemy pressed he was there animating his troops, directing their fire, hurrying up supports; thus, thanks to his exertions, the Austrians were held off, the cavalry and the artillery safely crossed the bridge, and the veteran Marshal at midnight brought the last of the rear-guard safely to the Isle of Lobau, where, exhausted by fatigue, the troops fell asleep in their ranks.

The death of Lannes threw Napoleon back on the Duke of Rivoli, who for the time became his confidant and right-hand man. It was Masséna who commanded at Lobau and made all the arrangements for the crossing before Wagram. The Emperor and his lieutenant were indefatigable in the care with which they made their preparations. On one occasion, wishing to inspect the Austrian position, dressed in sergeants' greatcoats, attended by a single aide-de-camp in the kit of a private, they went alone up the north bank of the island and took their coats off as if they wanted to bathe. The Austrian sentinels, seeing, as they thought, two French soldiers enjoying a wash, took no notice of them, and thus the Emperor and the Marshal were able to determine the exact spot for launching the bridges. On another occasion, while they were riding round the island, the Marshal's horse put its foot into a hole and fell, and injured the rider's leg so that he could not mount again. This unfortunate accident happened a few days before the battle of Wagram, so the Duke of Rivoli went into battle lying in a light calèche, drawn by four white horses, with his doctor beside him changing the compresses on his injured leg every two hours. During the battle Masséna's corps formed the left of the line. While Davout was carrying out his great turning movement, it was the Duke of Rivoli who had to endure the full fury of the Austrians' attack. In the pursuit after the battle he pressed the enemy with his wonted activity. At the last encounter at Znaim he had a narrow escape, for hardly had he got out of his carriage when a cannon-ball struck it, and a moment later another shot killed one of the horses.

After the treaty of Vienna the Marshal, newly created Prince of Essling, retired to rest at his country house at Rueil, but the Emperor could not spare him long. In April, 1810, within eight months, he was once again hurried off on active service, this time to Spain, where Soult had been driven out of Portugal by Sir Arthur Wellesley, and Jourdan and Joseph defeated at Talavera. The Emperor promised the Prince of Essling ninety thousand troops for the invasion of Portugal, and placed under his command Junot and Ney. The Marshal did his best to refuse the post; he knew the difficult character of Ney and the jealousy of Junot, and he pointed out that it would be better to reorganise the army of Portugal under generals appointed by himself. Berthier replied that "the orders of the Emperor were positive, and left no point in dispute. When the Emperor delegated his authority obedience became a duty; however great might be the pride of the Dukes of Elchingen and Abrantès, they had enough justice to understand that their swords were not in the same line as the sword of the conqueror of Zurich." Still, the Prince foresaw the future, and appealed to the Emperor himself, but the Emperor was obdurate. "You are out of humour to-day, my dear Masséna. You see everything black, yourself and your surroundings. To listen to you one would think you were half dead. Your age? A good reason! How much older are you now than at Essling? Your health? Does not imagination play a great part in your weakness? Are you worse than at Wagram? It is rheumatism that is troubling you. The climate of Portugal is as warm and healthy as Italy, and will put you on your legs… Set out then with confidence. Be prudent and firm, and the obstacles you fear will fade away; you have surmounted many worse." Unfortunately for the Marshal, his forebodings were truer than the Emperor's optimism. On arriving at Salamanca his troubles began. Delays were inevitable before he could bring into order his unruly team. Junot and Ney were openly contemptuous, Regnier hung back, and was three weeks late in his arrangements. Meanwhile, all that Masséna saw of the enemy, whom the Emperor had in past years stigmatised as the "slow and clumsy English," confirmed him in his opinion that the campaign was going to prove the most arduous he had ever undertaken.

In spite of everything, operations opened brilliantly for the French. Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida fell without the English commander making any apparent effort to relieve them. On September 16th the invasion of Portugal commenced. But losses, disease, and garrison duty had already reduced his troops to some seventy thousand men, and the French found "an enemy behind every stone"; while, as the Prince of Essling wrote, "We are marching across a desert; women, children, and old men have all fled; in fact, no guide is to be found anywhere." Still the English fell back before him, and he was under the impression that they were going to evacuate Portugal without a blow, although he grasped the fact that it was the immense superiority of the French cavalry which had prevented the "sepoy general" making any effort to relieve the fortresses. But on September 26th Masséna found that the English had stayed their retreat, and were waiting to fight him on the rocky ridge of Busaco. Unfortunately for his reputation, he made no reconnaissance of the position, and, trusting entirely to the reports of Ney, Regnier, and Junot, who asserted the position was much less formidable than it looked, sustained a heavy reverse. After the battle his lieutenants urged him to abandon the invasion of Portugal; but the veteran refused such timorous advice, and, rousing himself, soon showed the energy which had made his name so famous at Zurich and Rivoli. Turning the position, the French swept down on Portugal, while the English hurriedly fell back before them. What caused Masséna most anxiety was the ominous desertion of the countryside. He was well aware of the bitter hatred of the Portuguese, and knew that his soldiers tortured and hung the wretched inhabitants to force them to reveal hidden stores of provisions, but it was not until October 10th, when the French had arrived within a few miles of the lines of Torres Vedras, that he learned of the vast entrenched camp which the English commander had so secretly prepared for his army and the inhabitants of Portugal. Masséna was furious, and covered with accusations the Portuguese officers on his staff. "Que diable," he cried, "Wellington n'a pas construit des montagnes." But there had been no treachery, only so well had the secret been kept that hardly even an officer in the English army knew of the existence of the work, and as Wellington wrote to the minister at Lisbon on October

6th, "I believe that you and the Government do not know where the lines are." For six weeks the indomitable Marshal lay in front of the position, hoping to tempt the English to attack his army, now reduced to sixty thousand men. But Wellington, who had planned this victorious reply to the axiom that war ought to feed war, grimly sat behind his lines, while the English army, well fed from the sea, watched the French writhe in the toils of hunger. Masséna was now roused, and as his opponent wrote, "It is certainly astonishing that the enemy have been able to remain in this country so long… It is an extraordinary instance of what a French army can do." At last even Masséna had to confess himself beaten and fall back on Santarem. The winter passed in a fruitless endeavour on the part of the Emperor and the Marshal to force Soult, d'Erlon, and Regnier to co-operate for an advance on Lisbon by the left bank of the Tagus. Meanwhile, in spite of every effort, the French army dwindled owing to disease, desertion, and unending fatigue. So dangerous was the country that a despatch could not be sent along the lines of communication without an escort of three hundred men. The whole countryside had been so swept bare of provisions that a Portuguese spy wrote to Wellington saying, "Heaven forgive me if I wrong them in believing they have eaten my cat."

By March, 1811, it became clear that the French could no longer maintain themselves at Santarem; but so skilful were Masséna's dispositions that it was three days before Wellington realised that at last the enemy had commenced their retreat. Never had the genius of the Marshal stood higher than in this difficult retirement from Portugal. With his army decimated by hunger and disease, with the victorious enemy always hanging on his heels, with his subordinates in open revolt, and a Marshal of France refusing to obey orders in the face of the enemy, he lost not a single gun, baggage-wagon or invalid. Still, the morale of his army was greatly shaken; as he himself wrote, "It is sufficient for the enemy to show the heads of a few columns in order to intimidate the officers and make them loudly declare that the whole of Wellington's army is in sight." When the Marshal at last placed his wearied troops behind the fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, he found his difficulties by no means at an end. The Emperor, who "judged men only by results," wrote him a letter full of thinly-veiled criticism of his operations, while he found that the country round the fortresses was now included in the command of the northern army under Bessières. Accordingly he had to apply to that Marshal for leave to revictual and equip his troops. Meanwhile Wellington proceeded to besiege Almeida.

By the end of April, after a vigorous correspondence with Bessières, Masséna had at last reorganised his army and was once again ready to take the field against the English. Reinforced by fifteen hundred cavalry of the Guard under Bessières, at Fuentes d'Onoro he surprised the English forces covering the siege of Almeida; after a careful reconnaissance at dawn on May 5th he attacked and defeated the English right, and had it not been for the action of Bessières, who spoiled his combination by refusing to allow the Guard to charge save by his orders, the English would have been totally defeated. Masséna wished at all hazards to continue the fight on the morrow, but his principal officers were strongly opposed to it. Overborne by their counsels, after lying in front of the position for three days he withdrew to Ciudad Rodrigo. It was through no fault of his that he was beaten at Fuentes d'Onoro; Wellington himself confessed how closely he had been pressed when he wrote: "Lord Liverpool was quite right not to move thanks for the battle of Fuentes, though it was the most difficult I was ever concerned in and against the greatest odds. We had nearly three to one against us engaged: above four to one of cavalry: and moreover our cavalry had not a gallop in them, while some of that of the enemy were quite fresh and in excellent order. If Bony had been there we should have been beaten."

Soon after the battle Masséna was superseded by Marmont, and retired to Paris. The meeting with the Emperor was stormy. "Well, Prince of Essling," said Napoleon, "are you no longer Masséna?" Explanations followed, and the Emperor at last promised that once again he should have an opportunity of regaining his glory in Spain. But Fate willed otherwise. After Salamanca, when Marmont was recalled, Masséna set out again for Spain, only to fall ill at Bayonne and to return home and try to restore his shattered health at Nice. In 1813 and 1814 he commanded the eighth military

district, composed of the Rhône Valley, but he was getting too old to take strenuous measures and was glad to make submission to the Bourbons.

Very cruelly the new Government placed an affront on the Marshal by refusing to create him a peer of France under the plea that he was an Italian and a foreigner, but in spite of this the Prince remained faithful during the first part of the Hundred Days, and only went over to Napoleon when he found that the capital and army had recognised the Emperor. At Paris the Emperor greeted him with "Well, Masséna, did you wish to serve as lieutenant to the Duke of Angoulême and fight me … would you have hurled me back into the sea if I had given you time to assemble your forces?" The old warrior replied: "Yes, Sire, inasmuch as I believed that you were not recalled by the majority of Frenchmen." Ill-health prevented the Marshal from actively serving the Emperor. But during the interval between Napoleon's abdication and the second restoration it fell to the Marshal's lot to keep order in Paris as Governor and Commander of the National Guard. The new Government, to punish him for the aid he had given to the Emperor, nominated him one of the judges of Marshal Ney. This was the last occasion the Prince of Essling appeared in public. Suspected as a traitor by the authorities, weighed down by the horror of Ney's death and the assassination of his old friend Brune, and racked by disease, after a lingering painful illness the conqueror of Zurich breathed his last at the age of fifty-nine on April 4, 1817. Even then the ultra royalists could not conceal their hatred of him. The War Minister, Clarke, Duke of Feltre, his old comrade, now turned furious legitimist, had hitherto withheld the Marshal's new bâton, and it was only the threat of Masséna's son-in-law, Reille, to place on the coffin the bâton the Marshal had received from the Emperor which at last forced the Government to send the emblem.

Great soldier as he was, Masséna's escutcheon was stained by many a blot. His avarice was disgusting beyond words, and with avarice went a tendency to underhand dealing, harshness, and malice. During the Wagram campaign the Marshal's coachman and footman drove him day by day in a carriage through all the heat of the fighting. The Emperor complimented these brave men and said that of all the hundred and thirty thousand men engaged they were the bravest. Masséna, after this, felt bound to give them some reward, and said to one of his staff that he was going to give them each four hundred francs. The staff officer replied that a pension of four hundred francs would save them from want in their old age. The Marshal, in a fury, turned on his aide-de-camp, exclaiming, "Wretch, do you want to ruin me? What, an annuity of four hundred francs! No, no, no, four hundred francs once and for all"; adding to his staff, "I would sooner see you all shot and get a bullet through my arm than bind myself to give an annuity of four hundred francs to any one." The Marshal never forgave the aide-de-camp who had thus urged him to spend his money. His harshness was also well known, and the excesses of the French troops in Switzerland, Naples, and Portugal were greatly owing to his callousness; in the campaign in Portugal he actually allowed detachments of soldiers to set out with the express intention of capturing all girls between twelve and twenty for the use of his men. But while oblivious to the sufferings of others, as a father he was affectionate and indulgent. As he said after Wagram of his son Prosper, "That young scamp has given me more trouble than a whole army corps;" so careful was he of his safety that he refused during the second day of the battle to allow him to take his turn among the other aides-de-camp; but the young Masséna was too spirited to endure this, and Napoleon, hearing of the occurrence, severely reprimanded the Marshal. Staunch republican by profession, blustering and outspoken at times, he was at bottom a true Italian, and knew well how to use the delicate art of flattery. Writing in 1805 to the Minister of War, he thus ends a despatch: "I made my first campaign with His Majesty, and it was under his orders that I learned what I know of the trade of arms. We were together in the Army of Italy." Again, when at Fontainebleau he had the misfortune to lose an eye when out pheasant shooting, he attacked Berthier as the culprit, although he knew full well that the Emperor was the only person who had fired a shot.

But in spite of all this meanness and his many defects, he must always be remembered as one of the great soldiers of France, a name at all times to conjure with. Both Napoleon and Wellington

have paid their tribute to his talents. At St. Helena the fallen Emperor said that of all his generals the Prince of Essling "was the first," and the Duke, speaking to Lord Ros of the French commanders, said, "Masséna gave me more trouble than any of them, because when I expected to find him weak, he generally contrived somehow that I should find him strong." The Marshal was a born soldier. War was with him an inspiration; being all but illiterate, he never studied it theoretically, but, as one of his detractors admits, "He was a born general: his courage and tenacity did the rest. In the best days of his military career he saw accurately, decided promptly, and never let himself be cast down by reverses." It was owing to this obstinacy combined with clear vision that his great successes were gained, and the dogged determination he showed at Zurich, Loano, Rivoli and Genoa was no whit impaired by success or by old age, as he proved at Essling, Wagram, and before the lines of Torres Vedras. Like his great commander, none knew better than the Prince of Essling that fortune must be wooed, and, as Napoleon wrote to him, "It is not to you, my dear general, that I need to recommend the employment of audacity." In spite of his ill success in his last campaign, to the end the Prince of Essling worthily upheld his title of "The spoilt child of victory."

IV
JEAN BAPTISTE JULES BERNADOTTE, MARSHAL, PRINCE OF PONTE CORVO, KING OF SWEDEN

Gascony has ever been the mother of ambitious men, and many a ruler has she supplied to France. But in 1789 few Gascons even would have believed that ere twenty years had passed one Gascon would be sitting on the Bourbon throne of Naples and a second would be Crown Prince of Sweden, the adopted son of the House of Vasa.

Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, the son of a petty lawyer, was born at Pau on January 26, 1763. At the age of seventeen he enlisted in the Royal Marine regiment and passed the next nine years of his life in garrison towns in Corsica, Dauphiné and Provence. His first notable exploit occurred in 1788, when, as sergeant, he commanded a section of the Marines whose duty it was to maintain order at Grenoble during the troubles which preceded the outbreak of the Revolution. The story goes that Bernadotte was responsible for the first shedding of blood. One day, when the mob was threatening to get out of hand, a woman rushed out of the crowd and caught the sergeant a cuff on the face, whereon the fiery Gascon ordered his men to open fire. In a moment the answer came in a shower of bricks. Blood had been shed, and from that moment the people of France declared war to the death on the old régime. Impetuous, generous, warm-hearted and ambitious, for the next three years Jean Baptiste pursued a policy which is typical of his whole career. Ready when at white heat of passion to take the most extreme measures, even to fire on the crowd, in calmer moments full of enthusiasm for the Rights of Man and the well-being of his fellows; spending long hours haranguing his comrades on the iniquity of kingship and the necessity of taking up arms against all of noble birth, yet standing firm by his colonel, because in former days he had done him a kindness, and saving his officers from the mutineers who were threatening to hang them; watching every opportunity to push his own fortunes, Bernadotte pursued his way towards success. Promotion came rapidly: colonel in 1792, the next year general of brigade, and a few months later general of division, he owed his advancement to the way in which he handled his men. Naturally great neither as tactician or as strategist, he could carry out the orders of others and above all impart his fiery nature to his troops; his success on the battlefield was due to his personal magnetism, whereby he inspired others with his own self-confidence. But with all this self-confidence there was blended in his character a curious strain of hesitation. Again and again during his career he let "I dare not" wait upon "I would." Gascon to the backbone, full of craft and wile, with an eye ever on the future, at times he allowed his restless imagination to conjure up dangers instead of forcing it to show him the means to gain his end. When offered the post of general of brigade, and again when appointed general of division, he refused the step because he had divined that Jacobin would persecute Girondist, that ultra-Jacobin would overthrow Jacobin, and that a reaction would sweep away the Revolutionists, and he feared that the generals of the army might share the fate of those who appointed them. After his magnificent attack at Fleurus, he was at last compelled to accept promotion by Kléber, who rode up to him and cried out, "You must accept the grade of general of brigade here on the field of battle, where you have so truly earned it. If you refuse you are no friend of mine." Thereon Bernadotte accepted the post, considering that he could, if necessary, prove that he had not received it as a political favour. The years 1794-6 saw Bernadotte on continuous active service with the Army of the Sambre and Meuse, now in the Rhine valley, now in the valley of the Danube. Every engagement from Fleurus to Altenkirchen added more and more to his reputation with the authorities and to his hold on the affection of his men. "He is the God of armies," cried his soldiers, as they followed him into the fire-swept zone. His courage, personality and physical beauty captivated all who approached him. Tall, erect, with masses of coal black hair, the great hooked nose of a falcon, and dark flashing eyes indicating Moorish blood in his veins, he could crush the soul out

of an incipient revolt with a torrent of cutting words, and in a moment turn the mutineers into the most loyal and devoted of soldiers. During the long revolutionary wars he always kept before him the necessity of preparing for peace, and found time to educate himself in history and political science. It was with the reputation of being one of the best divisional officers of the Army of the Sambre and Meuse, and a political power of no small importance, that, at the end of 1796, Bernadotte was transferred with his division to the Army of Italy, commanded by Bonaparte. From their very first meeting friction arose. They were like Cæsar and Pompey, "the one would have no superior, the other would endure no equal." Bonaparte already foresaw the day when France should lie at his feet; he instinctively divined in Bernadotte a possible rival. Bernadotte, accustomed to the adulation of all with whom he came in contact, felt the loss of it in his new command, where soldiers and officers alike could think and speak of nobody save the conqueror of Italy. Yet neither could afford to break with the other, neither could as yet foretell what the future would bring forth, so amid an occasional flourish of compliments, a secret and vindictive war was waged between the two. As commander-in-chief, Bonaparte, for the time being, held the whip hand and could show his dislike by severe reprimands. "Wherever your division goes, there is nothing but complaints of its want of discipline." Bernadotte, on his side, anxious to win renown, would appeal to the "esprit" of his soldiers of the Sambre and Meuse, and would spoil Bonaparte's careful combinations by attempting a frontal attack before the turning movement was effected by the Italian divisions. By the end of the campaign it was clear to everybody that there was no love lost between the two. After Leoben Bonaparte was for the moment the supreme figure in France. As plenipotentiary at Leoben and commander-in-chief of "the Army of England" he could impose his will on the Directory. Bernadotte, in disgust at seeing the success of his rival, for some time seriously considered withdrawing from public life, or at any rate from France, where his reputation was thus overshadowed. Among various posts, the Directory offered him the command of the Army of Italy, but he refused them all, till at last he consented to accept that of ambassador at Vienna. Vienna was for the time being the pole round which the whole of European politics revolved, and accordingly there was great possibility there of achieving diplomatic renown. But scarcely had the new ambassador arrived at his destination when he heard of Bonaparte's projected expedition to Egypt. He at once determined to return to France. He felt that his return ought to be marked by something which might appeal to the populace. Accordingly he adopted a device at once simple and effective.

Jacobin at heart when his interest did not clash with his principles, he had from his arrival at Vienna determined to show the princes and dignitaries of an effete civilisation that Frenchmen were proud of their Revolution and believed in nothing but the equality of all men; he refused to conform to court regulations and turned his house into a club for the German revolutionists. His attitude was of course resented, and there was considerable feeling in Vienna against the French Embassy. It only required, therefore, a little more bravado and a display of the tricolour on the balcony of the Embassy to induce the mob to attack the house. Immediately this occurred Bernadotte lodged a complaint, threw up his appointment, and withdrew to France as a protest against this "scoundrelly" attack on the honour of his country and the doctrine of the equality of men.

On his arrival at Paris he found the Directory shaken to its foundation. Sièyes, the inveterate constitution-monger, who saw the necessity of "a man with a head and a sword," greeted him joyfully; the banishment of Pichegru, the death of Hoche, the disgrace of Moreau, and the absence of Bonaparte had left Bernadotte for the moment the most important of the political soldiers of the Revolution. Acting on Sièyes's advice, Bernadotte refused all posts offered him either in the army or in the Government and awaited developments. Meanwhile he became very intimate with Joseph Bonaparte, who introduced him to his sister-in-law, Désiré Clary. The Clarys were merchants of Marseilles, and Désiré had for some time been engaged to Napoleon Bonaparte, who had jilted her on meeting Josephine. Désiré, very bitter at this treatment, accepted Bernadotte, as she said in later life, "because I was told that he was a man who could hold his own against Napoleon." This marriage

was a master-stroke of policy; it at once gave Bernadotte the support of the Bonaparte family, for Bonaparte in his way was still fond of Désiré, and at the same time it gave Bernadotte a partner who at bottom hated Napoleon with a rancour equal to his own. After the disasters in Italy and on the Danube, on July 2, 1799, Bernadotte, thinking the time was come, accepted the post of Minister of War. He speedily put in the field a new army of one hundred thousand men, and by his admirable measures for the instruction of conscripts and for the collection of war material he was in no small way responsible, not only for Masséna's victory of Zurich, but, as Napoleon himself confessed, for the triumph of Marengo.

His term of office, however, was short, for his colleagues intrigued against him. Sièyes desired a man who would overthrow the Directory and establish a dictatorship: Barras was coquetting with the Bourbons. Bernadotte himself talked loudly of the safety of the Republic, but had not the courage to jump with Sièyes or to crouch with Barras. Oppressed by doubt, his imagination paralysed his action, and his personality, which only blazed when in movement, became dull. Still trusting his reputation and thinking that he was indispensable to the Directory, he tendered his resignation, hoping thus to check the intrigues of Sièyes and Barras. To his surprise it was at once accepted, and he found himself a mere nonentity.

On September 14th Bernadotte resigned, on October 9th Napoleon landed at Fréjus. During the Revolution of the 18th Brumaire Bernadotte remained in the background. Desiring the safety of France by the reorganisation of the Directory, hating the idea of a dictatorship, jealous of the success of his rival, he refused to join the stream of generals which hurried to the feet of the conqueror of Italy and Egypt. Bonaparte, who could read his soul like a book, attempted to draw his rival into his net, but, as ever, the Gascon could not make up his mind. At first he was inclined to join in the conspiracy, but at last he refused, and told Bonaparte that, if the Directory commanded him, he would take up arms against those who plotted against the Republic. Still, even on the eventful day he hesitated, and appeared in the morning among the other conspirators at Bonaparte's house, but not in uniform, thinking thus to serve both parties.

During the years which succeeded the establishment of the Consulate, Bernadotte waged an unending subterranean war against Napoleon. Scarcely a year passed in which his name was not connected with some conspiracy to overthrow the First Consul. Of these Napoleon was well advised, but Bernadotte was too cunning to allow himself to be compromised absolutely. However much he might sympathise with the conspirators and lend them what aid he could, he always refused to sign his name to any document. Accordingly, although on one occasion a bundle of seditious proclamations was found in the boot of his aide-de-camp's carriage, the charge could not be brought home. On another occasion, when it was proved that he had advanced twelve thousand francs to the conspirator Cerrachi, he could prove that it was the price he had paid the artist for a bust. In spite of the fact that no definite proof could be brought against him, the First Consul could easily, if he chose, have produced fraudulent witnesses or have had him disposed of by a court-martial, as he got rid of the Duc d'Enghien. Napoleon waited his time. He was afraid of a Jacobin outbreak if he made a direct attack against him. Further, Bernadotte had a zealous friend and ally in Joseph Bonaparte. So when pressed to take stern measures against his enemy, Napoleon always refused to do so, partly from policy, partly because of his former love for Désiré, and partly from the horror of a scandal in his family, which might weaken his position when he seized the imperial throne. Accordingly he attempted in every way to conciliate his rebellious subject, and at the same time to place him in positions where he could do no political harm. Together with Brune and Marmont, he made him a Senator. He offered him the command of the Army of Italy, and, when Bernadotte refused and demanded employment at home, he posted him to the command of the division in Brittany, with headquarters at Rennes. But the First Consul found that Rennes, far off as it was, was too close to Paris; accordingly he tried to tempt his Jacobin general by important posts abroad. He proposed in succession the embassy at Constantinople, the captain-generalcy at Guadaloupe, and the governorship of Louisiana, but Bernadotte refused to

leave France. At last, early in 1803 Napoleon nominated him minister to the United States. Three times the squadron of frigates got ready to accompany the new minister, but each time the minister postponed his departure. Meanwhile war broke out with England, and Bernadotte was retained in France as general on the unattached list, owing to the efforts of Joseph.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.