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EARLY AND PRIVATE LIFE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

BY JACOB ABBOTT

It is generally true in respect to great statesmen that they owe their celebrity almost entirely to their public and official career. They promote the welfare of mankind by directing legislation, founding institutions, negotiating treaties of peace or of commerce between rival states, and guiding, in various other ways, the course of public and national affairs, while their individual and personal influence attracts very little regard. With Benjamin Franklin, however, the reverse of this is true. He did indeed, while he lived, take a very active part, with other leading men of his time, in the performance of great public

functions; but his claim to the extraordinary degree of respect and veneration which is so freely awarded to his name and memory by the American people, rests not chiefly upon this, but upon the extended influence which he has exerted, and which he still continues to exert upon the national mind, through the power of his private and personal character. The prevalence of habits of industry and economy, of foresight and thrift, of cautious calculation in the formation of plans, and energy and perseverance in the execution of them, and of the disposition to invest what is earned in substantial and enduring possessions, rather than to expend it in brief pleasures or for purposes of idle show – the prevalence of these traits, so far as they exist as elements of the national character in this country – is due in an incalculable degree to the doings and sayings and history of this great exemplar. Thus it is to his life and to his counsels that is to be attributed, in a very high degree, the formation of that great public sentiment prevailing so extensively among us, which makes it more honorable to be industrious than to be idle, and to be economical and prudent rather than extravagant and vain; which places substantial and unpretending prosperity above empty pretension, and real comfort and abundance before genteel and expensive display.

A very considerable portion of the effect which Franklin has produced upon the national character is due to the picturesque and almost romantic interest which attaches itself to the incidents of his personal history. In his autobiography he has given us a

very full and a very graphic narrative of these incidents, and as the anniversary of his birth-day occurs during the present month, we can not occupy the attention of our readers at this time, in a more appropriate manner than by a brief review of the principal events of his life – so far as such a review can be comprised within the limits of a single article.

The ancestors of Franklin lived for many generations on a small estate in Northamptonshire, one of the central counties in England. The head of the family during all this time followed the business of a smith, the eldest son from generation to generation, being brought up to that employment.

The Franklin family were Protestants, and at one time when the Catholics were in power, during the reign of Mary, the common people were forbidden to possess or to read the English Bible. Nevertheless the Franklin family contrived to get possession of a copy of the Scriptures, and in order to conceal it they kept it fastened on the under side of the seat of a little stool. The book was open, the back of the covers being against the seat, and the leaves being kept up by tapes which passed across the pages, and which were fastened to the seat of the stool at the ends. When Mr. Franklin wished to read his Bible to his family, he was accustomed to take up this stool and place it bottom upward upon his lap; and thus he had the book open before him. When he wished to turn over a leaf, he had to turn it under the tape, which, though a little inconvenient, was attended with no serious difficulty. During the reading one of the children was stationed

at the door, to watch, and to give notice if an officer should be coming; and in case of an alarm the stool was immediately turned over and placed in its proper position upon the floor, the fringe which bordered the sides of it hanging down so as to conceal the book wholly from view. This was in the day of Franklin's *great-grandfather*.

In process of time, after the Catholic controversy was decided, new religious dissensions sprang up between the Church of England and the Nonconformists. The family of Franklin were of the latter party, and at length Mr. Josiah Franklin – who was Benjamin Franklin's father – concluded to join a party of his neighbors and friends, who had determined, in consequence of the restrictions which they were under in England, in respect to their religious faith and worship, to emigrate to America. Mr. Franklin came accordingly to Boston, and there, after a time, Benjamin Franklin was born. The place of his birth was in Milk-street, opposite to the Old South Church. The humble dwelling, however, in which the great philosopher was born, has long since disappeared. The magnificent granite warehouses of the Boston merchants now cover the spot, and on one of them is carved conspicuously the inscription, Birthplace of Franklin.

Mr. Josiah Franklin had been a dyer in England, but finding on his coming to Boston that there was but little to be done in that art in so new a country, he concluded to choose some other occupation; and he finally determined upon that of a tallow chandler. Benjamin was the youngest son. The others, as they

gradually became old enough, were put to different trades, but as Benjamin showed a great fondness for his books, having learned to read of his own accord at a very early age, and as he was the youngest son, his father conceived the idea of educating him for the church. So they sent him to the grammar school, and he commenced his studies. He was very successful in the school, and rose from class to class quite rapidly; but still the plan of giving him a public education was at length, for some reason or other, abandoned, and Mr. Franklin took Benjamin into his store, to help him in his business. His duties here were to cut the wicks for the candles, to fill the moulds, to attend upon the customers, or to go of errands or deliver purchases about the town.

There was a certain mill-pond in a back part of the town, where Benjamin was accustomed to go sometimes, in his play-hours, with other boys, to fish. This mill-pond has long since been filled up, and its place is now occupied by the streets and warehouses of the city. In Franklin's day, however, the place was somewhat solitary, and the shore of the pond being marshy, the boys soon trampled up the ground where they were accustomed to stand in fishing, so as to convert it into a perfect quagmire. At length young Franklin proposed to the boys that they should build a wharf, or pier, to stand upon – getting the materials for the purpose from a heap of stones that had been brought for a house which some workmen were building in the neighborhood. The boys at once acceded to the proposal. They all accordingly assembled at the spot one evening after the workmen had gone

away for the night, and taking as many stones as they needed for the purpose, they proceeded to build their wharf.

The boys supposed very probably that the stones which they had taken would not be missed. The workmen, however, did miss them, and on making search the following morning they soon discovered what had become of them. The boys were thus detected, and were all punished.

Franklin's father, though he was plain and unpretending in his manners, was a very sensible and well-informed man, and he possessed a sound judgment and an excellent understanding. He was often consulted by his neighbors and friends, both in respect to public and private affairs. He took great interest, when conversing with his family at table, in introducing useful topics of discourse, and endeavored in other ways to form in the minds of his children a taste for solid and substantial acquisitions. He was quite a musician, and was accustomed sometimes when the labors of the day were done, to play upon the violin and sing, for the entertainment of his family. This music Benjamin himself used to take great delight in listening to.

Young Benjamin did not like his father's trade – that of a chandler – and it was for a long time undecided what calling in life he should pursue. He wished very much to go to sea, but his parents were very unwilling that he should do so. His father, accordingly, in order to make him contented and willing to remain at home, took great pains to find some employment for him that he would like, and he was accustomed to walk about

the town with him to see the workmen employed about their various trades. It was at last decided that he should learn the trade of a printer. One reason why this trade was decided upon was that one of Benjamin's older brothers was a printer, and had just returned from England with a press and a font of type, and was about setting up his business in Boston. So it was decided that Benjamin should be bound to him, as his apprentice; and this was accordingly done. Benjamin was then about twelve years old.

Benjamin had always from his childhood manifested a great thirst for reading, which thirst he had now a much better opportunity to gratify than ever before, as his connection with printers and booksellers gave him facilities for borrowing books. Sometimes he would sit up all night to read the book so borrowed.

Benjamin's brother, the printer, did not keep house, but boarded his apprentices at a boarding house in the town. Benjamin pretty soon conceived the idea of boarding himself, on condition that his brother would pay to him the sum which he had been accustomed to pay for him to the landlady of the boarding house. By this plan he saved a large portion of the time which was allotted to dinner, for reading; for, as he remained alone in the printing office while the rest were gone, he could read, with the book in his lap, while partaking of the simple repast which he had provided.

Young Benjamin was mainly employed, of course, while in his brother's office, in very humble duties; but he did not by

any means confine himself to the menial services which were required of him, as the duty of the youngest apprentice. In fact he actually commenced his career as an author while in this subordinate position. It seems that several gentlemen of Boston, friends of his brother, used to write occasional articles for a newspaper which he printed; and they would sometimes meet at the office to discuss the subjects of their articles, and the effects that they produced. Benjamin determined to try his hand at this work. He accordingly wrote an article for the paper, and after copying it carefully in disguised writing, he put it late one night under the door. His brother found it there in the morning, and on reading it was much pleased with it. He read it to his friends when they came in – Benjamin being at work all the time near by, at his printing case, and enjoying very highly the remarks and comments which they made. He was particularly amused at the guesses that they offered in respect to the author, and his vanity was gratified at finding that the persons that they named were all gentlemen of high character for ingenuity and learning.

The young author was so much encouraged by this attempt that he afterward sent in several other articles in the same way; they were all approved of and duly inserted in the paper. At length he made it known that he was the author of the articles. All were very much surprised, and Benjamin found that in consequence of this discovery he was regarded with much greater consideration by his brother's friends, the gentlemen to whom his performances had been shown, but that his brother himself did

not appear to be much pleased.

Benjamin was employed at various avocations connected with the newspaper, while in his brother's service; sometimes in setting types, then in working off the sheets at the press, and finally in carrying the papers around the town to deliver them to the subscribers. Thus he was, at the same time, compositor, pressman, and carrier. This gave a very agreeable variety to his work, and the opportunities which he enjoyed for acquiring experience and information were far more favorable than they had ever been before.

In the efforts which young Franklin made to improve his mind, while in his brother's office, he did not devote his time to mere reading, but applied himself vigorously to *study*. He was deficient, he thought, in a knowledge of figures, and so he procured an arithmetic, of his own accord, and went through it himself, with very little or no assistance. By proceeding very slowly and carefully in this work, leaving nothing behind that he did not fully understand, he so smoothed his own way as to go through the whole with very little embarrassment or difficulty. He also studied a book of English grammar. The book contained, moreover, brief treatises on Logic and Rhetoric, which were inserted at the end by way of appendix. These treatises Franklin studied too with great care. In a word, the time which he devoted to books was spent, not in seeking amusement, but in acquiring solid and substantial knowledge.

Notwithstanding these advantages, however, Benjamin did not

lead a very happy life as his brother's apprentice. He found his brother a very passionate man and he was often used very roughly by him. Finally after the lapse of four or five years, during which various difficulties occurred which can not here be fully narrated, young Benjamin determined to run away, and seek his fortune in New York. In writing the history of his life, Franklin acknowledges that he was very censurable for taking such a step, and that in the disputes which had occurred between him and his brother, he himself was much in fault, having often needlessly irritated his brother by his saucy and provoking behavior. He, however, determined to go, and a young friend of his, named Collins, a boy of about his own age, helped him form and execute the plan of his escape.

The plan which they formed was for Benjamin to take passage secretly, in a New York sloop, which was then in Boston and about ready to sail. The boys made up a false story to tell the captain of the sloop in order to induce him to take Benjamin on board. Benjamin sold his books and such other little property as he possessed, to raise money, and at length, when the time arrived he went on board the sloop in a very private manner, and concealed himself there.

The captain of the sloop undoubtedly did wrong in taking such a boy away in this manner. He knew that Franklin was running away from home, though he was deceived by Collins's story in respect to the cause of his flight.

The vessel soon sailed, with Franklin on board. The wind was

fair and she had a very prosperous passage. In three days which was by no means a long time for such a voyage, she reached New York, and Benjamin landed safely.

He found himself, however, when landed, in a very forlorn and friendless condition. He knew no one, he was provided, of course, with no letters of introduction or recommendation, and he had very little money.

He applied at a printing office for employment. The printer, whose name was Bradford, said that he had workmen enough, but that he had a son in Philadelphia who was also a printer, and who had lately lost one of his principal hands. So our young hero determined to go to Philadelphia.

On his journey to Philadelphia he met with various romantic adventures. A part of the way he went by water, and very narrowly escaped shipwreck in a storm which suddenly arose, and which drove the vessel to the eastward, entirely out of her course, and came very near throwing her upon the shores of Long Island. He, however, at length reached Amboy in safety, and thence he undertook to travel on foot through New Jersey to Burlington, a distance of about fifty miles, carrying his pack upon his back.

It rained violently all the day, and the unhappy adventurer became so exhausted with his exposures and suffering that he heartily repented of having ever left his home.

At length after two days of weary traveling, Franklin reached Burlington, on the Delaware, the point where he had expected

to embark again on board a vessel in order to proceed down the river to Philadelphia. The regular packet, however, had just gone, and no other one was expected to sail for three days. It was then Saturday, and the next boat was not to go until Tuesday. Our traveler was very much disappointed to find that he must wait so long. In his perplexity he went back to the house of a woman where he had stopped to buy some gingerbread when he first came into town, and asked her what she thought he had better do. She offered to give him lodging in her house, until Tuesday, and inviting him in she immediately prepared some dinner for him, which, though it was very frugal and plain, was received with great thankfulness by the weary and wayworn traveler.

Our hero was not obliged to wait so long as he expected, after all; for that evening as he chanced to be walking along the shore of the river, a small vessel came by on its way to Philadelphia, and on his applying to the boatmen for a passage they agreed to take him on board. He accordingly embarked, and the vessel proceeded down the river. There was no wind, and the men spent the night in rowing. Franklin himself worked with the rest. Toward morning they began to be afraid that they had passed the city in the dark, and so they hauled their vessel up to the shore and landed. When daylight appeared they found that they were about five miles above the city. When they arrived at the city Franklin paid the boatmen a shilling for his passage. They were at first unwilling to receive it, on account of his having helped them to row, but he insisted that they should. He then counted

up the money which he had left, and found that it amounted to just one dollar.

The first thing that he did was to go to a baker's to buy something to eat. He asked for three-pence worth of bread. The baker gave him three good sized rolls for that money. His pockets were full of clothes and other such things, which he had put into them, and so he walked off up the street, holding one of his rolls under each arm and eating the third. It is a singular circumstance that while he was walking through the streets in this way, he passed by the house where the young woman resided who was destined in subsequent years to become his wife, and that she actually saw him as he passed, and took particular notice of him on account of the ridiculous appearance which he made.

Franklin went on in this manner up Market-street to Fourth-street, then down through Chestnut-street and apart of Walnut-street, until he came back to the river again at the place where the vessel lay. He came thus to the shore again in order to get a drink of water from the river, for he was thirsty.

In fact the situation in which our young adventurer found himself at this time must have been extremely discouraging. He was in a strange town, hundreds of miles from home, without friends, without money, without even a place to lay his head, and scarcely knowing what to do or where to go. It is not strange, therefore, that, after taking his short walk around the streets of the town, he should find himself returning again toward the vessel that had brought him; since this vessel alone contained

objects and faces in the least degree familiar to his eye.

It happened that among the passengers that had come down the river on board the vessel, there was a poor woman, who was traveling with her child, a boy of six or eight years of age. When Franklin came down to the wharf he found this woman sitting there with her child, both looking quite weary and forlorn; and, as he had already satisfied his hunger with eating only one of his rolls, he gave the other two to them. They received his charity very thankfully. It seems that they were waiting there for the vessel to sail again, as they were not intending to stop at Philadelphia, but were going farther down the river.

The way it happened that our young hero had provided himself with so much more bread than he needed, notwithstanding that his funds were so low, was this. When he went into the baker's he asked first for biscuits, meaning such as he had been accustomed to buy in Boston. The baker told him that they did not make such biscuits in Philadelphia. He then asked for a three-penny loaf. The baker said they had no three-penny loaves. Franklin then asked him for three-penny worth of bread of any sort, and the baker gave him the three penny rolls. Franklin was surprised to find how much bread he got for his money, but he took the rolls, though he knew it was more than he would need, and so after eating one he had no very ready way of disposing of the other two. His giving them therefore to the poor woman and her boy was not quite as great a deed of benevolence as it might at first seem. It was, however, in this respect like other charitable acts,

performed in this world, which will seldom bear any very rigid scrutiny.

It ought, however, to be added in justice to our hero, that instances frequently occurred during this period of his life in which he made real sacrifices for the comfort and welfare of others, and thus gave unquestionable evidence that he possessed a truly benevolent heart. In fact, his readiness to aid and assist others, whenever it was in his power to do so, constituted one of the most conspicuous traits in the philosopher's character.

Having thus given his bread to the woman, and obtained a draught of water from the river for himself, Franklin turned up the street again and went back into the town. He observed many well dressed people in the street, all going the same way. It was Sunday, and they were going to meeting. Franklin followed them, and took a seat in the meeting-house. It proved to be a meeting of the society of Friends, and as is usual in their meetings when no one is moved to speak, the congregation sat in silence. As there was thus no service to occupy Franklin's attention, and as he was weary with the rowing of the previous night and with the other hardships and fatigues which he had undergone, he fell asleep. He did not wake until the meeting was concluded, and not then until one of the congregation came and aroused him.

Early on Monday morning Franklin went to Mr. Bradford's office to see if he could obtain employment. To his surprise he found Bradford the father there. He had come on from New York on horseback, and so had arrived before Franklin. Franklin found

that young Bradford had obtained a workman in the place of the one he had lost, but old Mr. Bradford offered to go with him and introduce him to another printer named Keimer, who worked in the neighborhood.

Mr. Keimer concluded to take the young stranger into his employ, and he entered into a long conversation with Mr. Bradford about his plans and prospects in business, not imagining that he was talking to the father of his rival in trade. At length Mr. Bradford went away, and Franklin prepared to commence his operations.

He found his new master's printing office, however, in a very crazy condition. There was but one press, and that was broken down and disabled. The font of type, too, the only one that the office contained, was almost worn out with previous usage. Mr. Keimer himself, moreover, knew very little about his trade. He was an author, it seems, as well as compositor, and was employed, when Franklin and Mr. Bradford came to see him, in setting up an elegy which he was composing and putting in type at the same time, using no copy.

Franklin, however took hold of his work with alacrity and energy, and soon made great improvements in the establishment. The press was repaired and put in operation. A new supply of types and cases was obtained. Mr. Keimer did not keep house, and so a place was to be looked for in some private family where the young stranger could board. The place finally decided upon was Mr. Read's, the house where the young woman resided who

has already been mentioned as having observed the absurd figure which Franklin had made in walking through the streets when he first landed. He presented a much better appearance now, for a chest of clothing which he and Collins had sent round secretly from Boston by water, had arrived, and this enabled him to appear now in quite a respectable guise.

It was in the fall of the year 1723, that Franklin came thus to Philadelphia. He remained there during the winter, but in the spring a very singular train of circumstances occurred, which resulted in leading him back to Boston. During the winter he worked industriously at his trade, and spent his leisure time in reading and study. He laid up the money that he earned, instead of squandering it, as young men in his situation often do, in transient indulgences. He formed many useful acquaintances among the industrious and steady young men in the town. He thus lived a very contented life, and forgot Boston, as he said, as much as he could. He still kept it a profound secret from his parents where he was – no one in Boston excepting Collins having been admitted to the secret.

It happened, however, that Captain Holmes, one of Franklin's brothers-in-law who was a shipmaster, came about this time to Newcastle, a town about forty miles below Philadelphia, and there, hearing that Benjamin was at Philadelphia, he wrote to him a letter urging him to return home. Benjamin replied by a long letter defending the step that he had taken, and explaining his plans and intentions in full. It happened that Captain Holmes

was in company with Sir William Keith, the governor of the colony, when he received the letter; and he showed it to him. The governor was struck with the intelligence and manliness which the letter manifested, and as he was very desirous of having a really good printing office established in Philadelphia, he came to see Franklin when he returned to the city, and proposed to him to set up an office of his own. His father, the governor said, would probably furnish him with the necessary capital, if he would return to Boston and ask for it, and he himself would see that he had work enough, for he would procure the public printing for him. So it was determined that Franklin should take passage in the first vessel that sailed, and go to Boston and see his father. Of course all this was kept a profound secret from Mr. Keimer.

In due time Franklin took leave of Mr. Keimer and embarked; and after a very rough and dangerous passage he arrived safely in Boston. His friends were very much astonished at seeing him, for Captain Holmes had not yet returned. They were still more surprised at hearing the young fugitive give so good an account of himself, and of his plans and prospects for the future. The apprentices and journeymen in the printing office gathered around him and listened to his stories with great interest. They were particularly impressed by his taking out a handful of silver money from his pocket, in answer to a question which they asked him in respect to the kind of money which was used in Philadelphia. It seems that in Boston they were accustomed to

use paper money almost altogether in those days.

Young Collins, the boy who had assisted Franklin in his escape the year before, was so much pleased with the accounts that the young adventurer brought back of his success in Philadelphia that he determined to go there himself. He accordingly closed up his affairs and set off on foot for New York, with the understanding that Franklin, who was to go on afterward by water, should join him there, and that they should then proceed together to Philadelphia.

After many long consultations Franklin's father concluded that it was not best for Benjamin to attempt to commence business for himself in Philadelphia, and so Benjamin set out on his return. On his way back he had a narrow escape from a very imminent danger. A Quaker lady came to him one day, on board the vessel in which he was sailing to New York, and began to caution him against two young women who had come on board the vessel at Newport, and who were very forward and familiar in their manners.

"Young man," said she, "I am concerned for thee, as thou hast no friend with thee, and seems not to know much of the world, or of the snares youth is exposed to: depend upon it, these are very bad women. I can see it by all their actions, and if thou art not upon thy guard, they will draw thee into some danger; they are strangers to thee, and I advise thee, in a friendly concern for thy welfare, to have no acquaintance with them." Franklin thanked the lady for her advice, and determined to follow it. When they

arrived at New York the young women told him where they lived, and invited him to come and see them. But he avoided doing so, and it was well that he did, for a few days afterward he learned that they were both arrested as thieves. They had stolen something from the cabin of the ship during the voyage. If Franklin had been found in their company he might have been arrested as their accomplice.

It happened curiously enough that young Franklin attracted the notice and attention of a governor for the second time, as he passed through New York on this journey. It seems that the captain of the vessel in which he had made his voyage, happened to mention to the governor when he arrived in New York, that there was a young man among his passengers who had a great many books with him, and who seemed to take quite an interest in reading; and the governor very kindly sent word back to invite the young man to call at his house, promising, if he would do so, to show him his library. Franklin very gladly accepted this invitation, and the governor took him into his library, and held considerable conversation with him, on the subject of books and authors. Franklin was of course very much pleased with this adventure.

At New York Franklin found his old friend Collins, who had arrived there some time before him. Collins had been, in former times, a very steady and industrious boy, but his character had greatly degenerated during Franklin's absence. He had fallen into very intemperate habits, and Franklin found, on joining him at

New York, that he had been intoxicated almost the whole time that he had been there. He had been gaming too, and had lost all his money, and was now in debt for his board, and wholly destitute. Franklin paid his bills, and they set off together for Philadelphia.

Of course Franklin had to pay all the expenses, both for himself and his companion, on the journey, and this, together with the charges which he had incurred for Collins in New York, soon exhausted his funds, and the two travelers would have been wholly out of money, had it not been that Franklin had received a demand to collect for a man in Rhode Island, who gave it to him when he came through. This demand was due from a man in Pennsylvania, and when the travelers reached the part of the country where this man resided, they called upon him and he paid them the money. This put Franklin in funds again, though as it was money which did not belong to him, he had no right to use it. He however considered himself compelled to use a part of it, by the necessity of the case; and Collins, knowing that his companion had the money, was continually asking to borrow small sums, and Franklin lent them to him from time to time, until at length such an inroad was made upon the trust funds which he held, that Franklin began to be extremely anxious and uneasy.

To make the matter worse Collins continued to addict himself to drinking habits, notwithstanding all that Franklin could do to prevent it. In fact Franklin soon found that his remonstrances

and efforts only irritated Collins and made him angry, and so he desisted. When they reached Philadelphia the case grew worse and worse. Collins could get no employment, and he led a very dissipated life, all at Franklin's expense. At length, however, an incident occurred which led to an open quarrel between them. The circumstances were these.

The two boys, with some other young men, went out one day upon the Delaware in a boat, on an excursion of pleasure. When they were away at some distance from the shore, Collins refused to row in his turn. He said that Franklin and the other boys should row him home. Franklin said that they would not. "Then," said Collins. "You will have to stay all night upon the water. You can do just as you please."

The other two boys were disposed to give up to Collins, unreasonable as he was. "Let us row," said they, "what signifies it?" But Franklin, whose resentment was now aroused, opposed this, and persisted in refusing. Collins then declared that he would make him row or throw him overboard; and he came along, stepping on the thwarts, toward Franklin, as if to put his threat in execution. When he came near he struck at Franklin, but Franklin just at the instant thrust his head forward between Collins's legs, and then rising suddenly with all his force he threw him over headlong into the water.

Franklin knew that Collins was a good swimmer, and so he felt no concern about his safety. He walked along to the stern of the boat, and asked Collins if he would promise to row if they

would allow him to get on board again. Collins was very angry, and declared that he would not row. So the boys who had the oars pulled ahead a few strokes, to keep the boat out of Collins's reach as he swam after her. This continued for some time – Collins swimming in the wake of the boat, and the boys pulling gently, so as just to keep the boat out of his reach – while Franklin himself stood in the stern, interrogating him from time to time, and vainly endeavoring to bring him to terms. At last finding him beginning to tire without showing any signs of yielding, for he was obstinate as well as unreasonable, the boys stopped and drew him on board, and then took him home dripping wet. Collins never forgave Franklin for this. A short time after this incident, however, he obtained some engagement to go to the West Indies, and he went away promising to send back money to Franklin, to pay him what he owed him, out of the very first that he should receive. He was never heard of afterward.

In the mean time Franklin returned to his work in Mr. Keimer's office. He reported the result of his visit to Boston, to Sir William, the governor, informing him that his father was not willing to furnish the capital necessary for setting up a printing office. Sir William replied that it would make no difference; he would furnish the capital himself, he said; and he proposed that Franklin should go to England in the next vessel, and purchase the press and type. This Franklin agreed to do.

In the mean time, before the vessel sailed, Franklin had become very much attached to Miss Read. He felt, he says,

a great respect and affection for her, and he succeeded, as he thought, in inspiring her with the same feelings toward him. It was not, however, considered prudent to think of marriage immediately, especially as Franklin was contemplating so long a voyage.

Besides the company of Miss Read there were several young men in Philadelphia whose society Franklin enjoyed very highly at this time. His most intimate friend was a certain James Ralph. Ralph was a boy of fine literary taste and great love of reading. He had an idea that he possessed poetic talent, and used often to write verses, and he maintained that though his verses might be in some respects faulty, they were no more so than those which other poets wrote when first beginning. He intended, he said, to make writing poetry the business of his life. Franklin did not approve of such a plan as this; still he enjoyed young Ralph's company, and he was accustomed sometimes on holidays to take long rambles with him in the woods on the banks of the Schuylkill. Here the two boys would sit together under the trees, for hours, reading, and conversing about what they had read.

At length the time arrived for the sailing of the ship in which Franklin was to go to England. The governor was to have given him letters of introduction and of credit, and Franklin called for them from time to time, but they were not ready. Finally he was directed to go on board the vessel, and was told that the governor would send the letters there, and that he would find them among the other letters, and could take them out at his

leisure. Franklin supposed that all was right, and accordingly after taking leave of Miss Read, to whom he was now formally engaged, and who wished him heartily a good voyage and a speedy return, he proceeded to Newcastle, where the ship was anchored, and went on board.

On the voyage Franklin met with a variety of incidents and adventures, which, however, can not be particularly described here. Among other things he made the acquaintance of a certain gentleman named Denham, a *Friend*, from Philadelphia, who afterward rendered him very essential service in London. He did not succeed in finding the governor's letters immediately, as the captain told him, when he inquired for them, that the letters were all together in a bag, stowed away. He said, however, that he would bring out the bag when they entered the channel, and that Franklin would have ample time to look out the letters before they got up to London.

Accordingly when the vessel entered the channel the letters were all brought out, and Franklin looked them over. He did not find any that seemed very certainly intended for him, though there were several marked with his name, as if consigned to his care. He thought that these must be the governor's letters, especially as one was addressed to a printer and another to a bookseller and stationer. He accordingly took them out, and on landing he proceeded to deliver them. He went first with the one which was addressed to the bookseller. The bookseller asked him who the letter was from. Franklin replied that it was from

Sir William Keith. The bookseller replied that he did not know any such person, and on opening the letter and looking at the signature, he said angrily that it was from Riddlesden, "a man," he added, "whom I have lately found to be a complete rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him or receive any letters from him." So saying he thrust the letter back into Franklin's hands.

Poor Franklin, mortified and confounded, went immediately to Mr. Denham to ask him what it would be best for him to do. Mr. Denham, when he had heard a statement of the case, said that in all probability no one of the letters which Franklin had taken was from the governor. Sir William, he added, was a very good-natured man, who wished to please every body, and was always ready to make magnificent offers and promises but not the slightest reliance could be placed upon any thing that he said.

So Franklin found himself alone and moneyless in London, and dependent wholly upon his own resources. He immediately began to seek employment in the printing offices. He succeeded in making an engagement with a Mr. Palmer, and he soon found a second-hand bookstore near the printing office, where he used to go to read and to borrow books – his love of reading continuing unchanged.

In a short time Franklin left Mr. Palmer's and went to a larger printing office, one which was carried on by a printer named Watts. The place was near Lincoln's Inn Fields, a well known part of London. Here he was associated with a large number of workmen, both compositors and pressmen. They were very much

astonished at Franklin's temperance principles, for he drank nothing but water, while they consumed immense quantities of strong beer. There was an ale-house near by, and a boy from it attended constantly at the printing office to supply the workmen with beer. These men had a considerable sum to pay every Saturday night out of their wages for the beer they had drank; and this kept them constantly poor. They maintained, however, that they needed the beer to give them strength to perform the heavy work required of them in the printing office. They drank *strong* beer, they said, in order that they might be *strong* to labor. Franklin's companion at the press drank a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon at six o'clock, and a pint when he had done his day's work. Some others drank nearly as much.

Franklin endeavored to convince them that it was a mistake to suppose that the beer gave them strength, by showing that he, though he drank nothing but water, could carry two heavy forms up-stairs to the press-room, at a time, taking one in each hand; while they could only carry one with both hands. They were very much surprised at the superior strength of the "water American," as they called him, but still they would not give up drinking beer.

As is usually the case with young workmen entering large establishments, where they are strangers, Franklin encountered many little difficulties at first, but he gradually overcame them all, and soon became a favorite both with his employer and his fellow workmen. He earned high wages, for he was so prompt,

and so steady, that he was put to the best work. He took board at the house of an elderly woman, a widow, who lived not far distant, and who, after inquiring in respect to Franklin's character, took him at a cheaper rate than usual, from the protection which she expected in having him in the house.

In a small room in the garret of the house where Franklin boarded, there was a lodger whose case was very singular. She was a Roman Catholic, and when young had gone abroad, to a nunnery, intending to become a nun; but finding that the climate did not agree with her she returned to England, where, though there was no nunnery, she determined on leading the life of a nun by herself. She had given away all her property, reserving only a very small sum which was barely sufficient to support life. The house had been let from time to time to various Catholic families, who all allowed the nun to remain in her garret rent free, considering it a blessing upon them to have her there. A priest visited her every day to receive her confessions; otherwise she lived in almost total seclusion. Franklin, however, was once permitted to pay her a visit. He found her cheerful and polite. She looked pale, but said that she was never sick. The room had scarcely any furniture except such as related to her religious observances.

Franklin mentions among other incidents which occurred while he was in London, that he taught two young men to swim, by only going twice with them into the water. One of these young men was a workman in the printing-office where Franklin was

employed, named Wygate. Franklin was always noted for his great skill and dexterity as a swimmer, and one day, after he had taught the two young men to swim, as mentioned above, he was coming down the river Thames in a boat with a party of friends, and Wygate gave such an account of Franklin's swimming as to excite a strong desire in the company to see what he could do. So Franklin undressed himself, and leaped into the water, and he swam all the way from Chelsea to Blackfriar's bridge in London, accompanying the boat, and performing an infinite variety of dextrous evolutions in and under the water, much to the astonishment and delight of all the company. In consequence of this incident, Franklin had an application made to him some time afterward, by a certain nobleman, to teach his two sons to swim, with a promise of a very liberal reward. The nobleman had accidentally heard of Franklin's swimming from Chelsea to London, and of his teaching a person to swim in two lessons.

Franklin remained in London about eighteen months; at the end of that time one of his fellow workmen proposed to him that they two should make a grand tour together on the continent of Europe, stopping from time to time in the great towns to work at their trade, in order to earn money for their expenses. Franklin went to his friend, Mr. Denham, to consult him in respect to this proposal. Mr. Denham advised him not to accede to it, but proposed instead that Franklin should connect himself in business with *him*. He was going to return to America, he said, with a large stock of goods, there to go into business as

a merchant. He made such advantageous offers to Franklin, in respect to this enterprise, that Franklin very readily accepted them, and in due time he settled up his affairs in London, and sailed for America, supposing that he had taken leave of the business of printing forever.

In the result, however, it was destined to be otherwise; for after a short time Mr. Denham fell sick and died, and then Franklin, after various perplexities and delays, concluded to accept of a proposal which his old master, Mr. Keimer, made to him, to come and take charge of his printing-office. Mr. Keimer had a number of rude and inexperienced hands in his employ, and he wished to engage Franklin to come, as foreman and superintendent of the office, and teach the men to do their work skillfully.

Franklin acceded to this proposal, but he did not find his situation in all respects agreeable, and finally his engagement with Mr. Keimer was suddenly brought to a close by an open quarrel. Mr. Keimer, it seems, had not been accustomed to treat his foreman in a very respectful or considerate manner, and one day when Franklin heard some unusual noise in the street, and put his head out a moment to see what was the matter, Mr. Keimer, who was standing below, called out to him, in a very rough and angry manner, to go back and attend to his business, adding some reproachful words which nettled Franklin exceedingly. He immediately afterward came up into the office, when a sharp contention and high words ensued. The end of the

affair was that Franklin took his dismissal and went immediately away.

In a short time, however, Keimer sent for Franklin to come back, saying that a few hasty words ought not to separate old friends, and Franklin, after some hesitation, concluded to return. About this time Keimer had a proposition made to him to print some bank bills, for the state of New Jersey. A copper-plate press is required for this purpose, a press very different in its character from an ordinary press. Franklin contrived one of these presses for Mr. Keimer, the first which had been seen in the country. This press performed its function very successfully. Mr. Keimer and Franklin went together, with the press, to Burlington, where the work was to be done: for it was necessary that the bills should be printed under the immediate supervision of the government, in order to make it absolutely certain that no more were struck off than the proper number.

In printing these bills Franklin made the acquaintance of several prominent public men in New Jersey, some of whom were always present while the press was at work. Several of these gentlemen became very warm friends of Franklin, and continued to be so during all his subsequent life.

At last Franklin joined one of his comrades in the printing-office, named Meredith, in forming a plan to leave Mr. Keimer, and commence business themselves, independently. Meredith's father was to furnish the necessary capital, and Franklin was to have the chief superintendence and care of the business. This

plan being arranged, an order was sent out to England for a press and a font of type, and when the articles arrived the two young men left Mr. Keimer's, and taking a small building near the market, which they thought would be suitable for their purpose, they opened their office, feeling much solicitude and many fears in respect to their success.

To lessen their expense for rent they took a glazier and his family into the house which they had hired, while they were themselves to board in the glazier's family. Thus the arrangement which they made was both convenient and economical.

This glazier, Godfrey, had long been one of Franklin's friends, he was a prominent member, in fact, of the little circle of young mechanics, who, under the influence of Franklin's example, spent their leisure time in scientific studies. Godfrey was quite a mathematician. He was self-taught, it is true, but still his attainments were by no means inconsiderable. He afterward distinguished himself as the inventor of an instrument called Hadley's quadrant, now very generally relied upon for taking altitudes and other observations at sea. It was called by Hadley's name, as is said, through some artifice of Hadley, in obtaining the credit of the invention, though Godfrey was really the author of it.

Though Godfrey was highly respected among his associates for his mathematical knowledge, he knew little else, and he was not a very agreeable companion. The mathematical field affords very few subjects for entertaining conversation, and besides

Godfrey had a habit, which Franklin said he had often observed in great mathematicians, of expecting universal precision in every thing that was said, of forever taking exception to what was advanced by others, and of making distinctions, on very trifling grounds, to the disturbance of all conversation. He, however, became afterward an eminent man, and though he died at length at a distance from Philadelphia, his remains were eventually removed to the city and deposited at Laurel Hill, where a monument was erected to his memory.

The young printers had scarce got their types in the cases and the press in order, before one of Franklin's friends, a certain George House, came in and introduced a countryman whom he had found in the street, inquiring for a printer. They did the work which he brought, and were paid five shillings for it. – Franklin says that this five shillings, the first that he earned as an independent man, afforded him a very high degree of pleasure. He was very grateful too to House, for having taken such an interest in bringing him a customer, and recollecting his own experience on this occasion, he always afterward felt a strong desire to help new beginners, whenever it was in his power.

A certain other gentleman evinced his regard for the young printers in a much more equivocal way. He was a person of some note in Philadelphia, an elderly man, with a wise look, and a very grave and oracular manner of speaking. This gentleman, who was a stranger to Franklin stopped one day at the door and asked Franklin if he was the young man who had lately

opened a printing house. Being answered in the affirmative he told Franklin that he was very sorry for him, as he certainly could not succeed. Philadelphia, he said, was a sinking place. The people were already half of them bankrupts, or nearly so, to his certain knowledge. He then proceeded to present such a gloomy detail of the difficulties and dangers which Philadelphia was laboring under, and of the evils which were coming, that finally he brought Franklin into a very melancholy frame of mind.

The young printers went steadily on, notwithstanding these predictions, and gradually began to find employment for their press. They obtained considerable business through the influence of the members of a sort of debating club which Franklin had established some time before. This club was called the Junto, and was accustomed to meet on Friday evenings for conversation and mutual improvement. The rules which Franklin drew up for the government of this club required that each member should, in his turn, propose subjects or queries on any point of Morals, Politics, or Natural Philosophy, to be discussed by the company; and once in three months to produce and read an essay of his own writing, on any subject that he pleased. The members of the club were all enjoined to conduct their discussion in a sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, and not from love of dispute or desire of victory. Every thing like a positive and dogmatical manner of speaking, and all direct contradiction of each other, was strictly forbidden. Violations of these rules were punished by fines and other similar penalties.

The members of this club having become much interested in Franklin's character from what they had seen of him at the meetings, were strongly disposed to aid him in obtaining business now that he had opened an office of his own. They were mostly mechanics, being engaged in different trades, in the city. One of them was the means of procuring quite a large job for the young printers – the printing of a book in folio. While they were upon this job, Franklin employed himself in setting the type, his task being one sheet each day, while Meredith worked the press. It required great exertion to carry the work on at the rate of one sheet per day, especially as there were frequent interruptions, on account of small jobs which were brought in from time to time. Franklin was, however, very resolutely determined to print a sheet a day, though it required him sometimes to work very late, and always to begin very early. So determined was he to continue doing a sheet a day of the work, that one night when he had imposed his forms and thought his day's work was done, and by some accident one of the forms was broken, and two pages thrown into *pi*, he immediately went to work, distributed the letter, and set up the two pages anew before he went to bed.

This indefatigable industry was soon observed by the neighbors, and it began to attract considerable attention; so that at length, when certain people were talking of the three printing-offices that there were now in Philadelphia, and predicting that they could not all be sustained, some one said that whatever might happen to the other two, Franklin's office must succeed, "For

the industry of that Franklin," said he, "is superior to any thing I ever saw of the kind. I see him still at work every night when I go home, and he is at work again in the morning before his neighbors are out of bed." As the character of Franklin's office in this respect became generally known, the custom that came to it rapidly increased. There were still, however, some difficulties to be encountered.

Franklin was very unfortunate in respect to his partner, so far as the work of the office was concerned, for Meredith was a poor printer, and his habits were not good. In fact the sole reason why Franklin had consented to associate himself with Meredith was that Meredith's father was willing to furnish the necessary capital for commencing business. His father was persuaded to do this in hopes that Franklin's influence over his son might be the means of inducing him to leave off his habits of drinking. Instead of this, however, he grew gradually worse. He neglected his work, and was in fact often wholly incapacitated from attending to it, by the effects of his drinking. Franklin's friends regretted his connection with such a man, but there seemed to be now no present help for it.

It happened, however, that things took such a turn, a short time after this, as to enable Franklin to close his partnership with Meredith in a very satisfactory manner. In the first place Meredith himself began to be tired of an occupation which he was every day more and more convinced that he was unfitted for. His father too found it inconvenient to meet the obligations which

he had incurred for the press and types, as they matured; for he had bought them partly on credit. Two gentlemen, moreover, friends of Franklin, came forward of their own accord, and offered to advance him what money he would require to take the whole business into his own hands. The result of all this was that the partnership was terminated, by mutual consent, and Meredith went away. Franklin assumed the debts, and borrowed money of his two friends to meet the payments as they came due; and thenceforward he managed the business in his own name.

After this change, the business of the office went on more prosperously than ever. There was much interest felt at that time on the question of paper money, one party in the state being in favor of it and the other against it. Franklin wrote and printed a pamphlet on the subject. The title of it was *The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency*. This pamphlet was very well received, and had an important influence in deciding the question in favor of such a currency. In consequence of this Franklin was employed to print the bills, which was very profitable work. He also obtained the printing of the laws, and of the proceedings of the government, which was of great advantage to him.

About this time Franklin enlarged his business by opening a stationery store in connection with his printing office. He employed one or two additional workmen too. In order, however, to show that he was not above his business, he used to bring home the paper which he purchased at the stores, through the streets on a wheelbarrow.

The engagement which Franklin had formed with Miss Read before he went to London had been broken off. This was *his* fault and not hers; as the rupture was occasioned by his indifference and neglect. When her friends found that Franklin had forsaken her, they persuaded her to marry another man. This man, however, proved to be a dissolute and worthless fellow, having already a wife in England, when he married Miss Read. She accordingly refused to live with him, and he went away to the West Indies, leaving Miss Read at home, disconsolate and wretched.

Franklin pitied her very much, and attributed her misfortunes in a great measure to his unfaithfulness to the promises which he had made her. He renewed his acquaintance with her, and finally married her. The wedding took place on the 1st of September, 1730; Franklin was at this time about twenty-five years of age. It was reported that the man who had married her was dead. At all events her marriage with him was wholly invalid.

At the time when Franklin commenced his business in Philadelphia there was no bookstore in any place south of Boston. The towns on the sea coast which have since grown to be large and flourishing cities, were then very small, and comparatively insignificant; and they afforded to the inhabitants very few facilities of any kind. Those who wished to buy books had no means of doing it except to send to England for them.

In order to remedy in some measure the difficulty which was experienced on this account, Franklin proposed to the

members of the debating society which has already been named, that they should form a library, by bringing all their books together and depositing them in the room where the society was accustomed to hold its meetings. This was accordingly done. The members brought their books, and a foundation was thus laid for what afterward became a great public library. The books were arranged on shelves which were prepared for them in the club-room, and suitable rules and regulations were made in respect to the use of them by the members.

With the exception that he appropriated one or two hours each day to the reading of books from the library, Franklin devoted his time wholly to his business. He took care, he said, not only to *be*, in reality, industrious and frugal, but to appear so. He dressed plainly; he never went to any places of diversion; he never went out a-hunting or shooting, and he spent no time in taverns, or in games or frolics of any kind. The people about him observed his diligence, and the consequence was that he soon acquired the confidence and esteem of all who knew him. Business came in, and his affairs went on more and more smoothly every day.

It was very fortunate for him that his wife was as much disposed to industry and frugality as himself. She assisted her husband in his work by folding and stitching pamphlets, tending shop, purchasing paper, rags, and other similar services. They kept no servants, and lived in the plainest and most simple manner. Thus all the money which was earned in the printing office, or made by the profits of the stationery store, was applied

to paying back the money which Franklin had borrowed of his friends, to enable him to settle with Meredith. He was ambitious to pay this debt as soon as possible, so that the establishment might be wholly his own. His wife shared in this desire, and thus, while they deprived themselves of no necessary comfort, they expended nothing for luxury or show. Their dress, their domestic arrangements, and their whole style of living, were perfectly plain.

Franklin's breakfast, for example, for a long time, consisted only of a bowl of bread and milk, which was eaten from a two-penny earthen porringer and with a pewter spoon. At length, however, one morning when called to his breakfast he found a new china bowl upon the table, with a silver spoon in it. They had been bought for him by his wife without his knowledge, who justified herself for the expenditure by saying that she thought that her husband was as much entitled to a china bowl and silver spoon as any of her neighbors.

About this time Franklin adopted a very systematic and formal plan for the improvement of his moral character. He made out a list of the principal moral virtues, thirteen in all, and then made a book of a proper number of pages, and wrote the name of one virtue on each page. He then, on each page, ruled a table which was formed of thirteen lines and seven columns. The lines were for the names of the thirteen virtues, and the columns for the days of the week. Each page therefore represented one week, and Franklin was accustomed every night to examine himself, and

mark down in the proper column, and opposite to the names of the several virtues, all violations of duty in respect to each one respectively, which he could recollect that he had been guilty of during that day. He paid most particular attention each week to one particular virtue, namely, the one which was written on the top of the page for that week, without however neglecting the others – following in this respect, as he said, the example of the gardener who weeds one bed in his garden at a time.

He had several mottos prefixed to this little book, and also two short prayers, imploring divine assistance to enable him to keep his resolution. One of these prayers was from Thomson:

> "Father of light and life, thou Good Supreme!
> O teach me what is good; teach me Thyself!
> Save me from folly, vanity, and vice;
> From every low pursuit; and feed my soul
> With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure,
> Sacred, substantial, never fading bliss."

The other was composed by himself, and was as follows.

> "O Powerful Goodness! Bountiful Father! Merciful Guide! Increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolution to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to thy other children as the only return in my power for thy continual favors to me."

Franklin persevered in his efforts to improve himself in moral

excellence, by means of this record, for a long time. He thought he made great progress, and that his plan was of lasting benefit to him. He found, however, that he could not, as at first he fondly hoped, make himself perfect. He consoled himself at last, he said, by the idea that it was not best, after all, for any one to be absolutely perfect. He used to say that this willingness on his part to be satisfied with retaining some of his faults, when he had become wearied and discouraged with the toil and labor of removing them, reminded him of the case of one of his neighbors, who went to buy an ax of a smith. The ax, as is usual with this tool, was ground bright near the edge, while the remainder of the surface of the iron was left black, just as it had come from the forge. The man wished to have his ax bright all over, and the smith said that he would grind it bright if the man would turn the grindstone.

So the man went to the wheel by which it seems the grindstone was turned, through the intervention of a band, and began his labor. The smith held the ax upon the stone, broad side down, leaning hard and heavily. The man came now and then to see how the work went on. The brightening he found went on slowly. At last, wearied with the labor, he said that he would take the ax as it then was, without grinding it any more. “Oh, no,” said the smith, “turn on, turn on; we shall have it bright by-and-by. All that we have done yet has only made it speckled.” “Yes,” said the man, “but I think I like a speckled ax best.” So he took it away.

In the same manner Franklin said that he himself seemed

to be contented with a character somewhat speckled, when he found how discouraging was the labor and toil required to make it perfectly bright.

During all this time Franklin went on more and more prosperously in business, and was continually enlarging and extending his plans. He printed a newspaper which soon acquired an extensive circulation. He commenced the publication of an almanac, which was continued afterward for twenty-five years, and became very celebrated under the name of Poor Richard's Almanac. At length the spirit of enterprise which he possessed went so far as to lead him to send one of his journeymen to establish a branch printing-office in Charleston, South Carolina. This branch, however, did not succeed very well at first, though, after a time, the journeyman who had been sent out died, and then his wife, who was an energetic and capable woman, took charge of the business, and sent Franklin accounts of the state of it promptly and regularly. Franklin accordingly left the business in her hands, and it went on very prosperously for several years: until at last the woman's son grew up, and she purchased the office for him, with what she had earned and saved.

Notwithstanding the increasing cares of business, and the many engagements which occupied his time and attention, Franklin did not, during all this time, in any degree remit his efforts to advance in the acquisition of knowledge. He studied French, and soon made himself master of that language so far as to read it with ease. Then he undertook the Italian. A friend

of his, who was also studying Italian, was fond of playing chess, and often wished Franklin to play with him. Franklin consented on condition that the penalty for being beaten should be to have some extra task to perform in the Italian grammar – such as the committing to memory of some useful portion of the grammar, or the writing of exercises. They were accordingly accustomed to play in this way, and the one who was beaten, had a lesson assigned him to learn, or a task to perform, and he was bound upon his honor to fulfill this duty before the next meeting.

After having acquired some proficiency in the Italian language Franklin took up the Latin. He had studied Latin a little when a boy at school, at the time when his father contemplated educating him for the church. He had almost entirely forgotten what he had learned of the language at school, but he found, on looking into a Latin Testament, that it would be very easy for him to learn the language now, on account of the knowledge which he had acquired of French and Italian. His experience in this respect led him to think that the common mode of learning languages was not a judicious one. "We are told," says he, "that it is proper to begin first with the Latin, and having acquired that, it will be more easy to attain those modern languages which are derived from it; and yet we do not begin with the Greek in order more easily to acquire the Latin." He then compares the series of languages to a staircase. It is true that if we contrive some way to clamber to the upper stair, by the railings or by some other method, without using the steps, we can then easily reach any

particular stair by coming down, but still the simplest and the wisest course would seem to be to walk up directly from the lower to the higher in regular gradation.

"I would therefore," he adds, "offer it to the consideration of those who superintend the education of our youth, whether, since many of those who begin with the Latin quit the same after spending some years, without having made any great proficiency, and what they have learned becomes almost useless, so that their time has been lost, it would not have been better to have begun with the French, proceeding to the Italian and Latin; for though after spending the same time they should quit the study of languages, and never arrive at the Latin, they would, however, have acquired another tongue or two that, being in modern use, might be serviceable to them in common life."

It was now ten years since Franklin had been at Boston, and as he was getting well established in business, and easy in his circumstances, he concluded to go there and visit his relations. His brother, Mr. James Franklin, the printer to whom he had been apprenticed when a boy, was not in Boston at this time. He had removed to Newport. On his return from Boston, Franklin went to Newport to see him. He was received by his brother in a very cordial and affectionate manner, all former differences between the two brothers being forgotten by mutual consent. He found his brother in feeble health, and fast declining – and apprehending that his death was near at hand. He had one son, then ten years of age, and he requested that in case of his

death Benjamin would take this child and bring him up to the printing business. Benjamin promised to do so. A short time after this his brother died, and Franklin took the boy, sent him to school for a few years, and then took him into his office, and brought him up to the business of printing. His mother carried on the business at Newport until the boy had grown up, and then Franklin established him there, with an assortment of new types and other facilities. Thus he made his brother ample amends for the injury which he had done him by running away from his service when he was a boy.

On his return from Boston, Franklin found all his affairs in Philadelphia in a very prosperous condition. His business was constantly increasing, his income was growing large, and he was beginning to be very widely known and highly esteemed, throughout the community. He began to be occasionally called upon to take some part in general questions relating to the welfare of the community at large. He was appointed postmaster for Philadelphia. Soon after this he was made clerk of the General Assembly, the colonial legislature of Pennsylvania. He began, too, to pay some attention to municipal affairs, with a view to the better regulation of the public business of the city. He proposed a reform in the system adopted for the city watch. The plan which had been pursued was for a public officer to designate every night a certain number of householders, taken from the several wards in succession, who were to perform the duty of watchmen. This plan was, however, found to be very inefficient, as the more

respectable people, instead of serving themselves, would pay a fine to the constable to enable him to hire substitutes; and these substitutes were generally worthless men who spent the night in drinking, instead of faithfully attending to their duties.

Franklin proposed that the whole plan should be changed; he recommended that a tax should be levied upon the people, and a regular body of competent watchmen employed and held to a strict responsibility in the performance of their duty. This plan was adopted, and proved to be a very great improvement on the old system.

It was also much more just; for people were taxed to pay the watchmen in proportion to their property, and thus they who had most to be protected paid most.

Franklin took a great interest, too, about this time, in promoting a plan for building a large public edifice in the heart of the city, to accommodate the immense audiences that were accustomed to assemble to hear the discourses of the celebrated Mr. Whitefield. The house was built by public contribution. When finished, it was vested in trustees, expressly for the use of *any preacher of any religious persuasion*, who might desire to address the people of Philadelphia. In fact, Franklin was becoming more and more a public man, and soon after this time, he withdrew almost altogether from his private pursuits, and entered fully upon his public career. The history of his adventures in that wider sphere must be postponed to some future Number.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE. [1]

BY JOHN S. C. ABBOTT

Napoleon's Expedition to Egypt was one of the most magnificent enterprises which human ambition ever conceived. When Napoleon was a schoolboy at Brienne, his vivid imagination became enamored of the heroes of antiquity, and ever dwelt in the society of the illustrious men of Greece and Rome. Indulging in solitary walks and pensive musings, at that early age he formed vague and shadowy, but magnificent conceptions of founding an Empire in the East, which should outvie in grandeur all that had yet been told in ancient or in modern story. His eye wandered along the shores of the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea, as traced upon the map, and followed the path of the majestic floods of the Euphrates, the Indus, and the Ganges, rolling through tribes and nations, whose myriad population, dwelling in barbaric pomp and pagan darkness, invited a conqueror. "The Persians," exclaimed this strange boy, "have blocked up the route of Tamerlane, but I will open another." He, in those early dreams, imagined himself a

[1] Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1852, by Harper and Brothers, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of New York.

conqueror, with Alexander's strength, but without Alexander's vice or weakness, spreading the energies of civilization, and of a just and equitable government, over the wild and boundless regions which were lost to European eyes in the obscurity of distance.

When struggling against the armies of Austria, upon the plains of Italy, visions of Egypt and of the East blended with the smoke and the din of the conflict. In the retreat of the Austrians before his impetuous charges, in the shout of victory which incessantly filled his ear, swelling ever above the shrieks of the wounded and the groans of the dying, Napoleon saw but increasing indications that destiny was pointing out his path toward an Oriental throne.

When the Austrians were driven out of Italy, and the campaign was ended, and Napoleon, at Montebello, was receiving the homage of Europe, his ever-impetuous mind turned with new interest to the object of his early ambition. He often passed hours, during the mild Italian evenings, walking with a few confidential friends in the magnificent park of his palace, conversing with intense enthusiasm upon the illustrious empires, which have successively overshadowed those countries, and faded away. "Europe," said he, "presents no field for glorious exploits; no great empires or revolutions are to be found but in the East, where there are six hundred millions of men."

Upon his return to Paris, he was deaf to all the acclamations with which he was surrounded. His boundless ambition was such that his past achievements seemed as nothing. The most brilliant

visions of Eastern glory were dazzling his mind. “They do not long preserve at Paris,” said he, “the remembrance of any thing. If I remain long unemployed, I am undone. The renown of one, in this great Babylon, speedily supplants that of another. If I am seen three times at the opera, I shall no longer be an object of curiosity. I am determined not to remain in Paris. There is nothing here to be accomplished. Every thing here passes away. My glory is declining. This little corner of Europe is too small to supply it. We must go to the East. All the great men of the world have there acquired their celebrity.”

When requested to take command of the army of England, and to explore the coast, to judge of the feasibility of an attack upon the English in their own island, he said to Bourrienne, “I am perfectly willing to make a tour to the coast. Should the expedition to Britain prove too hazardous, as I much fear that it will, the army of England will become the army of the East, and we will go to Egypt.”

He carefully studied the obstacles to be encountered in the invasion of England, and the means at his command to surmount them. In his view, the enterprise was too hazardous to be undertaken, and he urged upon the Directory the Expedition to Egypt. “Once established in Egypt,” said he, “the Mediterranean becomes a *French Lake*; we shall found a colony there, unenervated by the curse of slavery, and which will supply the place of St. Domingo; we shall open a market for French manufactures through the vast regions of Africa,

Arabia, and Syria. All the caravans of the East will meet at Cairo, and the commerce of India, must forsake the Cape of Good Hope, and flow through the Red Sea. Marching with an army of sixty thousand men, we can cross the Indus, rouse the oppressed and discontented native population, against the English usurpers, and drive the English out of India. We will establish governments which will respect the rights and promote the interests of the people. The multitude will hail us as their deliverers from oppression. The Christians of Syria, the Druses, and the Armenians, will join our standards. We may change the face of the world." Such was the magnificent project which inflamed this ambitious mind.

England, without a shadow of right, had invaded India. Her well-armed dragoons had ridden, with bloody hoofs, over the timid and naked natives. Cannon, howitzers, and bayonets had been the all-availing arguments with which England had silenced all opposition. English soldiers, with unsheathed swords ever dripping with blood, held in subjection provinces containing uncounted millions of inhabitants. A circuitous route of fifteen thousand miles, around the stormy Cape of Good Hope, conducted the merchant fleets of London and Liverpool to Calcutta and Bombay; and through the same long channel there flooded back upon the maritime isle the wealth of the Indies.

It was the plea of Napoleon that he was not going to make an unjust war upon the unoffending nations of the East; but that he was the ally of the oppressed people, drawing the sword against

their common enemy, and that he was striving to emancipate them from their powerful usurpers, and to confer upon them the most precious privileges of freedom. He marched to Egypt not to desolate, but to enrich; not to enslave, but to enfranchise; not to despoil the treasures of the East, but to transfer to those shores the opulence and the high civilization of the West. Never was an ambitious conqueror furnished with a more plausible plea. England, as she looks at India and China, must be silent. America, as she listens to the dying wail of the Red Man, driven from the forests of his childhood and the graves of his fathers, can throw no stone. Napoleon surely was not exempt from the infirmities of humanity. But it is not becoming in an English or an American historian to breathe the prayer, "We thank Thee, oh God, that we are not like this Bonaparte."

Egypt, the memorials of whose former grandeur still attract the wonder and the admiration of the civilized world, after having been buried, during centuries, in darkness and oblivion, is again slowly emerging into light, and is, doubtless, destined eventually to become one of the great centres of industry and of knowledge. The Mediterranean washes its northern shores, opening to its commerce all the opulent cities of Europe. The Red Sea wafts to its fertile valley the wealth of India and of China. The Nile, rolling its vast floods from the unknown interior of Africa, opens a highway for inexhaustible internal commerce with unknown nations and tribes.

The country consists entirely of the lower valley of the

Nile, with a front of about one hundred and twenty miles on the Mediterranean. The valley six hundred miles in length, rapidly diminishes in breadth as it is crowded by the sands of the desert, presenting, a few leagues from the mouth of the river, but the average width of about six miles. The soil fertilized by the annual inundations of the Nile, possesses most extraordinary fertility. These floods are caused by the heavy rains which fall in the mountains of Abyssinia. It never rains in Egypt. Centuries may pass while a shower never falls from the sky. Under the Ptolemies the population of the country was estimated at twenty millions. But by the terrific energies of despotism, these numbers had dwindled away, and at the time of the French Expedition Egypt contained but two million five hundred thousand inhabitants. These were divided into four classes. First came the Copts, about two hundred thousand, the descendants of the ancient Egyptians. They were in a state of the most abject degradation and slavery. The great body of the population, two millions in number, were the Arabs. They were a wild and semi-barbarian race, restrained from all enterprise and industry, by unrelenting despotism. The Turks or Janizaries, two hundred thousand strong, composed a standing army, of sensual, merciless, unprincipled usurpers, which kept the trembling population by the energies of the bastinado, the scimitar and the bowstring in most servile subjection. The Mamelukes composed a body of twelve thousand horsemen, proud, powerful and intolerable oppressors. Each horseman had

two servants to perform his menial service. Twenty-four beys, each of whom had five or six hundred Mamelukes under his command, governed this singular body of cavalry. Two principal beys, Ibrahim and Mourad divided between them the sovereignty of Egypt. It was the old story of despotism. The millions were ground down into hopeless degradation and poverty to pamper to the luxury and vice of a few haughty masters. Oriental voluptuousness and luxury reigned in the palaces of the beys; beggary and wretchedness deformed the mud hovels of the defrauded and degraded people. It was Napoleon's aim to present himself to the *people* of Egypt as their friend and liberator; to rally them around his standard, to subdue the Mamelukes, to establish a government, which should revive all the sciences and the arts of civilized life in Egypt; to acquire a character, by these benefactions, which should emblazon his name throughout the East; and then, with oppressed nations welcoming him as a deliverer, to strike blows upon the British power in India, which should compel the mistress of the seas to acknowledge that upon the land there was an arm which could reach and humble her. It was a design sublime in its magnificence. But it was not the will of God that it should be accomplished.

The Directory, at last overcome by the arguments of Napoleon, and also, through jealousy of his unbounded popularity, being willing to remove him from France, assented to the proposed expedition. It was however necessary to preserve the utmost secrecy. Should England be informed of the direction

in which the blow was about to fall upon her, she might, with her invincible fleet, intercept the French squadron – she might rouse the Mamelukes to most formidable preparations for resistance, and might thus vastly increase the difficulties of the enterprise. All the deliberations were consequently conducted with closed doors, and the whole plan was enveloped in the most profound mystery. For the first time in the history of the world, literature and science and art, formed a conspicuous part of the organization of an army. It was agreed that Napoleon should take forty-six thousand men, a certain number of officers of his own selection, men of science, engineers, geographers, and artisans of all kinds. Napoleon now devoted himself with the most extraordinary energy to the execution of his plans. Order succeeded order with ceaseless rapidity. He seemed to rest not day nor night. He superintended every thing himself, and with almost the rapidity of the wind passed from place to place, corresponding with literary men, conversing with generals, raising money, collecting ships, and accumulating supplies. His comprehensive and indefatigable mind arranged even the minutest particulars. "I worked all day," said one, in apology for his assigned duty not having been fully performed. "But had you not the night also?" Napoleon replied. "Now sir," said he to another, "use dispatch. Remember that the world was created in but six days. Ask me for whatever you please, except *time*; that is the only thing which is beyond my power."

His own energy was thus infused into the hearts of hundreds,

and with incredible rapidity the work of preparation went on. He selected four points for the assemblage of convoys and troops, Toulon, Genoa, Ajaccio, and Civita Vecchia. He chartered four hundred vessels of merchantmen in France and Italy as transports for the secret service, and assembled them at the points of departure. He dispatched immediate orders for the divisions of his renowned army of Italy to march to Genoa and Toulon. He collected the best artisans Europe could furnish in all the arts of human industry. He took printing types, of the various languages of the East, from the College of the Propaganda at Rome, and a company of printers. He formed a large collection of the most perfect philosophical and mathematical instruments. The most illustrious men, though knowing not where he was about to lead them, were eager to attach themselves to the fortunes of the young general. Preparations for an enterprise upon such a gigantic scale could not be made without attracting the attention of Europe. Rumor was busy with her countless contradictions. "Where is Napoleon bound?" was the universal inquiry. "He is going," said some "to the Black Sea" – "to India" – "to cut a canal through the Isthmus of Suez" – "to Ireland" – "to the Thames." Even Kleber supposed that they were bound for England, and reposing implicit confidence in the invincibility of Napoleon, he said, "Well! if you throw a fireship into the Thames, put Kleber on board of her and you shall see what he will do." The English cabinet was extremely perplexed. They clearly foresaw that a storm was gathering, but knew not in what direction it would

break. Extraordinary efforts were made to equip a powerful fleet, which was placed under the command of Lord Nelson, to cruise in the Mediterranean and watch the movements of the French.

On the 9th of May, 1798, just five months after Napoleon's return to Paris from the Italian campaign, he entered Toulon, having completed all his preparations for the most magnificent enterprise ever contemplated by a mortal. Josephine accompanied him, that he might enjoy as long as possible, the charms of her society. Passionately as he loved his own glory, his love for Josephine was *almost* equally enthusiastic. A more splendid armament never floated upon the bosom of the ocean than here awaited him, its supreme lord and master. The fleet consisted of thirty ships of the line and frigates; seventy-two brigs and cutters, and four hundred transports. It bore forty-six thousand combatants, and a literary corps of one hundred men, furnished in the most perfect manner, to transport to Asia the science and the arts of Europe, and to bring back in return the knowledge gleaned among the monuments of antiquity. The old army of Italy was drawn up in proud array to receive its youthful general, and they greeted him with the most enthusiastic acclamations. But few even of the officers of the army were aware of its destination. Napoleon inspirited his troops with the following proclamation:

"Soldiers! you are one of the wings of the army of England. You have made war in mountains, plains and cities. It remains to make it on the ocean. The Roman legions, whom you have often

imitated but not yet equaled, combated Carthage, by turns, on the seas and on the plains of Zama. Victory never deserted their standards, because they never ceased to be brave, patient, and united. Soldiers! the eyes of Europe are upon you. You have great destinies to accomplish, battles to fight, dangers and fatigues to overcome. You are about to do more than you have yet done, for the prosperity of your country, the happiness of man and for your own glory." Thus the magnitude of the enterprise was announced, while at the same time it was left vailed in mystery.

Napoleon had, on many occasions, expressed his dislike of the arbitrary course pursued by the Directory. In private he expressed, in the strongest terms, his horror of Jacobin cruelty and despotism. "The Directors," said he "can not long retain their position. They know not how to do any thing for the imagination of the nation." It is said that the Directors, at last, were so much annoyed by his censure that they seriously contemplated his arrest and applied to Fouché for that purpose. The wily minister of police replied, "Napoleon Bonaparte is not the man to be arrested; neither is Fouché the man who will undertake to arrest him." When Bourrienne inquired if he were really determined to risk his fate on the Expedition to Egypt, "Yes!" he replied, "if I remain here, it will be necessary for me to overturn this miserable government, and make myself king. But we must not think of that yet. The pear is not yet ripe. I have sounded, but the time has not yet come. I must first dazzle these gentlemen by my exploits." One of his last acts before embarkation was to issue a humane

proclamation to the military commission at Toulon urging a more merciful construction of one of the tyrannical edicts of the Directory against the emigrants. "I exhort you, citizens," said he, "when the law presents at your tribunal old men and females, to declare that, in the midst of war, Frenchmen respect the aged and the women, even of their enemies. The soldier who signs a sentence against one incapable of bearing arms is a coward." There was perhaps not another man in France, who would have dared thus to oppose the sanguinary measures of government. This benevolent interposition met however with a response in the hearts of the people, and added a fresh laurel to his brow.

On the morning of the 19th of May, 1798, just as the sun was rising over the blue waves of the Mediterranean the fleet got under way. Napoleon, with Eugene, embarked in the Orient, an enormous ship of one hundred and twenty guns. It was a brilliant morning and the unclouded sun perhaps never shone upon a more splendid scene. The magnificent armament extended over a semi-circle of not less than eighteen miles. The parting between Napoleon and Josephine is represented as having been tender and affecting in the extreme. She was very anxious to accompany him, but he deemed the perils to which they would be exposed, and the hardships they must necessarily endure, far too formidable for a lady to encounter. Josephine stood upon a balcony, with her eyes blinded with tears, as she waved her adieus to Napoleon, and watched the receding fleet, till the lessening sails disappeared beneath the distant horizon.

The squadron sailed first to Genoa, thence to Ajaccio, and thence to Civita Vecchia, to join the convoys collected in those ports. The signal was then given for the whole fleet to bear away, as rapidly as possible, for Malta.

In coasting along the shores of Italy, Napoleon, from the deck of the Orient descried, far away in the distant horizon, the snow-capped summits of the Alps. He called for a telescope, and gazed long and earnestly upon the scene of his early achievements. "I can not," said he, "behold without emotion, the land of Italy. These mountains command the plains where I have so often led the French to victory. Now I am bound to the East. With the same troops victory is still secure."

All were fascinated by the striking originality, animation, and eloquence of his conversation. Deeply read in all that is illustrious in the past, every island, every bay, every promontory, every headland recalled the heroic deeds of antiquity. In pleasant weather Napoleon passed nearly all the time upon deck, surrounded by a group never weary of listening to the freshness and the poetic vigor of his remarks. Upon all subjects he was alike at home, and the most distinguished philosophers, in their several branches of science, were amazed at the instinctive comprehensiveness with which every subject seemed to be familiar to his mind. He was never depressed and never mirthful. A calm and thoughtful energy inspired every moment. From all the ships the officers and distinguished men were in turn invited to dine with him. He displayed wonderful tact in drawing them

out in conversation, forming with unerring skill an estimate of character, and thus preparing himself for the selection of suitable agents in all the emergencies which were to be encountered. In nothing was the genius of Napoleon more conspicuous, than in the lightning-like rapidity with which he detected any vein of genius in another. Not a moment of time was lost. Intellectual conversation, or reading or philosophical discussion caused the hours to fly on swiftest wing. Napoleon always, even in his most hurried campaigns, took a compact library with him. When driving in his carriage, from post to post of the army, he improved the moments in garnering up that knowledge, for the accumulation of which he ever manifested such an insatiable desire. *Words* were with him nothing, *ideas* every thing. He devoured biography, history, philosophy, treatises upon political economy and upon all the sciences. His contempt for works of fiction – the whole class of novels and romances – amounted almost to indignation. He could never endure to see one reading such a book or to have such a volume in his presence. Once, when Emperor, in passing through the saloons of his palace, he found one of the maids of honor with a novel in her hands. He took it from her, gave her a severe lecture for wasting her time in such frivolous reading, and cast the volume into the flames. When he had a few moments for diversion, he not unfrequently employed them in looking over a book of logarithms, in which he always found recreation.

At the dinner table some important subject of discussion

was ever proposed. For the small talk and indelicacies which wine engenders Napoleon had no taste, and his presence alone was sufficient to hold all such themes in abeyance. He was a young man of but twenty-six years of age, but his pre-eminence over all the forty-six thousand who composed that majestic armament was so conspicuous, that no one dreamed of questioning it. Without annoyance, without haughtiness, he was fully conscious of his own superiority, and received unembarrassed the marks of homage which ever surrounded him. The questions for discussion relating to history, mythology, and science, were always proposed by Napoleon. "Are the planets inhabited?" "What is the age of the world?" "Will the earth be destroyed by fire or water?" "What are the comparative merits of Christianity and Moslemism?" such were some of the questions which interested the mind of this young general.

From the crowded state of the vessels, and the numbers on board unaccustomed to nautical manœuvres, it not unfrequently happened that some one fell overboard. Though Napoleon could look with perfect composure upon the carnage of the field of battle, and order movements, without the tremor of a nerve, which he knew must consign thousands to a bloody death, when by such an accidental event life was periled, his sympathies were aroused to the highest degree, and he could not rest until the person was extricated. He always liberally rewarded those who displayed unusual courage and zeal in effecting a rescue. One dark night a noise was heard as of a man falling overboard.

The whole ship's company, consisting of two thousand men, as the cry of alarm spread from stem to stern, was instantly in commotion. Napoleon immediately ascended to the deck. The ship was put about; boats were lowered, and, after much agitation and search, it was discovered that the whole stir was occasioned by the slipping of a quarter of beef from a noose at the bulwark. Napoleon ordered that the recompense for signal exertions should be more liberal than usual. "It might have been a man," he said, "and the zeal and courage now displayed have not been less than would have been required in that event."

On the morning of the 16th of June, after a voyage of twenty days, the white cliffs of Malta, and the magnificent fortifications of that celebrated island, nearly a thousand miles from Toulon, emerged from the horizon, glittering with dazzling brilliance in the rays of the rising sun. By a secret understanding with the Knights of Malta. Napoleon had prepared the way for the capitulation of the island before leaving France. The Knights, conscious of their inability to maintain independence, preferred to be the subjects of France, rather than of any other power. "I captured Malta," said Napoleon, "while at Mantua." The reduction, by force, of that almost impregnable fortress, would have required a long siege, and a vast expenditure of treasure and of life. A few cannon shot were exchanged, that there might be a slight show of resistance, when the island was surrendered, and the tri-colored flag waved proudly over those bastions which, in former years, had bid defiance, to the whole power of the all-

conquering Turk. The generals of the French army were amazed as they contemplated the grandeur and the strength of these works, upon which had been expended the science, the toil, and the wealth of ages. "It is well," said General Caffarelli to Napoleon, "that there was some one within to open the gates to us. We should have had more trouble in making our way through, if the place had been empty." The Knights of Malta, living upon the renown acquired by their order in by-gone ages, and reveling in luxury and magnificence, were very willing to receive the gold of Napoleon, and palaces in the fertile plains of Italy and France, in exchange for turrets and towers, bastions and ramparts of solid rock. The harbor is one of the most safe and commodious in the world. It embraced, without the slightest embarassment, the whole majestic armament, and allowed the magnificent Orient, to float, with abundance of water, at the quay.

Napoleon immediately devoted his mind, with its accustomed activity, to securing and organizing the new colony. The innumerable batteries, were immediately armed, and three thousand men were left in defense of the place. All the Turkish prisoners, found in the galleys, were set at liberty, treated with the greatest kindness, and scattered through the fleet, that their friendship might be won, and that they might exert a moral influence, in favor of the French, upon the Mohammedan population of the East. With as much facility as if he had devoted a long life to the practical duties of a statesman, Napoleon arranged the municipal system of the island; and

having accomplished all this in less than a week, he again weighed anchor, and directed his course toward Egypt. Many of the Knights of Malta, followed the victorious general, and with profound homage, accepted appointments in his army.

The whole French squadron, hourly anticipating collision with the English fleet, were ever ready for battle. Though Napoleon did not turn from his great object to seek the English, he felt no apprehension in view of meeting the enemy. Upon every ship-of-the-line he had put five hundred picked men, who were daily exercised in working the guns. He had enjoined upon the whole fleet, that, in case of an encounter, every ship was to have but one single aim, that of closing immediately with a ship of the enemy, and boarding her with the utmost desperation. Nelson, finding that the French had left their harbors, eagerly but unavailingly searched for them. He was entirely at a loss respecting their destination, and knew not in what direction to sail. It was not yet known, even on board the French ships, but to a few individuals, whither the fleet was bound. Gradually, however, as the vast squadron drew nearer the African shore, the secret began to transpire. Mirth and gayety prevailed. All were watching with eagerness, to catch a first glimpse of the continent of Africa. In the evenings Napoleon assembled, in the capacious cabins of the Orient, the men of science and general officers, and then commenced the learned discussions of the Institute of Egypt. One night, the two fleets were within fifteen miles of each other; so near that the signal guns of Nelson's squadron, were heard by

the French. The night, however, was dark and foggy, and the two fleets passed without collision.

On the morning of the 1st of July, after a passage of forty days, the low and sandy shores of Egypt, about two thousand miles from France, were discerned extending along the distant horizon, as far as the eye could reach. As with a gentle breeze they drew nearer the land, the minarets of Alexandria, the Needle of Cleopatra, and Pompey's Pillar, rose above the sand hills, exciting, in the minds of the enthusiastic French, the most romantic dreams of Oriental grandeur. The fleet approached a bay, at a little distance from the harbor of Alexandria, and dropped anchor about three miles from the shore. But two days before, Nelson had visited that very spot, in quest of the French, and, not finding them there, had sailed for the mouth of the Hellespont. The evening had now arrived, and the breeze had increased to almost a gale. Notwithstanding the peril of disembarkation in such a surf, Napoleon decided that not a moment was to be lost. The landing immediately commenced, and was continued, with the utmost expedition, through the whole night. Many boats were swamped, and some lives lost, but, unintimidated by such disasters, the landing was continued with unabated zeal. The transfer of the horses from the ships to the shore, presented a very curious spectacle. They were hoisted out of the ships and lowered into the sea, with simply a halter about their necks, where they swam in great numbers around the vessels, not knowing which way to go. Six were caught by their

halters, and towed by a boat toward the shore. The rest, by instinct followed them. As other horses were lowered into the sea from all the ships, they joined the column hastening toward the land, and thus soon there was a dense and wide column of swimming horses, extending from the ships to the beach. As fast as they reached the shore they were caught, saddled, and delivered to their riders. Toward morning the wind abated, and before the blazing sun rose over the sands of the desert, a proud army of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, was marshaled upon the dreary waste, awaiting the commands of its general.

In the midst of the disembarkation, a sail appeared in the distant horizon. It was supposed to be an English ship. "Oh, Fortune!" exclaimed Napoleon, "dost thou forsake me now? I ask of thee but a short respite." The strange sail proved to be a French frigate, rejoining the fleet. While the disembarkation was still going on, Napoleon advanced, with three thousand men, whom he had hastily formed in battle array upon the beach, to Alexandria, which was at but a few miles distance, that he might surprise the place before the Turks had time to prepare for a defense. No man ever better understood the value of time. His remarkable saying to the pupils of a school which he once visited, "*My young friends! every hour of time is a chance of misfortune for future life*," formed the rule of his own conduct.

Just before disembarking, Napoleon had issued the following proclamation to his troops: "Soldiers! You are about to undertake a conquest fraught with incalculable effects upon the commerce

and civilization of the world. You will inflict upon England the most grievous stroke she can sustain before receiving her death blow. The people with whom we are about to live are Mohammedans. Their first article of faith is, There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet. Contradict them not. Treat them as you have treated the Italians and the Jews. Show the same regard to their muftis and imaums, as you have shown to the bishops and rabbins. Manifest for the ceremonies of the Koran, the same respect you have shown to the convents and the synagogues, to the religion of Moses and that of Jesus Christ. All religions were protected by the legions of Rome. You will find here customs greatly at variance with those of Europe. Accustom yourselves to respect them. Women are not treated here as with us; but in every country he who violates is a monster. Pillage enriches only a few, while it dishonors an army, destroys its resources, and makes enemies of those whom it is the interest of all to attach as friends."

The first gray of the morning had not yet dawned, when Napoleon, at the head of his enthusiastic column, marched upon the city, which bore the name, and which had witnessed the achievements of Alexander. It was his aim, by the fearlessness and the impetuosity of his first assaults, to impress the Turks with an idea of the invincibility of the French. The Mamelukes, hastily collected upon the ramparts of the city, received the foe with discharges of musketry and artillery, and with shouts of defiance. The French, aided by their ladders, poured over the walls like

an inundation, sweeping every thing before them. The conflict was short, and the tricolored flag waved triumphantly over the city of Alexander. The Turkish prisoners from Malta, who had become fascinated by the magnificence of Napoleon, as all were fascinated who approached that extraordinary man, dispersed themselves through the city, and exerted a powerful influence in securing the friendship of the people for their invaders. The army, imbibing the politic sentiments of their general, refrained from all acts of lawless violence, and amazed the enslaved populace by their justice, mercy, and generosity. The people were immediately liberated from the most grinding and intolerable despotism; just and equal laws were established; and Arab and Copt, soon began, lost in wonder, to speak the praises of Napoleon. He was a strange conqueror for the East; liberating and blessing, not enslaving and robbing the vanquished. Their women were respected, their property was uninjured, their persons protected from violence, and their interests in every way promoted. A brighter day never dawned upon Egypt than the day in which Napoleon placed his foot upon her soil. The accomplishment of his plans, so far as human vision can discern, would have been one of the greatest of possible blessings to the East. Again Napoleon issued one of those glowing proclamations which are as characteristic of his genius as were the battles which he fought:

> "People of Egypt! You will be told, by our enemies, that I am come to destroy your religion. Believe them not. Tell

them that I am come to restore your rights, punish your usurpers, and revise the true worship of Mohammed. Tell them that I venerate, more than do the Mamelukes, God, his prophet, and the Koran. Tell them that all men are equal in the sight of God; that wisdom, talents, and virtue alone constitute the difference between them. And what are the virtues which distinguish the Mamelukes, that entitle them to appropriate all the enjoyments of life to themselves? If Egypt is their farm, let them show their lease, from God, by which they hold it. Is there a fine estate? it belongs to the Mamelukes. Is there a beautiful slave, a fine horse, a good house? all belong to the Mamelukes. But God is just and merciful, and He hath ordained that the empire of the Mamelukes shall come to an end. Thrice happy those who shall side with us; they shall prosper in their fortune and their rank. Happy they who shall be neutral; they will have time to become acquainted with us, and will range themselves upon our side. But woe, threefold woe to those who shall arm for the Mamelukes and fight against us. For them there will be no hope; they shall perish."

"You witlings of Paris," wrote one of the officers of the army, "will laugh outright, at the Mohammedan proclamation of Napoleon. He, however, is proof against all your raillery, and the proclamation itself has produced the most surprising effect. The Arabs, natural enemies of the Mamelukes, sent us back, as soon as they had read it, thirty of our people, whom they had made prisoners, with an offer of their services against the Mamelukes."

It was an interesting peculiarity in the character of Napoleon

that he respected all religions as necessities of the human mind. He never allowed himself to speak in contemptuous terms even of the grossest absurdities of religious fanaticism. Christianity was presented to him only as exhibited by the papal church. He professed the most profound admiration of the doctrines and the moral precepts of the gospel, and often expressed the wish that he could be a devout believer. But he could not receive, as from God, all that Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, and Priests claimed as divine. In the spiritual power of the Pope he recognized an agent of tremendous efficiency. As such he sincerely respected it, treated it with deference, and sought its alliance. He endeavored to gain control over every influence which could sway the human heart. So of the Mohammedans; he regarded their religion as an element of majestic power, and wished to avail himself of it. While the philosophers and generals around him regarded all forms of religion with contempt, he, influenced by a far higher philosophy, regarded all with veneration.

Since the revolution there had been no sort of worship in France. The idea even of a God had been almost entirely obliterated from the public mind. The French soldiers were mere animals, with many noble as well as depraved instincts. At the command of their beloved chieftain, they were as ready to embrace a religion as to storm a battery. Napoleon was accused of hypocrisy for pursuing this course in Egypt. “I never,” said he, subsequently, “followed any of the tenets of the Mohammedan religion. I never prayed in the mosques. I never abstained from

wine, or was circumcised. I said merely that we were friends of the Mussulmans, and that I respected their prophet; which was true. I respect him now."

Napoleon remained in Alexandria but six days. During this time he devoted himself with a zeal and energy which elicited universal admiration, to the organization of equitable laws, the regulations of police, and the development of the resources of the country. The very hour of their establishment in the city, artisans, and artists, and engineers all were busy, and the life and enterprise of the West, were infused into the sepulchral streets of Alexandria. Preparations were immediately made for improving the harbor, repairing the fortifications, erecting mills, establishing manufactories, founding schools, exploring antiquities, and the government of the country was placed in the hands of the prominent inhabitants, who were interested to promote the wise and humane policy of Napoleon. Since that day half a century of degradation, ignorance, poverty, oppression, and wretchedness has passed over Egypt. Had Napoleon succeeded in his designs, it is probable that Egypt would now have been a civilized and a prosperous land, enriched by the commerce of the East and the West; with villas of elegance and refinement embellishing the meadows and headlands of the Nile, and steamers, freighted with the luxuries of all lands, plowing her majestic waves. The shores of the Red Sea, now so silent and lonely, would have echoed with the hum of happy industry, and fleets would have been launched from her forests,

and thriving towns and opulent cities would have sprung up, where the roving Bedouin now meets but desolation and gloom. It is true that in the mysterious providence of God all these hopes might have been disappointed. But it is certain that while Napoleon remained in Egypt the whole country received an impulse unknown for centuries before; and human wisdom can not devise a better plan than he proposed, for arousing the enterprise, and stimulating the industry, and developing the resources of the land.

About thirty of the French troops fell in the attack upon Alexandria. Napoleon, with his prompt conceptions of the sublime, caused them to be buried at the foot of Pompey's Pillar, and had their names engraven upon that monument, whose renown has grown venerable through countless ages. The whole army assisted at the imposing ceremony of their interment. Enthusiasm spread through the ranks. The French soldiers, bewildered by the meteor glare of glory, and deeming their departed comrades now immortalized, envied their fate. Never did conqueror better understand than Napoleon what springs to touch, to rouse the latent energies of human nature.

Leaving three thousand men in Alexandria, under the command of General Kleber, who had been wounded in the assault, Napoleon set out, with the rest of his army, to cross the desert to Cairo. The fleet was not in a place of safety, and Napoleon gave emphatic orders to Admiral Brueys to remove the ships, immediately after landing the army, from the bay of

Aboukir, where it was anchored, into the harbor of Alexandria; or, if the large ships could not enter that port, to proceed, without any delay, to the island of Corfu. The neglect, on the part of the Admiral, promptly to execute these orders, upon which Napoleon had placed great stress, led to a disaster which proved fatal to the expedition. Napoleon dispatched a large flotilla, laden with provisions, artillery, ammunition, and baggage, to sail along the shore of the Mediterranean to the western branch of the Nile, called the Rosetta mouth, and ascend the river to a point where the army, having marched across the desert, would meet it. The flotilla and the army would then keep company, ascending the Nile, some fifty miles, to Cairo. The army had a desert of sixty miles to cross. It was dreary and inhospitable in the extreme. A blazing sun glared fiercely down upon the glowing sands. Not a tree or a blade of grass cheered the eye. Not a rivulet trickled across their hot and sandy path. A few wells of brackish water were scattered along the trackless course pursued by the caravans, but even these the Arabs had filled up or poisoned.

Early on the morning of the 6th of July the army commenced its march over the apparently boundless plain of shifting sands. No living creature met the eye but a few Arab horsemen, who occasionally appeared and disappeared at the horizon, and who, concealing themselves behind the sand hills, immediately murdered any stragglers who wandered from the ranks, or from sickness or exhaustion loitered behind. Four days of inconceivable suffering were occupied in crossing the desert. The

soldiers, accustomed to the luxuriance, beauty, and abundance of the valleys of Italy, were plunged into the most abject depression. Even the officers found their firmness giving way, and Lannes and Murat, in paroxysms of despair, dashed their hats upon the sand, and trampled them under foot. Many fell and perished on the long and dreary route. But the dense columns toiled on, hour after hour, weary, and hungry, and faint, and thirsty, the hot sun blazing down upon their unsheltered heads, and the yielding sands burning their blistered feet. At the commencement of the enterprise Napoleon had promised, to each of his soldiers, seven acres of land. As they looked around upon this dreary and boundless ocean of sand, they spoke jocularly of his moderation in promising them but *seven acres*, "The young rogue," said they, "might have safely offered us as much as we chose to take. We certainly should not have abused his good-nature."

Nothing can show more strikingly the singular control which Napoleon had obtained over his army, than the fact that under these circumstances, no one murmured against him. He toiled along on foot, at the head of the column, sharing the fatigue of the most humble soldiers. Like them he threw himself upon the sands at night, with the sand for his pillow, and, secreting no luxuries for himself, he ate the coarse beans which afforded the only food for the army. He was ever the last to fold his cloak around him for the night, and the first to spring from the ground in the morning. The soldiers bitterly cursed the government who had sent them to that land of barrenness and desolation.

Seeing the men of science stopping to examine the antiquities, they accused them of being the authors of the expedition, and revenged themselves with witticisms. But no one uttered a word against Napoleon. His presence overawed all. He seemed to be insensible to hunger, thirst, or fatigue. It was observed that while all others were drenched with perspiration, not a drop of moisture oozed from his brow. Through all the hours of this dreary march, not a word or a gesture escaped him, which indicated the slightest embarrassment or inquietude. One day he approached a group of discontented officers, and said to them, in tones of firmness which at once brought them to their senses, "You are holding mutinous language! beware! It is not your being six feet high which will save you from being shot in a couple of hours." In the midst of the desert, when gloom and despondency had taken possession of all hearts, unbounded joy was excited by the appearance of a lake of crystal water, but a few miles before them, with villages and palm trees beautifully reflected in its clear and glassy depths. The parched and panting troops rushed eagerly on, to plunge into the delicious waves. Hour after hour passed, and they approached no nearer the elysium before them. Dreadful was their disappointment when they found that it was all an illusion, and that they were pursuing the *mirage* of the dry and dusty desert. At one time Napoleon, with one or two of his officers, wandered a little distance from the main body of his army. A troop of Arab horsemen, concealed by some sand hills, watched his movements, but for some unknown reason, when he

was entirely in their power, did not harm him. Napoleon soon perceived his peril, and escaped unmolested. Upon his return to the troops, peacefully smiling, he said, "It is not written on high, that I am to perish by the hands of the Arabs."

As the army drew near the Nile the Mameluke horsemen increased in numbers, and in the frequency and the recklessness of their attacks. Their appearance and the impetuosity of their onset was most imposing. Each one was mounted on a fleet Arabian steed, and was armed with pistol, sabre, carbine, and blunderbuss. The carbine was a short gun which threw a small bullet with great precision. The blunderbuss was also a short gun, with a large bore, capable of holding a number of balls, and of doing execution without exact aim. These fierce warriors accustomed to the saddle almost from infancy, presented an array indescribably brilliant, as, with gay turbans, and waving plumes, and gaudy banners, and gold-spangled robes, in meteoric splendor, with the swiftness of the wind, they burst from behind the sand hills. Charging like the rush of a tornado, they rent the air with their hideous yells, and discharged their carbines, while in full career, and halted, wheeled, and retreated with a precision and celerity which amazed even the most accomplished horsemen of the army of Italy. The extended sandy plains were exactly adapted to the manœuvres of these flying herds. The least motion, or the slightest breath of wind, raised a cloud of dust, blinding, choking, and smothering the French, but apparently presenting no annoyance either to the Arab rider or to his horse.

If a weary straggler loitered a few steps behind the toiling column, or if any soldiers ventured to leave the ranks in pursuit of the Mamelukes in their bold attacks, certain and instant death was encountered. A wild troop, enveloped in clouds of dust, like spirits from another world, dashed upon them, cut down the adventurers with their keen Damascus blades, and disappeared in the desert, almost before a musket could be leveled at them.

After five days of inconceivable suffering the long-wished-for Nile was seen, glittering through the sand hills of the desert, and bordered by a fringe of the richest luxuriance. The scene burst upon the view of the panting soldiers like a vision of enchantment. Shouts of joy burst from the ranks. All discipline and order were instantly forgotten. The whole army of thirty thousand men, with horses and camels rushed forward, a tumultuous throng, and plunged, in the delirium of excitement, into the waves. They luxuriated, with indescribable delight, in the cool and refreshing stream. They rolled over and over in the water, shouting and frolicking in wild joy. Reckless of consequences, they drank and drank again, as if they never could be satiated with the delicious beverage. In the midst of this scene of turbulent and almost frenzied exultation, a cloud of dust was seen in the distance, the trampling of hoofs was heard, and a body of nearly a thousand Mameluke horsemen, on fleet Arabian chargers, came sweeping down upon them, like the rush of the wind, their sabres flashing in the sunlight, and rending the air with their hideous yells. The drums beat the

alarm; the trumpets sounded, and the veteran soldiers, drilled to the most perfect mechanical precision, instantly formed in squares, with the artillery at the angles, to meet the foe. In a moment the assault, like a tornado, fell upon them. But it was a tornado striking a rock. Not a line wavered. A palisade of bristling bayonets met the breasts of the horses, and they recoiled from the shock. A volcanic burst of fire, from artillery and musketry, rolled hundreds of steeds and riders together in the dust. The survivors, wheeling their unchecked chargers, disappeared with the same meteoric rapidity with which they had approached. The flotilla now appeared in sight, having arrived at the destined spot at the precise hour designated by Napoleon. This was not accident. It was the result of that wonderful power of mind, and extent of information, which had enabled Napoleon perfectly to understand the difficulties of the two routes, and to give his orders in such a way, that they could be, and would be obeyed. It was remarked by Napoleon's generals, that during a week's residence in Egypt, he acquired apparently as perfect an acquaintance with the country as if it had been his native land.

The whole moral aspect of the army was now changed, with the change in the aspect of the country. The versatile troops forgot their sufferings, and, rejoicing in abundance, danced and sang, beneath the refreshing shade of sycamore and palm trees. The fields were waving with luxuriant harvests. Pigeons were abundant. The most delicious watermelons were brought to the camp in inexhaustible profusion. But the villages were poor and

squalid, and the houses mere hovels of mud. The execrations in which the soldiers had indulged in the desert, now gave place to jokes and glee. For seven days they marched resolutely forward along the banks of the Nile, admiring the fertility of the country, and despising the poverty and degradation of the inhabitants. They declared that there was no such place as Cairo, but that the "Little Corporal," had suffered himself to be transported *like a good boy*, to that miserable land, in search of a city even more unsubstantial than the mirage of the desert.

On the march Napoleon stopped at the house of an Arab sheik. The interior presented a revolting scene of squalidness and misery. The proprietor was however reported to be rich. Napoleon treated the old man with great kindness and asked, through an interpreter, why he lived in such utter destitution of all the comforts of life, assuring him that an unreserved answer should expose him to no inconvenience. He replied, "some years ago I repaired and furnished my dwelling. Information of this was carried to Cairo, and having been thus proved to be wealthy, a large sum of money was demanded from me by the Mamelukes, and the bastinado was inflicted until I paid it. Look at my feet, which bear witness to what I endured. From that time I have reduced myself to the barest necessaries, and no longer seek to repair any thing." The poor old man was lamed for life, in consequence of the mutilation which his feet received from the terrible infliction. Such was the tyranny of the Mamelukes. The Egyptians, in abject slavery to their proud oppressors, were

compelled to surrender their wives, their children, and even their own persons to the absolute will of the despots who ruled them.

Numerous bands of Mameluke horsemen, the most formidable body of cavalry in the world, were continually hovering about the army, watching for points of exposure, and it was necessary to be continually prepared for an attack. Nothing could have been more effective than the disposition which Napoleon made of his troops to meet this novel mode of warfare. He formed his army into five squares. The sides of each square were composed of ranks six men deep. The artillery were placed at the angles. Within the square were grenadier companies in platoons to support the points of attack. The generals, the scientific corps, and the baggage were in the centre. These squares were moving masses. When on the march all faced in one direction, the two sides marching in flank. When charged they immediately halted and fronted on every side; the outermost rank kneeling that those behind might shoot over their heads – the whole body thus presenting a living fortress of bristling bayonets. When they were to carry a position the three front ranks were to detach themselves from the square and to form a column of attack. The other three ranks were to remain in the rear, still forming the square, ready to rally the column. These flaming citadels of fire set at defiance all the power of the Arab horsemen. The attacks of the enemy soon became a subject of merriment to the soldiers. The scientific men, or *savans*, as they were called, had been supplied with asses to transport

their persons and philosophical apparatus. As soon as a body of Mamelukes was seen in the distance, the order was given, with military precision, "*form square*, *savans and asses in the centre*." This order was echoed, from rank to rank, with peals of laughter. The soldiers amused themselves with calling the asses *demi-savans*. Though the soldiers thus enjoyed their jokes, they cherished the highest respect for many of these savans, who in scenes of battle had manifested the utmost intrepidity. After a march of seven days, during which time they had many bloody skirmishes with the enemy, the army approached Cairo.

Mourad Bey had there assembled the greater part of his Mamelukes, nearly ten thousand in number, for a decisive battle. These proud and powerful horsemen were supported by twenty-four thousand foot soldiers, strongly intrenched. Cairo is on the eastern banks of the Nile. Napoleon was marching along the western shore. On the morning of the 21st of July, Napoleon, conscious that he was near the city, set his army in motion before the break of day. Just as the sun was rising in those cloudless skies, the soldiers beheld the lofty minarets of the city upon their left, gilded by its rays, and upon the right, upon the borders of the desert, the gigantic pyramids rising like mountains upon an apparently boundless plain. The whole army instinctively halted and gazed awe-stricken upon those monuments of antiquity. The face of Napoleon beamed with enthusiasm. "Soldiers!" he exclaimed, as he rode along the ranks; "from those summits forty centuries contemplate your actions." The ardor of the

soldiers was aroused to the highest pitch. Animated by the clangor of martial bands, and the gleam of flaunting banners, they advanced with impetuous steps to meet their foes. The whole plain before them, at the base of the pyramids was filled with armed men. The glittering weapons of ten thousand horsemen, in the utmost splendor of barbaric chivalry, brilliant with plumes and arms of burnished steel and gold, presented an array inconceivably imposing. Undismayed the French troops, marshaled in five invincible squares, pressed on. There was apparently no alternative. Napoleon must march upon those intrenchments, behind which twenty-four thousand men were stationed with powerful artillery and musketry to sweep his ranks, and a formidable body of ten thousand horsemen, on fleet and powerful Arabian steeds, awaiting the onset, and ready to seize upon the slightest indications of confusion to plunge, with the fury which fatalism can inspire, upon his bleeding and mangled squares. It must have been with Napoleon a moment of intense anxiety. But as he sat upon his horse, in the centre of one of the squares, and carefully examined, with his telescope, the disposition of the enemy, no one could discern the slightest trace of uneasiness. His gaze was long and intense. The keenness of his scrutiny detected that the guns of the enemy were not mounted upon carriages, and that they could not therefore be turned from the direction in which they were placed. No other officer, though many of them had equally good glasses, made this important discovery. He immediately, by a lateral movement, guided his

army to the right, toward the pyramids, that his squares might be out of the range of the guns, and that he might attack the enemy in flank. The moment Mourad Bey perceived this evolution, he divined its object, and with great military sagacity resolved instantly to charge.

"You shall now see us," said the proud Bey, "cut up those dogs, like gourds."

It was, indeed, a fearful spectacle. Ten thousand horsemen, magnificently dressed, with the fleetest steeds in the world, urging their horses with bloody spurs, to the most impetuous and furious onset, rending the heavens with their cries, and causing the very earth to tremble beneath the thunder of iron feet, came down upon the adamantine host. Nothing was ever seen in war more furious than this charge. Ten thousand horsemen is an enormous mass. Those longest inured to danger felt that it was an awful moment. It seemed impossible to resist such a living avalanche. The most profound silence reigned through the ranks, interrupted only by the word of command. The nerves of excitement being roused to the utmost tension, every order was executed with most marvelous rapidity and precision. The soldiers held their breath, and with bristling bayonets stood, shoulder to shoulder, to receive the shock.

The moment the Mamelukes arrived within gunshot, the artillery, at the angles, plowed their ranks, and platoons of musketry, volley after volley, in a perfectly uninterrupted flow, swept into their faces a pitiless tempest of destruction. Horses

and riders, struck by the balls, rolled over each other, by hundreds, in the sand, and were trampled and crushed by the iron hoofs of the thousands of frantic steeds, enveloped in dust and smoke, composing the vast and impetuous column. But the squares stood as firm as the pyramids at whose base they fought. Not one was broken; not one wavered. The daring Mamelukes, in the frenzy of their rage and disappointment, threw away their lives with the utmost recklessness. They wheeled their horses round and reined them back upon the ranks, that they might kick their way into those terrible fortresses of living men. Rendered furious by their inability to break the ranks, they hurled their pistols and carbines at the heads of the French. The wounded crawled along the ground, and with their scimitars, cut at the legs of their indomitable foes. They displayed superhuman bravery, the only virtue which the Mamelukes possessed.

But an incessant and merciless fire from Napoleon's well-trained battalions continually thinned their ranks, and at last the Mamelukes, in the wildest disorder, broke, and fled. The infantry, in the intrenched camp, witnessing the utter discomfiture of the mounted troops, whom they had considered invincible, and seeing such incessant and volcanic sheets of flame bursting from the impenetrable squares, caught the panic, and joined the flight. Napoleon now, in his turn, charged with the utmost impetuosity. A scene of indescribable confusion and horror ensued. The extended plain was crowded with fugitives – footmen and horsemen, bewildered with terror, seeking escape

from their terrible foes. Thousands plunged into the river, and endeavored to escape by swimming to the opposite shore. But a shower of bullets, like hail stones, fell upon them, and the waves of the Nile were crimsoned with their blood. Others sought the desert, a wild and rabble rout. The victors, with their accustomed celerity pursued, pitilessly pouring into the dense masses of their flying foes the most terrible discharges of artillery and musketry. The rout was complete – the carnage awful. The sun had hardly reached the meridian, before the whole embattled host had disappeared, and the plain as far as the eye could extend, was strewn with the dying and the dead. The camp, with all its Oriental wealth, fell into the hands of the victors; and the soldiers enriched themselves with its profusion of splendid shawls, magnificent weapons, Arabian horses, and purses filled with gold. The Mamelukes were accustomed to lavish great wealth in the decorations of their persons, and to carry with them large sums of money. The gold and the trappings found upon the body of each Mameluke were worth from twelve hundred to two thousand dollars. Besides those who were slain upon the field, more than a thousand of these formidable horsemen were drowned in the Nile. For many days the soldiers employed themselves in fishing up the rich booty, and the French camp was filled with all abundance. This most sanguinary battle cost the French scarcely one hundred men in killed and wounded. More than ten thousand of the enemy perished. Napoleon gazed with admiration upon the bravery which these proud horsemen

displayed. “Could I have united the Mameluke horse to the French infantry,” said he, “I should have reckoned myself master of the world.”

After the battle, Napoleon, now the undisputed conqueror of Egypt, quartered himself for the night in the country palace of Mourad Bey. The apartments of this voluptuous abode were embellished with all the appurtenances of Oriental luxury. The officers were struck with surprise in viewing the multitude of cushions and divans covered with the finest damasks and silks, and ornamented with golden fringe. Egypt was beggared to minister to the sensual indulgence of these haughty despots. Much of the night was passed in exploring this singular mansion. The garden was extensive and magnificent in the extreme. Innumerable vines were laden with the richest grapes. The vintage was soon gathered by the thousands of soldiers who filled the alleys and loitered in the arbors. Pots of preserves, of confectionery, and of sweetmeats of every kind, were quickly devoured by an army of mouths. The thousands of little elegancies which Europe, Asia, and Africa had contributed to minister to the voluptuous splendors of the regal mansion, were speedily transferred to the knapsacks of the soldiers.

The “Battle of the Pyramids,” as Napoleon characteristically designated it, sent a thrill of terror, far and wide, into the interior of Asia and Africa. These proud, merciless, licentious oppressors were execrated by the timid Egyptians, but they were deemed invincible. In an hour they had vanished, like the mist, before the

genius of Napoleon.

The caravans which came to Cairo, circulated through the vast regions of the interior, with all the embellishments of Oriental exaggeration, most glowing accounts of the destruction of these terrible squadrons, which had so long tyrannized over Egypt, and the fame of whose military prowess had caused the most distant tribes to tremble. The name of Napoleon became suddenly as renowned in Asia and in Africa as it had previously become in Europe. But twenty-one days had elapsed since he placed his foot upon the sands at Alexandria, and now he was sovereign of Egypt. The Egyptians also welcomed him as a friend and a liberator. The sheets of flame, which incessantly burst from the French ranks, so deeply impressed their imaginations, that they gave to Napoleon the Oriental appellation of Sultan Kebir, or King of Fire.

The wives of the Mamelukes had all remained in Cairo. Napoleon treated them with the utmost consideration. He sent Eugene to the wife of Mourad Bey, to assure her of his protection. He preserved all her property for her, and granted her several requests which she made to him. Thus he endeavored, as far as possible, to mitigate the inevitable sufferings of war. The lady was so grateful for these attentions that she entertained Eugene with all possible honors, and presented him, upon his departure, with a valuable diamond ring.

Cairo contained three hundred thousand inhabitants. Its population was brutal and ferocious in the extreme. The capital

was in a state of terrible agitation, for the path of Oriental conquerors is ever marked with brutality, flames, and blood. Napoleon immediately dispatched a detachment of his army into the city to restore tranquillity, and to protect persons and property from the fury of the populace. The next day but one, with great pomp and splendor, at the head of his victorious army, he entered Cairo, and took possession of the palace of Mourad Bey. With the most extraordinary intelligence and activity he immediately consecrated all his energies to promote the highest interest of the country he had conquered. Nothing escaped his observation. He directed his attention to the mosques, the harems, the condition of the women, the civil and religious institutions, the state of agriculture, the arts, and sciences – to every thing which could influence the elevation and prosperity of the country. He visited the most influential of the Arab inhabitants, assured them of his friendship, of his respect for their religion, of his determination to protect their rights, and of his earnest desire to restore to Egypt its pristine glory. He disclaimed all sovereignty over Egypt, but organized a government to be administered by the people themselves. He succeeded perfectly in winning their confidence and admiration. He immediately established a congress, composed of the most distinguished citizens of Cairo, for the creation of laws and the administration of justice, and established similar assemblies in all the provinces, which were to send deputies to the general congress at Cairo. He organized the celebrated Institute of

Egypt, to diffuse among the people the light and the sciences of Europe. Some of the members were employed in making an accurate description and a perfect map of Egypt; others were to study the productions of the country, that its resources might be energetically and economically developed; others were to explore the ruins, thus to shed new light upon history; others were to study the social condition of the inhabitants, and proper plans for the promotion of their welfare, by the means of manufactures, canals, roads, mills, works upon the Nile, and improvements in agriculture. Among the various questions proposed to the Institute by Napoleon, the following may be mentioned as illustrative of his enlarged designs: Ascertain the best construction for wind and water mills; find a substitute for the hop, which does not grow in Egypt, for the making of beer; select sites adapted to the cultivation of the vine; seek the best means of procuring water for the citadel of Cairo; select spots for wells in different parts of the desert; inquire into the means of clarifying and cooling the waters of the Nile; devise some useful application of the rubbish with which the city of Cairo, and all the ancient towns of Egypt, are encumbered; find materials for the manufacture of gunpowder. It is almost incredible that the Egyptians were not acquainted with windmills, wheelbarrows, or even handsaws, until they were introduced by Napoleon. Engineers, draughtsmen, and men of science immediately dispersed themselves throughout all the provinces of Egypt. Flour, as fine as could be obtained in

Paris, was ground in mills at Alexandria, Rosetta, Damietta, and Cairo. By the erection of public ovens, bread became abundant. Hospitals were established, with a bed for each patient. Saltpetre and gunpowder-mills were erected. A foundry was constructed with reverberating furnaces. Large shops were built for locksmiths, armorers, joiners, cartwrights, carpenters, and rope-makers. Silver goblets and services of plate were manufactured. A French and Arabic printing-press was set at work. Inconceivable activity was infused into every branch of industry. The genius of Napoleon, never weary, inspired all and guided all. It was indeed a bright day which, after centuries of inaction and gloom, had thus suddenly dawned upon Egypt. The route was surveyed, and the expense estimated, of two ship-canals, one connecting the waters of the Red Sea with the Nile at Cairo; the other uniting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean across the Isthmus of Suez. Five millions of dollars and two years of labor would have executed both of these magnificent enterprises, and would have caused a new era to have dawned upon three continents. It is impossible not to deplore those events which have thus consigned anew these fertile regions to beggary and to barbarism. The accomplishment of these majestic plans might have transferred to the Nile and the Euphrates those energies now so transplendent upon the banks of the Mississippi and the Ohio. "It is incredible," says Talleyrand, "how much Napoleon was able to achieve. He could effect more than any man, yes, more than any four men whom I have ever known.

His genius was inconceivable. Nothing could exceed his energy, his imagination, his spirit, his capacity for work, his ease of accomplishment. He was clearly the most extraordinary man that I ever saw, and I believe the most extraordinary man that has lived in our age, or for many ages." All the energies of Napoleon's soul were engrossed by these enterprises of grandeur and utility. Dissipation could present no aspect to allure him. "I have no passion," said he, "for women or gaming. I am entirely a political being."

The Arabs were lost in astonishment that a conqueror, who wielded the thunderbolt, could be so disinterested and merciful. Such generosity and self-denial was never before heard of in the East. They could in no way account for it. Their females were protected from insult; their persons and property were saved. Thirty thousand Europeans were toiling for the comfort and improvement of the Egyptians. They called Napoleon the worthy son of the prophet, the favorite of Allah. They even introduced his praises into their Litany, and chanted in the mosques, "Who is he that hath saved the favorite of Victory from the dangers of the sea, and from the rage of his enemies? Who is he that hath led the brave men of the West, safe and unharmed to the banks of the Nile! It is Allah! the great Allah! The Mamelukes put their trust in horses; they draw forth their infantry in battle array. But the favorite of Victory hath destroyed the footmen and the horsemen of the Mamelukes. As the vapors which rise in the morning are scattered by the rays of the sun, so hath the army

of the Mamelukes been scattered by the brave men of the West. For the brave men of the West are as the apple of the eye to the great Allah."

Napoleon, to ingratiate himself with the people, and to become better acquainted with their character, attended their religious worship, and all their national festivals. Though he left the administration of justice in the hands of the sheiks, he enjoined and enforced scrupulous impartiality in their decisions. The robbers of the desert, who for centuries had devastated the frontiers with impunity, he repulsed with a vigorous hand, and under his energetic sway life and property became as safe in Egypt as in England or in France. The French soldiers became very popular with the native Egyptians, and might be seen in the houses, socially smoking their pipes with the inhabitants, assisting them in their domestic labors, and playing with their children.

One day Napoleon, in his palace, was giving audience to a numerous assemblage of sheiks and other distinguished men. Information was brought to him that some robbers from the desert had slain a poor friendless peasant, and carried off his flocks. "Take three hundred horsemen and two hundred camels," said Napoleon, immediately, to an officer of his staff, "and pursue these robbers until they are captured, and the outrage is avenged." "Was the poor wretch your cousin," exclaimed one of the sheiks, contemptuously, "that you are in such a rage at his death?" "He was more," Napoleon replied, sublimely, "he

was one whose safety Providence had intrusted to my care." "Wonderful!" rejoined the sheik, "you speak like one inspired of the Almighty." More than one assassin was dispatched by the Turkish authorities to murder Napoleon. But the Egyptians with filial love, watched over him, gave him timely notice of the design, and effectually aided him in defeating it.

In the midst of this extraordinary prosperity, a reverse, sudden, terrible, and irreparable, befell the French army. Admiral Brueys, devotedly attached to Napoleon, and anxious to ascertain that he had obtained a foothold in the country before leaving him to his fate, delayed withdrawing his fleet, as Napoleon had expressly enjoined, from the Bay of Aboukir, to place it in a position of safety. The second day after entering Cairo, Napoleon received dispatches from Admiral Brueys by which he learned that the squadron was in the bay of Aboukir, exposed to the attacks of the enemy. He was amazed at the intelligence, and immediately dispatched a messenger, to proceed with the utmost haste, and inform the admiral of his great disapprobation, and to warn him to take the fleet, without an hour's delay, either into the harbor of Alexandria, where it would be safe, or to make for Corfu. The messenger was assassinated on the way by a party of Arabs. He could not, however, have reached Aboukir before the destruction of the fleet. In the mean time, Lord Nelson learned that the French had landed at Egypt. He immediately turned in that direction to seek their squadron. At six o'clock in the evening of the first of

August, but ten days after the battle of the Pyramids, the British fleet majestically entered the bay of Aboukir, and closed upon their victims. The French squadron consisting of thirteen ships of the line and four frigates, was anchored in a semi-circle, in a line corresponding with the curve of the shore. The plan of attack, adopted by Nelson, possessed the simplicity and originality of genius, and from the first moment victory was almost certain. As soon as Nelson perceived the situation of the French fleet, he resolved to double with his whole force on half of that of his enemy, pursuing the same system of tactics by sea which Napoleon had found so successful on the land. He ordered his fleet to take its station half on the outer, and half on the inner side of one end of the French line. Thus each French ship was placed between the fire of two of those of the English. The remainder of the French fleet being at anchor to the windward could not easily advance to the relief of their doomed friends. Admiral Brueys supposed that he was anchored so near the shore that the English could not pass inside of his line. But Nelson promptly decided that where there was room for the enemy to swing, there must be room for his ships to float. "If we succeed what will the world say," exclaimed one of Nelson's captains, with transport, as he was made acquainted with the plan of attack. "There is no if in the case," Nelson replied, "that we shall succeed is certain. Who may live to tell the story is a very different question."

The French fought with the energies of despair. For fifteen hours the unequal contest lasted. Dark night came on. The Bay of

Aboukir resembled one wide flaming volcano, enveloped in the densest folds of sulphureous smoke. The ocean never witnessed a conflict more sanguinary and dreadful. About eleven o'clock the Orient took fire. The smoke, from the enormous burning mass, ascended like an immense black balloon, when suddenly the flames, flashing through them, illumined the whole horizon with awful brilliance. At length its magazine, containing hundreds of barrels of gunpowder, blew up, with an explosion so tremendous as to shake every ship to its centre. So awfully did this explosion rise above the incessant roar of the battle, that simultaneously on both sides, the firing ceased, and a silence, as of the grave, ensued. But immediately the murderous conflict was resumed. Death and destruction, in the midst of the congenial gloom of night, held high carnival in the bay. Thousands of Arabs lined the shore, gazing with astonishment and terror upon the awful spectacle. For fifteen hours that dreadful conflict continued, through the night and during the morning, and until high noon of the ensuing day, when the firing gradually ceased, for the French fleet was destroyed. Four ships only escaped, and sailed for Malta. The English ships were too much shattered to attempt to pursue the fugitives.

Admiral Brueys was wounded early in the action. He would not leave the quarter-deck. "An admiral," said he, "should die giving orders." A cannon ball struck him, and but the fragments of his body could be found. Nelson was also severely wounded on the head. When carried to the cockpit, drenched in blood, he

nobly refused, though in imminent danger of bleeding to death, to have his wounds dressed, till the wounded seamen, who were brought in before him, were attended to. "I will take my turn with my brave fellows," said he. Fully believing that his wound was mortal, he called for the chaplain, and requested him to deliver his dying remembrance to Lady Nelson. When the surgeon came, in due time, to inspect his wound, it was found that the wound was only superficial.

All of the transports and small craft which had conveyed Napoleon's army to Egypt, were in the harbor of Alexandria, safe from attack, as Nelson had no frigates with which to cross the bar. For leagues the shore was strewn with fragments of the wreck, and with the mangled bodies of the dead. The bay was also filled with floating corpses, notwithstanding the utmost efforts to sink them. The majestic armament which but four weeks before had sailed from Toulon, was thus utterly overthrown. The loss of the English was but about one thousand. Of the French five thousand perished, and three thousand were made prisoners. As soon as the conquest was completed, Nelson made signal for the crew, in every ship, to be assembled for prayers. The stillness of the Sabbath instantly pervaded the whole squadron, while thanksgivings were offered to God for the signal victory. So strange is the heart of man. England was desolating the whole civilized world with war, to compel the French people to renounce republicanism and establish a monarchy. And in the bloody hour when the Bay of Aboukir was covered with

the thousands of the mutilated dead, whom her strong arm had destroyed, she, with unquestioned sincerity, offered to God the tribute of thanksgiving and praise. And from the churches and the firesides of England, tens of thousands of pious hearts breathed the fervent prayer of gratitude to God for the great victory of Aboukir.

Such was the famous *Battle of the Nile*, as it has since been called. It was a signal conquest. It was a magnificent triumph of British arms. But a victory apparently more fatal to the great interests of humanity was perhaps never gained. It was the death-blow to reviving Egypt. It extinguished in midnight gloom the light of civilization and science, which had just been enkindled on those dreary shores. Merciless oppression again tightened its iron grasp upon Asia and Africa, and already, as the consequence, has another half century of crime, cruelty and outrage, blighted that doomed land.

Napoleon at once saw that all his hopes were blasted. The blow was utterly irreparable. He was cut off from Europe. He could receive no supplies. He could not return. Egypt was his prison. Yet he received the news of this terrible disaster, with the most imperturbable equanimity. Not a word or a gesture escaped him, which indicated the slightest discouragement. With unabated zeal he pursued his plans, and soon succeeded in causing the soldiers to forget the disaster. He wrote to Kleber, “We must die in this country or get out of it as great as the ancients. This will oblige us to do greater things than we intended. We must

hold ourselves in readiness. We will at least bequeath to Egypt an heritage of greatness." "Yes!" Kleber replied, "we must do great things. I am preparing my faculties."

The exultation among the crowned heads in Europe in view of this great monarchical victory was unbounded. England immediately created Nelson Baron of the Nile, and conferred a pension of ten thousand dollars a year, to be continued to his two immediate successors. The Grand Signior, the Emperor of Russia, the King of Sardinia, the King of Naples, and the East India Company made him magnificent presents. Despotism upon the Continent, which had received such heavy blows from Napoleon, began to rejoice and to revive. The newly emancipated people, struggling into the life of liberty, were disheartened. Exultant England formed new combinations of banded kings, to replace the Bourbons on their throne, and to crush the spirit of popular liberty and equality, which had obtained such a foothold in France. All monarchical Europe rejoiced. All republican Europe mourned.

The day of Aboukir was indeed a disastrous day to France. Napoleon with his intimate friends did not conceal his conviction of the magnitude of the calamity. He appeared occasionally, for a moment, lost in painful reverie, and was heard two or three times to exclaim, in indescribable tones of emotion, "Unfortunate Brueys, what have you done." But hardly an hour elapsed after he had received the dreadful tidings, ere he entirely recovered his accustomed fortitude, and presence of mind, and he soon

succeeded in allaying the despair of the soldiers. He saw, at a glance, all the consequences of this irreparable loss. And it speaks well for his heart that in the midst of a disappointment so terrible, he could have forgotten his own grief in writing a letter of condolence to the widow of his friend. A heartless man could never have penned so touching an epistle as the following addressed to Madame Brueys, the widow of the man who had been unintentionally the cause of apparently the greatest calamity which could have befallen him.

"Your husband has been killed by a cannon ball, while combating on his quarter deck. He died without suffering – the death the most easy and the most envied by the brave. I feel warmly for your grief. The moment which separates us from the object which we love is terrible; we feel isolated on the earth; we almost experience the convulsions of the last agony; the faculties of the soul are annihilated; its connection with the earth is preserved only through the medium of a painful dream, which disturbs every thing. We feel, in such a situation, that there is nothing which yet binds us to life; that it were far better to die. But when, after such just and unavoidable throes, we press our children to our hearts, tears and more tender sentiments arise, and life becomes bearable for their sakes. Yes, Madame! they will open the fountains of your heart. You will watch their childhood, educate their youth. You will speak to them of their father, of your present grief, and of the loss which they and the Republic have sustained in his death. After having resumed the

interests in life by the chord of maternal love, you will perhaps feel some consolation from the friendship and warm interest which I shall ever take in the widow of my friend."

The French soldiers with the versatility of disposition which has ever characterized the light-hearted nation, finding all possibility of a return to France cut off, soon regained their accustomed gayety, and with zeal engaged in all the plans of Napoleon, for the improvement of the country, which it now appeared that, for many years, must be their home.

THE GERMAN EMIGRANTS – A SKETCH OF LIFE

BY JOHN DOGGETT, JUN

A few years ago, while wandering a stranger along the quay at Albany, my attention was attracted to a crowd composed for the most part of persons about to depart by a canal-packet for Buffalo. The scene was to me one of some interest, as a number of Germans of the better class were among the passengers. One was a beautiful girl apparently of about the age of eighteen, arrayed in the simple, unaffected garb of her country, but whose intellectual features, black and lustrous hair, tall and elegant figure, and somewhat melancholy cast of countenance, rendered her an object of interest, perhaps, I may say of admiration, to the bystanders. I noticed the sweet, sad smile which occasionally enlivened her countenance as fondly holding the hand of her companion in her own, she spoke to him in a tone and with a frankness of manner, that betrayed a deep and abiding interest in his welfare. I was informed that this young man was her only brother, who had been for some months employed in a manufacturing establishment in Albany; that his sister, however, had but recently arrived in the country, and, accompanied by her

uncle, was now about to depart on a pilgrimage to the distant West.

Feeling an interest – why I know not – in this brother and sister, and perceiving they were of a better class than ordinarily emigrate to America, I was not surprised to learn that they had been educated with all the care and tenderness wealthy parents could bestow; that their father, who for many years had been engaged in extensive commercial pursuits in Bremen, died from grief and despair at the sudden prostration of his credit and loss of fortune, his widow soon after following him to the grave.

A few months previous to the time alluded to, the sister was the affianced bride of an amiable, enterprising young man, the partner of her father in business. At that period her ideal world was doubtless one of beauty and of innocence, the acme, perhaps, of earthly peace and happiness; for within it was a fountain of pure and mutual love, ever full and ever flowing. No worldly care disturbed her tranquil bosom – her every wish was gratified; no cloud obscured the brightness of her sky – it was pure, serene, and beautiful. How uncertain are earthly hopes! How vain are human expectations! In a moment, as it were, all with her had changed. Grief had taken possession of her heart, bitter tears had succeeded to innocent smiles, and her hopes of domestic bliss were blasted, perhaps never again to bud or bloom. She was miserably unhappy, the innocent victim of a disappointment, heart-rending indeed and by her never to be forgotten.

On the decline of her father's fortune and that also of Edward Nordheimer (for that was the name of her lover), the latter suddenly became intemperate. Thinking, as many wiser and older than himself had thought, to drown the recollection of bankruptcy and the disappointment of worldly hope in the giddy bowl, he seized the intoxicating draught with an infatuated zeal. He heeded not the timid admonitions of love, or the kind entreaties of friends; but reckless alike of the consequences of his dreadful habit to himself and others, was hurrying to inevitable ruin, making no effort to stem the wild, the eddying stream that controlled him, and within the vortex of which he was soon, alas! to be forever lost.

Like many others, he had been taught by the example of his elders, perhaps, by the daily habits of his parents, the unwise and dangerous idea that discourtesy consisteth not in partaking but in *refusing* the proffered glass; hence, what was in youth a fashionable indulgence – a mere pastime – had become in his manhood a settled, desperate vice. Every principle, every ambition, of which apparently the exercise had gained him the respect, confidence, best wishes of his fellow-men, no longer controlled him. Once an industrious, careful, esteemed young merchant, he was now a reckless, abandoned inebriate. All his energies were apparently paralyzed. The pangs of remorse (for reflections on his course would sometimes flit with the rapidity of shadows across his mind) were drowned in deep and frequent potations; his features were bloated, his eyes were bloodshot, his

limbs shook. So changed was he that few could realize in him the man who so recently in conscious manliness of character, had held high his head on the Exchange, and operated so extensively in the marts of Bremen.

Love was regarded by him, if regarded at all, as an idle creation of the brain; and whether from such an opinion of the tender passion, a consciousness of his own unworthiness of being loved, or, from a feeling of shame to meet the pure and lovely being to whom he had paid his addresses; yet, he had forsaken her – her, recently his polar star – the object of his thoughts by day and of his dreams by night! Yes, he had forsaken her, and taken a dreary, debauched abode with those who go down to the grave, unwept, unhonored, and unlamented.

Brief, indeed, was the earthly career of Edward Nordheimer. His youthful habit of enjoying an occasional glass, had led him gradually, imperceptibly, perhaps, but surely to the verge of the grave!

How dreadful must thy summons be, oh! Death, to such an one! to any one, indeed, who, regardless of the great and wise purposes for which he was created, has passed his days and nights in drunkenness and debauchery; who, having fallen from his high estate – disappointed his own hopes of usefulness, respectability, and honor among men; having frustrated the fond, ardent hopes of parents, the wishes of troops of friends, finds himself at last on a drunkard's death-bed, with the awful consciousness of having laughed to scorn the responsibilities resting on his immortal soul!

I need not attempt to describe the effect (for who can portray the extreme bitterness of the human heart?) which the melancholy, soul-harrowing change in Edward, produced on the mind of his lady-love, or expose to the curious gaze, the broken fountains of her soul. Aware as she was, however, that all efforts had failed to reclaim the idol of her bosom, it would be difficult to tell if she more mourned his exit from the earth than his departure from that course which leads to happiness and peace. But he was gone, and forever. The eyes, that once looked so fondly on her, were closed in their last sleep; the tongue that had so oft and so truly pronounced the soft, musical accents of love, was a noiseless instrument, and that voice, the very whisperings of which had sent such a thrill of joy to her once happy heart, was now forever hushed. The cold embrace of death was around him, and the places which once knew him were to know him no more.

The unfortunate, broken-hearted maiden, became regardless of every attraction of society – every attention of friends – for hers was a sorrow, calm, indeed, but deep and abiding withal – a disappointment as well as a grief, of that peculiarly delicate nature, for which there is no earthly consolation. She felt that the world had lost its interest, its attraction, its delight: her Edward was no more. Her uncle noticed with deep solicitude the change wrought in her by the utter wreck and sudden dispersion of all her hopes of happiness, and with this sympathizing relative she readily consented to seek, on the distant shores of America, that peace of mind compared with which thrones and empires and

principalities and powers are but vanity and dust.

Her feelings, on leaving her native Germany, may be inferred from the circumstances already related. They were those peculiar to all, who for the first time depart from their own country, who for the first time bid their native land good-night, who for the first time bid an adieu, perhaps final, to the green fields, the pure skies, the sunny and endeared spots around the home of infancy and love. Others know not how oft, how tenderly they are remembered, or how strongly the affections cling to them, when a wide waste of ocean rolls between our "ain dear home" and us. If we have left it in prosperity to visit the grand and beautiful in nature, in other lands, or, reluctantly departed from it in adversity, with the hope of improving our fortunes, in either case, the mind ever yearns for the spot where every object, tree, flower, rock, and shrub is associated with our earliest, our happiest days, where every breeze is fragrant and refreshing as the breath of Araby.

With these sympathies for a then distant home, I entered fully into the situation, the feelings, and affections of the brother and sister before me and watched with deep interest, their every look and movement. Presently a boatman sounded the signal of departure, then a long and hearty embrace, a fond and mutual kiss was exchanged, and the interesting couple parted. The packet was soon seen moving slowly up the basin, and on the deck, gazing at her brother, stood the beautiful sister, playing, meanwhile, on her guitar, and singing the air "Home." With what

sweetness and feeling did she warble that music! How expressive those silent tokens of sorrow which then bedewed her fair, pale cheek!

The bright, beautiful sun of an autumnal day was sinking in the west, and when its golden, lingering rays no longer tinged objects living or inanimate, neither the guitar nor the sweet voice of the German maiden was heard, nor were her features visible.

I have often asked myself, is that sister now happy? Has she recovered her wonted cheerfulness? Has she forgotten Edward Nordheimer? Is she married? Is she living? Alas! perhaps, in seeking an asylum in the far wilds of the West, she has measured out her own span upon earth, fallen, as many before have fallen, a victim to some disease peculiar to a new, uncultivated country.

Since the time alluded to, I have often seen in my mind's eye, the intellectual, beautiful face, and the graceful figure of that sister. I have seen her as she stood on the deck of the little packet gazing with tearful eyes at her lonely brother, and as I recalled the trials and sorrows through which she had passed, have fancied I heard her melancholy voice again warbling the same plaintive air which caused my heart to sink within me when I really heard it. Yes, she often rises in memory, and ever with a strong, a sad impression of the pang which rent her heart, as her own native Bremen faded forever from her sight! Bremen! the scene of all her joys, of all her woes! Of her first – only love! The burial-place of her parents! Bremen! within whose precincts lie also entombed the cold and perishing remains of

Edward Nordheimer! of him whom she had so truly loved, and who in other, happier days, as fondly loved her.

CONSPIRACY OF THE CLOCKS

When Cardinal Montalto assumed the tiara under the title of Sixtus V., he speedily threw off the disguise which had enveloped his former life, smoothed the wrinkles from his now proud forehead, raised his piercing eyes – heretofore cautiously vailed by their downcast lids – and made the astounded conclave know that in place of a docile instrument they had elected an inflexible master. Many glaring abuses existed in Rome, and these the new pope determined to reform. It was the custom for the nobles, whether foreigners or natives, to be escorted whenever they went out by a numerous body of pages, valets, soldiers, and followers of all kinds, armed, like their masters, to the teeth. Sometimes a noble's "following" resembled an army rather than an escort; and it frequently happened that when two such parties met in a narrow street, a violent struggle for precedence would take place, and blood be freely shed by those who had had no previous cause of quarrel. Hence came the warlike meaning – which it still retains – of the word *rencontre*. Sixtus V. resolved to put down this practice, and seized the opportunity of an unusually fierce combat taking place on Easter-day within the very precincts of St. Peter's.

Next morning an official notice was posted on the city walls, prohibiting every noble without exception from being followed by more than twenty attendants. Every one also, of

whatever degree, who should himself carry, or cause his people to carry any sort of fire-arms (pocket-pistols being especially mentioned), should thereby incur the penalty of death. At this notice Pasquin jested, and the nobles laughed, but no one dared to indulge in bravado, until the following incident occurred.

Just after the promulgation of the pope's orders, Ranuccio Farnese, the only son of the Duke of Parma, arrived in Rome. His first care was to wait on the new pontiff; and being presented by his uncle, Cardinal Farnese, the young prince met the reception due to his rank and to his merit. Already his talents and courage gave promise of his becoming a worthy successor to his father; and the Roman nobles vied with each other in doing honor to the heir of one of the richest duchies in the peninsula. On the evening after his arrival he was invited by Prince Cesarini to a magnificent banquet. Wine flowed freely, and the night waxed late, when the gay guests began to discuss the recent edict of his holiness. Several wild young spirits, and among them Ranuccio, declared themselves ready to brave it openly. Next morning, however, when sobered by sleep, they all, with one exception, judged it expedient to forget their bravado. Ranuccio alone felt a strong desire to try conclusions with the pope. Although a feudatory of the Holy See, he was not a Roman, and he was a prince. Sixtus V. would probably think twice before touching a head that was almost crowned. Besides, youths of twenty love adventure, and it is not every day that one can enjoy the pleasure of putting a pope in a dilemma. Ranuccio, in short,

went to the Vatican and asked an audience of his holiness. It was immediately granted, and the prince, after having, according to the custom, knelt three times, managed adroitly to let fall at the very feet of Sixtus a pair of pistols loaded to the muzzle.

Such audacity could not go unpunished. Without a moment's hesitation the pope summoned his guards, and ordered them to arrest and convey to Fort St. Angelo the son of the Duke of Parma, who had just condemned himself to death. War might be declared on the morrow; an outraged father might come, sword in hand, to demand the life and liberty of his son. What cared Sixtus? He was resolved to restore but a corpse.

The news spread quickly: so much audacity on one side and so much firmness on the other seemed almost incredible. Cardinal Farnese hastened to the Vatican, and, falling at the feet of the pope, with tears in his eyes pleaded his nephew's cause. He spoke of the youth of the culprit and the loyalty of his father, who was then in Flanders fighting the battles of the Holy See. Ranuccio had been but two days in Rome – might he not fairly be supposed ignorant of the new enactment? Then he belonged to a powerful house, which it might not be prudent for even his holiness to offend; and, finally, he was closely related by blood to the late pope, Paul III.

The holy father's reply was cruelly decisive. "The law," he said, "makes no distinction: a criminal is a criminal, and nothing more. The vicegerent of God on earth, my justice, like His, must be impartial; nor dare I exercise clemency, which would be

nothing but weakness."

The cardinal bent his head and retired.

Besieged incessantly by fresh supplications from various influential quarters, the pope sent for Monsignor Angeli, the governor of Fort St. Angelo. To him he gave imperative orders, that precisely at twenty-four o'clock[2] that evening his illustrious prisoner's head should be struck off.

The governor returned to the castle, and signified to Ranuccio that he had but two hours to live. The young man laughed in his face, and began to eat his supper. He could not bring himself to believe that he, the heir-apparent of the Duke of Parma, could be seriously menaced with death by an obscure monk, whose only title to the pontificate seemed to have been his age and decrepitude. Yet speedily the threat seemed to him less worthy of derision, when he saw from his window a scaffold, bearing a hatchet and a block, in process of erection. But who can describe his dismay when his room was entered by a monk, who came to administer the last rites of the church, followed by the executioner, asking for his last orders!

Meantime Cardinal Farnese was not idle. He consulted with his friend, Count Olivarès, embassador from the court of Spain, and they resolved to attempt to obtain by stratagem what had been refused to their prayers. Two precious hours remained.

"Our only plan," said the cardinal, "is to stop the striking of all the public clocks in Rome! Meantime do you occupy Angeli's

[2] In Italy the hours are reckoned from 1 to 24, commencing at sunset.

attention."

His eminence possessed great influence in the city, and, moreover, the control of the public clocks belonged to his prerogative. At the appointed hour, as if by magic, time changed his noisy course into a silent flight. Two clocks, those of St. Peter and St. Angelo, were put back twenty minutes. Their proximity to the prison required this change, and the cardinal's authority secured the inviolable secrecy of every one concerned in the plot.

The execution was to be private; but Olivarès, in his quality of embassador, was permitted to remain with the governor. A single glance assured him that the clock was going right – that is to say, that it was quite wrong. Already the inner court was filled with soldiers under arms, and monks chanting the solemn "Dies Iræ." Every thing was prepared save the victim. Olivarès was with Angeli, and a scene commenced at once terrible and burlesque. The embassador, in order to gain time, began to converse on every imaginable subject, but the governor would not listen.

"My orders," he said, "are imperative. At the first stroke of the clock all will be over."

"But the pope may change his mind." Without replying, the terrible Angeli walked impatiently up and down the room, watching for the striking of his clock. He called: a soldier appeared. "Is all prepared?" All was prepared: the attendants, like their master, were only waiting for the hour.

""Tis strange," muttered the governor. "I should have thought – "

"At least," interposed Olivarès, "if you will not delay, do not anticipate." And monsignor resumed his hasty walk between the door and window, listening for the fatal sound which the faithful tongue of the clock still refused to utter.

Despite of the delay, however, the fatal hour approached. Ten minutes more, and Ranuccio's fate would be sealed.

Meanwhile the cardinal repaired to the pope. As he entered, Sixtus drew out his watch, and his eyes sparkled with revengeful joy. On the testimony of that unerring time-piece Ranuccio was already executed.

"What seek you?" asked his holiness.

"The body of my nephew, that I may convey it to Parma. At least let the unhappy boy repose in the tomb of his ancestors."

"Did he die like a Christian?"

"Like a saint," cried the cardinal, trembling at a moment's delay. Sixtus V. traced the following words: "We order our governor of Fort St. Angelo to deliver up to his eminence the body of Ranuccio Farnese." Having sealed it with the pontifical signet, he gave it to the cardinal.

Arrived at the palace gates, Farnese, agitated between fear and hope, hastened to demand an entrance. A profound silence reigned within, broken only by the distant note of the "De profundis." He rushed toward the court. Was he too late? – had his stratagem succeeded? One look would decide. He raised his eyes – his nephew still lived. His neck bare, and his hands tied, he knelt beside the block, between a priest and the executioner,

faintly uttering the words of his last prayer. Suddenly the chanting ceased; the cardinal flew toward the governor. Ere he could speak, his gestures and his countenance lied for him:

"A pardon? – a pardon!" exclaimed Olivarès. The soldiers shouted. The executioner began to unloose his victim, when a sign from Angeli made him pause. The governor read and re-read the missive.

"The *body* of Ranuccio Farnese!" he repeated: "the criminal's name would suffice. Why these words, '*The body of*?'"

"What stops you?" cried the cardinal, at that perilous moment looking paler than his nephew.

"Read!" replied Angeli, handing him the pope's letter.

"Is that all?" said his eminence, forcing a smile and pointing to the clock. "Look at the hour: it still wants two minutes of the time, and I received that paper from his holiness more than a quarter of an hour since."

The governor bowed: the argument was irresistible. Ranuccio was given up to his deliverers. A carriage, with four fleet horses, waited outside the prison, and in a few moments the cardinal and the young prince were galloping along the road to Parma. Just then the clocks of Rome pealed forth in unison, as if rejoicing that by their judicious silence they had gained their master's cause. It might be well if lawyers in our day would sometimes follow their example.

Monsignor Angeli, as the chronicle relates, was rather astonished at the rapid flight of time after his prisoner's

departure. In fact, the next hour seemed to him as short as its predecessor was long. This phenomenon, due to the simple system of compensation, was ascribed by him to the peaceful state of his conscience. Although inflexible in the discharge of what he esteemed his duty, he was in reality a kind-hearted man, and felt sincere pleasure at what he honestly believed to be Ranuccio's pardon.

On the morrow the Spanish embassador was the first to congratulate Sixtus V., with admirable *sang froid*, on his truly pious clemency. Olivarès was only a diplomatist, but he played his part as well as if he had been a cardinal, and made every one believe that he had been the dupe of his accomplice. He had good reasons for so acting. His master, Philip II., seldom jested, more especially when the subject of the joke was the infallible head of the church; and he strongly suspected that the clocks of Madrid might prove less complaisant than those at Rome.

Poor Angeli was the only sufferer. For no other crime than that of not wearing a watch, the pope deprived him of his office, and imprisoned him for some time in Fort St. Angelo. As to Cardinal Farnese, renouncing all the praises and congratulations of his friends at Rome, he prudently remained an absentee.

MAURICE TIERNAY, THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE. [3]

CHAPTER XLVIII

A VILLAGE "SYNDICUS."

I sat up all night listening to the soldiers' stories of war and campaigning. Some had served with Soult's army in the Asturias; some made part of Davoust's corps in the north of Europe; one had just returned from Friedland, and amused us with describing the celebrated conference at Tilsit, where he had been a sentinel on the river side, and presented arms to the two emperors as they passed. It will seem strange, but it is a fact, that this slight incident attracted toward him a greater share of his comrades' admiration than was accorded to those who had seen half the battle-fields of modern war.

He described the dress, the air, the general bearing of the emperors; remarking that, although Alexander was taller and handsomer, and even more soldier-like than our own emperor,

[3] Continued from the December Number.

there was a something of calm dignity and conscious majesty in Napoleon that made him appear immeasurably the superior. Alexander wore the uniform of the Russian guards, one of the most splendid it is possible to conceive, the only thing simple about him was his sword, which was a plain sabre with a tarnished gilt scabbard, and a very dirty sword-knot; and yet every moment he used to look down at it and handle it with great apparent admiration; and "well might he," added the soldier, "Napoleon had given it to him but the day before."

To listen even to such meagre details as these was to light up again in my heart the fire that was only smouldering, and that no life of peasant labor or obscurity could ever extinguish. My companions quickly saw the interest I took in their narratives, and certainly did their utmost to feed the passion – now with some sketch of a Spanish marauding party, as full of adventure as a romance; now with a description of northern warfare, where artillery thundered on the ice, and men fought behind entrenchments of deep snow.

From the North Sea to the Adriatic, all Europe was now in arms. Great armies were marching in every direction; some along the deep valley of the Danube, others from the rich plains of Poland and Silesia; some were passing the Alps into Italy, and some again were pouring down for the Tyrol "Jochs," to defend the rocky passes of their native land against the invader. Patriotism and glory, the spirit of chivalry and conquest, all were abroad, and his must indeed have been a cold heart which could

find within it no response to the stirring sounds around. To the intense feeling of shame which I at first felt at my own life of obscure inactivity, there now succeeded a feverish desire to be somewhere and do something to dispel this worse than lethargy. I had not resolution to tell my comrades that I had served; I felt reluctant to speak of a career so abortive and unsuccessful; and yet I blushed at the half pitying expressions they bestowed upon my life of inglorious adventure.

"You risk life and limb here in these pine forests, and hazard existence for a bear or a chamois goat," cried one, "and half the peril in real war would perhaps make you a Chef d'Escadron, or even a general."

"Ay," said another, "we serve in an army where crowns are military distinctions, and the epaulet is only the first step to a kingdom."

"True," broke in a third, "Napoleon has changed the whole world, and made soldiering the only trade worth following. Massena was a drummer-boy within my own memory, and see him now! Ney was not born to great wealth and honors. Junot never could learn his trade as a cobbler, and for want of better has become a general of division."

"Yes, and," said I, following out the theme, "under that wooden roof yonder, through that little diamond-paned window the vine is trained across, a greater than any of the last three first saw the light. It was there Kleber, the conqueror of Egypt was born."

"Honor to the brave dead!" said the soldiers from their places around the fire, and carrying their hands to the salute. "We'll fire a salvo to him to-morrow before we set out!" said the corporal. "And so Kleber was born there!" said he, resuming his place, and staring with admiring interest at the dark outline of the old house, as it stood out against the starry and cloudless sky.

It was somewhat of a delicate task for me to prevent my companions offering their tribute of respect, but which the old peasant would have received with little gratitude, seeing that he had never yet forgiven the country nor the service for the loss of his son. With some management I accomplished this duty, however, promising my services at the same time to be their guide through the Bregenzer Wald, and not to part with them till I had seen them safely into Bavaria.

Had it not been for my thorough acquaintance with the Tyroler dialect, and all the usages of Tyrol life, their march would have been one of great peril, for already the old hatred against their Bavarian oppressors was beginning to stir the land, and Austrian agents were traversing the mountain districts in every direction, to call forth that patriotic ardor which, ill-requited as it has been, has more than once come to the rescue of Austria.

So sudden had been the outbreak of this war, and so little aware were the peasantry of the frontier of either its object or aim, that we frequently passed recruits for both armies on their way to head-quarters on the same day; honest Bavarians, who were trudging along the road with pack on their shoulders, and

not knowing, nor indeed much caring, on which side they were to combat. My French comrades scorned to report themselves to any German officer, and pushed on vigorously in the hope of meeting with a French regiment. I had now conducted my little party to Immenstadt, at the foot of the Bavarian Alps; and, having completed my compact, was about to bid them good-by.

We were seated around our bivouac fire for the last time, as we deemed it, and pledging each other in a parting glass, when suddenly our attention was attracted to a bright red tongue of flame that suddenly darted up from one of the Alpine summits above our head. Another and another followed, till at length every mountain peak for miles and miles away displayed a great signal fire! Little knew we that behind that giant range of mountains, from the icy crags of the Glockner, and from the snowy summit of the Ortelér itself, similar fires were summoning all Tyrol to the combat; while every valley resounded with the war cry of "God and the Emperor!" We were still in busy conjecture what all this might portend, when a small party of mounted men rode past us at a trot. They carried carbines slung over their peasant frocks, and showed unmistakably enough that they were some newly-raised and scarcely-disciplined force. After proceeding about a hundred yards beyond us they halted, and drew up across the road, unslinging their pieces as if to prepare for action.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.