

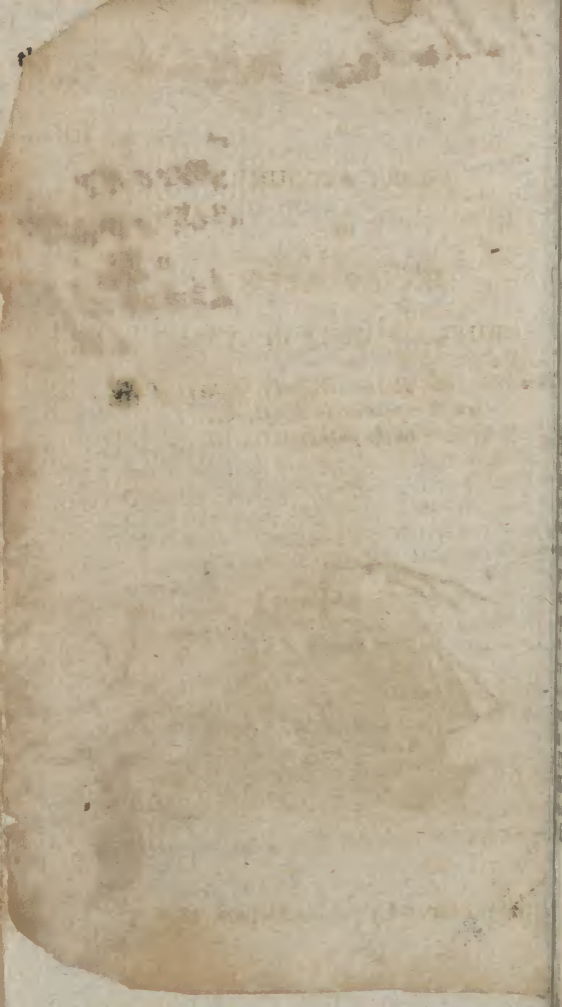
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A  
 SHORT ACCOUNT  
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 BONAPARTE'S  
 CRUEL CONDUCT IN SYRIA.

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Taken from Sir Robert Wilson's history of  
 British expedition in Egypt, &c.  
 lately published.





# A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF

## BONAPARTE'S

### CRUEL CONDUCT IN SYRIA.

BONAPARTE having carried the town of Jaffa by assault, many of the garrison were cut to sword; but the greater part flying into the mosques, and imploring mercy from their pursuers, were granted their lives; and let it be well remembered, that an exasperated army in the moment of révenge, when the laws of war justified the rage, yet heard the voice of pity, received its impression, and proudly refused to be any longer the executioners of an unresisting enemy. Soldiers of the Italian army, this is a laurel wreath worthy of your fame, a trophy of which the subsequent treason of an individual shall not deprive

Three days afterwards, Bonaparte, who had expressed much resentment at the compassion manifested by his troops, and determined to relieve himself from the maintenance and care of three thou-

sand eight hundred prisoners, \* ordered them to be marched to a rising ground near Jaffa, where a division of French infantry formed against them. When the Turks had entered into their fatal alignment, and the mournful preparations were completed, the signal gun fired. Volleys of musquetry and grape instantly played against them; and Bonaparte, who had been regarding the scene through a telescope, when he saw the smoke ascending, could not restrain his joy, but broke out into exclamations of approval; indeed, he had just reasons to dread the refusal of his troops thus to dishonour themselves. Kleber had remonstrated in the most strenuous manner, and the officer of the Etat Major who commanded (for the general

\* Bonaparte had in person inspected previously the whole body, amounting to near 3000 men, with the object of saving those who belonged to the towns he was preparing to attack. The age and noble physiognomy of a veteran Janissary attracted his observation, and he asked him sharply, "Old man, what did you do here?" The Janissary undaunted replied, "I may answer you that question by asking you the same." "Your answer will be that you came to serve your Sultan; so do I mine." The entrepid frankness of the reply excited universal interest in his favour. Bonaparte even smiled. "He is saved," whispered some of the aids de camp. "You know not Bonaparte," observed one who had served with him in Italy "tho' smile, I speak from experience, does not proceed from benevolence; remember what I say." The opinion was too true! The Janissary was left in the rank doomed to death, and suffered!

to whom the division belonged was absent) even refused to execute the order without a written instruction; but Bonaparte was too cautious, and sent Berthier to enforce obedience.

When the Turks had all fallen, the French troops humanly endeavoured to put a period to the sufferings of the wounded but some time elapsed before the bayonet could finish what the fire had not destroyed and probably many languished whole days in agony. Several French officers, by whom partly these details are furnished declared that this was a scene, the retrospect of which tormented their recollection, and that they could not reflect on it without horror; accustomed as they had been to sights of cruelty! These were the prisoners, whom Pissalini, in his very able work on the plague, alluded to, when he says, that for three days the Turks shewed no symptoms of that disease, and it was their putrifying remains which produced the pestilential malady which he describes as afterwards making such ravages in the French army. The bones still lie in heaps, and are shewn to every traveller who arrives nor can they be confounded with those who perished in the assault, since this field of butchery lies a mile from the town.

Such a fact should not, however, be alledged without some proof, or leading circumstance no longer than assertion, being produced to support it; but there would be a want of generosity in naming individuals, and branding them to the latest posterity, with infamy, for obey a command, when their submission became an act of necessity; therefore to establish further the authority of the

relation. this **only** can be mentioned,—that it was Born's division which fired, and thus **ev ry** one is afforded the opportunity of satisfying themselves respecting the truth, by enquiring of officers serving in the different brigades composing this division

The next circumstance is of nature which requires, indeed, the most particular details to establish, since the idea can scarce be entertained, that the commander of an army should or his own countrymen (or if not immediately such, those amongst whom he had been naturalized) to be deprived of existence, when in a state which required the kindest consideration. But the annals of France record the frightful crimes of a Robespierre, a Carrier; and historical truth must now recite one equal to any which has blackened its page!

Bonaparte finding that his hospitals at Jaffa were crowded with sick, sent for a physician, whose name should be inscribed in letters of gold, but which from weighty reasons cannot be here inserted: on his arrival he entered in a long conversation with him respecting the danger of contagion, concluding at last, with the remark, that something must be done to remedy the evil, and that the destruction of the sick at present in the hospital was the only measure which could be adopted! The physician, alarmed at the proposal, bold in the confidence of virtue and the cause of humanity, remonstrated vehemently, representing the cruelty, as well as the atrocity, of such a murder but finding that Bonaparte persisted and menaced, he indignantly left the tent, with this memorable observation, "Neither my principles,

“ nor the character of my profession, will allow  
 “ me to become a human butcher ; and, General,  
 “ if such qualities as you insinuate, are necessary  
 “ to form a great man, I thank my God that I do  
 “ not possess them.”

Bonaparte was not to be diverted from his object by moral consideration ; he persevered, and found an apothecary, who dreading the weight of power, but who since has made an atonement of his mind, by unequivocally confessing the fact, consented to become his agent and to administer poison to the sick ! Opium at night was distributed in gratifying food, the wretched unsuspecting victims banqueted, and in a few hours five hundred and eighty soldiers, who had suffered so much for their country, perished thus miserably by order of its Idol !

Is there not a Frenchman whose blood does not chill with horror at the recital of such a fact ; Surely the manes of these murdered, unoffending people, must be now hovering round the seat of government, and \* \* \* \* \*

If a doubt should still exist, as to the veracity of this statement, let the members of the Institute at Cario be asked, what passed at the sitting after the return of Bonaparte from Syria : they will relate, that the same virtuous physician, who refused to become the destroyer of those committed to his protection, accused Bonaparte of high treason in the full assembly against the honour of France, her children, and humanity ; that he entered into the full details of the poisoning of the sick, and the massacre of the garrison, aggravating these crimes, by charging Bonaparte with strangling, previously

at Rosetta, a number of French and Copts who were ill of the plague; thus proving, that this disposal of the sick was a pre-meditated plan. In vain Bonaparte attempted to justify himself; \* the members sat petrified with terror, and almost doubted whether the scene passing before their eyes was not illusion:—There are records which remain, and which in due season, will be produced. In the interim this representation will be sufficient to stimulate inquiry; and, and Frenchmen, your honours, indeed, interested in the examination

Let us hope, that in no country will there be found another man of such Machiavelian principles, as by sophistry to palliate such transactions.

\* Bonaparte pleaded, that he ordered the garrison to be destroyed, because he had not provisions to maintain them, or strength enough to guard them, and that he destroyed the sick to prevent contagion, and save themselves from falling into the hands of the Turks; but these arguments were refuted directly, and Bonaparte was obliged to rest his defence on the positions of Machiavel. When he afterwards left Egypt, the Savans were so angry at being left behind, that they elected the physician president of the Institute, an act which speaks for itself fully.