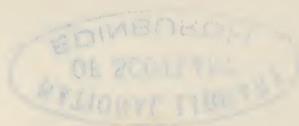


THE
HISTORY
OF
NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

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HISTORY

THE

THE HISTORY

OF

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE was born at Ajaccio, in the island of Corsica, near France. He chose the profession of arms; and at the age of seven was placed in the military school of Brienne. In 1783, he was transferred to the Royal Military School at Paris. He became an excellent mathematician, and read the Latin historians with enthusiasm: Ossian, also, was a favourite author. At sixteen, he obtained his first commission, as second lieutenant in an artillery regiment. In 1792, he attained the rank of Captain, but was not in employment, and lived chiefly at the expense of his friend De Bourrienne, wandering about the streets of Paris, and talked of establishing himself in business, and, at one time, of making money by sub-letting houses. In 1793, the national guards of Paris, to the number of 30,000, took up arms against their rulers, when, through the influence

of Barras, Buonaparte took the command of 5000 regular troops against the insurgents, and in a few hours quelled the disturbance; his rise was instantaneous, and he was made commander-in-chief of the army in Italy.

Napoleon's forces, wherewith to revolutionize Italy, consisted of 50,000 men, badly equipped, and opposed to highly disciplined and numerous forces. His system of warfare consisted in concentrating a small and determined force unexpectedly upon points of importance; all luxuries, therefore, and even the baggage of the soldiers, was to be dispensed with, in order to the accomplishment of forced marches of unexampled speed.

The position of the Austrian army, at the beginning of the campaign, was between Genoa, and that of the French:—their stronghold was Monte Notte, occupied by D'Argenteau, who, rushing down upon the French redoubts, was checked by Colonel Runpon, during that and the next day. On the night of the 11th April, 1796, Napoleon so disposed the columns under Augereau and Massena, as completely to surround the Austrians: he retreated through the hills, leaving his colours, cannon, 1000 killed, and 2000 prisoners. This was the first of that series of admirable manoeuvres which was to oaz-

the world, and the successes immediately after at Dego, opened the gates of Italy to Napoleon. In the short space of three weeks, the loss of the enemy in these encounters being no less than 5,000 men, 80 guns, and 21 standards. The Alpine fortresses of Coni were soon after taken in possession of, and the French army urged to enthusiasm by the consummate talent of the young general, asked only for action, and dreamed only of success.

Napoleon now invested Mantua, and made himself master of four out of five of the fortified places. Here he concluded a peace with the king of Naples; and also with the Pope—demanded from the latter the cession of Ferrara, Ancona, and Bologna, a payment of 20,000,000 francs, and a large collection of paintings, statues, and stores. On the Rhine, the divisions under Jourdan and Moreau were less fortunate; the former being defeated by the Archduke Charles, and the other being compelled to retreat, which he did in a most masterly manner, through the Black Forest. The Marshal Alvinci prepared to measure himself with Napoleon, having under his orders an army of 60,000 men. Napoleon's force was comparatively small, and somewhat divided; his situation was beginning to be precarious; but one of those ex-

traordinary movements suggested by his surpassing genius, placed him between Alvinsi and Davidowich, and led to the most obstinate and successful rencontre during the whole of the campaign. Leaving Verona with the main body, if intending to fall, in retreat, on Mantua, he caused his troops to wheel again towards the Adige, and, finding the bridge, crossed the river with all speed, and so placed himself between the rival armies. Augereau moved on through ground intersected with dykes, and therefore fatal in the event of the reverse, to the bridge of Arcola: he was driven back with great loss. Napoleon himself then headed his grenadiers in the midst of an overwhelming fire; but again the French fell back, and their leader was forced into a morass, with the Austrians between. From this danger he was rescued by the desperate valour of his troops, who finally carried the bridge. Fearful of the approach of the Austrian general in an opposite direction, he now retired from Arcola, on Ronco; but, learning the next morning that Vaubois had not been engaged with the general, he once more carried the bridge; the Austrians, however, kept their ground behind it so well, that he again retired on Ronco. The third day he again carried the bridge; and, by an am-

buscade which threw a column of Croats into confusion, and a feigned charge of cavalry, which consisted only of 25 men, with three trumpets, created such a panic throughout the enemy's flanks, that they retreated on Montebello. Joubert and Rivoli was reported to have been compelled to fall back, and Buonaparte, to aid him, marched with his usual lightning-like rapidity, and arrived at the heights of Rivoli by moonlight, at 2 o'clock in the morning. No movement could have been better timed; the artillery of the Austrian general had not come up, and that of the French prevented any possibility of the Austrians securing the heights. The rout of Alvinci was complete. Buonaparte had three horses killed under him; but, in spite of his immense exertions, he seemed not to tire. Leaving Massena and Murat to pursue Alvinci, he hastened with all expedition to the neighbourhood of Mantua, where, at the close of its repeated assaults, Provera and 5000 men laid down their arms; and Wurmser, worn out, made an offer to capitulate. The total Austrian loss at Mantua was 30,000 men, 500 pieces of brass cannon, and a vast quantity of stores remained with the victors. Napoleon next proceeded to the Papal states, where negotiations were again entered into with the Roman envoy; and

Augereau about the same time was despatched to Paris with sixty stand of colours. Massena having made a successful attack at Belluno on the Austrian flank, Napoleon immediately crossed the river with a great display of force—feigned a retreat—and again, two hours afterwards, made an unexpected attack, which ended in the Archduke's being obliged to retreat.

The treaty of Leoben interrupted for the present further hostilities between France and Austria. Master of all northern Italy excepting Venice, Buonaparte now resolved to humiliate that republic, which he speedily accomplished. A ransom of £150,000 in gold was demanded and paid; stores to the amount of £200,000 were furnished, and several valuable pictures and relics were given up.

In January, 1798, Buonaparte had returned to Paris, and was living there in a style almost approaching to seclusion. His humble residence was the same that he had formerly occupied. The Directory in the mean time had done absolutely nothing for him, out of a spirit of the meanest jealousy; and anxious that he should be employed, they proposed an invasion of England. He surveyed the coast, and proved that the time was not favourable; but he proposed a scheme of attacking

England through her Mediterranean possessions. It was adopted, and he sailed from Toulon to Egypt, on the 20th May, 1798, with an army consisting of 13 ships of the line, 14 frigates, and 400 transports, conveying 45,000 chosen troops. By a fortunate chance it escaped the pursuit of Nelson, and, on the 2d July, a debarkation took place at Niarabout, nine miles from Alexandria. On the 7th, after a march of much suffering, the army came within sight of the Pyramids, and of the numerous army of the Egyptian general. The battle of the Pyramids, so glorious to the French, followed. The Egyptian cavalry found it impossible to break the line of bayonets, and in madness they dashed upon them, but the roll of musketry brought rider and horse to the ground. The soldiers gathered an immense booty on the field; and Lower Egypt was in their power.

On the 11th Feb., 1799, Buonaparte, at the head of an army of 10,000 men, marched into Syria. Jaffa made a serious resistance, but yielded; 300 Turks were slain, and 2000 prisoners were drawn out in the vicinity and shot. After a most disastrous journey he arrived at Cairo on the 14th June, but he was soon summarily expelled from the city. The Turks had disem-
barked at the mouth of the Nile, and taken possession of the

fortress ; he descended the Nile, reached Alexandria on the 24th July, saw his men posted near Aboukir, and gave orders for the assault early next morning. This accordingly took place ; Murat doing wonders with his cavalry. Victory sided with the French, and Napoleon returned to Cairo on the 9th August ; and on the 22d reached the coast with his staff, and embarked on board a French frigate. After a perilous voyage he landed at Frejus, and arrived at Paris on the 16th Oct., and shortly after was made chief consul.

A refusal on the part of the British government to enter into accommodation with Buonaparte's consulate, determined him to consolidate his power by fresh victories. The army of the Rhine, 100,000 strong, being confided to Moreau, Napoleon made a new levy of 50,000 men, which left Geneva in three bodies, 6000 to cross Mont Cenis, 7000 the little St. Bernard, and 37,000, under Buonaparte, the great St. Bernard in the Alps. After four days of excessive toil, the army crossed that stupendous range, and on the 20th May, 1800, Napoleon staid for a short time at the mountain convent, whose benevolent fathers had given refreshment to every soldier in his route. It had been extremely difficult, by casing artillery in trunks of trees, to drag them over

the snow upwards; it was still more so to convey them safely from ridge to ridge in the descent. At the narrow passes of the Alps the soldiers had to march one by one. On the 11th June, Buonaparte descended to the plain of Marengo, with 20,000 men, near which place the Austrians appeared on the 13th, 40,000 strong.

On the following day the battle took place, when the first and second lines of the French were compelled to retreat; and, but for the timely arrival of Dessaix, the engagement had been lost. The third line formed, and taking advantage of the over-confidence of the Austrians, after a furious struggle, gained a complete victory. Napoleon, on the 2d July, returned to Paris, and was received with great enthusiasm.

On the 18th May, 1803, Great Britain declared war against France, and 200 ships, containing three millions of property, were seized by the British. In retaliation, Napoleon retained, in contempt of national law, 10,000 English, who were residing in France, as prisoners. During the war, the British took St. Domingo, and the French, Hanover; and in Sept., 1803, the preparations for invading England were made and abandoned. A firm ministry, a Nelson, and 400,000 volunteers, in addition to the regular

army, and militia of 200,000 were not circumstances to be despised even by Buonaparte.

On the 2d December, Buonaparte and Josephine were crowned at Notre Dame, in the midst of a splendid assemblage. In May, 1804, the imperial pair were for a short time at Milan, and Napoleon was made King of Italy. About this time also, he made his brother Joseph, King of Spain; Louis, King of Holland; Jerome King of Westphalia; and Murat, King of Naples.

In 1805, Austria declared war against France, and the army was confided to General Mack. Buonaparte's grand principle was, at all times, to weaken his enemy in detail; he therefore withdrew the armies from Normandy, intended, apparently, for a descent on England; and they, under Soult, Marmont, and Ney, traversed the Rhine, and crossing the Danube, took up a position in the rear of Mack. The consequence of this was, that although Mack had a garrison of admirable troops, amounting to 22,000 men, his case was hopeless, and he capitulated without a blow. Buonaparte having thus admirably provided for the safety of his flank and rear, entered Vienna on the 13th November, 1805, with the main army, and took possession of the palace as a residence.

About this time the news arrived of the battle of Trafalgar, an engagement fatal to the French marine; and it was on this occasion that Napoleon exhibited the advantage of his peculiar temperament; for, instead of being depressed, he appeared stimulated to more daring vigour. Leaving Vienna, he crossed the Danube, and advanced into Moravia, as far as Brunn. Between Brunn and Austerlitz the distance is two miles, and this space became his immediate study and his rallying point. His preparations were as follows:—the centre was composed of the cavalry and foot of Bernadotte and Murat; Lannes commanded the left wing; Soult the right; the reserve, under Oudinot, including the imperial guard, was 20,000 strong. An evidence of the masterly skill of Napoleon in so disposing his troops as to take advantage of a probable imprudence in the enemy was his placing Davoust at Raygern with a strong division to the rear of the French right. Buonaparte threw himself by a watch-fire for an hour on the night of the 1st Dec., 1805—at one o'clock he was on horseback, and rode round his army in front. The sun rose brilliantly—it was the anniversary of his coronation, and his soldiers determined to celebrate it worthily. The battle began. Kutusoff, the Russian commander-in-chief, sent a large force to turn

the French right; but here, quite unexpectedly, Davoust came up, and at the same time Soult rushed into the space so created, and isolated the centre and right. He was driven back, but was soon after supported by Bessieres and the imperial guard, and threw the enemy into confusion—the grand Duke Constantine very narrowly escaping from the victors. It was now an easy matter to surround the right wing, although the struggle with Lannes was still obstinate. The loss of life was then most appalling; for the Russians, cooped up on some frozen lakes, the French artillery from the heights broke the ice around them, so that about 20,000 were drowned. The Emperors of Russia and Austria got off the field with extreme difficulty, leaving 20,000 prisoners, and above 40 pieces of artillery.

After the victory at Austerlitz, Buonaparte formed the confederation of the Rhine, of which he took the title of Protector. In 1806 he proposed to take Hanover from Prussia and to give that territory to Great Britain. When this became known to the Prussian cabinet, the rage and the enthusiasm of revenge which it created are indescribable. The Queen of Prussia, and the gallant Prince Louis, (the King's brother) arrayed the people in heart or arms for this contemptuous insult.

But it was unwise to rush singly into hostilities, and to enter Saxony in defiance of that Elector's protest. Murat, Bernadotte, and Davoust,—Ney and Soult,—Lannes and Augereau,—headed three divisions of the French army, the last of which was sternly opposed by Prince Louis, who was unfortunately killed in the engagement. Soult on the left, was charged by Mollendorf, and must have given way but for the division of Ney. A general charge of the centre, under Lannes, of Augereau on the right, and Murat with his cavalry, threw the Prussians into utter confusion. They flew on to Weimar, leaving above 20,000 dead or prisoners, all their artillery, and sixty standards. This was the battle of Jena. Army after army of the Prussians was hemmed in by the French and broken up. On the 25th October, Buonaparte entered Berlin. His insolence was extreme. The French military were permitted to pillage at pleasure. Prussia was treated as a conquered province. The pictures and statues were sent to Paris.

During Buonaparte's stay in the Prussian capital, he issued decrees, by which he interrupted all intercourse between England and the Continent. This speedily led to a war with Russia; and on the 7th Feb., 1807, the French and Russia

armies reached Preuss-Eyran, near Warsaw. The possession of the town was contested obstinately, but at nightfall was in occupation of the French. On the following morning the battle began by the French troops charging the Russian line in two columns, but without effect. Many hours of hard fighting followed, the French on-setting with the fiery zeal of crusaders, and the Russians receiving them with great courage. Finally, the village of Schloditten having been occupied by Ney, was regained by the Russians at ten at night, and was the last scene of this eventful strife, in which both claimed with equal justice the victory. If any thing, the scale will incline to the Russian general, who had but 64,000 men, while Napoleon mustered 92,000. There were 47,000 dead, of which 27,000 are supposed to have been French. Both nations had proved themselves so well matched in desperate resolution, that the Russian general's desire of an armistice was instantly agreed to by Buonaparte, on the 25th June, 1807.

The Emperor Alexander having repaired to Tilsit, he and Napoleon met on the 25th June. When Buonaparte chose to unbend, his fascination of manner was deemed irresistible, and this appeared in the case of the young and open-minded Em-

peror. Their friendship increased from day to day, and the celebrated treaty of Tilsit was arranged without an obstacle.

On the 8th August, 1808, Sir Arthur Wellesley disembarked in Mondego Bay, in Portugal, with 11,000 men. With this trifling force he boldly marched at once into Lisbon, defeating the French general, on his way, at the point of the bayonet. But a success far higher awaited him, and at last convinced the French generals that more than their master was now in the field.

On the 20th Dec., 1808, Napoleon heard of the advance of Sir John Moore into the interior of Spain, when he immediately left Madrid with an army, with a view to support Soult in driving him into the sea. When Moore heard of this movement, he began his retreat to Corunna, followed by Soult, whom he attacked rather than ask an armistice. The French were so far repelled that the British troops were enabled to embark; but their gallant General fell, mortally wounded, at the close of the encounter. Napoleon left Spain, and arrived at Paris on the 22d January, 1809.

About this time, Austria declared war against France,—the Austrian army at the time consisting of 450,000 men; and had the Archdukes kept their forces united, the troops of Davoust and Massena,

as well as the centre, which Napoleon now commanded, might successfully have been driven back, but on account of the Austrians dividing their troops they were easily routed, and Buonaparte gained a complete victory.

In December, 1809, Napoleon divorced Josephine, to whom he had been married in 1793; he declared this to be a sacrifice made for the good of his country, which demanded an heir; Josephine was to retain the title of Empress, and the Archduchess Maria Louisa was to be the Imperial bride. On the 2d of April, 1810, they were married formally at Paris, in the midst of every attribute of magnificence. On the 20th of April, 1811, a son was born to Napoleon; the event was welcomed by him with all the rapture of paternal affection.

In 1812, Napoleon made preparations for the Russian campaign; and on the 16th May, with his Empress, arrived at Dresden, having there congregated a host of kings before whom to play the tyrant and the superior. The Czar, as a means of conciliation, was invited, but was inaccessible to Napoleon's messenger. Napoleon went to Dantzic, and during fourteen days occupied himself in negotiating, finally, without effect, the terms of an arrangement with Russia.

Napoleon now determined to extinguish the

domination of Russia ; and with this view marched towards Moscow with a large army, where he arrived on the 14th September, after a hard fought battle with the Russians ; the number of slain amounted to 100,000. It was dark when Napoleon entered Moscow ; he took up his quarters for the night in the Dorogomilow suburb, appointing Mortier governor of the capital ; at two o'clock in the morning there was an alarm of Fire, at day-break Napoleon hastened to the spot, he threatened the guard, but Mortier pointed out to him houses, as yet unentered, from which smoke was rising, which plainly showed it to be a premeditated act of the Russians. He pensively entered the Kremlin. At the sight of the palace of the Ruriks and Romanoffs his hopes became reanimated ; he was in the superb palace of the Russian Cæsars, and every portion yielded a gratification to his pride or curiosity. At this period he wrote a letter to the Czar, with proposals of peace, but no answer was returned. As night came on the flames rose again in different parts of the city, changing with the direction of the wind as it happened to blow towards the Kremlin ; and it was discovered that the water-pipes had been cut—that trains had been deliberately laid, and that a number of wretches, horrible and disgusting in appearance, were

employed in gliding about, like the Gouls of eastern fable, and in consuminating this terrible sacrifice. The fact was, that Rostopchin, the governor, had emptied the prisons, on condition of their miscreants burning the French out of the Imperial city; some police officers were left to combine them, and never was misdeed better fulfilled than this visitation of revengeful patriotism! On the third night the Kremlin took fire. It was rumoured that it was undermined; all were in a paroxysm of terror save Napoleon, he smiled incredulously, but this report afterwards proved too true; he therefore quitted the palace, and on the 20th September, the fire being subdued, he again returned and remained there until the 19th of October. No answer having arrived from Alexander, Lauriston was sent to Kutusoff with another letter for the Czar; the Russian, though he declined granting a passport to any French emissary, offered to forward the letter by his own Aid-de-camp; an armistice was subsequently entered into. Napoleon was compelled to leave Moscow because of the approaching winter. The armistice was afterwards broken, and the Russians pursuing the French slew immense numbers of the army; upwards of 40,000 bodies were found in the ensuing spring in the bed of the river Beresina, and multitudes died of cold and hunger

during the retreat. The remnant of the French army arrived in France reduced to a few thousands, from that of 400,000 men. Napoleon imputed the disasters of his army entirely to the elements, and, as there could be none to dispute the assertion, he so far enlisted the sympathies of his people favourably to his views, that in a few weeks he had again at command an army of 380,000 men.

Buonaparte after this seldom was successful in any engagement, and in the year 1814 signed the following document of abdication:—

“ The Allied Powers having proclaimed that the Emperor Napoleon is the sole obstacle to the peace of Europe, he declares that, in conformity with his oath, he will descend from the throne, quit France, and even relinquish life, if his country should require such sacrifice. He seeks only the welfare of France, inseparable, as it is, from the rights of his son, from those of the Regency in the person of the Empress, and from the maintenance of the laws of the empire.

“ Done at our Palace at Fontainebleau, April the 4th, 1814.

“ NAPOLEON.”

Napoleon afterwards accepted the conditions proffered by Alexander; and renouncing for himself and his heirs the thrones of France and Italy, consented to receive the sovereignty of Elba. In consequence of the Bourbon government ungraving

his pension after the first three months, he left Elba on the 26th February, 1815, and on his return to France was welcomed by the soldiery amidst cries of "Vive l'Empereur;" before May, he organised a well equipped army, with excellent artillery.

"I go to measure myself against Wellington," said Napoleon, as he entered the carriage which was to convey him to Vervius and Beaumont; at the latter place he reviewed his troops, amounting to 140,000 men. At this time the head quarters of the Duke of Wellington were at Brussels; he ordered a hasty concentration of his army, then widely cantoned, around Quatre-Bras; this was effected on the night of the 16th June.

At three o'clock, p.m. on the same day, Napoleon came down upon Blucher, at Ligny, with 90,000 men. The force of the latter was 9,000 less. While this was going on, Ney, with 40,000 men, had posted an advance among growing corn, at Quatre-Bras, which wholly concealed it until close upon the 79th; this regiment would have been cut to pieces, but for the succour of the 42nd; other divisions came up rapidly; the loss on each side, at night fall, was 5,000 men. From Quatre-Bras Wellington retired on the field of Waterloo, and took up his position on a declivity, in front of the village of Mont. St. Jean: his troops amounted

to 73,000 men; of these 29,000 were British. The French arrived at their position late in the morning, which was tempestuous, numbering also 73,000 men. At noon a cannonade was opened, under shelter of which Jerome Buonaparte charged on the position of Hougomont; the English guards were not to be moved by this assault—but the Nassau men fell back; while Jerome pushed his cavalry and artillery on Wellington's right, and was received by squares wholly impregnable, whose fire drove the French over the acclivity. The British right formed into squares, having in front 34 pieces of artillery; they were attacked with the utmost fury by the whole force of cuirassiers, who, after several assaults, were compelled to retreat, with a loss of two-thirds of their number. The Prussian columns were now faintly discernible through the woods, and Napoleon prepared his guard, under Ney, for the final encounter; the English poured an overwhelming fire into the flanks and body of the approaching columns; the old guard fought valiantly, but the nerve of the British was too much for them. Napoleon perceived it—"They mingle!" he exclaimed—"All is lost!" and galloped from his post of observation. Blucher coming up from the wood, commenced a cannonade in support of the British: the French fled in all direc-

tions, pursued by the Prussians, who inflicted relentless vengeance on all whom they overtook.

Napoleon hurried to Paris, where his disgrace and arrival were proclaimed on the 21st of June. He was prevailed on to repair to Rochefort, with the view of proceeding to the United States; unable to escape thither, he gave himself over, at the former place, to the protection of the British Government. After arriving at Plymouth he was banished to St. Helena, with an allowance of £12,000 per annum. He became seriously indisposed, in 1818, with a hereditary disease—a scirrous of the pylorus—and, refusing to take any medicine, he sank gradually till the 5th of May, 1821, when the ambitious Napoleon terminated his mortal career.

THE END.