

# LOUIS DE BOURRIENNE

MEMOIRS OF NAPOLEON  
BONAPARTE — VOLUME  
02

**Louis Antoine Fauvelet Bourrienne**  
**Memoirs of Napoleon**  
**Bonaparte — Volume 02**

*[http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio\\_book/?art=34840374](http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=34840374)  
Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte — Volume 02:*

# Содержание

CHAPTER V	4
CHAPTER VI	12
CHAPTER VII	24
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	37

# Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte — Volume 02

## CHAPTER V

1797.

Signature of the preliminaries of peace—Fall of Venice—My arrival and reception at Leoben—Bonaparte wishes to pursue his success—The Directory opposes him—He wishes to advance on Vienna—Movement of the army of the Sambre-et-Meuse—Bonaparte's dissatisfaction—Arrival at Milan—We take up our residence at Montebello—Napoleon's judgment respecting Dandolo and Melzi.

I joined Bonaparte at Leoben on the 19th of April, the day after the signature of the preliminaries of peace. These preliminaries resembled in no respect the definitive treaty of Campo Formio. The still incomplete fall of the State of Venice did not at that time present an available prey for partition. All was arranged afterwards. Woe to the small States that come in immediate contact with two colossal empires waging war!

Here terminated my connection with Bonaparte as a comrade and equal, and those relations with him commenced in which I saw him suddenly great, powerful, and surrounded with homage and glory. I no longer addressed him as I had been accustomed to do. I appreciated too well his personal importance. His position placed too great a social distance between him and me not to make me feel the necessity of fashioning my demeanour accordingly. I made with pleasure, and without regret, the easy sacrifice of the style of familiar companionship and other little privileges. He said, in a loud voice, when I entered the salon where he was surrounded by the officers who formed his brilliant staff, "I am glad to see you, at last"—"Te voila donc, enfin;", but as soon as we were alone he made me understand that he was pleased with my reserve, and thanked me for it. I was immediately placed at the head of his Cabinet. I spoke to him the same evening respecting the insurrection of the Venetian territories, of the dangers which menaced the French, and of those which I had escaped, etc. "Care thou[\*] nothing about it," said he;

[\*]—[He used to 'tutoyer' me in this familiar manner until his return to Milan.]—

"those rascals shall pay for it. Their republic has had its day, and is done." This republic was, however, still existing, wealthy and powerful. These words brought to my recollection what I had read in a work by one Gabriel Naude, who wrote during the reign of Louis XIII. for Cardinal de Bagin: "Do you see

Constantinople, which flatters itself with being the seat of a double empire; and Venice, which glories in her stability of a thousand years? Their day will come."

In the first conversation which Bonaparte had with me, I thought I could perceive that he was not very well satisfied with the preliminaries. He would have liked to advance with his army to Vienna. He did not conceal this from me. Before he offered peace to Prince Charles, he wrote to the Directory that he intended to pursue his success, but that for this purpose he reckoned on the co-operation of the armies of the Sambre-et-Meuse and the Rhine. The Directory replied that he must not reckon on a diversion in Germany, and that the armies of the Sambre-et-Meuse and the Rhine were not to pass that river. A resolution so unexpected— a declaration so contrary to what he had constantly solicited, compelled him to terminate his triumphs, and renounce his favourite project of planting the standard of the republic on the ramparts of Vienna, or at least of levying contributions on the suburbs of that capital.

A law of the 23d of August 1794 forbade the use of any other names than those in the register of births. I wished to conform to this law, which very foolishly interfered with old habits. My eldest brother was living, and I therefore designated myself Fauvelet the younger. This annoyed General Bonaparte. "Such change of name is absolute nonsense," said he. "I have known you for twenty years by the name of Bourrienne. Sign as you still are named, and see what the advocates with their laws

will do."

On the 20th of April, as Bonaparte was returning to Italy, he was obliged to stop on an island of the Tagliamento, while a torrent passed by, which had been occasioned by a violent storm. A courier appeared on the right bank of the river. He reached the island. Bonaparte read in the despatches of the Directory that the armies of the Sambre-et-Meuse and the Rhine were in motion; that they were preparing to cross the Rhine, and had commenced hostilities on the very day of the signing of the preliminaries. This information arrived seven days after the Directory had written that "he must not reckon on the co-operation of the armies of Germany." It is impossible to describe the General's vexation on reading these despatches. He had signed the preliminaries only because the Government had represented the co-operation of the armies of the Rhine as impracticable at that moment, and shortly afterwards he was informed that the co-operation was about to take place! The agitation of his mind was so great that he for a moment conceived the idea of crossing to the left bank of the Tagliamento, and breaking off the negotiations under some pretext or other. He persisted for some time in this resolution, which, however, Berthier and some other generals successfully opposed. He exclaimed, "What a difference would there have been in the preliminaries, if, indeed, there had been any!"

His chagrin, I might almost say his despair, increased when, some days after his entry into the Venetian States, he received a letter from Moreau, dated the 23d of April, in which that general

informed him that, having passed the Rhine on the 20th with brilliant success, and taken four thousand prisoners, it would not be long before he joined him. Who, in fact, can say what would have happened but for the vacillating and distrustful policy of the Directory, which always encouraged low intrigues, and participated in the jealousy excited by the renown of the young conqueror? Because the Directory dreaded his ambition they sacrificed the glory of our arms and the honour of the nation; for it cannot be doubted that, had the passage of the Rhine, so urgently demanded by Bonaparte, taken place some days sooner, he would have been able, without incurring any risk, to dictate imperiously the conditions of peace on the spot; or, if Austria were obstinate, to have gone on to Vienna and signed it there. Still occupied with this idea, he wrote to the Directory on the 8th of May: "Since I have received intelligence of the passage of the Rhine by Hoche and Moreau, I much regret that it did not take place fifteen days sooner; or, at least, that Moreau did not say that he was in a situation to effect it." (He had been informed to the contrary.) What, after this, becomes of the unjust reproach against Bonaparte of having, through jealousy of Moreau, deprived France of the advantages which a prolonged campaign would have procured her? Bonaparte was too devoted to the glory of France to sacrifice it to jealousy of the glory of any individual.

In traversing the Venetian States to return to Milan, he often spoke to me of Venice. He always assured me that he was

originally entirely unconnected with the insurrections which had agitated that country; that common sense would show, as his project was to advance into the basin of the Danube, he had no interest in having his rear disturbed by revolts, and his communications interrupted or cut off: "Such an idea," said he, "would be absurd, and could never enter into the mind of a man to whom even his enemies cannot deny a certain degree of tact." He acknowledged that he was not vexed that matters had turned out as they had done, because he had already taken advantage of these circumstances in the preliminaries and hoped to profit still more from them in the definitive peace. "When I arrive at Milan," said he, "I will occupy myself with Venice." It is therefore quite evident to me that in reality the General-in-Chief had nothing to do with the Venetian insurrections; that subsequently he was not displeased with them; and that, later still, he derived great advantage from them.

We arrived at Milan on the 5th of May, by way of Laybach, Triest, Palma-Nova, Padua, Verona, and Mantua. Bonaparte soon took up his residence at Montebello, a very fine chateau, three leagues from Milan, with a view over the rich and magnificent plains of Lombard. At Montebello commenced the negotiations for the definitive peace which were terminated at Passeriano. The Marquis de Gallo, the Austrian plenipotentiary, resided half a league from Montebello.

During his residence at Montebello the General-in-Chief made an excursion to the Lake of Como and to the Lago

Maggiore. He visited the Borromean Islands in succession, and occupied himself on his return with the organization of the towns of Venice, Genoa, and Milan. He sought for men and found none. "Good God," said he, "how rare men are! There are eighteen millions in Italy, and I have with difficulty found two, Dandolo and Melzi."

He appreciated them properly. Dandolo was one of the men who, in those revolutionary times, reflected the greatest honour upon Italy. After being a member of the great council of the Cisalpine Republic, he exercised the functions of Proveditore-General in Dalmatia. It is only necessary to mention the name of Dandolo to the Dalmatians to learn from the grateful inhabitants how just and vigorous his administration was. The services of Melzi are known. He was Chancellor and Keeper of the Seals of the Italian monarchy, and was created Duke of Lodi.

—[Francesco, Comte de Melzi d'Eryl (1753-1816), vice President of the Italian Republic, 1802; Chancellor of the Kingdom of Italy, 1805; Duc de Lodi, 1807.]—

In those who have seen the world the truth of Napoleon's reproach excites little astonishment. In a country which, according to biographies and newspapers, abounds with extraordinary men, a woman of much talent —(Madame Roland.)—said, "What has most surprised me, since the elevation of my husband has afforded me the opportunity of knowing many persons, and particularly those employed in important affairs, is the universal mediocrity which exists.

It surpasses all that the imagination can conceive, and it is observable in all ranks, from the clerk to the minister. Without this experience I never could have believed my species to be so contemptible."

Who does not remember Oxenstiern's remark to his son, who trembled at going so young to the congress of Munster: "Go, my son. You will see by what sort of men the world is governed."

## CHAPTER VI

1797.

Napoleon's correspondence—Release of French prisoners at Olmutz— Negotiations with Austria— Bonaparte's dissatisfaction—Letter of complaint from Bonaparte to the Executive Directory—Note respecting the affairs of Venice and the Club of Clichy, written by Bonaparte and circulated in the army—Intercepted letter of the Emperor Francis.

During the time when the preliminaries of Leoben suspended military operations, Napoleon was not anxious to reply immediately to all letters. He took a fancy to do, not exactly as Cardinal Dubois did, when he threw into the fire the letters he had received, saying, "There! my correspondents are answered," but something of the same kind. To satisfy himself that people wrote too much, and lost, in trifling and useless answers, valuable time, he told me to open only the letters which came by extraordinary couriers, and to leave all the rest for three weeks in the basket. At the end of that time it was unnecessary to reply to four-fifths of these communications. Some were themselves answers; some were acknowledgments of letters received; others contained requests for favours already granted, but of which intelligence had not been received. Many were filled with complaints respecting provisions, pay, or clothing,

and orders had been issued upon all these points before the letters were written. Some generals demanded reinforcements, money, promotion, etc. By not opening their letters Bonaparte was spared the unpleasing office of refusing. When the General-in-Chief compared the very small number of letters which it was necessary to answer with the large number which time alone had answered, he laughed heartily at his whimsical idea. Would not this mode of proceeding be preferable to that of causing letters to be opened by any one who may be employed, and replying to them by a circular to which it is only necessary to attach a date?

During the negotiations which followed the treaty of Leoben, the Directory ordered General Bonaparte to demand the liberty of MM. de La Fayette, Latour-Marbourg, and Bureau de Puzy, detained at Olmutz since 1792 as prisoners of state. The General-in-Chief executed this commission with as much pleasure as zeal, but he often met with difficulties which appeared to be insurmountable. It has been very incorrectly stated that these prisoners obtained their liberty by one of the articles of the preliminaries of Leoben. I wrote a great deal on this subject to the dictation of General Bonaparte, and I joined him only on the day after the signature of these preliminaries. It was not till the end of May of the year 1797 that the liberation of these captives was demanded, and they did not obtain their freedom till the end of August. There was no article in the treaty, public or secret, which had reference to them. Neither was it at his own suggestion that Bonaparte demanded the enlargement of the

prisoners, but by order of the Directory. To explain why they did not go to France immediately after their liberation from Olmutz, it is necessary to recollect that the events of the 18th Fructidor occurred between the period when the first steps were taken to procure their liberty and the date of their deliverance. It required all Bonaparte's ascendancy and vigour of character to enable him to succeed in his object at the end of three months.

We had arrived at the month of July, and the negotiations were tediously protracted. It was impossible to attribute the embarrassment which was constantly occurring to anything but the artful policy of Austria: Other affairs occupied Bonaparte. The news from Paris engrossed all his attention. He saw with extreme displeasure the manner in which the influential orators of the councils, and pamphlets written in the same spirit as they spoke, criticised him, his army, his victories, the affairs of Venice, and the national glory. He was quite indignant at the suspicions which it was sought to create respecting his conduct and ulterior views.

The following excerpts, attributed to the pens of Dumouriez or Rivarol, are specimens of some of the comments of the time:

## **EXTRACTS OF LETTERS IN "LE SPECTATEUR DU NORD" of 1797**

General Bonaparte is, without contradiction, the most brilliant warrior who has appeared at the head of the

armies of the French Republic. His glory is incompatible with democratic equality, and the services he has rendered are too great to be recompensed except by hatred and ingratitude. He is very young, and consequently has to pursue a long career of accusations and of persecutions.

.....Whatever may be the crowning event of his military career, Bonaparte is still a great man. All his glory is due to himself alone; because he alone has developed a character and a genius of which no one else has furnished an example.

## **EXTRACT OF LETTER OR 18TH APRIL 1797 in "THE SPECTATEUR DU NORD."**

Regard, for instance, this wretched war. Uncertain in Champagne, it becomes daring under Dumouriez, unbridled under the brigands who fought the Vendeeans, methodic under Pichegru, vulgar under Jourdan, skilled under Moreau, rash under Bonaparte. Each general has put the seal of his genius on his career, and has given life or death to his army. From the commencement of his career Bonaparte has developed an ardent character which is irritated by obstacles, and a quickness which forestalls every determination of the enemy. It is with heavier and heavier blows that he strikes. He throws his army on the enemy like an unloosed torrent. He is all action, and he is so in everything. See him fight, negotiate, decree, punish, all is

the matter of a moment. He compromises with Turin as with Rome. He invades Modena as he burns Binasco. He never hesitates; to cut the Gordian knot is always his method.

Bonaparte could not endure to have his conduct predicated; and enraged at seeing his campaigns depreciated, his glory and that of his army disparaged,

—[The extraordinary folly of the opposition to the Directory in throwing Bonaparte on to the side of the Directory, will be seen by reading the speech of Dumolard, so often referred to by Bourrienne (Thiers, vol. v. pp. 110-111), and by the attempts of Mathieu Dumas to remove the impression that the opposition slighted the fortunate General. (See Dumas, tome iii. p. 80; see also Lanfrey, tome i. pp. 257-299).]—

and intrigues formed against him in the Club of Clichy, he wrote the following letter to the Directory:—

## **TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORY**

I have just received, Citizens-Directors, a copy of the motion of Dumolard (23d June 1797).

This motion, printed by order of the Assembly, it is evident, is directed against me. I was entitled, after, having five times concluded peace, and given a death-blow to the coalition, if not to civic triumphs, at least to live

tranquilly under the protection of the first magistrates of the Republic. At present I find myself ill-treated, persecuted, and disparaged, by every shameful means, which their policy brings to the aid of persecution. I would have been indifferent to all except that species of opprobrium with which the first magistrates of the Republic endeavour to overwhelm me. After having deserved well of my country by my last act, I am not bound to hear myself accused in a manner as absurd as atrocious. I have not expected that a manifesto, signed by emigrants, paid by England, should obtain more credit with the Council of Five Hundred than the evidence of eighty thousand men—than mine! What! we were assassinated by traitors—upwards of four hundred men perished; and the first magistrates of the Republic make it a crime to have believed the statement for a moment. Upwards of four hundred Frenchmen were dragged through the streets. They were assassinated before the eyes of the governor of the fort. They were pierced with a thousand blows of stilettos, such as I sent you and the representatives of the French people cause it to be printed, that if they believed this fact for an instant, they were excusable. I know well there are societies where it is said, "Is this blood, then, so pure?"

If only base men, who are dead to the feeling of patriotism and national glory, had spoken of me thus, I would not have complained. I would have disregarded it; but I have a right to complain of the degradation to which the first magistrates of the Republic reduce those who have aggrandised, and carried the French name to so high a pitch

of glory. Citizens-Directors, I reiterate the demand I made for my dismissal; I wish to live in tranquillity, if the poniards of Clichy will allow me to live. You have employed me in negotiations. I am not very fit to conduct them.

About the same time he drew up the following note respecting the affairs of Venice, which was printed without the author's name, and circulated through the whole army:—

## NOTE

Bonaparte, pausing before the gates of Turin, Parma, Rome, and Vienna, offering peace when he was sure of obtaining nothing but fresh triumphs—Bonaparte, whose every operation exhibits respect for religion, morality, and old age; who, instead of heaping, as he might have done, dishonour upon the Venetians, and humbling their republic to the earth, loaded her with acts of kindness, and took such great interest in her glory—is this the same Bonaparte who is accused of destroying the ancient Government of Venice, and democratising Genoa, and even of interfering in the affairs of the prudent and worthy people of the Swiss Cantons? Bonaparte had passed the Tagliamento, and entered Germany, when insurrections broke out in the Venetian States; these insurrections were, therefore, opposed to Bonaparte's project; surely, then, he could not favour them. When he was in the heart of Germany the Venetians massacred more than four hundred French

troops, drove their quarters out of Verona, assassinated the unfortunate Laugier, and presented the spectacle of a fanatical party in arms. He returned to Italy; and on his arrival, as the winds cease their agitation at the presence of Neptune, the whole of Italy, which was in commotion, which was in arms, was restored to order.

However, the deputies from Bonaparte drew up different articles conformable to the situation of the country, and in order to prevent, not a revolution in the Government, for the Government was defunct, and had died a natural death, but a crisis, and to save the city from convulsion, anarchy, and pillage. Bonaparte spared a division of his army to save Venice from pillage and massacre. All the battalions were in the streets of Venice, the disturbers were put down, and the pillage discontinued. Property and trade were preserved, when General Baragney d'Hilliers entered Venice with his division. Bonaparte, as usual, spared blood, and was the protector of Venice. Whilst the French troops remained they conducted themselves peaceably, and only interfered to support the provisional Government.

Bonaparte could not say to the deputies of Venice, who came to ask his protection and assistance against the populace, who wished to plunder them, "I cannot meddle with your affairs." He could not say this, for Venice, and all its territories, had really formed the theatre of war; and, being in the rear of the army of Italy, the Republic of Venice was really under the jurisdiction of that army. The rights of war confer upon a general the powers of supreme police over the countries which are the seat of

war. As the great Frederick said, "There are no neutrals where there is war." Ignorant advocates and babblers have asked, in the Club of Clichy, why we occupy the territory of Venice. These declaimers should learn war, and they would know that the Adige, the Brenta, and the Tagliamento, where we have been fighting for two years, are within the Venetian States. But, gentlemen of Clichy, we are at no loss to perceive your meaning. You reproach the army of Italy for having surmounted all difficulties—for subduing all Italy for having twice passed the Alps—for having marched on Vienna, and obliged Austria to acknowledge the Republic that, you, men of Clichy, would destroy. You accuse Bonaparte, I see clearly, for having brought about peace. But I know you, and I speak in the name of eighty thousand soldiers. The time is gone when base advocates and wretched declaimers could induce soldiers to revolt. If, however, you compel them, the soldiers of the army of Italy will soon appear at the Barrier of Clichy, with their General. But woe unto you if they do!

Bonaparte having arrived at Palma-Nova, issued a manifesto on the 2d of May 1797. Arrived at Mestre, where he posted his troops, the Government sent three deputies to him, with a decree of the Great Council, without Bonaparte having solicited it and without his having thought of making any change in the Government of that country: The governor of Venice was an old man, ninety-nine years of age, confined by illness to his apartment. Everyone felt the necessity of renovating this Government of twelve hundred years' existence, and to simplify its machinery, in

order to preserve its independence, honour, and glory. It was necessary to deliberate, first, on the manner of renovating the Government; secondly, on the means of atoning for the massacre of the French, the iniquity of which every one was sensible..

Bonaparte, after having received the deputation at Mestre, told them that in order to obtain satisfaction, for the assassination of his brethren in arms, he wished the Great Council to arrest the inquisitors. He afterwards granted them an armistice, and appointed Milan as the place of conference. The deputies arrived at Milan on the . . . A negotiation commenced to re-establish harmony between the Governments. However, anarchy, with all its horrors, afflicted the city of Venice. Ten thousand Sclavonians threatened to pillage the shops. Bonaparte acquiesced in the proposition submitted by the deputies, who promised to verify the loss which had been sustained by pillage.

Bonaparte also addressed a manifesto to the Doge, which appeared in all the public papers. It contained fifteen articles of complaint, and was followed by a decree ordering the French Minister to leave Venice, the Venetian agents to leave Lombard, and the Lion of St. Mark to be pulled down in all the Continental territories of Venice.

The General-in-Chief now openly manifested his resolution of marching on Paris; and this disposition, which was well known in the army, was soon communicated to Vienna. At this period a letter from the Emperor Francis II. to his brother, the Grand

Duke of Tuscany, was intercepted by Bonaparte. I translated the letter, which proved to him that Francis II. was acquainted with his project. He likewise saw with pleasure the assurances which the Emperor gave his brother of his love of peace, as well as the wavering of the imperial resolves, and the incertitude respecting the fate of the Italian princes, which the Emperor easily perceived to depend on Bonaparte. The Emperor's letter was as follows:—

MY DEAR BROTHER—I punctually received your third letter, containing a description of your unhappy and delicate situation. You may be assured that I perceive it as clearly as you do yourself; and I pity you the more because, in truth, I do not know what advice to give you. You are, like me, the victim of the former inactivity of the princes of Italy, who ought, at once, to have acted with all their united forces, while I still possessed Mantua. If Bonaparte's project be, as I learn, to establish republics in Italy, this is likely to end in spreading republicanism over the whole country. I have already commenced negotiations for peace, and the preliminaries are ratified. If the French observe them as strictly as I do, and will do, then your situation will be improved; but already the French are beginning to disregard them. The principal problem which remains to be solved is, whether the French Directory approve of Bonaparte's proceedings, and whether the latter, as appears by some papers distributed through his army, is not disposed to revolt against his country, which also seems to be probable, from his severe conduct towards Switzerland,

notwithstanding the assurances of the Directory, that he had been ordered to leave the country untouched. If this should be the case, new and innumerable difficulties may arise. Under these circumstances I can, at present, advise nothing; for, as to myself, it is only time and the circumstances of the moment which can point out how I am to act.

There is nothing new here. We are all well; but the heat is extraordinary. Always retain your friendship and love for me. Make my compliments to your wife, and believe me ever

*Your best Friend and Brother,*  
*FRANCIS.*

HETZENDORF, July 20, 1797.

## CHAPTER VII

1797.

Unfounded reports—Carnot—Capitulation of Mantua—General Clarke— The Directory yields to Bonaparte—Berthier—Arrival of Eugene Beauharnais at Milan—Comte Delaunay d'Entraigues—His interview with Bonaparte—Seizure of his papers—Copy of one describing a conversation between him and Comte de Montgaillard—The Emperor Francis—The Prince de Conde and General Pichegru.

While Bonaparte was expressing his opinion on his campaigns and the injustice with which they had been criticised, it was generally believed that Carnot dictated to him from a closet in the Luxembourg all the plans of his operations, and that Berthier was at his right hand, without whom, notwithstanding Carnot's plans, which were often mere romances, he would have been greatly embarrassed. This twofold misrepresentation was very current for some time; and, notwithstanding it was contrary to the evidence of facts, it met with much credence, particularly abroad. There was, however, no foundation for the opinion: Let us render to Caesar that which is Caesar's due. Bonaparte was a creator in the art of war, and no imitator. That no man was superior to him in that art is incontestable. At the commencement of the glorious campaign in Italy the Directory certainly sent out instructions

to him; but he always followed his own plans, and continually, wrote back that all would be lost if movements conceived at a distance from the scene of action were to be blindly executed. He also offered to resign. At length the Directory perceived the impossibility of prescribing operations of war according to the view of persons in Paris; and when I became the secretary of the General-in- Chief I saw a despatch of the Directory, dated May, 1796, committing the whole plan of the campaign to his judgment; and assuredly there was not a single operation or movement which did not originate with him. Carnot was obliged to yield to his firmness. When the Directory, towards the end of 1796, felt disposed to treat for peace, General Clarke, appointed to conclude the armistice, was authorised, in case Mantua should not be taken before the negotiation was brought to a close, to propose leaving the blockade in statu quo. Had such a condition been adopted it would doubtless have been stipulated that the Emperor of Austria should be allowed to provision the garrison and inhabitants of the city day by day. Bonaparte, convinced that an armistice without Mantua would by no means conduce to peace, earnestly opposed such a condition. He carried his point; Mantua capitulated, and the result is well known. Yet he was not blind to the hazards of war; while preparing, during the blockade, an assault on Mantua, he wrote thus to the Directory: "A bold stroke of this nature depends absolutely for success on a dog or a goose." This was about a question of surprise.

Bonaparte was exceedingly sensitive to the rumours which

reached him respecting Carnot and Berthier. He one day said to me: "What gross stupidity, is this? It is very well to say to a general, 'Depart for Italy, gain battles, and sign a peace at Vienna;' but the execution that is not so easy. I never attached any value to the plans which the Directory sent me. Too many circumstances occur on the spot to modify them. The movement of a single corps of the enemy's army may confound a whole plan arranged by the fireside. Only fools can believe such stuff! As for Berthier, since you have been with me, you see what he is—he is a blockhead. Yet it is he who does it all; it is he who gathers a great part of the glory of the army of Italy." I told him that this erroneous opinion could not last long; that each person would be allowed his merit, and that at least posterity would judge rightly. This observation seemed to please him.

Berthier was a man full of honour, courage, and probity, and exceedingly regular in the performance of his duties. Bonaparte's attachment to him arose more from habit than liking. Berthier did not concede with affability, and refused with harshness. His abrupt, egotistic, and careless manners did not, however, create him many enemies, but, at the same time, did not make him many friends. In consequence of our frequent intercourse he had contracted the friendly practice of speaking to me in the second person singular; but he never wrote to me in that style. He was perfectly acquainted with the disposition of all the corps, and could name their commanders and their respective forces. Day or night he was always at hand and made out with clearness

all the secondary orders which resulted from the dispositions of the General-in-Chief. In fact, he was an excellent head of the staff of an army; but that is all the praise that can be given, and indeed he wished for no greater. He had such entire confidence in Bonaparte, and looked up to him with so much admiration, that he never would have presumed to oppose his plans or give any advise. Berthier's talent was very limited, and of a special nature; his character was one of extreme weakness. Bonaparte's friendship for him and the frequency of his name in the bulletins and official despatches have unduly elevated his reputation. Bonaparte, giving his opinion to the Directory respecting the generals employed in his army, said, "Berthier has talents, activity, courage, character—all in his favour." This was in 1796. He then made an eagle of him; at St. Helena he called him a goose. He should neither have raised him so high nor sunk him so low.

Berthier neither merited the one nor the other. Bonaparte was a man of habit; he was much attached to all the people about him, and did not like new faces. Berthier loved him. He carried out his orders well, and that enabled him to pass off with his small portion of talent.

It was about this time that young Beauharnais came to Milan. He was seventeen years old. He had lived in Paris with his mother since the departure of Bonaparte. On his arrival he immediately entered the service as 'aide de camp' to the General-in-Chief, who felt for him an affection which was justified by his good

qualities.

Comte Delaunay d'Entraigues, well known in the French Revolution, held a diplomatic post at Venice when that city was threatened by the French. Aware of his being considered the agent of all the machinations then existing against France, and especially against the army of Italy, he endeavoured to escape; but the city being, surrounded, he was seized, together with all his papers. The apparently frank manners of the Count pleased Bonaparte, who treated him with indulgence. His papers were restored, with the exception of three relating to political subjects. He afterwards fled to Switzerland, and ungratefully represented himself as having been oppressed by Bonaparte. His false statements have induced many writers to make of him an heroic victim. He was assassinated by his own servant in 1802.

I kept a copy of one of his most interesting papers. It has been much spoken of, and Fauche-Borel has, I believe, denied its authenticity and the truth of its contents. The manner in which it fell into the hands of the General-in-Chief, the importance attached to it by d'Entraigues, the differences I have observed between the manuscript I copied and versions which I have since read, and the knowledge of its, authenticity, having myself transcribed it from the handwriting of the Count, who in my presence vouched for the truth of the facts it details—all these circumstances induce me to insert it here, and compel me to doubt that it was, as Fauche-Borel asserted, a fabrication.

This manuscript is entitled, 'My Conversation with Comte de

Montgaillard, on the 4th of December 1796, from Six in the Afternoon till midnight, in the presence of the Abbe Dumontel.'

[On my copy are written the words, "Extracts from this conversation, made by me, from the original." I omitted what I thought unimportant, and transcribed only the most interesting passages. Montgaillard spoke of his escape, of his flight to England, of his return to France, of his second departure, and finally of his arrival at Bale in August 1795.]

The Prince de Conde soon afterwards, he said, called me to Mulheim, and knowing the connections I had had in France, proposed that I should sound General Pichegru, whose headquarters were at Altkirch, where he then was, surrounded by four representatives of the Convention.

I immediately went to Neufchatel, taking with me four or five hundred Louis. I cast my eyes on Fauche-Borel, the King's printer at Neufchatel, and also yours and mine, as the instrument by which to make the first overture, and I selected as his colleague M. Courant, a native of Neufchatel. I persuaded them to undertake the business: I supplied them with instructions and passports. They were foreigners: so I furnished them with all the necessary documents to enable them to travel in France as foreign merchants and purchasers of national property. I went to Bale to wait for news from them.

On the 13th of August Fauche and Courant set out for the headquarters at Altkirch. They remained there eight days without finding an opportunity to speak to Pichegru, who was surrounded by representatives and generals. Pichegru

observed them, and seeing them continually wheresoever he went, he conjectured that they had something to say to him, and he called out in a loud voice, while passing them, "I am going to Huningen." Fauche contrived to throw himself in his way at the end of a corridor. Pichegru observed him, and fixed his eyes upon him, and although it rained in torrents, he said aloud, "I am going to dine at the chateau of Madame Salomon." This chateau was three leagues from Huningen, and Madame Salomon was Pichegru's mistress.

Fauche set off directly to the chateau, and begged to speak with General Pichegru. He told the general that, being in the possession of some of J. J. Rousseau's manuscripts, he wished to publish them and dedicate them to him. "Very good," said Pichegru; "but I should like to read them first; for Rousseau professed principles of liberty in which I do not concur, and with which I should not like to have my name connected."—"But," said Fauche, "I have something else to speak to you about."—"What is it, and on whose behalf?"—"On behalf of the Prince de Conde."—"Be silent, then, and follow me."

He conducted Fauche alone into a retired cabinet, and said to him, "Explain yourself; what does Monseigneur le Prince de Conde wish to communicate to me?" Fauche was embarrassed, and stammered out something unintelligible. "Compose yourself," said Pichegru; "my sentiments are the same as the Prince de Conde's. What does he desire of me?" Fauche, encouraged by these words, replied, "The Prince wishes to join you. He counts on you, and wishes to connect himself with you."

"These are vague and unmeaning words," observed Pichegru. "All this amounts to nothing. Go back, and ask for written instructions, and return in three days to my headquarters at Altkirch. You will find me alone precisely at six o'clock in the evening."

Fauche immediately departed, arrived at Bale, and informed me of all that had passed. I spent the night in writing a letter to General Pichegru. (The Prince de Conde, who was invested with all the powers of Louis XVIII, except that of granting the 'cordon-bleu', had, by a note in his own handwriting, deputed to me all his powers, to enable me to maintain a negotiation with General Pichegru).

I therefore wrote to the general, stating, in the outset, everything that was calculated to awaken in him that noble sentiment of pride which is the instinct of great minds; and after pointing out to him the vast good it was in his power to effect, I spoke of the gratitude of the King, and the benefit he would confer on his country by restoring royalty. I told him that his Majesty would make him a marshal of France, and governor of Alsace, as no one could better govern the province than he who had so valiantly defended it. I added that he would have the 'cordon-rouge', the Chateau de Chambord, with its park, and twelve pieces of cannon taken from the Austrians, a million of ready money, 200,000 livres per annum, and an hotel in Paris; that the town of Arbors, Pichegru's native place, should bear his name, and be exempt from all taxation for twenty-five years; that a pension of 200,000 livres would be granted to him, with half reversion to his wife, and 50,000 livres to his heirs

for ever, until the extinction of his family. Such were the offers, made in the name of the King, to General Pichegru. (Then followed the boons to be granted to the officers and soldiers, an amnesty to the people, etc). I added that the Prince de Conde desired that he would proclaim the King in the camps, surrender the city of Huningen to him, and join him for the purpose of marching on Paris.

Pichegru, having read my letter with great attention, said to Fauche, "This is all very well; but who is this M. de Montgaillard who talks of being thus authorised? I neither know him nor his signature. Is he the author?"—"Yes," replied Fauche. "But," said Pichegru, "I must, before making any negotiation on my part, be assured that the Prince de Conde, with whose handwriting I am well acquainted, approves of all that has been written in his name by M. de Montgaillard. Return directly to M. de Montgaillard, and tell him to communicate my answer to the Prince."

Fauche immediately departed, leaving M. Courant with Pichegru. He arrived at Bale at nine o'clock in the evening. I set off directly for Malheim, the Prince de Conde's headquarters, and arrived there at half-past twelve. The Prince was in bed, but I awoke him. He made me sit down by his bedside, and our conference then commenced.

After having informed the Prince of the state of affairs, all that remained was to prevail on him to write to General Pichegru to confirm the truth of what had been stated in his name. This matter, which appeared so simple, and so little liable to objection, occupied the whole night. The Prince, as

brave a man as can possibly be, inherited nothing from the great Conde but his undaunted courage. In other respects he is the most insignificant of men; without resources of mind, or decision of character; surrounded by men of mediocrity, and even baseness; and though he knows them well, he suffers himself to be governed by them.

It required nine hours of hard exertion on my part to get him to write to General Pichegru a letter of eight lines. 1st. He did not wish it to be in his handwriting. 2d. He objected to dating it 3d. He was unwilling to call him General, lest he should recognise the republic by giving that title. 4th. He did not like to address it, or affix his seal to it.

At length he consented to all, and wrote to Pichegru that he might place full confidence in the letters of the Comte de Montgaillard. When all this was settled, after great difficulty, the Prince next hesitated about sending the letter; but at length he yielded. I set off for Bale, and despatched Fauche to Altkirch, to General Pichegru.

The general, after reading the letter of eight lines, and recognising the handwriting and signature, immediately returned it to Fauche, saying, "I have seen the signature: that is enough for me. The word of the Prince is a pledge with which every Frenchman ought to be satisfied. Take back his letter." He then inquired what was the Prince's wish. Fauche explained that he wished—1st. That Pichegru should proclaim the King to his troops, and hoist the White flag. 2d. That he should deliver up Huningen to the Prince. Pichegru objected to this. "I will never take part in such a plot," said he; "I have no wish to make the third volume of

La Fayette and Dumouriez. I know my resources; they are as certain as they are vast. Their roots are not only in my army, but in Paris, in the Convention, in the departments, and in the armies of those generals, my colleagues, who think as I do. I wish to do nothing by halves. There must be a complete end of the present state of things. France cannot continue a Republic. She must have a king, and that king must be Louis XVIII. But we must not commence the counter- revolution until we are certain of effecting it. 'Surely and rightly' is my motto. The Prince's plan leads to nothing. He would be driven from Huningen in four days, and in fifteen I should be lost. My army is composed both of good men and bad. We must distinguish between them, and, by a bold stroke, assure the former of the impossibility of drawing back, and that their only safety lies in success. For this purpose I propose to pass the Rhine, at any place and any time that may be thought necessary. In the advance I will place those officers on whom I can depend, and who are of my way of thinking. I will separate the bad, and place them in situations where they can do no harm, and their position shall be such as to prevent them from uniting. That done, as soon as I shall be on the other side of the Rhine, I will proclaim the King, and hoist the white flag. Conde's corps and the Emperor's army will then join us. I will immediately repass the Rhine, and re-enter France. The fortresses will be surrendered, and will be held in the King's name by the Imperial troops. Having joined Conde's army, I immediately advance. All my means now develop themselves on every side. We march upon Paris, and in a

fortnight will be there. But it is necessary that you should know that you must give the French soldier wine and a crown in his hand if you would have him cry 'Vive le Roi! Nothing must be wanting at the first moment. My army must be well paid as far as the fourth or fifth march in the French territory. There go and tell all this to the Prince, show my handwriting, and bring me back his answer."

During these conferences Pichegru was surrounded by four representatives of the people, at the head of whom was Merlin de Thionville, the most insolent and the most ferocious of inquisitors. These men, having the orders of the Committee, pressed Pichegru to pass the Rhine and go and besiege Manheim, where Merlin had an understanding with the inhabitants. Thus, if on the one hand the Committee by its orders made Pichegru wish to hasten the execution of his plan, on the other he had not a moment to lose; for to delay obeying the orders of the four representatives was to render himself suspected. Every consideration, therefore, called upon the Prince to decide, and decide promptly. Good sense required him also to do another thing, namely, to examine without prejudice what sort of man Pichegru was, to consider the nature of the sacrifice he made, and what were his propositions. Europe acknowledged his talents, and he had placed the Prince in a condition to judge of his good faith. Besides, his conduct and his plan afforded fresh proofs of his sincerity. By passing the Rhine and placing himself between the armies of Conde and Wurmser, he rendered desertion impossible; and, if success did not attend his attempt, his own acts forced him to become an emigrant. He

left in the power of his fierce enemies his wife, his father, his children. Everything bore testimony to his honesty; the talents he had shown were a pledge for his genius, his genius for his resources; and the sacrifices he would have to make in case of failure proved that he was confident of success.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.