

Napoleon's Early Days.

His father, having obtained a place for him in the Government military school at Brienne, took him and his elder brother Joseph, in December, 1778, when he was nine and a half years of age, to a preparatory school at Autun, where the boys, who up to this time had spoken nothing but Italian, were to learn French. Three months at Autun gave young Napoleon enough of the new language to do his exercises; thereupon he was separated from his brother and sent alone to Brienne.

From the first the atmosphere was hateful to him. His comrades were French, and it was the French who had subdued Corsica. They taunted him with it sometimes, and he told them that had there been but four to one, Corsica would never have been conquered, but that the French came ten to one. When they said: "But your father submitted," he said bitterly. "I shall never forgive him for it." As for Paoli, he told them, proudly, "He is a good man. I wish I could be like him."

He had trouble with the new language. They jeered at him because of it. His name was strange; *la paille au nez* was the nickname they made from Napoleon. He was poor; they were rich. The contemptuous treatment he received because of his poverty was such that he begged to be taken home.

"My father," he wrote, "If you or my protectors cannot give me the means of sustaining myself more honorably in the house where I am, please summon me home, and as soon as possible. I am tired of poverty and of the smiles of the insolent scholars who are superior to me only in their fortune, for there is not one among them who feels one hundredth part of the noble sentiments by which I am animated. Must your son, sir, continually be the butt of these boobies, who, vain of luxuries which they enjoy, insult me by their laughter at the privations which I am forced to endure? No, father, no! If fortune refuses to smile upon me, take me from Brienne, and make me, if you will, a mechanic. From these words you may judge of my despair. This letter, sir, please believe, is not dictated by a vain desire to enjoy expensive amusements. I have no such wish. I feel simply that it is necessary to show my companions that I can procure them as well as they, if I wish to do so."

Your respectful and affectionate son,
"BONAPARTE."

Charles Bonaparte, always in pursuit of pleasure and his inheritance, could not help his son. Napoleon made other attempts to escape, even offering himself, it is said, to the British Admiralty as a sailor. In the end he saw that there was no way for him but to remain at Brienne, galled by poverty and formalism.

At the end of five and one-half years Napoleon was promoted to the military school at Paris. The choice of pupils for this school was made by an inspector, at this time one Chevalier de Keralio, an amiable old man, who was fond of playing with the boys as well as examining them. He was particularly pleased with Napoleon, and named him for promotion in spite of his being strong in nothing but mathematics, and not yet being of the age required by the regulations. The teachers protested, but De Keralio insisted:

"I know what I am doing," he said. "If I put the rules aside in this case, it is not to do his family a favor. I do not know them. It is because of the child himself. I have seen a spark here that cannot be too carefully cultivated."

De Keralio died before the nominations were made, but his wishes in regard to young Bonaparte were carried out. The recommendation which sent him up is curious. The notes read:

"Monsieur de Bonaparte; height four feet, ten inches and ten lines; has passed his fourth examination; good constitution, excellent health; submissive character; frank and grateful; regular in conduct; has distinguished himself by his application to mathematics; is passably well up in history and geography; is behindhand in his Latin. Will make an excellent sailor. Deserves to be sent to the school in Paris."

The circumstances which brought Junot and Napoleon together at Toulon were especially heroic. Some one was needed to carry an order to an exposed point. Napoleon asked for an under officer, audacious and intelligent. Junot, then a sergeant, was sent. "Take off your uniform and carry this order there," said Napoleon, indicating the point.

Junot blushed and his eyes flashed. "I am not a spy," he answered; "find some one beside me to execute such an order."

"You refuse to obey," said Napoleon.

"I am ready to obey," answered Junot, "but I will go in my uniform or not go at all. It is honor enough then for these — Englishmen."

The officer smiled and let him go, but he took pains to find out his name.

A few days later Napoleon called for some one in the ranks who wrote a fine hand to come to him. Junot offered himself, and sat down close to the battery to write the letter. He had scarcely finished when a bomb thrown by the English burst near by and covered him and his letter with earth.

"Good," said Junot, laughing. "I shall not need any sand to dry the ink."

Bonaparte looked at the young man, who had not even trembled at the danger. From that time the young sergeant remained with the commander of artillery.—*Ida M. Tarbell, in McClure's Magazine.*

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