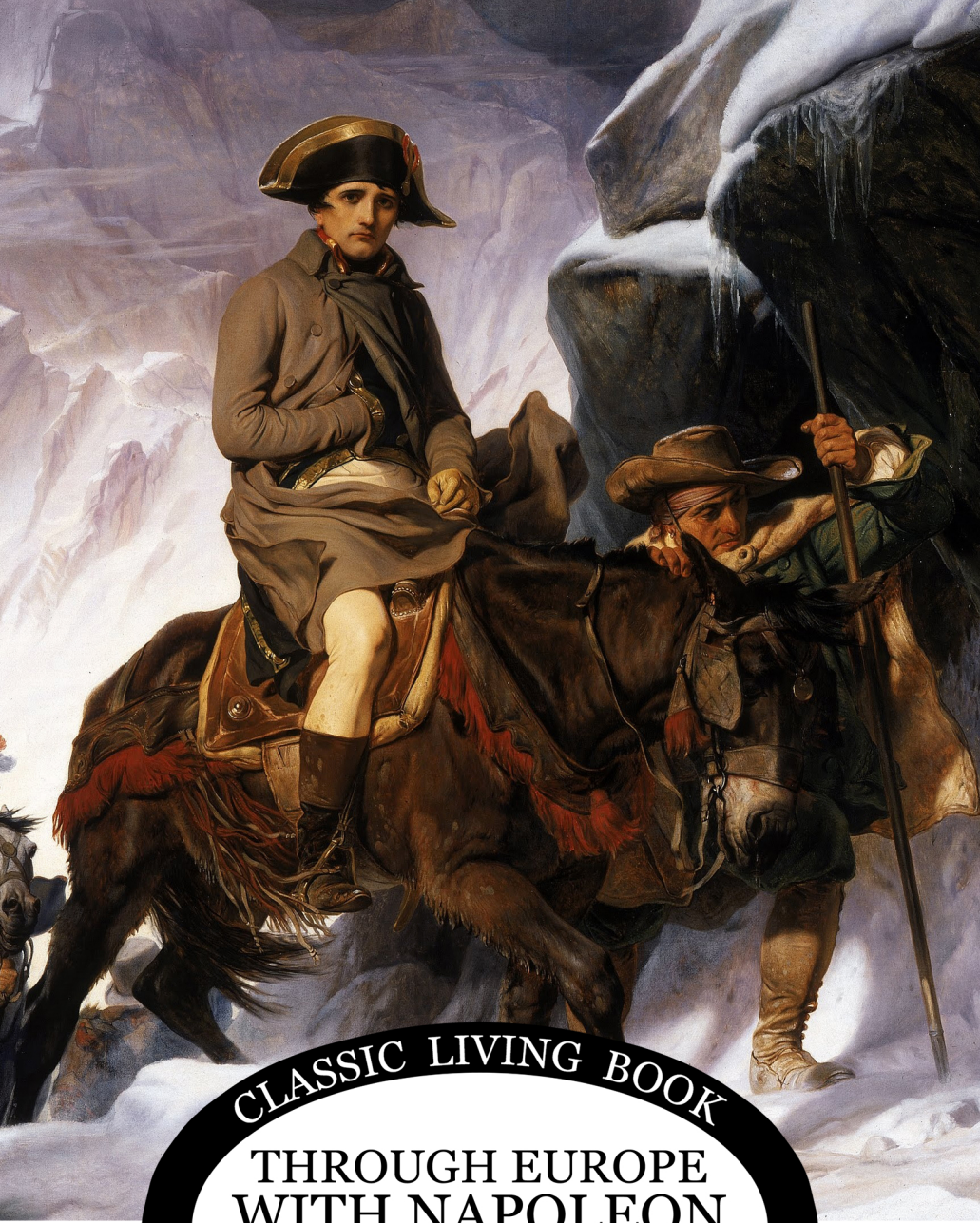

CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

THROUGH EUROPE WITH NAPOLEON

Henrietta E. Marshall

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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by

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Napoleon as a boy

CHAPTER I

ABOUT A ROCKY ISLAND IN THE BLUE SEA

To the south of Europe there lies a blue sea called the Mediterranean. Its name means "in the middle of the land," and if you look on the map you will see that land shuts it in on every side, its only outlet to the ocean being by the Straits of Gibraltar. For this reason the ancients called it "the sea in the middle of the land," "the inner sea," or "our sea," and to them it was the centre of trade of the world, for the lands of nearly all the world they knew lay about it.

The Mediterranean is very blue. This is partly because it lies in the south, and the sunny blue skies above it are reflected in its waters; partly because it is so deep. In places it is forty or fifty times deeper than our grey North Sea. It is far more salt, too. There are two reasons for this. First, because not many large rivers empty themselves into the Mediterranean; and second, because the warm sun of the south draws up a great deal of the water, leaving the salt behind.

In this sunny, blue sea lies the island of Corsica. It is a rugged and beautiful little island, full of high mountains. Except a strip of land on the eastern shore, looking towards Italy, there is hardly any plain in it. What plain there is, is very fertile, and much of the island is thickly wooded. Here are orange and lemon groves; here mulberries, olives, and beautiful grapes grow and

ripen; and the trade of the island consists largely in the export of fruit and timber.

Corsica lies about fifty miles from the coast of Italy, and for hundreds of years the island belonged to the Republic of Genoa. The people are hardy and brave, and, like all mountain peoples, they love liberty. They hated to be ruled by Genoa, and at last, under a leader called Paoli, they rebelled and fought for freedom. So well did they fight that they nearly drove the Genoese out. Then the Genoese asked the French to help them, and at last, tired of the struggle, they sold the island to France.

At that the Corsicans were very angry. "What right had the Genoese to sell them like cattle to a new master?" they asked. So they went on fighting the French, as they had fought the Genoese.

Among those who fought were Charles – Marie Bonaparte and his brave wife, Letizia. Bonaparte was an Italian, but for many years his family had lived in Corsica. He was a noble; but in Corsica there was little difference between nobles and shepherds—they were all poor and proud alike. Letizia was young and beautiful, yet she bore all the hardships of war bravely. She followed her husband even to the battle-field. She was often in danger from flying bullets, yet she feared nothing, and thought only of the safety of her husband and the freedom of her country. By mountain paths, steep and narrow; through trackless forests, called in Corsica, "maquis"; over streams where there were no bridges, Letizia followed her husband. She was only a girl, but she had the heart of a hero, and not until the struggle proved hopeless did she give in.

For France was great and Corsica little, and brave though the people were, they were at last forced to yield and become part of the French dominion; and their leader Paoli fled over the seas.

So there was peace. But it was the peace between slave and tyrant. The Corsicans hated the French, and many of the French were not greatly pleased with their new possession. It was but a useless mass of rock, they said. It would never be anything but a burden. It cost so much to keep the people in subjection that one

Frenchman said he wished he could bore a hole in the bottom of the island and sink it in the sea, and so have done with it.

And here, in this little island, almost before the roar of battle had ceased, among a people full of sullen anger and bitterness against their conquerors, a little son was born, one blazing August day in 1769, to Charles and Letizia Bonaparte. They gave him the name of Napoleon, but he was not baptized until he was nearly two years old. Then, on the same day that his sister Anna Maria was baptized in the Cathedral of Ajaccio, the capital of Corsica, he received the name which he was to make famous all the world over, and for all time to come.

The house in which Napoleon was born is still shown in Ajaccio. Long ago, however, it was plundered and burned down, and although it has been built again, we cannot say if is really like the house in which he was born or not. But the square in which it stands is still called Letizia Place, and all about the little town of Ajaccio are things which remind one of the small dark-faced boy, who grew up to be one of the greatest men who has ever lived.

CHAPTER II

LESSONS AND PLAY

Napoleon had several brothers and sisters, and their mother, having only one servant, had a great deal to do, and not much time to look after the children. So she gave them a big, empty room in which to play. The walls and floor of this room were bare, and there was nothing in it except the children's toys. Here they were allowed to do as they liked. They scribbled and drew pictures on the walls, and played at all sorts of games. Napoleon always drew soldiers marching to battle, and played with nothing but a drum and a wooden sword. He used to get up battles, too, between the boys of Ajaccio and the boys of the neighbourhood. These wars would last for months at a time, during which there would be many pitched battles, surprises, and assaults. Napoleon, of course, was always leader, and made the others obey him. He was afraid of no one, and he bit, scratched, and slapped any one, big or little, as he chose. He was often noisy and quarrelsome, and bullied his brothers and sisters, especially Joseph, who was older than he.

But at times, too, even when he was a very small boy, he would be moody and thoughtful, and would walk about by himself, refusing to speak or play with the others. He was an untidy little boy, not caring in the least how he was dressed. His straight dark hair straggled over his brown face, and his stockings hung down over his shoe-tops, and altogether he must have looked a wild little harum-scarum.

When Napoleon was about five years old he was sent to a school for little girls kept by nuns. Here he learned to read and to

do sums. He became so fond of sums, and so good at them, that the nuns called him the little mathematician.

Soon Napoleon left the nuns' school and went to a boys' school, along with his brother Joseph. Here the boys in class were set opposite each other in two rows, each under a large flag. One was the flag of Carthage, the other the flag of Rome, with S.P.Q.R. upon it, which means "Senatus Populusque Romanus." That is Latin for "The Senate and People of Rome."

The boys were arranged like this so that each side might try to learn better than the other, and fight and conquer in lessons, as the Romans and Carthaginians fought in war.

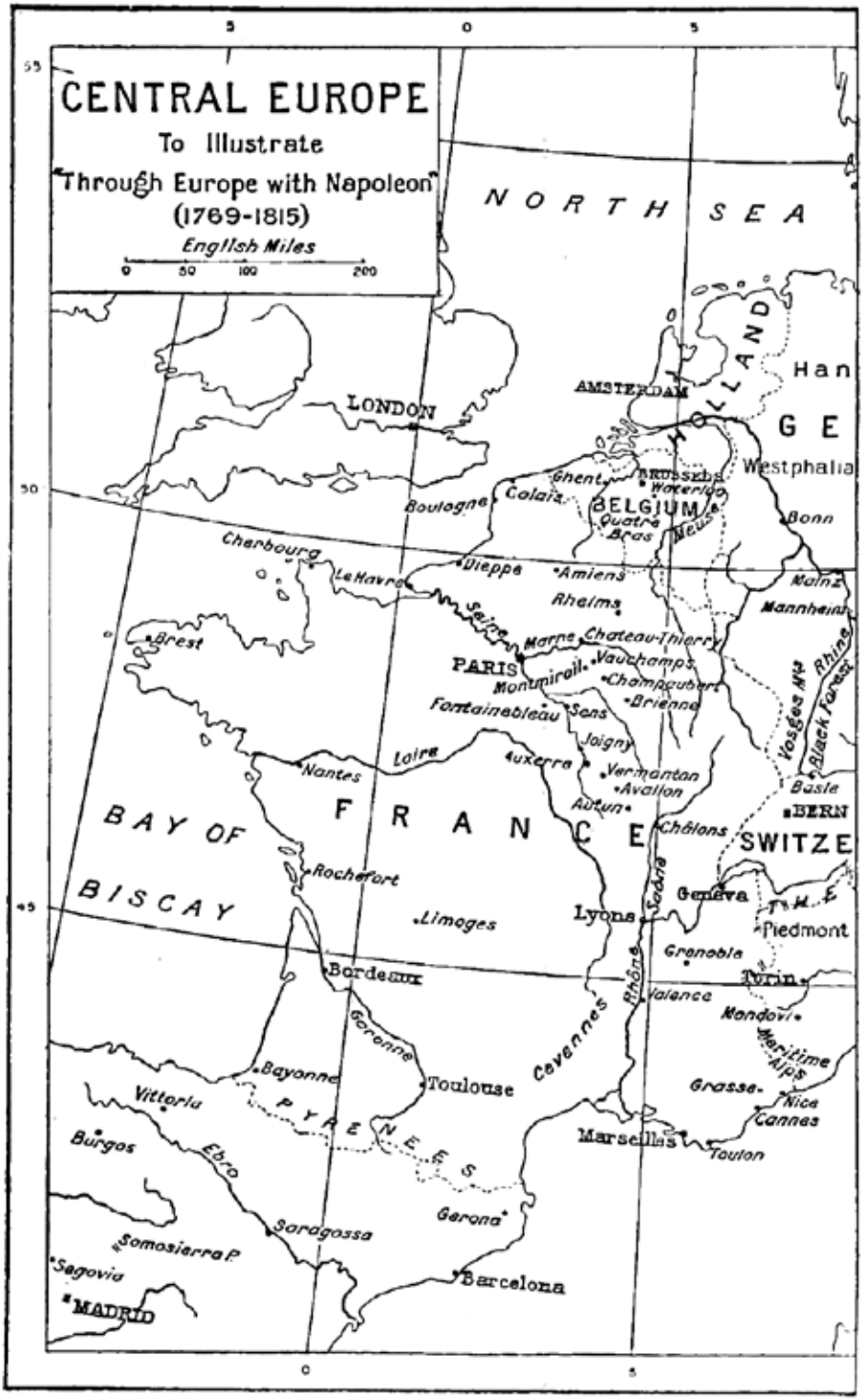
As Napoleon was the younger of the two brothers, he was put on the side of Carthage. But he did not like that at all, for in history he knew the Romans had always been the conquerors, and he liked to be on the winning side. So Joseph, who did not mind so much, changed with Napoleon, and allowed him to be a Roman.

Napoleon worked hard at his lessons. By the time he was eight he was so fond of arithmetic that his mother had a little room built for him in the garden, where he might work without being bothered by his brothers and sisters. There he used to spend many hours making all kinds of calculations. But even more than sums he loved soldiers. Every morning, before he went to school, he was given a piece of white bread. This he used to give to a soldier in exchange for a piece of coarse brown soldiers' bread. His mother was not very pleased at this. "Why do you give away your good white bread for a piece of brown?" she asked him one day.

"Because," replied Napoleon, "if I am going to be a soldier I must get used to eating soldiers' bread. Besides, I like it."

As Napoleon loved soldiers so much, his father and mother decided that he should be one. And one December day a little ship sailed away from Corsica, carrying Charles Bonaparte and his two sons, Joseph and Napoleon, over the sea to France. Napoleon was not yet ten, and Joseph scarcely a year more. He was going to learn to be a priest, and Napoleon to be a soldier.

Corsica lies about a hundred miles from the shores of France,


CENTRAL EUROPE
To Illustrate
"Through Europe with Napoleon"
(1769-1815)
English Miles
0 50 100 200
NORTH SEA
HOLLAND
AMSTERDAM
LONDON
Han
GE
Westphalia
BELGIUM
Ghent
BRUSSELS
Waterloo
Quatre Bras
Ney
Bonn
Boulogne
Calais
Charbourg
Le Havre
Dieppe
Amiens
Rheims
Seine
Marne
Chateau-Thierry
Vauchamps
Champaubert
Brienne
Mainz
Mannheim
Rhine
Black Forest
Vosges Mts
Brest
PARIS
Montmirail
Fontainebleau
Sens
Joigny
Auxerre
Nantes
Loire
Vermantan
Avallon
Autun
Basle
BERN
SWITZE
BAY OF
BISCAY
F R A N C E
Chalons
Rochefort
Limoges
Lyons
Saône
Rhône
Geneva
THE
Piedmont
Grenoble
Turin
Valence
Mondovi
Bordeaux
Garonne
Cevennes
Maritime Alps
Grasse
Nice
Cannes
Bayonne
Toulouse
Vittoria
PYRENEES
Marseilles
Toulon
Burgos
Ebro
Saragossa
Gerona
Somosierra P.
Segovia
Barcelona
MADRID

Bartholomew Edin^{r}

but from Ajaccio to Marseilles, to which Bonaparte now sailed, is two hundred miles or more.

Marseilles is a very ancient town. It was founded by the Greeks hundreds of years ago. They called it Marsalia. The people of Marsalia became great sailors and traders, and were masters of the Mediterranean. Now Marseilles is the chief seaport of France and the second city of the Republic, Paris only being bigger.

Marseilles does not lie, like so many of our great ports, on the estuary of a river—it is a deep-sea port, not a river port. A deep-sea port has an advantage over a river port in that larger vessels can come into harbour, as a rule. But, on the other hand, without a river behind the port it is neither so easy nor so cheap to carry goods inland. So people have talked of making a canal to join Marseilles with the Rhône, which flows into the Mediterranean not far off. The Rhône, however, although it is the largest river of France, is not very good for navigation. It rises high among the Swiss mountains, and therefore flows very swiftly. It is so shallow, too, that going up-stream steamers have to go empty, or only half laden. So that trade by way of the Rhône is more export than import. But its tributary the Saone, which joins it at Lyons, flows slowly, and is of much use for trade. By canals it is connected with other French rivers and with the Rhine, the great German river, and so the valley of the Rhône has become the natural trade route from the south.

Much of the trade of the Mediterranean passes through Marseilles, but it has two rivals in Trieste and Genoa. In Britain, of two ports the one may rise and the other fall, for some reason or another, but still the wealth brought by trade remains in the country, although it may have gone to another town. On the Continent, however, two rival ports near each other may be in different lands. Then the rivalry between them grows keener.

Marseilles lies in the warm and fertile Rhône valley, where olive and mulberry trees grow, so it does great trade in oil and silk. It imports raw silk too from the East, which it sends to the

silk-mills of Lyons. Thousands of sheep are imported every year from Algiers, so in Marseilles large factories of soap and candles, boots and shoes have arisen.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL DAYS

Up the fertile valley of the Rhône, beneath the shadow of the Cevennes, beside the rushing river, past the city of Lyons, with its famous silk factories, then by the slow-flowing Saône Napoleon passed, until, a fortnight after he and his father and brother had set out, they arrived at the town of Autun.

Here, in this busy manufacturing town, with its fine cathedral and grey remains of Roman times, the boys were sent to school. With his fellows Joseph soon became a favourite. He was a little shy at first, but he was lively and gay, and joined in games with the other boys.

Napoleon, on the other hand, was silent and sad. His dark face looked sulky, and instead of joining in the games, he liked best to go about by himself. So the boys teased him. They called him "cowardly Corsican," and reminded him that his island had been conquered by the French. At first Napoleon paid no attention. Then suddenly, one day, flashing round on his tormentors, he cried, "If the French had been four against one only, they would never have had Corsica: but they were ten to one."

But if Joseph was a greater favourite, Napoleon was far more clever. He soon learned to read and speak in French. For to the boys French was a foreign language; at home, in Corsica, they spoke Italian. And although Napoleon learned to speak French very well, all his life long he made mistakes in it, especially in writing. He wrote very badly too—to hide his bad spelling, some people say.

The little, sulky, lonely boy did not stay long at Autun. In about

three months his father came to take him away to the military school at Brienne. But Joseph was to be left at Autun. The two brothers had never before been parted, and although Napoleon bullied Joseph they were very fond of each other. Now that they were in a strange land, far from their home, among people speaking a strange language, they seemed to love each other more. When they knew that they must part, Joseph burst into tears. But Napoleon tried hard to pretend that he did not care. His dark face only looked more sulky than before. But although he tried hard, he could not quite keep back the tears, and one slowly trickled down his cheek.

Brienne is more than a hundred miles north of Autun, and was in those days a long journey, when there were no trains, and travellers had to ride or drive all the way. Brienne lies near the Aube, a tributary of the Seine, in that part of France called Champagne, from which the wine champagne takes its name. But Brienne itself is now chiefly famous as the place where Napoleon was at school. Before the town hall there stands a statue of him as he looked when a boy.

The school to which Napoleon was now sent was one of twelve founded by King Louis XVI. for the children of nobles too poor to give their sons a good education. Once a boy was received as a king's scholar, he was obliged to remain at school for six years, and was not allowed to go home, even for holidays, without special leave.

Although these schools were called military schools, they were taught by monks, and were really not very different from other schools. The boys, however, wore a uniform, and Napoleon was now dressed in a suit of blue with red facings and white metal buttons.

At first Napoleon was not happy at this school, even though he was dressed in a uniform and was going to be a soldier. He was dreadfully homesick. The dull, chalky downs of Champagne seemed to him dismal and uninteresting after beautiful Corsica, with its hills and glens and sunny blue sky. And here, in this dull

land, he must remain for six years! To a little boy of nine it seemed as if six years would never end.

As Napoleon was shy, moody, and silent, his schoolfellows teased him. They nicknamed him "Straw on Nose," because they thought that he held his nose in the air, and that Napoleon sounded like the French words for straw on nose—"la paille au nez." They teased him, too, about his country. "You are a conquered nation, a people of slaves," they said.

This always made Napoleon fierce. "I hope one day to give my country freedom," he would cry.

Even the masters made him angry, because they taught that Corsica was Italian, and Napoleon hated the Italians almost as much as he hated the French. So he sulked, and grew angry, and ended by hating all his schoolfellows. "I will do these Frenchmen as much harm as I can," he said. They, in their turn, disliked him, although many of them feared him, and allowed themselves to be ordered about by him.

Each boy had a piece of ground given to him for a garden. Napoleon made two of the others give their gardens to him. Round them and his own, he made a fence and planted bushes which in two years grew so thick that no one could see through. Here Napoleon used to spend all his playtime alone, reading and thinking. And woe to any one who dared to come near to disturb him!

CHAPTER IV

MORE SCHOOL DAYS

After Napoleon had been at school for some time, the boys were all formed into an army. They were drilled, had to obey orders, and form and march in line, like real soldiers. And as in a real army, some were officers. Napoleon was given the rank of captain. But his schoolfellows made up their minds to show him how they hated him. They held a council of war, and declared that Napoleon was unworthy to hold any rank, because he had shown that he did not care in the least for any of them. This sentence was read to him, and then they took away his gold braid and signs of office, and degraded him to the ranks.

But instead of flying into a fierce passion, as they had expected, Napoleon took his humiliation so quietly that the boys, in place of feeling pleased with what they had done, were sorry. They were not really cruel, and were quite willing to be friends. And Napoleon, surprised that they should try to be kind, came out of his shell and became more sociable.

Instead of being the butt of the whole school, he now for a time became a sort of captain of games. He had read about the Olympic games and the Roman circus, so now he arranged wrestling and races, in imitation of them. He got up battles, too, one side being Greeks or Romans, the other side Persians or Carthaginians. But this brought Napoleon into trouble, for the warriors used stones for ammunition, and some of the boys were hurt. So the headmaster put an end to such dangerous games, and scolded Napoleon severely as he was the ringleader. This made the proud Corsican boy angry, and once more he took to sulking alone.

One winter, when Napoleon had been about four years at school, the boys had lessons about the building of ramparts and fortifications. They were taught the names of the different kinds of forts, their uses, and how best to attack and defend them. While these lessons were going on, there came a heavy fall of snow. This gave Napoleon a grand idea. Instead of fighting like the ancient Greeks and Romans, they would build a fortress of snow, and attack and defend it like modern soldiers.

All the boys were delighted with the idea. Napoleon drew out the lines of the fort, and soon every one was hard at work with spade and wheelbarrow, eagerly building under Napoleon's directions.

When the fort was finished, the boys took sides, and fought with snowballs. Napoleon was general, and he commanded both sides, giving orders sometimes to the besiegers, sometimes to the defenders. This time the masters were quite pleased, and looked on, cheering those boys who showed most courage and cleverness.

Soon the fame of the fort spread far, and people came from all round about to see it and watch the fights. These went on as long as the snow lay upon the ground. But at last March came, the sun began to grow warm, the snow melted, and the storming and snowballing came to an end. The masters were not sorry when this happened, as many of the boys had caught bad colds from playing so much in the snow. As for Napoleon, he was more sure than ever that the life of a soldier was the grandest possible, and he felt that he was born to make others obey him.

As to his lessons, Napoleon learned no Greek, and never did his Latin well. He loved the tales of the Greek and Roman heroes, but he read them in translations. It seemed to him waste of time to try to read them in a dead or foreign language. At arithmetic and geometry he was good. He liked his geography lessons too, but above all he loved history. Whenever he had a spare moment he might be found reading, and it was history and the lives of great men that he read. Indeed he often read when he ought to

have been playing games. So he never grew tall; and although his shoulders were broad, he was thin and delicate-looking.

Only once, during all the years that Napoleon was at Brienne, did he see his father. It was in the little bare parlour of the school where visitors were received that father and son met after five long years. Charles Bonaparte had left a child, he found a man, for although Napoleon was only fifteen he spoke and thought as a man. We can imagine what joy it was to him to have news of his dearly-loved home from one who had seen it lately, and how sad he was when his father went away again.

Napoleon never saw his father again, for handsome Charles Bonaparte was already very ill, and a few months afterwards he died. He never knew what a great man his son was to be. Yet it is said that when he lay a-dying he called aloud for him. "Where is my son Napoleon? Where is my son, whose sword will make kings tremble, who will change the face of the earth?"

CHAPTER V

FROM BRIENNE TO PARIS

Now came the question of what Napoleon was to be, whether soldier or sailor. He himself wanted to go into the navy. But his mother, who loved him dearly, could not bear the thought of so much danger—danger from shot and shell, and from the angry waves too. So Napoleon gave up that idea, and resolved to go into the artillery.

He had still another year, he thought, to pass in Brienne, when one day he was told that he had been admitted to the military school at Paris. And on the 30th of October 1784 he set out for the capital with four other boys.

We can hardly think that Napoleon was sorry to leave Brienne. Yet long years after, when his life of blood and fame was over, and he was a prisoner in a lonely island, his thoughts turned to that rugged country, "the fatherland of his thought," he called it.

It was in dull November weather that this passionate and moody Corsican boy first saw beautiful Paris, "the City of Light." Paris is not only the capital—it is the very heart of France; and at the call of Paris every town and village answers and thrills. All the history of France is wrapped in Paris. Which way it leads, to wild revolution, to empire, to democracy, France follows.

It is here that the ruler, be he King, Emperor, or President, lives. Here meets the Parliament, and here the laws for the ruling of the land are made. Paris is not only the largest town in France—it is the largest on the Continent. It is a city of beauty and splendour,

made, it would seem, for sunshine, light, and happiness. Full of broad streets and stately palaces, crowned with pinnacles and domes, it lies amid its hills, a very queen of cities. Yet this gay city, clothed with such airy grace, breathing of mirth and laughter, has seen days of horror and darkness. The howl of maddened multitudes, the roar of starving, frenzied mobs, has sounded through its stately halls. The fair streets have been sodden with trampled blood, the glorious palaces, wrecked with fire and sword, have been laid in ruins, and the fair face of Paris has been scarred and seared. Yet the finger of time has smoothed away every trace of agony and passion, and still Paris, ever young, though so full of memories, smiles upon the world.

But although Paris has beauty and power, and is full of history and romance, it has much else too. It lies upon the Seine, the best navigable river of France, just where the Marne, another good navigable stream, joins it. And up and down the river, day and night, go ships laden with merchandise. From Paris as a centre, railroads lead out to every port of France, for it is the heart of all the foreign trade.

Paris, too, in spite of its brightness and beauty, is a city of work and factories. Here are manufactures of machinery, carriages, motors; here are tanneries and boot factories; factories of furniture and perfumes, of china, clocks, and pianos, and an endless list of things. But especially it is famous for its jewellery and its beautiful little trifles, called "articles de Paris." These find a market among the wealthy people of Paris itself, and are easily sent to the still greater and wealthier city of London.

And besides all this, Paris has a University, and is famous for its schools of painting and sculpture.

And now the man who was to play upon this Paris, and to play upon France, and make them answer to his will, was quietly learning his lessons in the school upon the Champs de Mars—the Field of the War-God.

At Paris, as at Brienne, Napoleon worked hard. But although sometimes he still shut himself up in moody silence, he mixed far