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THE  
**LIFE**  
OF  
**NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.**

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# LIFE

OF

## NAPOLÉON BUONAPARTE.

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### CHAPTER I.

*Buonaparte's arrival at Paris.—The two Chambers assemble, and adopt resolutions, indicating a wish for Napoleon's Abdication.—Buonaparte holds a General Council.—Fouché presents to the Representatives Napoleon's Abdication, which stipulates that his Son shall succeed him.—Carnot's exaggerated report to the Peers, of the means of defence—contradicted by Ney.—Stormy debate in the Peers on the Abdication Act.—Both Chambers evade formally recognising Napoleon II.—Provisional Government appointed.—Napoleon required to retire to Malmaison.—His offer of his services in the defence of Paris rejected.—He is placed under the surveillance of General Beker.—Means provided at Rochefort for his departure to the United States.—He arrives at Rochefort on 3d July.—The Provisional Government attempt in vain to treat with the Allies, or to excite the French to resistance.—The Allies advance to Paris, and, an armistice being concluded, enter it on 7th July.—Chamber of Peers disperse, and the Members of the other Chamber are excluded from the place of meeting.—Louis XVIII. re-enters Paris on 8th July.—Reflections upon this second Restoration of the Bourbons.*

**I**MMENSE as the direct and immediate consequences of the battle of Waterloo certainly were, being the total loss of the campaign, and the entire destruction of Napoleon's fine army, the more remote contin-

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gencies to which it gave rise were so much more important, that it may be doubted whether there was ever in the civilized world a great battle followed by so many and such extraordinary results.

That part of the French army which escaped from the battle of Waterloo, fled in the most terrible disorder towards the frontiers of France. Napoleon himself continued his flight from Charleroi, in the neighbourhood of which was his first place of halting, and hurried on to Philippeville. From this point, he designed, it was said, to have marched to place himself at the head of Grouchy's army. But no troops of any kind having been rallied, and Charleroi having been almost instantly occupied by the Prussian pursuers, a report became current that the division was destroyed, and Grouchy himself made prisoner. Napoleon, therefore, pursued his own retreat, leaving orders, which were not attended to, that the relics of the army should be rallied at Avesnes. Soult could only succeed in gathering together a few thousands, as far within the French territory as Laon. Meanwhile Buonaparte, travelling post, had reached Paris, and brought thither the news of his own defeat.

On the 19th of June the public ear of the capital had been stunned by the report of a hundred pieces of cannon, which announced the victory at Ligny, and the public prints had contained the most gasconading accounts of that action ; of the forcing the pas-

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sage of the Sambre, the action at Charleroi, and the battle of Quatre Bras. The Imperialists were in the highest state of exultation, the Republicans doubtful, and the Royalists dejected. On the morning of the 21st, the third day after the fatal action, it was at first whispered, and then openly said, that Napoleon had returned alone from the army on the preceding night, and was now in the palace of Bourbon-Elysee. The fatal truth was not long in transpiring—he had lost a dreadful and decisive pitched battle, and the French army, which had left the capital so confident, so full of hope, pride, and determination, was totally destroyed.

Many reasons have been given for Napoleon's not remaining with his army on this occasion, and endeavouring at least to bring it into a state of reorganization; but the secret seems to be explained by his apprehension of the faction of Republicans and Constitutionals in Paris. He must have remembered that Fouché, and others of that party, had advised him to end the distresses of France by his abdication of the crown, even before he placed himself at the head of his army. He was aware, that what they had ventured to suggest in his moment of strength, they would not hesitate to demand and extort from him in the hour of his weakness, and that the Chamber of Representatives would endeavour to obtain peace for themselves by sacrificing him. "He is known," says an author alrea-

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dy quoted, friendly to his fame, “ to have said, after the disasters of the Russian campaign, that he would confound the Parisians by his presence, and fall among them like a thunderbolt. But there are things which succeed only because they have never been done before, and for that reason ought never to be attempted again. His fifth flight from his army occasioned the entire abandonment of himself and his cause by all who might have forgiven him his misfortune, but required that he should be the first to arise from the blow.”\*

It was a curious indication of public spirit in Paris, that, upon the news of this appalling misfortune, the national funds rose, immediately after the first shock of the tidings was past ; so soon, that is, as men had time to consider the probable consequence of the success of the allies. It seemed as if public credit revived upon any intelligence, however disastrous otherwise, which promised to abridge the reign of Buonaparte.

The anticipations of Napoleon did not deceive him. It was plain, that, whatever deference the Jacobins had for him in his hour of strength, they had no compassion for his period of weakness. They felt the opportunity favourable to get rid of him, and did not disguise their purpose to do so.

The two Chambers hastily assembled. La Fay-

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\* Letters from Paris, written during the Last Reign of Napoleon.

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ette addressed that of the Representatives in the character of an old friend of liberty, spoke of the sinister reports that were spread abroad, and invited the members to rally under the three-coloured banner of liberty, equality, and public order, by adopting five resolutions. The first declared that the independence of the nation was menaced. The second declared the sittings of the Chambers permanent, and denounced the pains of treason against whomsoever should attempt to dissolve them. The third announced that the troops had deserved well of their country. The fourth called out the National Guard. The fifth invited the ministers to repair to the Assembly.

These propositions intimated the apprehensions of the Chamber of Representatives, that they might be a second time dissolved by an armed force, and, at the same time, announced their purpose to place themselves at the head of affairs, without further respect to the Emperor. They were adopted, all but the fourth concerning the National Guard, which was considered as premature. Regnault de St Jean d'Angely attempted to read a bulletin, giving an imperfect and inconsistent account of what had passed on the frontiers; but the Representatives became clamorous, and demanded the attendance of the ministers. At length, after a delay of three or four hours, Carnot, Caulaincourt, Davoust, and Fouché, entered the hall with Lucien Buonaparte.

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The Chamber formed itself into a secret committee, before which the ministers laid the full extent of the disaster, and announced that the Emperor had named Caulaincourt, Fouché, and Carnot, as commissioners to treat of peace with the allies. The Ministers were bluntly reminded by the Republican members, and particularly by Henry Lacoste, that they had no basis for any negotiations which could be proposed in the Emperor's name, since the allied powers had declared war against Napoleon, who was now in plain terms pronounced, by more than one member, the sole obstacle betwixt the nation and peace. Universal applause followed from all parts of the hall, and left Lucien no longer in doubt that the Representatives intended to separate their cause from that of his brother. He omitted no art of conciliation or entreaty, and,—more eloquent probably in prose than in poetry,—appealed to their love of glory, their generosity, their fidelity, and the oaths which they had so lately sworn. “We *have* been faithful,” replied Fayette; “we have followed your brother to the sands of Egypt—to the snows of Russia. The bones of Frenchmen, scattered in every region, attest our fidelity.” All seemed to unite in one sentiment, that the abdication of Buonaparte was a measure absolutely necessary. Davoust, the minister at war, arose, and disclaimed, with protestations, any intention of acting against the freedom or independence of the Chamber. This was, in fact, to espouse their

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cause. A committee of five members was appointed to concert measures with Ministers. Even the latter official persons, though named by the Emperor, were not supposed to be warmly attached to him. Carnot and Fouché were the natural leaders of the popular party, and Caulaincourt was supposed to be on indifferent terms with Napoleon, whose ministers, therefore, seemed to adopt the interest of the Chamber in preference to his. Lucien saw that his brother's authority was ended, unless it could be maintained by violence. The Chamber of Peers might have been more friendly to the Imperial cause, but their constitution gave them as little confidence in themselves as weight with the public. They adopted the three first resolutions of the lower Chamber, and named a committee of public safety.

The line of conduct which the Representatives meant to pursue was now obvious; they had spoken out, and named the sacrifice which they exacted from Buonaparte, being nothing less than abdication. It remained to be known whether the Emperor would adopt measures of resistance, or submit to this encroachment. If there could be a point of right, where both were so far wrong, it certainly lay with Napoleon. These very representatives were, by voluntary consent, as far as oaths and engagements can bind men, his subjects, convoked in his name, and having no political existence except-



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ing as a part of his new constitutional government. However great his faults to the people of France, he had committed none towards these accomplices of his usurpation, nor were they legislators otherwise than as he was their Emperor. Their right to discard and trample upon him in his adversity, consisted only in their having the power to do so ; and the readiness which they showed to exercise that power, spoke as little for their faith as for their generosity. At the same time, our commiseration for fallen greatness is lost in our sense of that justice, which makes the associates and tools of a usurper the readiest implements of his ruin.

When Buonaparte returned to Paris, his first interview was with Carnot, of whom he demanded, in his usual tone of authority, an instant supply of treasure, and a levy of 300,000 men. The minister replied, that he could have neither the one nor the other. Napoleon then summoned Maret, Duke of Bassano, and other confidential persons of his court. But when his civil councillors talked of defence, the word wrung from him the bitter ejaculation, “ Ah, my Old Guard, could they but defend themselves like you !” A sad confession that the military truncheon, his best emblem of command, was broken in his gripe. Lucien urged his brother to maintain his authority, and dissolve the Chambers by force ; but Napoleon, aware that the National Guard might take the part of the Representatives, declined an action so full of ha-

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zard. Davoust was, however, sounded concerning his willingness to act against the Chambers, but he positively refused to do so. Some idea was held out by Fouché to Napoleon, of his being admitted to the powers of a dictator; but this could be only thrown out as a proposal for the purpose of amusing him. In the meantime arrived the news of the result of the meeting of the Representatives in secret committee.

The gauntlet was now thrown down, and it was necessary that Napoleon should resist or yield, declare himself absolute, and dissolve the Chambers by violence, or abdicate the authority he had so lately resumed. Lucien, finding him still undetermined, hesitated not to say, that the smoke of the battle of Mont Saint Jean had turned his brain. In fact, his conduct at this crisis was not that of a great man. He dared neither venture on the desperate measures which might, for a short time, have preserved his power, nor could he bring himself to the dignified measure of an apparently voluntary resignation. He clung to what could no longer avail him, like the distracted criminal, who, wanting resolution to meet his fate by a voluntary effort, must be pushed from the scaffold by the hand of the executioner.

Buonaparte held, upon the night of the 21st, a sort of general council, comprehending the ministers of every description, the president and four members of the Chamber of Peers; the president, and