

Capt. Thos. Lucas

The Raleigh Minerva.

Vol. 19.

FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 1847.

No. 1094.

RALEIGH, (N. C.)

PRINTED, WEEKLY, BY A. LUGAS.

Terms of subscription: Three dollars per year, one hal to be paid in advance. No paper to be continued longer than three months after a year's subscription becomes due, and notice thereof shall have been given. Advertisements, not exceeding 14 lines, are inserted three for one dollar; for twenty-five cents each subsequent insertion; and in like proportion where there is a greater number of lines than fourteen.—The cash must accompany those from persons unknown to the editor.

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Miscellaneous.

(Continued from our last.)

NARRATIVE RESPECTING BONAPARTE.

Napoleon continued to speak of the Bourbon family. "Had I," he said, "been anxious to get any, or all the Bourbons into my possession, I could have accomplished the object. Your smugglers offered me a Bourbon for a stated sum, (I think he named 40,000 francs) but, on coming to a more precise explanation, they entertained a doubt of fulfilling the engagement as it was originally proposed. They would not undertake to possess themselves of any of the Bourbon family absolutely alive; and though with the alternative, alive or dead, they had no doubt of completing it. But it was not my wish merely to deprive them of life. Besides, circumstances had taken a turn which then fixed me without fear of change or chance on the throne I possessed. I felt my security, and left the Bourbons undisturbed. Wanton, useless murder, whatever has been said and thought of me in England, has never been my practice; to what end or purpose could I have indulged the horrid propensity. When sir George Ramboold and Mr. Drake, who had been carrying on a correspondence with conspirators in Paris, were seized they were not murdered." [In looking over these letters for the press, I feel a doubt whether this observation respecting Sir George Ramboold was made at this time, or at some other; or whether it proceeded from Bonaparte or Count de Las Cassas, but I am positive it was made by one or the other.]

Here he ceased to speak; and I was determined to gratify my curiosity as far as his present communicative spirit would allow. I was determined to continue the conversation. I accordingly observed, "that of all the undertakings which composed his wonderful career, no circumstance had excited such astonishment in England as his expedition to Russia, before he had brought the Peninsula war to a termination, which, at that time, appeared to be an attainable object." I paused, expecting a reply on the subject; however, he gave none—but, as if he had not heard my observation, proceeded to a renewal, in some degree, of the former topics.

"Your country," he said, "has accused me of having murdered the sick and wounded of my army at Jaffa. Be assured, that if I had committed such a horrid act, my very soldiers themselves would have execrated me, & I might have looked to their ceasing to obey me. There is no occurrence of life to which I gave more publicity than this. You have an officer, a sir Robert Wilson, who has written very copiously on the subject of my campaign in Egypt." As he repeated the last sentence, he assumed an air and tone of sarcastic jocularity, and then asked me if I had read sir Robert's publication. I replied in the affirmative. "It is possible," he said, "that he wrote from the testimony of other people, equally prone to error as himself; he cannot pretend to have done it from his own observation. Can you tell me," continued Napoleon, "whether sir Sidney Smith, in any official communications to your government, attempted, in any way to corroborate the testimony of sir R. Wilson?" I could not, at the moment, sufficiently recollect the purport of his despatches to determine the point, but I replied as I felt, "that he had not." This reply, however, indecisive as it was, appeared to afford him considerable satisfaction, as he instantly repeated, "I believe so—for sir Sidney Smith is a brave and just man." I here observed, that "there are many in England who imagine your jealousy and hatred of sir Sidney Smith influenced your conduct towards that officer." He smiled with astonishment at such an idea—the thought of coupling the two names appeared never to have entered his imagination. "Ridiculous! Nonsense!" was his reply. He then entered on the following narrative: "On raising the siege of St. Jean de Acre, the army retired upon Jaffa. It had become a matter of urgent necessity. The occupation of this town for any length of time, was impracticable, from the force that Jezza Pacha was enabled to bring forward. The sick and wounded were numerous, and their removal was my first consideration. Carriages, the most convenient that could be formed, were appropriated to the purpose. Some of them were sent by water to Damietta, and the rest were accommodated, in the best, possible manner, to accompany their comrades in their march through the desert. Seven men, however, occupied a quarantine hospital, who were infected with the plague, whose report was made me by the chief of the medical staff: (I think it was Degenet.) He further added, that the disease had gained such a stage of malignancy, there was not the least probability of their continuing alive beyond 48 hours." I here exclaimed in a dubious tone, the word seven; and immediately asked whether I was to understand that there were no more than seven? "I perceive," he replied, "that you have heard a

different account." "Most assuredly, general Sir Robert Wilson states 57 or 77; and speaking more collectively—your whole sick and wounded." He then proceeded—"The Turks were numerous and powerful, and their cruelty proverbial throughout the army. Their practice of mutilating and barbarously treating their christian prisoners in particular, was well known among my troops, and had a preservative influence on my mind and conduct, and I do affirm, that there were only 7 sufferers whom circumstances compelled me to leave as short-lived sufferers at Jaffa. They were in that stage of disease which rendered their removal utterly impracticable, exclusive of the dissemination of the disease among the healthy troops. Situated as I was, I could not place them under the protection of the English; I, therefore, desired to see the senior medical officer, and observing to him, that the afflictions of their disease would be cruelly aggravated by the conduct of the Turks towards them, and that it was impossible to continue in possession of the town, I desired him to give me his best advice on the occasion. I said, tell me what is to be done! He hesitated for some time, and then repeated, that these men, who were the objects of my very painful solicitude, could not survive forty-eight hours. I then suggested (what appeared to be his opinion, though he might not choose to declare it, but waited with the trembling hope to receive it from me) the propriety, because I felt it would be humanity, to shorten the sufferings of these seven men by administering opium. Such a relief, I added, in a similar situation, I should anxiously solicit for myself. But, rather contrary to my expectation, the proposition was opposed, and consequently abandoned. I accordingly halted the army one day longer than I intended, and on my quitting Jaffa, left a strong rear guard, who continued in that city till the third day. At the expiration of that period an officer's report reached me, that the men were dead." "Then general," I could not resist exclaiming, "no opium was given."—The emphatic answer I received was—"No, none!"—A report was brought me that the men died before the rear guard had evacuated the city." I again interrupted him by mentioning, that Sir Sidney Smith, when he afterwards entered Jaffa, found one or two Frenchmen alive. "Well," he answered, that, after all, may be possible! It was, I think, at this period of the conversation, that he stated his being in possession of a letter from Sir Sidney Smith, written in very complimentary language, which expressed the writer's astonishment, as well as praise, at the accommodations which were contrived and executed to transport the French sick and wounded from Acre to Jaffa, and then across the desert. I here took occasion to observe, "that a late English traveller, a distinguished scholar, and learned professor of the University of Cambridge, had excited a very general doubt respecting the accuracy of this particular part of Sir Robert Wilson's narrative. Dr. Clark, the person to whom I allude, said, 'I had, I said, 'travelled through Turkey, and, as I believed, by the route of Ateppo and Damascus to Jerusalem, and from thence to Jaffa, where he remained some time. This gentleman, whose character stands high in the world, may be said to contradict the testimony of his countryman, Sir Robert, respecting the charges which the former may be said to have brought forward against you. Though he merely states, that he never heard of the cruel transaction, but very naturally observes, that if such an extraordinary event had occurred, as the murder of such a number of Frenchmen by their own general, some traces or recollection of so horrid an event, and of such recent occurrence, must have transpired and been communicated to him during his residence there." A question instantaneously followed—"Has this traveller said any thing of El Arish?"—My memory did not serve me sufficiently to give an answer. "Well," he continued, "you shall also hear the particulars of El Arish and the garrison of Jaffa. You have read, without doubt, of my having ordered the Turks to be shot at Jaffa." "Yes, indeed," I replied, "I have often heard of that massacre in England: it was a general topic at the time, and created such a sensation of horror, as a British mind never fails to consider subjects of that description." He then proceeded: "At the period in question, general Dessaix was left in Upper Egypt, and Kleber in the vicinity of Damietta. I left Cairo and traversed the Arabian Desert, in order to unite my force with that of the latter at El Arish. The town was attacked, and a capitulation succeeded. Many of the prisoners were found, on examination, to be natives of the mountains, and inhabitants of Mount Lebanon, but chiefly from Nazareth. They were immediately released on their engaging to return quietly to their homes, children and wives; at the same time they were recommended to acquaint their countrymen, the Napolese, that the French were no longer their enemies, unless they were found in arms assisting the Pacha. When this ceremony was concluded, the army proceeded on its march towards Jaffa. Gaza surrendered on the route. The city, on the first view of it, bore a formidable appearance, and the garrison was considerable. It was summoned to surrender. When the officer who bore my flag of truce, no sooner passed the city wall, than his head was inhumanly struck off; instantly fixed upon a pole, and insultingly exposed to the French army. At the sight of this horrid and unexpected object, the indignation of the soldiers knew no bounds: they were perfectly infuriated; and, with the most eager impatience, demanded to be led on to the storm. I did not hesitate, under such circumstances, to command it.

The attack was dreadful, and the carnage exceeded any action I had then witnessed. We carried the place, and it required all my efforts and influence to restrain the fury of the enraged soldiers. At length I succeeded, and night closed the sanguinary scene. At the dawn of the following morning a report was brought me, that 500 men, chiefly Napolese, who had lately formed a part of the garrison of El Arish, and to whom I had a few days before given liberty, on condition that they should return to their homes, were actually found and recognised amongst the prisoners. On this fact being indubitably ascertained, I ordered the 500 men to be drawn out and instantly shot."—In the course of our conversation, his anxiety appeared to be extreme, that I should be satisfied of the truth of every part of his narrative; and he continually interrupted it by asking me, if I perfectly comprehended him. He was, however, patient itself, when I made any observations expressive of doubts I had previously entertained respecting any part of the subjects agitated between us, or any unfavourable opinion entertained or propagated in England. Whenever I appeared embarrassed for an answer, he gave me time to reflect; and I could not but lament, that I had not made myself better acquainted with the circumstances of the period under consideration, as it might have drawn him into a more enlarged history of them.—He now returned to the subject of Sir Robert Wilson, and asked me if I knew any thing of his military character, and the tendency of his writings, and if the latter had added to his fortune. I replied, that I could not speak upon either from my own knowledge; but I was induced to suppose, from the services in which he had been engaged, he must have stood high in the opinion of those who employed him; and I had also understood that his works were considered as having been very honorable to him both as a writer and a soldier. "Pray, can you tell me," he continued, "from what motive this officer has acted in the escape of La Valette, the decided and avowed friend of the man whom he has so wantonly calumniated?" I was here, as it may be supposed, rather embarrassed for an immediate reply, but he gave me full time to collect myself; and I answered, "that I had no doubt they were such as did honor to his heart; whatever imputation may have been passed upon his judgment and his discretion. Somewhat of an adventurous and romantic spirit might have governed him; but it never was imagined by any one, that he was influenced by sordid or pecuniary motives; that it never seems to have occurred when the transaction was the subject of universal consideration and inquiry. There was not, I thought, a person in England, who received him or his companions, with a diminution of their regard for the part they had taken in this mysterious business." In an instant he observed, "I believe every word you have said, at the same time you may be assured, that money would not have been wanting to save La Valette. I desire you also to give your particular attention to my opinion, which is a decided one. That this act of Sir Robert Wilson, for the preservation of La Valette, is the commencement of his recantation of what he has written against me." It is a coincidence perhaps; not worth mentioning, but it is a singular circumstance, that we had a son of Sir Robert Wilson, at this time a midshipman on board the Northumberland.

My curiosity now grew bold, and I was determined to try whether I could induce Napoleon to satisfy me as to the particulars of a conversation between him and Mr. Fox, relative to the infernal machine, which I had heard related by the Hon. Mr. Bannet, who took passage with Lord W. Stuart, in the Lavinia, from Lisbon to England in the year 1807. I preface my inquiry by observing, that an account has been published, and was very generally believed in England, stating a conversation between him and Mr. C. Fox, at St. Cloud; that to myself it was very interesting; and as I heard it related by a gentleman of rank, talent and high character, I had entertained no doubt of the general fact as he stated it. Napoleon, in a most good humoured way, said, "Repeat it—I shall remember." I then proceeded: "The account, generally, is as follows. As you were one evening going to the theatre, you encountered great danger of your life by the explosion of a machine, to which the title of 'Infernal' was afterwards applied. This engine of destruction was said to have been placed in a narrow street through which you were to pass.—The rashness of your coachman, it is said, saved your life; for, finding a vehicle placed in such a manner as would have presented an insurmountable difficulty to a less timid driver, he gave speed to his horses, and the wheel of your carriage coming in contact with the machine, overset it with great violence, and immediately after you had passed the explosion took place." "That," he replied, "is true: your information is correct." "And it is also said, that you went to the theatre and enjoyed the play as if nothing had happened." He now nodded or rather made a slight obeisance.—"And it is also asserted, that in a conversation you had with Mr. Fox, at St. Cloud, on the subject you accused the English of having invented the

machine for your destruction." "That is the fact," he said; "I certainly did." "And that you particularly alluded to Mr. Windham?" "Yes, Mr. Vandam." "It is also said, general, that Mr. Fox, contended it was not of English invention, for that the crime of assassination was repugnant to the national character. He also particularly defended Mr. Windham, who, he said, though they had differed in politics, he knew to be an honourable man, and incapable, as a British minister, of sanctioning such a dishonourable transaction." Napoleon remembered the conversation, and acknowledged that he accused Mr. Windham. I now ventured to ask him if he continued of the same opinion. "Yes," he said—"the English ministry were instrumental to the plot. Their money has gone for that and other extraordinary purposes. My English blood was a little up on the occasion, and my reply, depend upon it, was to the following effect:—My nation detests an assassin more than it does a coward—indeed, he is the worst of cowards—and I do not believe that there is a British heart which does not revolt at the thought; and subscribe, with an honest and glowing sincerity, to the opinion of Mr. Fox. He gave me no answer—but I could perceive that he was not convinced, and he still retains his original belief in the contrivance of the Infernal Machine.

I now discontinued the subject, and approached the chimney-piece to examine a small bust in marble, which appeared to me to be exquisitely sculptured. When he saw my attention to it, he exclaimed, "that is my son." Indeed the resemblance to the father is so very striking, that it is discernible at the first glance. On one side is a miniature also of young Napoleon, and a highly finished portrait of his mother, Maria Louisa, on the other.

He now complained of a pain in the great toe of his right foot; he described the sensation he felt, and asked if it betokened the gout. I requested to know if he could trace the gout to any hereditary transmission. "No," he replied, "neither of his parents ever had the gout;" but recollecting himself, he added, "that his uncle, Cardinal Fesch, had been very much afflicted by it."

I remarked, that even when the disease was known to be hereditary in families, attention, in early years, to exercise and diet, often retarded its approach, and when it came at length, would render the disease more mild.

I observed to him, "that, considering the active life he had led, it did not appear that he took sufficient exercise to preserve himself in a right state of health." He replied, "my rides, indeed, are too confined; but the being accompanied by an officer is very disagreeable to me, that I must be content to suffer the consequences of abridging them. However, I feel no inconvenience from the want of exercise. Man can accustom himself to privations. At one period of my life I was many hours on horseback every day, for six years; and I was once 18 months without passing from the house." He now returned to the grievance of being watched by an officer. "You are acquainted," he said, "with the island of St. Helena, and must be sensible, that a sentinel, placed on either of these hills, can command the sight of me from the moment I quit this house till I return to it. If an officer or soldier, placed on that post, will not satisfy your governor, why not place ten, twenty, or a troop of dragoons. Let them never lose sight of me, only keep an officer from my side."

Additional extracts from Dr. Warden's letters detailing his conversation with Bonaparte.
"Where," said he, "were you educated?" I replied, "in Edinburgh." "You have very eminent professors there, I know: I remember Dr. Brown's system was in repute during my first Italian campaign. I have read of your other men of note, and I wish you would call them to my recollection by repeating their names."—I accordingly mentioned Black in Chemistry; Monro in Anatomy and Surgery; and Gregory in Physics; but, at the same time, I observed, that while I particularized these distinguished characters, whose pupil I was, I could name others of equal merit in the different schools of the British empire. "I never knew," said Napoleon, "but one physician who was infallible in his diagnostics. He was certain in his discovery of the nature and seat of a disease; his name was Dubos; but, strange to say, he could not prescribe, and, consequently, would never undertake the treatment or cure of a complaint whose character his acumen could so accurately penetrate." I observed, "That he had a very able surgeon with him in Egypt, Monsieur Serry." "Yes," he answered, "he was excellent in his field arrangement: but I have had men with me, who in scientific knowledge, were far superior to him." "Mr. Serry," I said, "who joined you on the morning of the battle of Austerlitz, had the reputation of superior professional talents." "Ah," he exclaimed, with a glow on his countenance, "how did you know that?" "I must have read of it, in Serry's publication, or heard it mentioned by General Bertrand." He continued,

"It was my intention in France to have classed your profession into three divisions: I have always respected it: it is a science, and more than a science: because it requires a knowledge of several; Chemistry, Anatomy, Botany and Physics. For the first class I should have selected the most eminent of the profession."—"But how, General, would you have discovered them?"—"By their reputation, income, and figure which they made in the world."—"But would not that plan be liable to objection? ma-

(See fourth page.)

*La Valette I believe, was a great favourite of the late Emperor; and I well know, that every one of his suite expressed the greatest joy at his escape. I remember hearing General Bertrand say, that during the whole time La Valette was in the Post Office, not a single instance of unnecessary rigour was known to have taken place; nor was the peace of a private family ever disturbed in the slightest degree.