

20589 Original anecdotes of the family of
Bonaparte, in Corsica.

Communicated by Mr. T—i, formerly
mayor of Ajaccio, and president of the
Highest Court of Justice, in the Island.

The annals of the family of Bonaparte, till the beginning of the last century, are in the deepest obscurity: ~~although~~ no public records exist from which a conclusion might be inferred about its condition, either in Corsica or any where else. The person of the family who first appears to have filled public places was Joseph, the grand father of the present emperor of France: from 1730 to 1740, he repeatedly was one of the forty decurions of the municipal government of Ajaccio; and this is a proof that he was a man of gentle connections. His son, Charles, father of the emperor, was a lawyer of some consideration, in the same city; and he married Leticia ———, from which marriage the present imperial family issued. When, in 1769, Corsica passed under the domination of France, an edict issued from the King that, owing to the long civil war which had prevailed in the island, and consequently to the confusion which had taken place in all public and domestic concerns, the titles of the several families, either in respect to the state or to the individuals, should be verified; a circumstance which proved highly favourable to the family of Bonaparte: for, by the unbounded influence of the Count of Marboeuf, French viceroy, it was then registered among the noble families. This excited loud murmurs among the nobility; but the viceroy set them at defiance. From the epoch in which it was intruded into the highest

days to its expulsion from Corsica, the Bonapartes, in landed ~~property~~ and moved property, enjoyed about 4000 francs of annual income (about 150 lb st.) a sum of some consideration, in their native place, and competent to the maintenance of the family, if they had ever ~~been~~ lived to live under the same roof.

The father and the mother of the emperor, from the very epoch of their marriage, were the rule of the island. Their first born, Joseph, the present King of Naples, was thought to be son of the late celebrated General Paoli; and the facts which gave rise to this report were the following. During the years 1763 and 64, the first two years of the marriage, the civil war between the Corsicans and the Genoese was in its height: the maritime places as well as some of the cities of ~~the~~ and Ajaccio among them were in the hands of the Genoese; the inland parts were under the domination of the Corsicans, and their chief, the General Paoli. no communication existed between the places of the former and those of the latter description; when Charles Bonaparte, finding himself under a prosecution, in Ajaccio, and not thinking himself safe in any other place depending on the Genoese, ~~he~~ passed into the departments occupied by the Corsicans; he put himself under the protection of General Paoli, and ~~he~~ soon after removed to Corte, the city which, from its situation in the center of the island, was chosen by the general as the seat of his government. By this chief, also, Charles was engaged to call his wife of he did, his wife to Corte. Upon her arrival, that lady became intimate with Paoli; and in the course of that intimacy, in 1765, Joseph was born. From the striking likeness of the child with the general, and from the great attachment which the latter ~~was~~ ~~firmly~~ ~~in~~ ~~formed~~ for the individuals of the family of Bonaparte, it was strongly argued that there was some thing more than a common friendship, in the case. The emperor, Napoleon, was also born in Corte,

in April 1760; but nothing particular was said in
respect to his birth. The public, however, was ²⁰⁵⁹⁰ soon after
amused by the circumstances which attended the
birth of the third son, Lucien. The obstacles which
Charles Buonaparte had until then felt against his residence
in Ajaccio were removed in 1767: he consequently soon
returned to his native town — that was the year in
which the Jesuits were expelled from the dominions of
the house of Bourbon. The Spanish Jesuits, to the number
of two thousand, from Majorca had been landed on
Corsica: one half of them had soon after been conveyed
to the continent of Italy, the other half had remained
in the island, and ~~the~~ great ~~part~~ part of them in Ajaccio.
These, by the government, were distributed through
the convents and the private houses; and Charles
Buonaparte was allotted the honour of having with
him the provincial of La Plata, a man of great
merit, and chiefly remarkable for his insinuating
manner. It was soon reported that M^r. Buonaparte
had not been insensible to the uncommon
qualifications of her guest, and that Lucien, who was
born in 1768, was the fruit of her attachment to the
Jesuit.

The ^{fourth} ~~third~~ son of the family, Louis, the present
king of Holland, is undoubtedly the son of Marboeuf.
In his baptism, he received the name of Louis, Charles,
Zenobe, the very christian name of the count of
Marboeuf. of the youngest brother, Jerome, king of
Westphalia, nothing particular was ever said. Now,
by the care of the viceroy or intendant, all these
individually received a liberal education, either in
France or in Italy, is a fact too well known to be
mentioned among the present anecdotes.

At the breaking of the Revolution, in 1789, Joseph
in the 24 year of his age, was a lawyer; Napoleon,
in his 23rd was a lieutenant in the French troops. As
soon as the first Royalist constitution was proclaimed, in
1790, they began their revolutionary career in such a
manner as to give a presage of their future character.

Joseph appeared as an insignificant being, in every respect; and Napoleon as an artful, cunning and perfidious man. By an order from the constituent assembly, the newly formed constitution was to be accepted by the primary assemblies, in each district; and, in the constitution itself, it was declared that every person who had completed his 25th year was entitled to give his vote in the primary assembly. ~~At~~ a formality of this kind being to take place in Ajaccio, in March 1791, the two Bonapares presented themselves, in order to give their votes. John Baptiste Tarraroli, mayor of Ajaccio, observing that, appearing both very young, they were to produce the certificate of their birth, to prove that they had reached the age required by the constitution, they answered that they were born in Corte, and consequently that they could not directly produce the certificate ~~which~~ in question; but Mr. Tarraroli being firm, the certificate was at last produced. It appeared from this that Joseph was upwards of 26, and Napoleon only 24 and 11 months. The first former was therefore admitted, the other ~~was~~ ~~not~~. To this apparently trifling incident the whole of the subsequent events of the family of Bonapare may be ultimately traced.

Towards the close of that year, a decree had issued from the Legislative assembly that a new organization should be effected in the national Guard throughout the whole of the French empire, which decree prescribed among other things that the Colonel of each body of the guard should be a citizen of the district; and the Lieutenant Colonel, an officer in the former Royal troops. Napoleon had conceived the design of filling the latter place, for the district of Ajaccio; and as he could set no reliance on the mayor Tarraroli, to whom he had already made his character known, by his conduct some months before, he practised all his artifices to watch the day in which the mayor could not be in the popular assembly, in order to carry on the point of his election. In this he succeeded; and Mr. Tarraroli, being apprised of the event when he no longer had it in his power to prevent it, could do nothing

more than tell the people that they had made choice of a person who would soon make them repent of their condescension.

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Divine service; but it was as well preserved as ever,
in all its parts. The mayor abruptly ordered two of the
ushers of the assembly to open one of the graves; and
then, haranguing the people, "I am persuaded," said
he, "that some infamous persons are now in this
place who wish to excite confusion and bloodshed."
"Whilst I appeal to your good sense on my conduct, and
"whilst I express my wish to give an unbounded liberty
"to opinions, and grant to each of you a perfect
"freedom of speech; I declare also upon my honour,
"and upon my Religion that the first person who attempts
"to break the line of the Law, ~~he~~ will be buried alive
"Bonaparte and his fifteen or sixteen attendants
"were so affrighted by this spirited declaration of fear
"to leave the place."

The year 1793 was the last remarkable era for
the family of Bonaparte, in Corsica. Lucien, who had
already emerged from obscurity, was acting like his
two elder Brothers, and their eldest sister, Marianna
(now called Elisa) the present princess of Piombino,
having married Mr. Baciocchi, proved a violent
anarchist, and had communicated this spirit to her
husband. All of them intrigued with the emissaries
of the national convention, and with the blood
hounds sent from Paris to Corsica. The consequence
was that, ~~the Municipality of Ajaccio~~ ^{from} the municipality of Ajaccio,
always presided by Mr. Tarrardi, a decree issued
that the family of Bonaparte, raised from
obscurity by an effeminate Bacha, and condemned
to eternal execration and infamy, should be for
ever exiled from the island of Corsica."

The subsequent vicissitude & the individuality of
the family of Bonaparte are unconnected with the
present anecdote. We shall only take notice that
"it is not from mere desire & appearing three
years younger that the emperor, in his imperial
almanac, has represented himself as born on the
15th August 1769. This is the effect of a much deeper

policy. The island of Corsica was conquered by the French, in June 1769; and he wished to make it appear that he was born subject of France — he has therefore stated his birth to have taken place three months after the conquest.

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John Baptiste Tartaroli is an amiable elderly man, about 60. He descends from a noble and ancient family of Ajaccio, of which the name formerly was Tortorelli, and was gradually corrupted into that of Tartaroli, by the wrong pronunciation of the Genoese, whilst they possessed Corsica. In his youth, he had served the Republic of Genoa, as an officer; and he was then under the command of his father, who, in his turn, was general of the artillery. By the death of his elder brother, he left the career of the army, in order to follow that of the law. During several years, before the revolution, he had been chief magistrate of his native place. At the epoch of the change, he was appointed mayor of the same place, and afterwards president of the High court of justice in the island. At the time of the surrender of Corsica to his majesty's troops, he acted, next to General Paoli, the first part towards that event. When, in 1796, Corsica was evacuated, he passed to Porto Ferrajo with the Viceroy Elliot. When Porto Ferrajo also was evacuated, he passed, with the British troops, to Lisbon. There he was highly regarded by Lord Fitzgerald, then ambassador, and by His Royal Highness, the Duke of Sussex, by whom he was urged to come to England.

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Bonaparte*