

**A Good Napoleon Story.**

M. Maurice Vaucaire is a well-known French dramatist. He collaborated with Sardou in a three-act play in verse, "La Jeunesse de Figaro," he wrote "Hans the Flute-Player," and the "Manon Lescaut," to which Puccini wrote the music, and his "Chattertan" to the music of Leoncavallo has become a classic.

He can do more than write plays. He tells a story better than any man in Paris. Here is one of his stories:—

"A great many years ago I was a very small boy, and at that happy time my grandfather was fond of telling me how he, when he was seven years old, made the acquaintance of the Emperor Napoleon. My grandfather was a flower-grower at Grasse. His father had grown violets and orange blossoms before him, and a few days after Napoleon landed from Elba—to be exact, on March 2, 1815—my grandfather, Jean Paul Bedelle made the great man's acquaintance. He used to tell the story in this way. I will tell it to you in his own words:—

"The Emperor arrived at the Golfe Juan on board the Inconstant. He had Cambonne, Drouot, and Bertrand with him, and 1100 men. He landed at three in the afternoon, and he left for Grasse at midnight.

"The little town, or at all events, the townspeople, wished that he were anywhere else. The townspeople of Grasse did not know just what they ought to do with him. There was no enthusiasm in Grasse for the Emperor Napoleon on March 2, 1815. I remember my father removing his nightcap and scratching his head, and explaining how badly the townspeople of Grasse were treating the Emperor. I remember how he sprang out of bed and pulled me out of mine. "Little man," he said, "the people of Grasse do not know how to treat Napoleon. You and I are going to show them. Put on your best clothes."

"Ten minutes afterwards my father put a big bunch of fine violets into my hand, and off we went, he in his best

clothes, I in mine. It was bitterly cold, there was snow on the ground, and we ran all the way to keep warm. Every now and again my father would shout, "Vive l'Empereur!" and though I was out of breath he made me do the same. The Emperor, when he found him, was standing in the middle of a group of soldiers with the tricolour cockade. Outside the circle of the soldiers stood a crowd of townspeople gazing in silence at Napoleon. "Now, then," said my father, "slip through the soldiers' legs and give your flowers to the Emperor. Be quick. He must not leave Grasse with the bad impression he has got already."

"I slipped through the legs of a big Grenadier, and ran to where the Emperor was standing. I pushed the violets into his hand, and fell on my knees in front of him. I don't know why I did that, but it seemed exactly the right thing to do. "What does the boy want?" said the Emperor, who seemed in a very bad temper. "Sire," said somebody—I was told afterwards that it was Drouot—"flowers are the industry of the country. These have been sent you as a welcome." "Do you think so?" said the Emperor. "I don't." Another general, Cambonne it was, took the flowers and was going to smell them. "Don't do that," shouted Napoleon. "This may be a Bourbon trick. I don't trust these people. Throw the flowers down."

"Cambonne dropped the violets, and I began to cry. "Where did you get those flowers, child?" the Emperor growled. I was trembling all over. It wasn't the cold. It was because of his voice. "Father gave them me for you," I said. "Where is he?" I pointed to him without a word. "Bring the man here," said Napoleon sharply.

"My father faced the Emperor. He was very pale, and looked as though Napoleon's big eyes had turned him into stone. "You gave the child those flowers to give to me," Napoleon said. "Yes, sire." "What is your name?" "Evariste Bedelle," my father said. "I am a distiller of perfume." The Emperor stared



THE SORT OF COUNTRY WHERE THE TURKS AND MONTENEGRINS ARE FIGHTING.—A TYPICAL ROAD ON THE FRONTIER.

at him as though he would read his mind. "Why did you send me those violets?" he asked. "As a homage from a humble individual," my father said.

"Everybody was looking at him, and everybody looked suspicious. "There is some trick in this," said the Emperor. "Trick?" said my father. "A trick in a bouquet of flowers?" Napoleon laughed a short, nasty laugh like a bark. "Poison," he said. "The thing has been done before. We know the Bourbons."

"My father smiled. "Sire," he said, "there is no poison in these flowers, and I will prove it." He snatched up the bouquet, and two soldiers leaped forward. "Leave him alone," Napoleon barked. The two men, my father and the Emperor, stood staring into one another's eyes. My father laughed again. Then, very slowly, with his eyes on the Emperor's eyes, he raised the violets to his mouth and began eating them. He took mouthful after mouthful, eating the petals as though they had been preserved and crystallized in sugar, and his eyes never left the Emperor's face till he had eaten up the bouquet, stalks and all. He nearly choked over the stalks. "There! You will not deny that I am still alive, sire," he said as he finished, "and I am not a friend of the Bourbons."

"The Emperor smiled a slow smile. "You are a good fellow," he said, shak-

ing hands with my father and pinching his ear. Then he slipped his hand into his pocket, and brought out a Napoleon, which he handed to me. I had never seen one before. Five minutes afterwards the little army of 1,100 marched on to Sisteron."

Mrs. Greson, who is head of her house, remarked one morning to her husband: "In five months from to-day we shall celebrate our silver wedding."

"Better wait five years longer," said her husband in quiet desperation, "and then we can celebrate the Thirty Years' war."



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