

## FROM THE DAVID LLOYD ARCHIVE

*What follows was found in the archive left to the Ludlow Historical Research Group by David Lloyd. It serves to explain how Lucien Bonaparte spent the first six months of 1811 as a resident of Ludlow. The author is recorded as Eileen Holt, and it was originally published in French as "L'exil de Lucien Bonaparte" in Revue de l'Institut Napoleon, no.141, 1983. The English translation has been lightly edited by Roy Payne.*

### **The Exile of Lucien Bonaparte 1810 - 1814**

It was on a December day in the year 1810 that Lucien Bonaparte, brother of the Emperor Napoleon, arrived in England to begin a period of exile which was to last until 1814. Lucien was 35 years old at the time when the exile began having been born at Ajaccio in 1775, the third son to survive infancy Charles and Laetitia Bonaparte. Once destined for the Church he proved to have no vocation, and went to Military School at Brienne. At the outbreak of the Revolution he became an ardent supporter of republican ideals, and in 1794 he was appointed Commissary to the army and put in charge of public stores at Saint-Maximin, a small town in Provence. There, in 1794, he married Catherine-Christine Boyer, the sister of an innkeeper. Of this marriage two children survived: Christine-Charlotte born in 1795, and Christine-Charlotte-Alexandrine- Egypta born in 1798.

At Saint\_Maximin, and in the years that followed, Lucien proved himself to be an orator of some renown, and in 1799 at the Palace of Saint-Cloud, when Napoleon overthrew the National Councils of France, it was Lucien's power of oratory and his action on behalf of his brother which helped to turn the scales in favour of Napoleon.

Nevertheless, relations became strained between the brothers. Lucien was outspoken in his criticism of governmental decisions, and Napoleon disapproved of Lucien's choice of friends. In May 1800 Lucien's first wife died, and in 1803 he secretly married Alexandrine-Charlotte-Louise-Laurence Jacob de Bleschamp, widow of Hippolyte Jouberton, a marriage contracted subsequent to the birth of their first son. This second marriage was a source of great anger to Napoleon, who had a dynastic marriage in view for his brother, and he refused to recognise Lucien's second wife as his sister-in-law. In 1804 Lucien, having been refused the title of a French Prince, and having seen himself and his son excluded from the Imperial Succession, left France for the Papal States. He settled in Rome and then purchased, at the suggestion of the Pope, the estate of Canino, from which he was later to take the papal title of Prince of Canino.

In 1807 he had a meeting with the Emperor in Mantua at which he refused Napoleon's request that he should divorce Alexandrine so that he could be offered a European throne. He did however agree to his brother's suggestion that he should send his daughter Charlotte to the French Court to be initiated into Court life with a view to preparation for a dynastic alliance. However, it was not until March 1810 that Charlotte finally took up residence at the Court. Although in a letter to Lucien of 1<sup>st</sup> April 1810, Madame Mère,

the girl's grandmother, spoke of her joy in the girl's presence, and the fact that she was "loved and admired by every one", the visit was not really a success. Charlotte's letters home were disparaging in tone, and critical of her relations. The letters, which were opened and read before they reached their destination caused displeasure at Court, and Charlotte returned home in June after a stay of only three months. Following her return, Lucien began to feel increasingly insecure in the Papal States, and he decided to leave for America.

He obtained passports in the name of "M. Fabrizi, négociant", in preparation for the journey, and at the beginning of August he left Canino, accompanied by his family and household. His children now numbered six, the two daughters of his first marriage, Charlotte and Christine-Egypta, and the four children of his second marriage, his sons Charles-Lucien and Paul-Marie, and his daughters Letitia and Jeanne. The daughter of his wife's first marriage, Anna Jouberton, was also with them, as was André Boyer, Lucien's nephew by his first marriage, now a young man of 28.

They arrived at the port of Civitavecchia where they boarded a three-masted sailing ship, the *Hercules*, flying the American flag, which had been sent there for the family by Joachim Murat, King of Naples, Lucien's brother-in-law by virtue of his marriage to Lucien's youngest sister, Caroline. The *Hercules*, under the command of Captain Edward West of Salem, Mass., had been under arrest for the alleged violation of the continental blockade, and Murat, whose own relations with Napoleon were strained, released the American ship, and allowed Lucien to charter her. Escorted by the corvette *Achille*, she arrived at Civitavecchia, and on 7 August the *Hercules*, with the Bonapartes aboard, set sail for America. Soon afterwards, however, a storm arose, and they were forced to seek shelter off the Sardinian coast. In spite of requests for permission to land at Cagliari in view of the fact that there was a sick child on board, consent was refused. It so happened that the British Ambassador at Constantinople, Sir Robert Adair, was present in Cagliari at that moment, and he warned Lucien that if he put to sea without his papers in order, he would be apprehended by a British warship and taken to Malta. The British Government feared that Lucien might become involved in some plot against the United Kingdom once he had arrived in the United States of America, and would not allow him to proceed to that country.

Lucien, having the choice of returning to Civitavecchio or being taken to Malta, chose the latter, and after some time having been spent off the Sardinian coast, the *Hercules* made for the open sea. Some two miles from Cagliari, and outside Sardinian waters, the English frigate, the *Pomone* was waiting. It intercepted the *Hercules*, and the officer in charge refused to accept the passports in the name of Fabrizi, and took the Bonapartes and their party as prisoners of war aboard the *Pomone*, commanded by Captain Robert Barrie. The ship then sailed for Malta, where it arrived in the evening of 23 August.

Captain Barrie went ashore and presented to the Civil and Military Commissioner of the island, Sir Hildebrand Oakes, letters from Sir Robert Adair and the English Envoy in Cagliari, advising him of the circumstances surrounding the arrival of the Bonapartes off

the Sardinian coast, and the reasons for their subsequent detention on the high seas and their conveyance to Malta.

Oakes was dismayed and disturbed by the arrival of the family in Malta, and his feelings on the subject are expressed in a [then] ,m 28 secret dispatch sent a few days later, 28 August, to the Earl of Liverpool, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. He said that his objections to receiving the Bonapartes on the island and admitting them to free intercourse with the inhabitants were so great that his first reaction had been not to allow them to land at all, but to urge their being conveyed to the British fleet off Toulon, whence they could be escorted direct to England. However, on reflection, he had decided “having regard to the high and established character of those who were of a contrary opinion, their experience and diplomacy, their long and confidential correspondence with His Majesty's Ministers” to yield to their judgement, and after some deliberation with Rear Admiral Boyles, to receive the family on the island in the character of prisoners of war, the character under which Captain Barrie had brought them. In this way he could exclude them from the town of Valletta and from such intercourse with the inhabitants as he conceived, from the natural intriguing character and disposition of Frenchmen, and particularly of Lucien Bonaparte and his suite, might be dangerous to the peace of the island. He went on to remind the Earl of Liverpool that there still existed in the island the seeds of a French party, and that however true it might be that Lucien had been proscribed French territory and was under the complete displeasure of his brother, yet he was nevertheless and avowed republican. Furthermore, he had amongst his suite a Monsieur Charpentier, whom Oakes describes as “a dangerous and turbulent character”. This was in fact a reference to the Abbé Charpentier, tutor to the Prince's children, and probably the author of the pamphlet *La Bastille dévoilée*, published in 1789-90.

It was on Saturday, 25 August that Oakes had a meeting with Lucien aboard the *Pomone*, the details of which are related in the despatch, wherein Lucien is referred to as “this remarkable person”. Oakes told Lucien that he and all belonging to him would be regarded as prisoners of war and placed in Fort Ricasoli. This fort had been built at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century opposite Fort Elmo in response to the need to seal the mouth of the Grand Harbour at Valletta. It occupied the whole of the promontory, and was a longitudinal fort whose curtain and bastions rose from the water's edge, and whose land front was protected by three powerful bastions.

Lucien, reported Oakes, had expressed a desire to retire to the country, but this idea he had discouraged, particularly as the place he indicated, Città Vecchia, had been the scene of a massacre of some French troops which the Maltese still remembered with a lively satisfaction, and where the name of Bonaparte was held in such execration that Oakes was apprehensive for Lucien's safety should he go there. The incident referred to took place in 1798 when the French troops under Napoleon occupied the island and made themselves very unpopular. In Città Vecchia, once known as Città Notabile, and which in modern times has reverted to its Arabic name of Mdina, a Captain Masson, commander of the French garrison, was thrown from a window and killed by the

infuriated populace. The Maltese then stormed the citadel on two sides, caught the French garrison between two fires, and practically annihilated them. Oakes intimated that if he later felt that he could grant Lucien's request to live in the country, he would place him in his own house, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Palace of St Antonio, a former summer residence of the Grand Masters of the Knights of Malta to the east of Medina, where he would best be able to watch his activities.

In the meantime, the family landed on 25 and 26 August and were accommodated at the Fort. All the foreigners who had occupied it were withdrawn, and a guard was placed there comprising two officers, Captain Marshall and Lieutenant Harold, with seventy men of the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Two police sergeants were also placed there, chiefly for the purpose of attending the Bonaparte servants when they went into town to purchase provisions, etc. On the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup> Oakes visited the fort under the pretext of seeing that the family were properly accommodated. Both Lucien and his wife renewed the subject of a house in the country, but Oakes evaded the issue. He did however propose that Lucien and a part of his family should go to dine with him, but Lucien declined the invitation, saying that he was a close prisoner. Oakes was very annoyed at this refusal, and was to refer to it again later.

After closing his despatch on the 28<sup>th</sup>, Oakes received a letter from Lucien in which he complained of the fact that his family and suite were being treated as prisoners of war. Oakes replied that instructions on this point must be awaited from the government, but in the meantime he would, as soon as he could do so with propriety, give the necessary order for permitting the female part of the family with such of their male attendants as might be deemed necessary, to have liberty to go out of the fort without a military escort, but that such indulgence could not be extended to the secretaries and ecclesiastics attached to the suite.

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As it happened, Lucien was not destined to spend the winter in Malta. The presence of the Bonapartes on this island remained a considerable source of anxiety to Sir Hildegard Oakes. He had a strong reason to suspect that Lucien was carrying on a clandestine correspondence with Queen Maria Carolina, Queen of the Two Sicilies, then resident in Palermo, though a Maltese merchant and a Spanish lady at the Court of the Sicilian Queen, the Marquise de Minutolo. Oakes was extremely perturbed that contact had probably been established between Lucien and the Queen, and it must therefore have been a great relief that Oakes received the news in a despatch of 18 October from the Earl of Liverpool that the prisoners were to depart from Malta. The Foreign Secretary, the Marquis of Wellesley, wrote personally to Lucien on 15 October, informing him that while his request for permission to go to America was refused, the family were to be offered asylum in England on the receipt of Lucien's parole, and a ship of war was to be prepared for his accommodation.

On 6 November the British frigate, *President*, under the command of Captain Warren arrived in Malta to convey the family and their suite to England. In vain Lucien requested that his wife and children be permitted to remain in Malta until Spring in order to avoid

the rigours of the seas voyage in winter. The request was refused, and the *President*, having spent some ten days in harbour taking on provisions and being repainted, took the Bonapartes and their suite on board on 16 November. On that date Oakes, extremely happy to be rid of them, sent his final despatch to the Earl of Liverpool on the subject, advising him of the embarkation, and enclosing a list of the persons who had board the ship, as follows:

*[In summary]* Lucien Bonaparte, his wife, their seven children, and their nephew, their children's tutor, a physician, a painter, a friar, 15 servants, one of the latter having her father and two children, and Nicola Isuardy, formerly a prisoner of war, but taken into Lucien's service.

On 17<sup>th</sup> November the *President*, which strangely enough was an ex-French frigate which had been captured by the British, set sail out of the harbour of La Valletta, and began its journey to England. On 3 December the ship passed the Rock of Gibraltar.

*[There follows an account of a drawing of Lucien and other members of his party].*

At 2.30am on the morning of Thursday 13 December the Lizard Light was sighted, and at noon on that day, in rainy weather, the ship was moored in Plymouth Sound. For the rest of Thursday and all day on Friday the 14<sup>th</sup> she remained moored there, and then on Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup>, she made sail for Barn Pool and there made fast to a buoy. There was now taken on board and delivered to Lucien a letter from Lord Wellesley, the Foreign Secretary, advising him that orders would be issued that day from the Admiralty giving him, his family and suite, permission to disembark, and that his effects were to be landed subject only to the regulations of the Custom House. He was further informed that “a gentleman” had been appointed to meet him at Plymouth for the purpose of facilitating the arrangements for the party's establishment on shore.

The ship was put into quarantine, and it was not until Tuesday 18 December that the Bonapartes and their suite disembarked. Before they left the ship gifts were exchanged between Lucien and Captain Warren, a further testimony of the good relations which had existed between them during the voyage from Malta. Captain Warren was presented with a gold watch “enriched with diamonds”, and Lucien received from the captain a double-barrelled gun which, during his stay in England, was to become his favourite fowling-piece. The party landed at the Victualling Office, having been brought from the *President* in the Admiral's cutter. They then proceeded in carriages to the King's Arms where they were to be lodged temporarily, accompanied by Sir Robert Calder, who was the Port Admiral, General England, Lord Borringdon, and several other naval and military officers. Two days later, on Thursday 20 December, Lucien wrote to Lord Wellesley, confirming that he had landed in Plymouth, and was awaiting the arrival of the “gentleman” to advise him of the arrangements made for his establishment in England. He then complained of the extreme severity being shown to him by the Custom House regarding the clearance of his baggage. He gave his word that this baggage contained only personal effects which had been destined for the USA when the ship in which they left Italy had been intercepted off Sardinia, and he asked for orders to be given to release these effects. It should however be mentioned that amongst these effects

were art collections, objects of antiquity from excavations at Canino, and cabinets of gems, all of which had been part of the cargo on the *Hercules*, and had then been brought to England on the *President*. Finally, Lucien enclosed a letter for his mother in Paris, which he requested Wellesley to be good enough to forward to her. as the long sea voyage undertaken by her son and his family in winter would be a source of anxiety to her until she knew that they had landed safely in an English port.

On the following day, Friday, 21 December, the “gentleman” appointed by Lord Wellesley called upon Lucien. His name was MacKenzie, and he had recently been the negotiator of a cartel of exchange of prisoners. It was no doubt for this reason that he had been chosen to deal with the reception of Lucien Bonaparte, newly arrived in England as a prisoner of war. MacKenzie brought with him a letter of introduction from Lord Wellesley, and he was presented to Lucien and his family by Admiral Sir Robert Calder.

Having been received with great civility by Lucien, MacKenzie advised him that for the present he was to proceed to “a country seat in the vicinity of the town of Ludlow”. The, upon the Admiral withdrawing, MacKenzie informed Lucien that he was required to sign a Parole of Honour, and a copy of this Parole was presented to him. He approved of its contents, and on the entry into the room of General England, one of the military officers who had accompanied him, from the ship to the inn on his arrival at Plymouth, he signed the paper which was dated “at Plymouth, 21 December 1810”, and General England and MacKenzie acted as witnesses.

The text of the Parole of Honour was written in French, and it stated that Lucien gave his word of honour that:

(1) Neither he himself nor any member of his family or suite who were named individually, would go beyond the limits fixed or which would be fixed by the British Government, unless permission was given through official channels.

(2) He would not engage in any correspondence, direct or indirect with any enemy of the British King, nor would he receive or write any letter or letters other than through the hands of those whom the British Government had appointed, or would appoint for this purpose, so that the letters would be seen and approved.

It will be recalled. In regard to this second undertaking, that Lucien's correspondence had already caused unease during his stay in Malta, and it was now made quite clear to him that there was to be no unauthorised correspondence while he was in England. Within a few months however, Lucien was again to give trouble in regard to unauthorised letters.

The Parole having been signed, the question of departure from Plymouth was then discussed. MacKenzie found that the whole party was ready to leave as soon as what he described as “the formidable obstacle of getting the necessary approval from the Custom House for the release of the baggage” was overcome. The weather had been very bad since the disembarkation of the passengers on Tuesday, and no steps had been

undertaken since then to get a single article on shore. MacKenzie had however made arrangements for everything essential for the journey to be cleared quickly, and Lucien agreed to the remaining heavy packages being sent after him. As to the whole party leaving together, MacKenzie explained that it would be very difficult to lodge such a large number of persons on the road between Plymouth and Ludlow, and it was agreed that Lucien, accompanied by only a few members of his household, and MacKenzie himself, would leave first. His family and the remainder of the suite would then follow within a few days.

It was further explained to Lucien during this meeting that the stay in Ludlow was only to be a temporary one. It was proposed that "his permanent residence should ultimately be fixed at a seat of the Earl of Powis's, in the vicinity of the town of Montgomery". It had in fact been reported in the locality that nearly all the French officers who were on parole at Montgomery had already been sent to Brecon at the time of the arrival of the Bonapartes in England. The permanent residence was to have been the mansion of Lymore about half a mile to the south east of Montgomery. Built in the reign of Charles II, and one of the finest half-timbered houses in the district. It was not however ready at the time of the arrival, indeed more than twenty men were then still employed in preparing the house for the reception of the family. In consequence of the extensive repairs which were found to be necessary, the idea of Lucien's residing at Lymore was abandoned shortly afterwards, and the Bonapartes never did live in Wales.

On Saturday, 22 December, the Custom House finally released the baggage which was required for the departure, and Lucien bought himself a carriage to be used on the journey. The departure was arranged for the next morning, but before he left Plymouth on that Sunday, 23 December, Lucien wrote two letters. The first was to Lord Wellesley in which he expressed his regret at having to leave Plymouth so soon; he would rather, he said, have rested for a week or ten days before leaving, but Mackenzie had been adamant about the necessity for an immediate departure. Lucien was also worried about the effect that the long journey by road to be undertaken by the children would have on them, and said he would have preferred that they should all have remained in some little town near Plymouth. He concluded by asking for the onward transmission of a letter addressed to his mother which he enclosed, and he promised to write again as soon as he had arrived in Ludlow. In the letter to his mother, Lucien repeated that he was anxious about the effect of the journey on his children, a journey which they were being obliged to make in midwinter. He then explained how he had signed the Parole as a prisoner of war, and he asked his mother to request the Emperor to arrange for an exchange to be made as soon as possible of himself and the persons of his suite, so that in the Spring they could continue their journey to America. At this stage therefore, Lucien was still hoping that his brother might intercede on his behalf, although it is difficult to see how the British could have agreed to such an exchange as the one suggested, even if Lucien's request ever reached Napoleon, and he in turn, acted upon it.

The signal for departure was given at 11 am, but it was not until noon that they finally

left. The parting from the family was, so MacKenzie recorded “rather touching but without tears or difficulty”. Then Lucien, accompanied by André Boyer, and one other member of his household (probably Le Père Maurice), set off in Lucien's own carriage, while MacKenzie with three domestic servants travelled in a second carriage. It had been arranged that the expenses of the journey, provided they were reasonable, would be paid by H.M. Government, and McKenzie had been instructed that objections should not be made to halting at towns upon the road. They travelled with four horses to each carriage as Lucien disliked starting very early or going on after dark.

At 5.p.m they arrived at Chudleigh, where they stayed the night. It was from the inn there that MacKenzie sent a report for the information of Lord Wellesley, in which he confirmed that everything had gone well so far, and that in regard to Lucien himself, he found “his conversation extremely interesting and his manners easy.” Thus he had an early favourable impression of Lucien and a cordial relationship developed between the two men, as it had done between Lucien and Captain Warren on board the *President*. This cordiality was of course in direct contrast to the unfavourable first impression which Sir Hildebrand Oakes had gained of him in Malta and the strained relationship which existed between them thereafter. It does seem that Sir Hildebrand felt that his dignity had been affronted by Lucien's refusal to dine with him in the early days of his stay on the island, and that he also had an initial distrust of him which he felt was justified when he later had cause to suspect him of carrying on an unauthorised correspondence. In any event, on his arrival in England Lucien seems to have created a good first impression on those appointed to deal with his affairs.

The next day the party set out for Exeter. A great deal of interest was being shown in the travellers. It was felt that Lucien was a victim of his brother's tyranny, and the arrival of the Bonapartes had been reported in *The Times* and in the West Country press, and local people were anxious to get a glimpse of members of the celebrated family. Later that day, which was Christmas Eve, the party arrived at Taunton, and continued Street where the party stayed the night.

The next day, Christmas Day, they continued via Old Down, where the horses were changed and refreshments taken at Ston Easton House, to Bath, and thence to Gloucester. Here they stayed overnight, and before leaving the following morning, Lucien visited the cathedral, which pleased him very much. A further stop was made at Tewkesbury, in accordance with the permission which had been given for stops to be made at towns on the road, and here Lucien stayed for nearly an hour. All along the road numerous groups of people were assembled; they were at almost every turn, village and turnpike, and about noon on Boxing Day the two carriages arrived at the Hop Pole Inn at Worcester. A very large crowd had assembled near the inn, intimations having been given of their arrival there. Lucien seemed to be much gratified by this attention, and bowed several times to the spectators who cheered as he left. The following description of him was given by one of them:

*In person he very much resembles the portrait of Napoleon, though the expression of*

*his countenance is much more pleasing; he has a high forehead, an aquiline nose, a long chin, and a sallow complexion; as he remained in the carriage we could not exactly judge his height, but he appears taller than his brother. He wore a singular hat; it was made of white beaver, made in the shape of a huntsman's cap.*

The cap referred to was no doubt the same "curious form of headgear" which had appeared in a drawing made on board the *President*, and which was worn by Lucien when his portrait was drawn in Taunton.

As the spectator noted, Lucien did not alight from the carriage; the horses were changed immediately, and the two carriages set off for the Hundred House at Great Witley, and from thence proceeded to Ludlow. The party reached that town during the afternoon, and were accommodated at the Angel Inn. The following day, Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>, he began to make the acquaintance of the inhabitants of Ludlow, and we have the following report of his activities:

*Lucien Bonaparte arrived at Ludlow about four o'clock on the evening of Wednesday, accompanied by his nephew, an interpreter secretary, Mr MacKenzie, and a few servants. He drove to the Angel Inn where he dined and slept. On Thursday morning he walked about the town, viewed the castle and some of the principal streets, but as the weather was rather unfavourable and public curiosity great, he did not stay out long. On that evening one of the winter dancing assemblies took place which Lucien, his nephew and some of his friends attended. Some of the latter danced but Lucien did not. He continued in the room until supper was announced. He then attended the Countess Powis to the supper rooms and sat at her Ladyship's right hand during supper, after which he returned to the ball and card rooms.*

During the following week, Lucien's wife and children, together with the rest of the suite arrived in Ludlow after the long journey from Plymouth. They had travelled in four carriages, and their passage through the countryside had aroused much interest, just as Lucien's had done. In Worcester for instance, a number of people had assembled once more around the Hop-Pole Inn "anxious to get a sight of these interesting strangers", and we have a description of the family by one of the spectators:

*Madame Lucien has a pleasing face, but seems to have suffered from fatigue; she is rather enbonpoint, and about thirty-nine years of age (she was in fact only thirty-two); her family consists of five daughters and two sons, one of the former appears to be about sixteen or seventeen years of age (this must have been Charlotte who was then aged fifteen), neither of the boys appears above nine years old. The name of the eldest boy is Charles, that of the second is Napoleon (The two boys were Charles and Paul-Marie who were then eight and not yet two years old respectively).*

The family were reunited at the Angel Inn in Ludlow, and shortly afterwards, early in January 1811, the whole household moved into Dinham House which had been prepared for their reception. Dinham House stands to the south of Ludlow Castle in the

centre of the town, and was in 1811 described as a “large modern-built brick house, the occasional rural residence of Earl Powis.” It had been relinquished by the Earl for the temporary residence of the Bonapartes, since his mansion at Lymore, near Montgomery, which had been intended for them was not ready. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Powis had seats at Powis Castle, Welshpool, Montgomeryshire, and Walcot, Lydbury North, near Bishop's Castle in north-west Shropshire. In addition to Dinham House in Ludlow itself, he also owned a property called Stone House, some five miles from Ludlow. Shortly after his arrival from Plymouth, Lucien had visited the Earl at Walcot, and it was planned that the Bonapartes should eventually move from Dinham House to Stone House, although this plan was never to be carried out.

At first Lucien settled down well in the country town, and he certainly remained a source of interest and comment, a situation which he appeared on the whole to enjoy. In January 1811, a local source reported:

*Lucien Bonaparte - several travellers have lately taken Ludlow in their way to see the above personage, and he knowing the circumstance, generally walks round the castle for an hour about midday to gratify their curiosity. One day lately, the weather being indifferent, he did not take his usual walk; a gentleman who had come a considerable distance and who could not stop, was disappointed, but being very anxious to see Lucien, sent his compliments, and requested to look at him for a few seconds. Lucien, with much good humour, desired that the gentleman might be introduced, and when he entered, politely begged him to be seated, and handed him several different kinds of wine, concluding with a half pint bumper of champagne. The drawing master who accompanied Lucien, has some finely executed drawings of antique statues, vases, etc. which Lucien dug out of the ruins of Tesculum during the six years of his retirement in Italy; the originals have been left in Rome. He frequently gives dinners to selected parties.*

Lucien further impressed the local gentry as being a man of talent. They knew that he was composing an epic poem on Charlemagne, and in addition to his literary activities, he encouraged concerts of vocal and instrumental music given by members of his suite, amongst whom several were excellent musicians.

By March however, Lucien had certainly become disenchanted with life in Ludlow. MacKenzie had left, and had been replaced by a Lieutenant-Colonel Leighton, who was henceforth to superintend his correspondence and conduct. Here Lucien had no complaint, he found the lieutenant-colonel correct and polite. But some hostility was being shown towards the Bonaparte family by at least some of the local population, if not by those with whom the family were on visiting terms. On 24 March Lucien wrote to Lord Wellesley to ask permission to leave Ludlow. He complained that his children had on more than one occasion been insulted by a coarse remark called after them, and that twice one of the children (presumably the youngest child, Paul-Marie) had had stones thrown at him while in the arms of his nurse. He did not wish to complain through the local courts as he felt this might give rise to further incidents, but his family no longer felt safe in the town. Lieutenant-Colonel Leighton, he said, had doubtless communicated his

request that he should be allowed to move to a house in the country, or if the government would not permit this, he would like to go to Presteigne, a small town over the border in Wales, where a suitable house was available. He asked that his request should be put before the Prince Regent, and he concluded his letter by thanking Lord Wellesley for obtaining the release of the remainder of his baggage from Plymouth, which matter had now been satisfactorily concluded.

Three days later, on 27 March, Lucien wrote again to Lord Wellesley, following the return to him on the 26<sup>th</sup> by Lieutenant-Colonel Leighton of a letter which he, Lucien, had written on 8 February, to the Prince of Wales. This was a letter of congratulation to the Prince on his appointment as Prince Regent, which had taken place on 5 February. Lucien had of course undertaken, when he signed the Parole in Plymouth, not to send any letters other than through the hands of those appointed by the government to superintend his correspondence, and yet this one he had sent direct to the Prince. So, as in Malta, he was once again incurring the displeasure of the British authorities in the matter of unauthorised correspondence. He offered his excuses, and asked Lord Wellesley to transmit them to the Prince Regent on his behalf. He hwas, he said, used to corresponding directly with His Holiness the Pope and many other sovereigns of Europe, without speaking of the princes of his own family, and having regard to his position as a prisoner of war, he had hoped that the Prince Regent would have accepted his letter. However, he recognised his error, and would in future conform to the requirements laid down. In this letter we may perhaps detect a glimpse of the attitude of superiority which Sir Hildebrand Oakes had resented in Malta. Lucien then asked that his request to be able to continue his journey to the USA should be put before His Royal Highness. He was ready to give a written assurance before leaving that he would not have anything to do with English politics while in the USA, but would live there as a private citizen, and not leave the territory of the USA one he had arrived there. If on the other hand, he was forced to continue his captivity, he repeated his previous request that he be allowed to live in the country, or in a town away from Ludlow, where the evening before there had been another incident, as Lieutenant-Colonel Leighton would no doubt report.

His plea to go to America was not granted. The British Government still regarded Lucien with a certain amount of suspicion, fearing that his rupture with Napoleon might only be feigned, or that if he did arrive in America he might induce the Americans to act against England.

During April relations with the people of Ludlow deteriorated, and there was an ugly incident involving two of Bonaparte's servants, Francesco Lunadei and Serafino Varelli, both of whom had accompanied them from Italy. In the late afternoon of 15 April, a local cabinet-maker, John Griffiths, and his friend, James Collier who was a tailor, were out walking near the castle when they were set upon by Lunadei and Varelli, who, mentioning the name of "Bony" threatened the two citizens with knives, the motive undoubtedly being robbery. The attackers were arrested and bound over to appear at Ludlow Quarter Sessions in July. Eventually Varelli at least was ordered to be treated as a close prisoner of war, having been dismissed from Lucien's service, and after his

appearance in court he was ordered to be sent by “the most expeditious mode compatible with a suitable economy” to the depot for prisoners of war at Stapleton, near Bristol.

Relations between Lucien and the Earl of Powis also deteriorated during the course of the spring and early summer. The interest which the earl had first shown towards the family had changed, according to Lucien himself, into “coldness and neglect”, and this for “some cause or other unknown to the family.” There was apparently a question of rent being demanded for the house, whereas Lucien had understood that it was being made available to him without charge. He now sent the sum of three hundred guineas to the earl “by way of compensation.” There is no doubt that the Bonapartes were living on an extravagant scale, and this may well have led the earl to demand some payment for his property being made available to them.

The Bonapartes were not however to remain in Ludlow for much longer. If the plea to continue the journey to America had been refused, that to leave Ludlow was granted. Lucien was permitted to purchase a property not at Presteigne, but in Worcestershire. This was the property of Thorngrove near Worcester, which he bought for £9000. The transaction was carried out under the name of an English banker since the law did not permit foreigners to purchase land in the United Kingdom. Lucien himself took up residence there on 1 July 1811, and his family joined him two days later.

At the end of July, the Earl of Coventry, Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Worcester, wrote to Lord Wellesley, and requested instructions with regard to the conduct he should observe towards Lucien, and he received the following reply:

*It has been deemed advisable to consider M. Lucien Bonaparte merely as an individual prisoner of war, without any reference to the situations held by his brothers on the continent of Europe. Some particular indulgences have been extended to him, which have been granted in consideration of his numerous family and of the circumstances under which they came within the reach of the British power; but it is not desirable that any special notice should be taken either of M. Lucien Bonaparte or of his family, by your Lordship as Lord Lieutenant of the County of Worcester.*

Although the family settled down very quickly to life in exile at Thorngrove, Lucien had not given up the idea of trying to continue the journey to America, and he was still hoping that his mother might intercede on his behalf to persuade Napoleon to negotiate an exchange for him. He had evidently received no reply to his previous letters to his mother, for on 20 August he wrote to her:

*My Dear Mother,*

*In spite of all my letters, I am not able to get any reply from you. As I am sure of your love, I do not doubt that you have often written to me, and I deplore my misfortune in seeing your letters stopped. What cruel hand can take pleasure thus in depriving me of the letters of a mother who is so dear to me? May this hand, whoever it may belong to, tire of such a barbarous employment, and no longer put an iron barrier between you and*

*me.*

*Not long ago we obtained permission to leave the town of Ludlow where we were subject to much unpleasantness; we are now the town of Worcester in a pretty countryside, and are much better here; we are all in good health, and beg you to write to us, and try to get your letters through to us. Give us news of Louis and other members of the family who have not forgotten us. If it is possible to get justice from the Emperor, beg him on my behalf to work for my exchange. Does he not owe this favour to me, who had left my own country twice to please him? For, being unable to barter my wife and children to him, I could have stayed in Italy in spite of his threats, and forced him into a patent persecution against me. I have therefore done him a service in leaving and I dare say that by the side of this last service, that of 18 Brumaire is nothing. The only reward I ask is that he enables me to go and seek a third country, if he refuses us, may God forgive him. Receive my dear mother, my loving greetings, may we always enjoy good health and peace in our hearts, and give us your blessing.*

*Your loving son, Lucien Bonaparte.*

*From the Estate of Thorngrove, near Worcester.*

*20 August 1811*

The British Government denied that previous letters had been held back, and for his part, Lucien in accordance of the terms of his parole, did submit his letters to Lieutenant-Colonel Leighton for approval and onward transmission. All incoming letters addressed to the family were delivered to the Lieutenant-Colonel, and then forwarded to Thorngrove. Lucien was in fact shortly to establish a correspondence with his mother and his brother Louis, and this contributed to his relative contentment after the unsettling period in Ludlow. The family might be in exile, but there were compensations, and the new place of residence was an extremely pleasant one.

The property of Thorngrove, which adjoined the turnpike road from Worcester to Ludlow, comprised, with mansion house, shrubberies and gardens, about 130 acres of rich arable land, pastures and orchards. The stone-built house stood on an eminence, and had pleasing views of the countryside. In front of it was an extensive lawn and an ornamental lake, and there was a gardener's house and a cottage on the estate. In the house itself Lucien installed the art treasures he had brought from Italy, the pictures, statues, engravings, cabinets of gems, and objects of antiquity which had eventually cleared the Custom House in Plymouth and arrived in Ludlow in the Spring.

A regular routine was now established in Lucien's life. He would rise at 8 am and breakfast with his family at nine o'clock. Then he would retire to the small cottage on the estate which was about half a mile from the house, and there he would be occupied with his literary pursuits for the rest of the morning, although his family were at liberty to visit him if they wished to do so. He was working on his epic poem, begun in Italy, and continued in Malta and then in Ludlow. After dinner with the family at 2 pm he would, weather permitting, indulge in outdoor activities such as shooting and when he went out shooting he preferred to use Captain Warren's fowling-piece to any other. The evening would often be spent in literary or artistic pursuits, and the family generally retired about

ten o'clock.

Much interest was shown in the family, and within a few weeks of their arrival at Thorngrove, the following account appeared in a provincial newspaper: *Lucien Bonaparte is settled in his new residence near Worcester. The establishment is about fifty in family. All the young Bonapartes have two servants in constant attendance, besides a cook and a tutor. About a fortnight since, the whole family were employed in making hay before the house. They used nothing but their hands in throwing it about, and laughed at such English people of the neighbourhood who had a different custom. Lucien appears to be always wrapped up in thought and gloom; he moves gracefully to such persons as salute him, but never speaks, as he is almost ignorant of the English language. Madame is agreeable and chatty, and very particular in making the younger part of her family observe the strictest politeness to strangers. The furniture of the house is an odd mixture of splendour and meanness, as is the dress of the family in general. The youngest child has so much gilt and glitter in its dress, that, in the sun, it resembles an orb of moving fire. The inspector of his letters goes daily to Thorngrove as the letters arrive. There is very little land attached to the house, and so far from Lucien being an agriculturalist, he does not appear to have any ideas on the subject. He has a range of parole of four miles from his house which includes Worcester.*

It would appear that the statement regarding the four mile parole limit was incorrect, because in a letter of 15 August 1811 to Thomas Knight of Downton Castle, Ludlow, with whom he had become acquainted during his stay in that town, Lucien regretted his inability to visit Downton because it was outside the limit of ten miles which had to be strictly observed.

It does however appear that on one occasion Lucien did visit Stratford-upon-Avon. Many years later, a visitor to the birthplace of Shakespeare noticed a board hanging over the kitchen fireplace bearing the following inscription:

*About the year 1810, Lucien Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon, passing through Stratford, visited this house, and inscribed, where this frame now hangs, four lines in honour of the poet. These, the then owner of the house, a silly and capricious person, ordered to be white-washed over. As they are the composition of one of the most distinguished foreigners who have done honour to Shakespeare, a copy of them is here subjoined:*

*“The eye of Genius glistens to admire  
How memory hails the sound of Shakespeare's lyre -  
One tear I'll shed to form a crystal shrine  
For all that's grand, immortal and divine.”*

*Buonaparte, Principe di Canino.*

This board was in place in 1848, but had been removed by 1852, and it presents some puzzling features. If Lucien did visit the birthplace it must have been later than 1810, because he did not arrive in the Midlands until the very last days of that year. Even long after that, his English was very poor, and he would not have signed himself as “Principe di Canino” before the title was bestowed upon him by the Pope in 1814. Furthermore, Stratford-on-Avon was well outside the ten mile parole limit which Lucien himself states was in force at Thorngrove. Nevertheless it does seem that the most likely time for such a visit to have been made was during the time he spent in Worcestershire, and he may well have received permission to go to Stratford, or to pass through the town on the way to somewhere else. He did not spell his name in the Italian style “Buonaparte” at this time, but we must remember that this was not the original inscription but a copy of it made much later, and it does seem to constitute some evidence of a visit there made during Lucien's exile.

Shortly after his arrival at Thorngrove, Lucien found himself in financial difficulties. The removal from Italy, and then the purchase of the house had proved very costly. To add to this, he had deposited the equivalent of some £8.000 with the French banking house of Le Mesurier in London, and in the autumn of 1811 this banking house went into bankruptcy. He would in fact have lost a lot more money had he not been warned by friends of the impending disaster, and drawn out all the money which was on immediate call. Nevertheless he was short of funds, and he appealed to his brother Louis for help. This however was not forthcoming, but he did obtain a considerable sum from his mother through secret channels, which helped him over his immediate difficulties.

Some eighteen months after the Bonapartes had taken up residence at Thorngrove, there was an addition to the family. This was Louis-Lucien, a son who was born there on 4 January 1813. He was to spend many years of his life in England, and become a noted philologist and authority on dialects. He was eventually granted a pension from the civil list in recognition of his services to philology, and was said to have dined often with Queen Victoria. He was a great friend of the Prince Imperial, who frequently visited him at his London home in Bayswater. He died in Italy in 1891, but he was buried at St Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery at Kensal Green, the Queen being represented at the funeral by Earl Romilly.

It was at Thorngrove too that Lucien finally completed the composition of his epic poem in twenty-four cantos, *Charlelemagne: ou l'église délivrée*. As early as the autumn of 1811 approaches were being made to the publishers, and the original intention was that Byron's publisher, William Miller, should bring out the poem. It was however finally Longman & Co. who published it in the original French in 1814, following this in 1815 with an English translation. Byron himself had seen part of the poem in manuscript. He may have seen it during his visits to Eywood, the home of Lady Oxford, near Presteigne, which is not far from Ludlow, and where, as we have already seen, Lucien had wished to purchase a house in the spring of 1811. On the other hand he could have it through his friends in the Holland House Circle in London. Even if Lucien himself was not

allowed to travel far, he did entertain at Thorngrove, and his guests included Lord Holland, the Marquis of Lansdowne, and Lord Brougham. There is no record of Byron having met Lucien, although he had tried to arrange such a meeting on more than one occasion. He had obviously seen the manuscript without Lucien's knowledge, because he wrote to Dr Samuel Butler, one of the translators of the poem, on 20 October 1811:

*The little I have seen by stealth and accident of "Charlemagne" quite electrified me. It must be a stupendous work - it seems to be of another age, and, I grieve for the certainty, of another country. . . . M. Lucien will occupy the same space in the annals of poetry which his imperial brother has secured in those of history - except that with posterity the verdict must be in his favour.*

Eminent writers had been approached for the translation of the work into English, including Sir Walter Scott, and Thomas Moore. Both declined, and Sir Walter Scott wrote scathingly of the proposition to Lady Abercorn on 18 September 1811 "A French Epic and by a Bonaparte, I should have expired under the task." He also commented that it was enough to "make one yawn their jaws off the hinges", and refused the work in spite of the attraction of the fees offered. Eventually it was the Revd Samuel Butler, Headmaster of Shrewsbury School, and the Revd Francis Hodgson, a friend of Byron's who undertook the translation.

In spite of Byron's favourable reactions to the part of the poem he had seen, the critics were not so impressed when the work appeared. In December 1814 William Hazlitt, writing in *The Champion* said:

*It seldom happens that the same family produces an emperor and an epic poet. So it is, however, in the present instance. The Brother of Buonaparte may be allowed to take his rank among the poets, as Buonaparte himself has done present quite the same formidable front to the established possessors of the seats of the muses, as the imitator of Charlemagne did to the hereditary occupiers of thrones. Our poet is not the same monster of genius that his brother was of power.*

Posterity has proved Hazlitt's judgement to be more accurate than that of Byron, and the poem has long since been confined to oblivion.

After the completion of *Charlemagne*, Lucien did however while still at Thorngrove, begin to write a second epic poem, the *Cyreide*, which was later published in Paris. Lucien somewhat grandly described this as the "Odyssey to his Iliad"! Furthermore his wife, Alexandrine, composed an epic poem in ten cantos entitled *Bathilde, reine des Francs*, which was later published in Paris as well. While the Bonapartes were occupied their literary activities, Charles de Chatillon was busy with illustrations for Lucien's work, and he also painted a fine miniature of Alexandrine, which is dated "Thorngrove 1812".

Lucien himself was a man of diverse interests, and one of them which he took up with enthusiasm was astronomy. He had purchased from Herschel a large telescope, which it

is claimed, was the very one with which the famous astronomer had discovered the planet Uranus. It may well be that Lucien had made the acquaintance of Herschel when the latter visited Paris in 1799., during which visit the astronomer had had an audience with Napoleon, who was then First Consul. In any case Lucien was in correspondence with him later on, and did purchase a large telescope from him. He is said to have set up a small observatory in the grounds of Thorngrove, and assisted in the mathematical calculations by his chaplain, Père Maurice as he began his study of the stars. In later years he was to make use of this telescope when he had returned to Italy.

The Bonapartes remained at Thorngrove until 1814, leading a relatively uneventful life in the country. There were, however, some minor disturbances, as for instance in May 1814, when there was trouble with another of the servants who had accompanied them from Italy. This time it was Luigi Espasiani, who, it was reported, “having a trifling dispute with the coachman, was so enraged with him that, with a knife, he stabbed him in the belly.” The man who had been stabbed recovered, but the servant was immediately dismissed by Lucien, and taken off to the county gaol. He too, as in the case of Varelli, following the incident in Ludlow, was treated as a close prisoner of war.

By the time this incident took place Lucien was on the point of leaving Thorngrove for Italy. He had made plans for his return there when his brother abdicated in April, and now, leaving his family behind, he set off for Rome. He had become a well established figure in the Worcestershire countryside, and his journey was followed with interest back in England. He arrived in Rome on 26 May, and was received by the Pope that same evening. On 18 August the Pope bestowed upon him the title of a Roman prince, and he became Prince of Canino. Some four days later Alexandrine, with the children and members of the household left Thorngrove, and proceeding via Dover and Ostend, and then at a leisurely pace across Europe to Italy, arrived in Rome in October, where the family were reunited.

Meanwhile in England, on 24 October 1814 an auction had begun at Thorngrove of the contents of the house. It will be recalled that at the beginning of the Bonapartes' residence there, a newspaper report had stated that the furniture of the house was “an odd mixture of splendour and meanness.” By the end of their stay there, the splendour certainly dominated, as reference to the sale catalogue for the auction shows. Among the items listed were:

*Many large and elegant solid mahogany presses and wardrobes, of exquisitely fine wood and workmanship, swing and dressing glasses, of large dimensions in gold burnished mahogany, and fancy painted frames, a very beautiful figure glass in an elegant rosewood swing frame, . . . an elegant drawing room suite comprising two large fancy painted sofas with moveable backs, seats and sides stuffed with curled hair, feather cushions to same, 12 two-arm chairs,, fret backs, 3 conversation or window chairs to correspond, the whole very richly covered in green silk, to match the window curtains, which with valence and wings are ornamented with black and green tassels and fringe and neat painted cornices,. . . the musical instruments and two fine-toned French piano-fortes, a sweet-*

*toned harpsichord, and excellent barrel organ and a guitar. The capital billiard table is 12 feet by 6 feet, in a good state, and complete with balls, cues, mace and markers.*

From the cellar was offered:

*218 bottles of prime fine-flavoured crusted port, 28 bottles of champagne, 12 of madeira, and 40 bottles of white port.*

Although Lucien was undoubtedly pressed for money during the early days at Thorngrove, it would seem that by the end of his stay there, the house had been furnished in an elegant manner, and the family were living in a very comfortable, if not to say grand style, having consideration to their status as prisoners of war of the British. Thorngrove itself, that is the house and the estate, were offered for sale some twelve months later in the autumn of 1815.

In Italy Lucien and his family settled down once more to life in Rome and on their country estates. On Napoleon's escape from Elba in 1815, Lucien went to Paris where he was reunited and reconciled with his brother. After Waterloo, the brothers met again, and then parted for the last time, Napoleon leaving for exile in St Helena, and Lucien returning to Rome. Some time later, during his exile on St Helena, Napoleon was to read his brother's epic poem, *Charlemagne: ou l'église délivrée*. He found it completely boring, and commented that it would be left to gather dust on library shelves, and earn its author at the most a few lines, probably derogatory, in literary works of reference. This, in fact, was to be the fate of Lucien's monumental work, on which he had laboured during his years in exile.

During the years that followed Waterloo, Lucien and his family were to receive many visitors from the British Isles, and in the years to come more than one of his children were to return to the land of their childhood exile, a land which they had first seen on a wet winter's day in the year 1810.