

THE LEGENDARY AND THE REAL NAPOLEON

AN OCCULT STUDY.

BY HENRY RIDGELY EVANS.

"The real hero of modern legend, the legend that towers above the whole century, is Napoleon."—Marc Debrit: *Inter. Quar.*, Vol. VI., No. 1. Sept.—Dec., 1902.

"After Marengo, you are the hero of Europe, the man of Providence, anointed of the Lord; after Austerlitz, Napoleon the Great; after Waterloo, the Corsican ogre."—Victor Hugo: *William Shakspeare*.

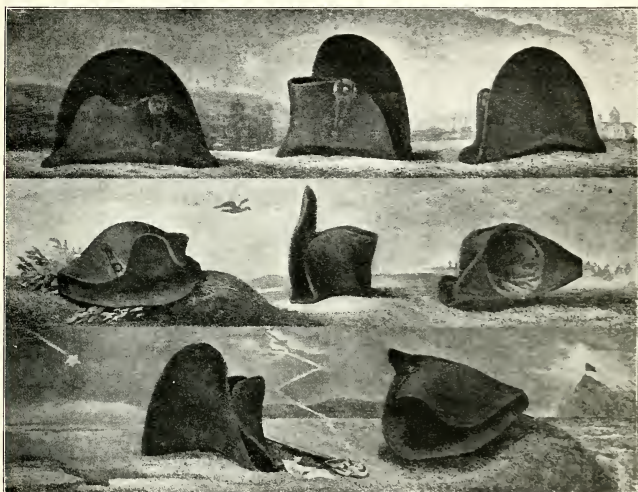
I.

IT has been the fate of the great historical personages—warriors, priests, poets, kings and reformers—to have woven about them a tissue of myths and fables. Miraculous stories have grown up about the Christ, Moses, Mohammed, Buddha, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Alexander the Great, Charlemagne and Napoleon I, entirely obscuring the true characters of these great men. They remind one of the interminable bandages wrapt about the Egyptian mummy. One has to unwind these cerement cloths in order to get a view of the body—to see it in its staring nakedness. It is, then, the duty of the student of history to dissipate these myths and fanciful stories, to treat men as real beings, and not as demi-gods.

Let us take Napoleon I as an example. There is a Napoleonic legend that persists in spite of the iconoclastic efforts of modern historians to destroy it. Like Banquo's ghost it will not *down*. The name of Napoleon is still one to conjure with. We make pilgrimages to his tomb, under the gilded dome of the Invalides, and offer up our devotions to the ashes of the dead hero. By paying a small fee to a uniformed official, we may gaze upon his little

cocked hat—*le Chapeau de Marengo*, which has been metamorphosed into a symbol or fetish by a French painter. Every few years there is a tremendous revival of the Napoleonic cult. Witness the extraordinary enthusiasm over Rostand's play *L'Aiglon*, with its memories of the great soldier and his ill-fated son, the poor eaglet who beat his feeble wings in vain against the golden bars of his cage

Says Debrit: "The Napoleonic legend did not arise at once, that is, while he was the all-powerful master of France, and while



THE EIGHT EPOCHS OF THE LIFE OF NAPOLEON.

This original series of hats, presented in different significant positions, is from the pencil of Steuben, one of the most fertile painters of the First Empire, and symbolises the eight principal epochs in Napoleon's career: (1) Vendémiaire, (2) Consulate, (3) Empire, (4) Austerlitz, (5) Wagram, (6) Moscow, (7) Waterloo, (8) St. Helena. (From Armand Dayot's *Napoléon raconté par l'image*. Paris: Librairie Hachette & Cie. 1895.)

he was crushing Europe under his iron heel with an amount of free-and-easiness, and a contempt for the rights of others that has been equaled or surpassed only by the great Asiatic conquerors, Tamerlane and Ghenghis Khan. At that time he was admired and feared, but he had not yet become, as he did become later, the ideal of grandeur and chivalric majesty. His epic commenced after his fall only

* * * It was developed after Waterloo, especially when the vanquished despot appeared in fallen majesty on that rock of St. Helena, which turned out, indeed, to be a magnificent pedestal for him."

Napoleon's memoirs, by their "vast number of misstatements, many of them evidently intentional," and the effort to foist into history apocryphal documents, have "helped forward," says J. R. Seeley (*Napoleon I*, p. 230), "the process by which he was idealized after his death." This they accomplished by dwelling almost exclusively upon the earlier period and on the Waterloo campaign. "They reminded the world that the Prometheus now agonizing on the lonely rock, who had lately fallen in defending a free nation against a coalition of kings and emperors, was the same who, in his youth, had been the champion of the First French Republic against the First Coalition. They consigned the long interval to oblivion. Hence the Napoleonic legend, which has grown up in the very midst of the nineteenth century, and would perhaps never have been seriously shaken but for the failure of the Second Empire. Look at Napoleon's career between 1803 and 1814, when it was shaped most freely by his own will; you see a republic skilfully undermined and a new hereditary monarchy set up in its place. This new monarchy stands out as the great enemy and oppressor of nationalities, so that the nationality movement, when it begins in Spain and Tyrol and spreads through North Germany, is a reaction against Napoleon's tyranny. But in 1815 he succeeded in posing as a champion and martyr of the nationality principle against the Holy Alliance. The curtain fell upon this pose. It brought back the memory of that Bonaparte, who at the end of the eighteenth century had seemed the antique republican hero dreamed by Rousseau, and men forgot once more how completely he had disappointed their expectations. By looking only at the beginning and at the end of his career, and by disregarding all the intermediate period, an imaginary Napoleon has been obtained, who is a republican, not a despot; a lover of liberty, not an authoritarian; a champion of the Revolution, not the destroyer of the Revolution; a hero of independence, not a conqueror; a friend of the people, not a contemner of the people; a man of heart and virtue, not a ruthless militarist, cynic, and Machiavellian. This illusion led to the restoration of the Napoleonic dynasty in 1852."

Lord Wolseley takes similar ground. He says (*Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Jan., 1903):

"His (Napoleon's) longing for praise was strong, but his de-

termination to secure posthumous fame was still stronger. It was not enough, it did not satisfy his insatiable craving for renown, that all nations should recognize him as the greatest of living men; he would have his name coupled forever with those of Alexander and of Julius Cæsar, and placed beside theirs in the world's great Valhalla. Of all he wrote and dictated at St. Helena, this aspiration was the keynote. Those who assisted him in the compilation of the hodgepodge of interesting untruths, concocted there for publication, helped in this plot to conceal facts and deceive future generations. He would have had us forget the heroes of other ages, and would have history filled with the story of his fame alone. He placed on record in his beautiful island prison, not what he had thought or said or done during the vicissitudes of his unparalleled career, but what he wished history to accept and repeat as facts forever.

"There is no great historical character of modern times whose early life has been more variously recorded than his has been, and none contributed to this result more than he did himself. The large amount of fiction with which his story abounds has so long passed current as fact *that legends have been created* [the italics are mine] *on its foundations to further what I may well term the 'Napoleonic worship.'* These fables are still repeated in many of his most important biographies as facts beyond all dispute. A divine origin was claimed for Julius Cæsar, and he boasted the tradition. But in the early life of Napoleon, and in the history of his family, there was much that evidently accord with his own notions of what should be the story of a Cæsar's youth, and of a Cæsar's parents and nearest relations. As I take it, the aim of this great Corsican romancer was to mystify posterity concerning the occurrences of his early years by relating them not as they were but as he conceived they should have been in the life of the Second Cæsar—Napoleon, Emperor of the French."

II.

Napoleon's Egyptian campaign was productive of legends.

When the hero of Lodi, after his splendid campaign in Italy, suggested Egypt, to the Directory, as the scene of future conflict and glory for the French arms, the legislative figureheads of France were not slow in taking the hint. They felt themselves insecure in their imitation curule chairs as long as the idol of the people and the army remained inactive at home. The excuse for the expedition was this: To strike a blow at the English in the East, and cut them off from communication with India. It was an extravagant idea alto-

gether, this sending a French army into the Orient, to die by the sword and the plague amid the burning sands of the desert.

But the Directory wanted to get rid of Napoleon—they feared the future Cæsar, and consented to his plans. What splendid dreams of conquest and glory moved the ambitious soul of Bonaparte at this time? Who could fathom the burning and mysterious thoughts of that mighty soul? Did this lion heart aim at the conquering of the world? Who can tell?

Napoleon's efforts to conciliate the natives were theatrical in the extreme. His knowledge of men was profound, but he utterly failed to comprehend the Moslem mind and character—that grave, drowsy, Oriental soul, so deeply indifferent to Western ideas and progress. When Cairo fell into the hands of the French, one of Napoleon's first efforts was to call an assemblage of Arab chieftains and form them into a Divan, or Senatorial body, to assist in governing Egypt, under the guiding hand of France. Then he issued the following remarkable proclamation, which was translated into Arabic:

“We (the French army) also are true Musselmans. Is it not we who have destroyed the Knights of Malta, because these madmen believed that it was God's will that they should make war on Musselmans? Thrice happy those who shall be with us. They shall prosper in their fortune and in their rank. Happy those who shall be neutral; they will have time to know us, and they will range themselves on our side. But woe to those who shall take up arms in favor of the Mameluke and fight against us. There shall be no hope for them; they shall all perish.” (July 2, 1798.)

The soldiers only laughed at this bulletin and the Arabs received it with disdain. General Menou embraced Mahometanism, but his example, says Lanfrey, the French historian, “only excited ridicule, and he found very few imitators; but if the soldiers had no religious convictions, they had a proud feeling of their moral superiority. This obstacle made Bonaparte regret that he had not lived in ancient times when conquerors had no such scruples, and, speaking of Alexander the Great, he said he envied him his power of proclaiming himself the son of Jupiter Ammon, which had been worth more to him in his subjugation of Egypt than twenty battles gained. He adopted the sententious and imaginative language of the East, and never spoke to the Sheiks or Muftis without quoting on every occasion verses of the Koran, and continually boasted to them of having ‘destroyed the Pope and overthrown the Cross.’ He tried hard to strike the fatalist imagination by asserting that human efforts

could not prevail against him, and by attributing to himself a kind of Divine commission to complete the work of Mahomet."

Napoleon's invasion of Syria was the sequel of one of those vast dreams of conquest in which he was wont to indulge. I quote again from Lanfrey: "At one time he studied the map of the deserts which separated Syria from Persia, fought over again the campaigns of Alexander, and wrote to Tippoo-Saib that he was preparing to 'deliver him from the iron yoke of England.' At another time, he pictured himself as raising an insurrection of the Druses and Greek Christians against the Turks, and marching with this immense army upon Constantinople, and then, to use his own expression, 'taking Europe in the rear,' and overthrowing the Austrian monarchy on his way, and finally making the most marvelous triumphal entry into France recorded in the history of man."

During Napoleon's expedition to Syria two rebellions took place in Egypt. One was that of an obscure fanatic, who declared himself to be the Angel El'mody, promised in the Koran to the faithful in the time of persecution. Says Lanfrey: "His only food was milk, in which he merely dipped his fingers and passed them over his lips; and his only weapon was a handful of dust, which he threw in the air, assuring his followers that this alone would disperse our army." Several thousand natives were concerned in this insurrection. It was quelled by General Lanusse, who put fifteen hundred of them to the sword. The angel who expected to make his enemies 'bite the dust' was slain. His weapon proved a failure.

One of Napoleon's adventures at this period was his visit to the Greek monastery on Mt. Sinai, where, it is said, he inscribed his name under that of Mahomet in the register kept by the monks, but Bourrienne discredits the story.

History tells us that the soldiers who went on the Egyptian expedition had their hopes buoyed up with promises of wealth and rare treasures to be obtained in the new Golconda. In this respect they were like the swarthy followers of Cortez and Pizarro. Where were these great treasures to be found? In despoiling the poor fellahen? Hardly so. For we know that it was the intention of Napoleon to propitiate the natives in every manner possible, and to win them over to French interests. Where then were to be found these fabled treasures? Perchance deep down in the bowels of the pyramids—hidden there by the olden Pharaohs centuries ago. This belief antedated the time of Napoleon. Caliph Al Mamoun, Moslem conqueror of Egypt, and son of that Haroun Al Raschid who figures so frequently in the "Arabian Nights," entertained the idea of

precious treasures stowed away in the Great Pyramid, and ordered his army to quarry out an opening into the monument; but nothing rewarded the Arab workmen for their gigantic task save a solitary stone chest, hidden away in the King's Chamber—an open, lidless, despoiled sarcophagus. The soldiers were incensed, but Al Mamoun quieted their anger by the perpetration of a pious fraud. He directed the malcontents to delve to a certain spot, indicated by him, and they soon came upon a “sum of gold, exactly equal to the wages claimed for their work, which gold he had himself secretly deposited at the place.”

Napoleon took with him, as is well known, a number of learned and brilliant savants, whose knowledge of Egyptian antiquities, hieroglyphics, and the like was profound. These archæologists went for the ostensible purpose of studying the monuments and relics of the land, in order to report upon the same for the benefit of science, and bring back with them a magnificent collection of curios for the museums of France. Their presence with the army, though a matter of ridicule among the soldiers, seemed to give color to the firm-rooted belief that treasure-hunting was the aim and ambition of the Little Corporal. When a square was formed by a regiment to resist the onslaughts of a fanatical Mameluke cavalry, the order was usually “Savants and asses in the centre.” The savants, as the reader will recall to mind, rode donkeys, like the regulation Egyptian tourists of today. The reader will find much curious and interesting data concerning the rumors current during the French occupation of Egypt as to Napoleon's acquisition of immense secret treasures discovered somewhere by him in the pyramids, in the gossipy memoirs of Madame Junot wife of the General-in-Chief's favorite officer.

“Bonaparte,” says Bourrienne, (*Memoirs*, Vol. I) “on the 14th of July, 1799, left Cairo for the pyramids. He intended spending three or four months in examining the ruins of the ancient necropolis of Memphis; but he was suddenly obliged to alter his plan. * * * Now the fact is, that Bonaparte never even entered the Great Pyramid. He never had any thought of entering it. I certainly should have accompanied him had he done so, for I never quitted his side for a single moment in the desert. He caused some persons to enter into the ancient tomb, while he remained outside, and received from them, on their return, an account of what they had seen. In other words they informed him there was nothing to be seen.” This event gave rise to a silly story that Napoleon entered the Great Pyramid and in the presence of the muftis and ulemas

cried out, "Glory to Allah! God only is God, and Mahomet is his prophet."

History tells us that Napoleon departed hurriedly for Europe, after learning from some old newspapers sent him by his enemy, Sir Sidney Smith, that the French arms on the Continent were suffering reverses, and that the Directory was rotten to the core with its own imbecility. The time had come for the overthrow of this body. Junot, who loved Napoleon as his God, was heart-broken when his general deserted him. He applied to Kleber, the second in command, for leave to follow Bonaparte. It was granted, and the gallant soldier prepared to set out for France in the wake of his beloved leader. The story went like wild-fire through the army that Junot would carry with him an immense treasure—the treasure of the pyramids, which Napoleon in his haste was unable to take with him, and in consequence of the fact had left his factotum to transport, as part of his baggage. Says the Duchesse d'Abrantes:

"A report was circulated in the army that Junot was carrying away the treasures found in the pyramids by the General-in-Chief. The matter was carried so far that several subalterns and soldiers proceeded to the shore, and some of them went on board the merchantman which was to sail with Junot the same evening. They rummaged about, but found nothing; at length they came to a prodigious chest, which ten men could not move, between decks. 'Here is the treasure,' cried the soldiers. 'Here is our pay that has been kept from us above a year; where is the key?' Junot's valet, an honest German, shouted to them in vain, with all his might, that the chest did not belong to his 'Cheneral.' They would not listen to him, Unluckily Junot, who was not to embark till evening, was not then on board. The mutineers seized a hatchet and began to cut away at the chest, which they would have soon broken up had not the ship's carpenter come running, quite out of breath. 'What the devil are you at?' cried he. 'Mad fellows that you are; stop! don't destroy my chest—here is the key.' He opened it immediately, and lo—the tools of the master carpenter of the ship.

"The odious calumny, the stupid invention, relative to the treasures of the Pharaohs, had meanwhile found believers elsewhere, as well as in the army. The English, for example, had been simple enough to give credit to this story. A ship was even cruising off Alexandria, and the merchantman in which Junot had sailed was obliged to bring to at the first summons of the *Theseus*, man-of-war, Captain Steele, while Junot and his aid-de-camp, Captain Lallemand, had not the power to make the least resistance, how well dis-

posed soever they might have been to do so. 'We were waiting for you,' said Captain Steele to Junot and his companion."

III.

There is then a legendary Napoleon and a real Napoleon. The real Napoleon is gradually coming to light, and the mythical one is fading into the background. Modern historians are taking middle ground. The great Emperor is neither a monster of wickedness nor a hero-saint. Of his genius as a sovereign and as a strategist he has but few equals, if any. "Seldom," says Debrit, "has there appeared on this earth an intelligence better armed, or, in other words, better adapted to the work it had to perform and to the time at which it was to manifest itself. He found society in a state of complete decomposition, and his instinct for organization enabled him to create out of it a new structure, made in his own image, moulded, as it were, on his own frame. * * *

"There are some five or six men in history that may be compared to him, and it will always be difficult to decide which of them all was the greatest, that is, the strongest, the most despotic, and the most feared. If he did not experience the enjoyment of ordering vast executions of men such as those in which his predecessors loved to contemplate their own grandeur and the nothingness of mankind, it is because he lived in Paris in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, and not in Nineveh under the kings, the sons of Sargon. But he caused blood to flow in streams upon the battlefields for motives that were scarcely better, and he humbled more rulers and destroyed more states than any Sennacherib or Asurbanipal. He also had his hecatombs, and in this respect he need envy no one."

As to Napoleon the man, a flood of contemporary witnesses like De Remusat, Pasquier, Chaptal, etc., etc., bear witness to his character. He was the giant egotist of the world. In him the cold-blooded motto of the founder of the Jesuits, "the end justifies the means," was fully realized—and says Debrit, "there was but one inviolable right, the Emperor's will." But violence bears in itself the germ of weakness, and here is the unimpeachable verdict rendered by history, by the mouth of that servant of the empire (Pasquier), on the policy of excess and wilfulness that believed in violence and conquest only, and was constantly directed toward crushing some one,—now France, now the Pope, and now Europe into the bargain.

"'He ended,' says Pasquier, by being unable to secure to France

its former frontiers, and he handed us over almost defenseless to the spirit of ultramontaniam, and the encroachments of the papal power.'”

France was hypnotized by Napoleon, and saw only glory and conquest, instead of madness and ruin.

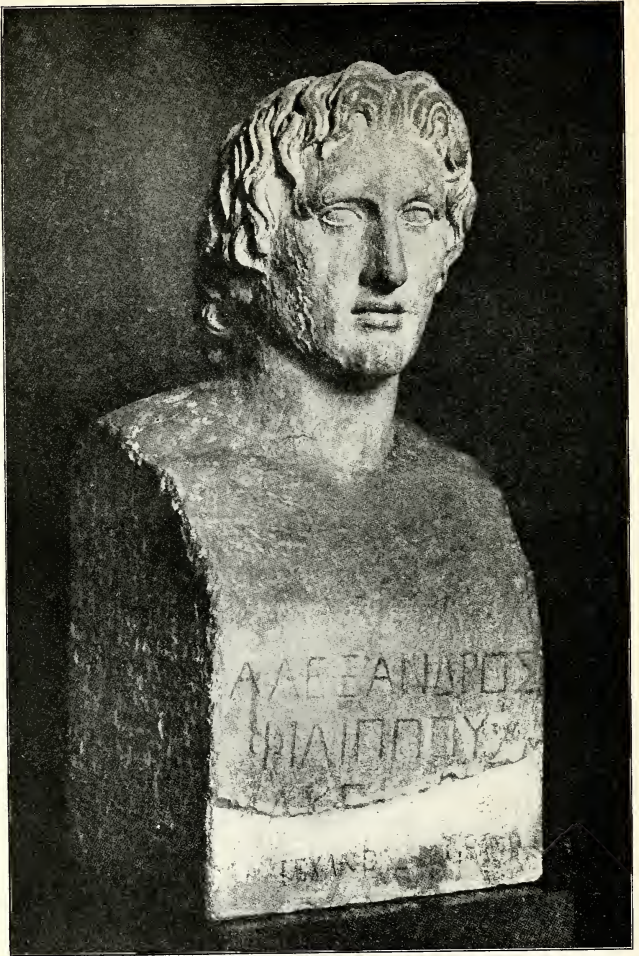
Cæsar Lombroso, the great criminologist, has this to say:

“Alexander the Great [and] Napoleon I * * * * * have the [criminal] type complete, and only the prestige coming from their great deeds (which always augments after death) makes us blind, so that in them, physically and morally, we only see the traits of genius and not those of the criminal. It is certain that in the busts and portraits of Napoleon I, after the Consulate, we find no more the asymmetric face, stern eyes, the exaggeration of the jaw bones, and the alveolar prognathism which he really had, and, in the same way, few busts of Alexander the Great reveal his criminal type, with vertical wrinkles on the forehead, with the acrocephaly, etc. The same thing happens with us in judging their actions; we go to the point of excusing common crimes (murder of the Duke d'Enghein) and even as far as considering the butchery of the Borgias as works of genius, as did Machiavelli, and admiring the most insensate enterprises, such as those of Napoleon in Spain and Russia, and those of Alexander in India, taking them for profound conceptions as though errors and crimes, when made on a large scale, change their nature. Not only do people forgive, but they forget, the cynical indifference of Napoleon to the thousands of deaths which he caused and at the sight of which he did not know what to say except, ‘A night of Paris will adjust all this,’ and they also forgot the order to shoot *en masse* 300 innocent Calabrese, setting fire to their village, because some one had shot at his soldiers, * * * and the firing of an entire city at the order of Alexander the Great only to please a courtesan, who murdered his best friend.”*

IV.

Napoleon has been apotheosized like Alexander the Great, whom he resembles in many points of character. With his arms crossed on his breast, and his little hat on his head, he seems, in all his pictures, to be defying the universe like a demi-god, and imposing his iron will upon the races of mankind. Legend-makers eighteen hundred years from now will perhaps characterize him as a ruthless van-

* Lombroso: *Inter. Quar.*, Vol. VI, No. 2. Dec., 1902 to March, 1903, page 239.



ALEXANDER THE GREAT.
(Musée du Louvre, Paris.)

dal from a barbarous island called Corsica, who swept over the civilized world carrying death and destruction in his train. Artists will picture him enthroned upon a huge truncated pyramid of human skulls, the spoils of his enemies. Many will express doubts that he



NAPOLEON ON THE BRIDGE OF ARCOLE.

(After the oil painting of Baron Gros.)

ever existed. He will appear in the light of a mythical hero like King Arthur of Britain. This is not altogether improbable. Archbishop Whately in his essay, "Doubts Concerning the Existence

of Napoleon," and M. Jean-Baptiste Tere's "Grand Erratum, the Non-Existence of Napoleon Proved," have given us curious examples of how this may be brought about. Those who believe in the reincarnations of the soul upon the earth, like the Theosophists, will perhaps endeavor to show that Napoleon was identical with Rameses II. (the Sesostris of the Greeks), with Alexander the Great, and also with Charlemagne. Let us see where this bizarre fancy will lead us.

In the splendid museum of Turin, Italy, among the ancient Egyptian relics, is a statue of Rameses, the face of which strongly resembles that of Napoleon, especially when seen in profile. Georg



BARTELDA, A YOUNG APACHE, RESEMBLING NAPOLEON I.*

Ebers, the learned Egyptologist and novelist, calls attention to this strange likeness in his novel "Uarda." It is an interesting fact to

* After a photograph taken by Mr. T. A. Rinehart, Omaha, Neb. Reproduced from the *School Journal*. Courtesy of the photographer and E. L. Kellogg & Co., publishers, 61 E. 9th St., New York.

Concerning this portrait, Mrs. Blanche E. Little writes: "Bartelda, the Apache Indian, whose profile in his younger days so much resembled that of Napoleon, belongs to the San Carlos Apache tribe of Indians, one of the most war-like tribes. They live in Arizona and New Mexico, near the boundary of Mexico. These people are a branch of the Athabaskan family, and their name translated means 'The Men.' It was of them General Crook said: 'They are the tigers of the human species.' This tribe came from the Arctic region. From the ice fields of the north they fought their way

note, that Napoleon frequently remarked to his friends that he was all but certain of his identity with the Gothic hero Charlemagne.

Victor Hugo says (*The Rhine, a Tour from Paris to Mayence, etc.*):

“In 1804, when Bonaparte became known as Napoleon, he visited Aix-la-Chapelle, the birthplace of Charlemagne. Josephine, who accompanied him, had the caprice to seat herself upon the throne of Charlemagne [One of the relics to be seen in the old abbey]; but Napoleon, out of respect for the great Emperor, took off his hat and remained for some time standing, and in silence. The following fact is somewhat remarkable, and struck me forcibly: In 814 Charlemagne died; a thousand years afterwards, most presumably about the same hour, Napoleon fell—1814.”

Napoleon's similarity to Alexander the Great has always possessed a fascination for me. Both were possessed with dreams of world-conquest, with the same contempt for human life, the same tireless capacity to labor, and both had the same military tactics—to perceive with an eagle's eye the vulnerable point in the foe's army and to hurl with lightning rapidity upon that spot an overwhelming phalanx of men. Napoleon, like Alexander, conquers Egypt, communes with the Sphinx, and dreams of becoming a species of demi-god, or Oriental despot. Compare the portraits of Alexander, such as we find them upon gems, coins, etc., with that of Napoleon, and the mind is at once struck with the wonderful resemblance. Of course it is all fanciful and bizarre, and one might well say that Napoleon cultivated the Greek type and the artists and sculptors who fixed his likeness upon canvas or in stone flattered him to this extent.

through the possessions of hostile tribes to the warmer climate of Arizona and New Mexico. This tribe of Indians, possibly more than any other, illustrates the accepted idea, that the Indian is physically perfect. They are built like athletes and possess not only great strength, but that other very important quality, great power of endurance under the most trying hardships. This tribe has been made famous by the generalship and prowess of Geronimo, whom it took the Government eighteen years to subdue and capture. During all those terrible years the wily old Indian led our troops a wild and terrible chase.

“Bartelda, with his smooth blue-black hair falling over his shoulders and forehead, bears a remarkable resemblance to the well-known portrait of the youthful Napoleon. In his youth Bartelda had a training, that, had not the Government (through General Miles) subdued and captured Geronimo, might have placed his name next to that of Geronimo as a fighter. Possibly he would have shown the generalship of Napoleon, as the resemblance in his in his face would suggest. These Apaches fought under Geronimo until the atrocities of this hardened warrior became too great, when they withdrew their part of the tribe from his support.

“The photograph of Bartelda that is to be used as an illustration with your article was taken about six years since.”

The Russian campaign proved productive of legends. In the famous retreat Napoleon travelled usually in a luxurious coach fitted up as a sleeping-carriage. Says Bigelow (*History of the German Struggle for Liberty*, vol. 2, p. 27): "He only walked for the sake of stirring his blood. Of course he had a complete camp kitchen and an outfit of wine, and lived as well as it was possible to do. That he shared the struggles and sufferings of his men, even to the extent of riding his horse in their midst, is the invention of patriotic painters and novelists. Napoleon respected the doctrine *l'état c'est moi*, and felt that he was serving the state badly if he neglected his own health." The soldiers during the retreat were burdened down with all sorts of articles taken from the sacred city of Moscow, money, jewelry, furs, costly laces and silks, icons, clocks, etc. Napoleon carried off with him as the *pièce de résistance* of the plundering expedition, the cross from the top of the Kremlin—"as though to prove that he had conquered the country by desecrating its capital. But it proved to be nothing but base metal, gaudily gilded for the purpose of deceiving those far away." Notwithstanding this, it was carried along in the strange procession to play its part in the anticipated triumphal entry of the modern Cæsar into Paris. It is related that on the entry of the French forces into Moscow that an eagle was seen entangled amid the chains of this cross, high up on the bulbous-shaped tower of the Kremlin. By some this was declared to portend disaster to the French army. It proved true; the Imperial Eagle of France, Napoleon, was certainly caught in the trap set for him by his enemy, Holy Russia, represented by the gilded cross. Moscow proved Napoleon's Golgotha. His downfall and exile to Elba began there.

Victor Hugo, poet, novelist, and symbolist, has given us the epic of Waterloo, in his powerful story, *Les Misérables*, the foremost work of fiction of the 19th century. He has done for literature what Raffet and Steubel have done for art. Waterloo in Hugo's hands becomes the Supreme Enigma, the Twilight of the Gods. His conception of the subject is worthy of a Michael Angelo. The figures become gigantic. It is a species of Apocalypse. He says: "Was it possible for Napoleon to win the battle? We answer in the negative. Why? On account of Wellington; on account of Blucher? No; on account of God. * * * * When the earth is suffering from an excessive burden, there are mysterious groans from the shadow, which the abyss hears. Napoleon had been denounced in infinitude, and his fall was decided. He had angered God. Waterloo is not a battle, but a transformation of the Universe." "Did

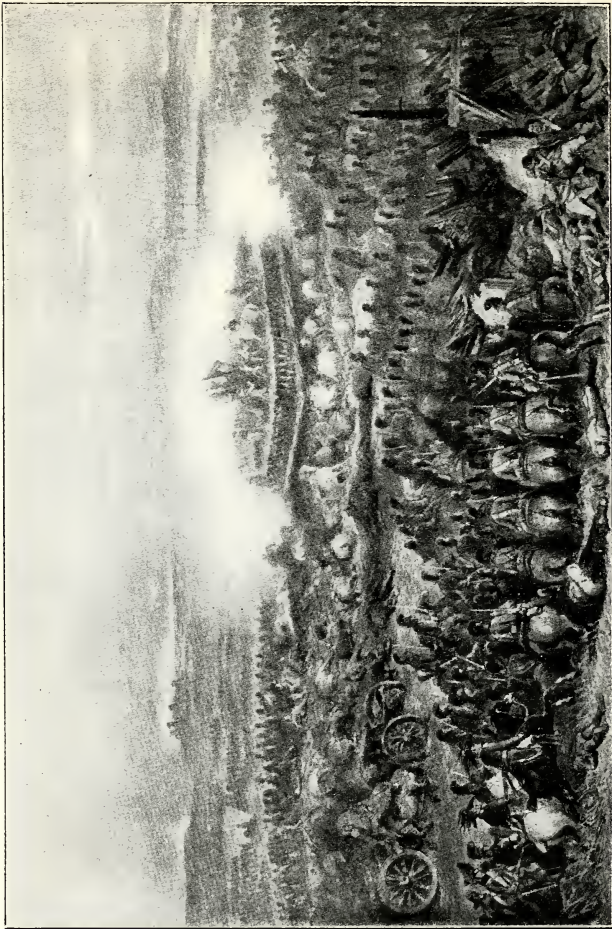
this vertigo, this terror, this overthrow of the greatest bravery that ever astonished history, take place without a cause? No. The shadow of a mighty right hand is cast over Waterloo; it is the day of destiny, and the force which is above man produced that day. Hence the terror, hence all those great souls laying down their swords. Those who had conquered Europe, fell, crushed, having nothing more to say or do, and feeling a terrible presence in the shadow. *Hoc erat in fatis*. On that day the perspective of the human race was changed, and Waterloo is the hinge of the 19th century."

What word-painting could be grander than this bit from Hugo's description of the Cuirassier charge: "At a distance it appeared as if two immense steel snakes were crawling toward the crest of the plateau; they traversed the battle-field like a flash. * * * * It seemed as if this mass had become a monster, and had but one soul; each squadron undulated, and swelled like the rings of a polype. This could be seen through a vast smoke which was rent asunder at intervals; it was a pell-mell of helmets, shouts and sabres, a stormy bounding of horses among cannon, and a disciplined and terrible array; while above it all flashed the cuirasses like the scales of the hydra. Such narratives seemed to belong to another age; something like this vision was doubtless traceable in the old Orphean epics describing the men-horses, the ancient hippanthropists, those Titans with human faces and equestrian chests whose gallop escalated Olympus,—horrible, invulnerable, sublime; gods and brutes. It was a curious numerical coincidence that twenty-six battalions were preparing to receive the charge of these twenty-six squadrons."

The last stand of the Old Guard is described with equal magnificence. "They are no longer men, but demi-gods hurling thunderbolts." In the disastrous retreat he speaks of Napoleon as follows: "At nightfall, Bernard and Bertrand seized by the skirt of his coat, in a field near Genappe, a haggard, thoughtful, gloomy man, who, carried so far by the current of the rout, had just dismounted, passed the bridle over his arm, and was now, with wandering eye, returning alone to Waterloo. It was Napoleon, the immense somnambulist of the shattered dream, still striving to advance. * * * * Such is Waterloo; but what does the Infinite care? All this tempest, all this cloud, this war, and then this peace. All this shadow did not for a moment disturb the flash of the mighty eye before which a grub, leaping from one blade of grass to another, equals the eagle flying from tower to tower at Notre Dame." * *

"'Napoleon is dead,' said a passer-by to an invalid of Marengo

and Waterloo. 'He dead!' the soldier exclaimed; 'much you know about him!' Imaginations deified this thrown man. Europe after



RETREAT OF THE SACRED BATTALION AT WATERLOO. (After Raffet. Courtesy of McClure, New York.)

Waterloo was dark, for some enormous gap was long left unfilled after the disappearance of Napoleon."

Napoleon was superstitious. He constantly referred to his "star of destiny." He believed in the "evil eye." At St. Helena, referring to his first interview with his jailer, Sir Hudson Lowe, he

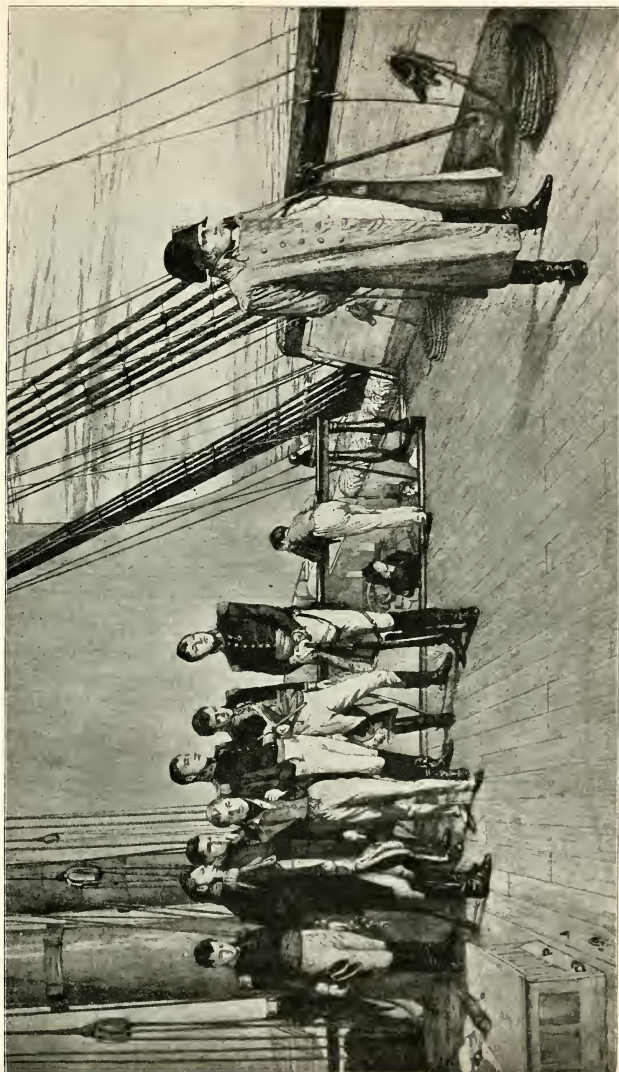


L'A REVUE NOCTURNE. (Courtesy of McClure, New York.)

said to Dr. O'Meara, "I never saw such a horrid countenance. He sat on a chair opposite to my sofa, and on a little table between us there was a cup of coffee. His physiognomy made such an unfavorable impression upon me that I thought his evil eye had pois-



NAPOLEON AT VRIENNE. (By Dumas Realier.)



NAPOLEON ON H. M. S. BELLEROPHON. July 23, 1815. (By Orchardson.)

oned the coffee, and I ordered Marchand to throw it out of the window. I would not have swallowed it for the world."

Do what we may, the Napoleonic legend will die hard. The masses of the people, who are anything but critical, will still invest the great Emperor with the halo of mystery, superstition, and romance. Painters, poets, and novelists will contribute in the future, as they have done in the past, to this building up of the mythos about him.

The famous lithographic draughtsman, Raffet, years ago, began the symbolical and mystical treatment of the Napoleonic cycle. Take for example, his "Retreat of the Sacred Battalion at Waterloo," "Waterloo, June 18, 1815," *La Revue Nocturne*, etc.

Could there be finer examples of idealization in art than the *Nocturne*? It is the bizarre apotheosis of the imperial drama; a weird and fantastic bit of impressionism. It is midnight in the Champs Élysées. A cold wind blows; the moon is partly hidden by clouds. Suddenly appears a phantom army. The dead Napoleon holds a review of spectres—"aroused for one night from eternal slumber by the sound of the trumpet. An army of horsemen pass by like a whirlwind, and salute with their swords the modern Cæsar on his white charger."

The German poet, Zedlitz, celebrates the scene in some splendid verse; Raffet, in black and white, makes it real for us, conjuring up, like a modern Ezekiel, a second vision of the Valley of Dry Bones. They come, they come, from all parts of the world, soldiers from the burning sands of Egypt, the snowy steppes of Russia, the vineyard dotted fields of Italy, to participate in the review, only to melt away into the land of shadows at the first blush of the dawn in the eastern sky.

Everything connected with Napoleon is theatrical, his coronation, his death, his second funeral. While he was dying, a terrific thunderstorm was raging at St. Helena. It seems as if nature had conspired to make the death of the Cæsar heroic. Amid the crash of thunder, like the sound of artillery, Napoleon cried out "*Tête d'armée!*" (Head of the army.) He doubtless imagined himself again at Austerlitz, or Waterloo. During his sojourn at St. Helena, the English newspapers often hinted at French plots to rescue the Emperor. It is actually said that members of the Old Guard contemplated an attempt to take Napoleon from his rocky prison, but that it proved abortive, owing to the extreme vigilance of the English authorities. The lynx-eyed Sir Hudson Lowe watched his wretched captive too well. Some day in the dim future, legend-makers will

declare that Napoleon was delivered from his enemies. He will be made to sail away in a ship like the mythical Arthur, to disappear forever from the knowledge of mankind.

Napoleon's second funeral created a tremendous furore in France, and did much to perpetuate the legends. It was a great spectacle. On the Esplanade des Invalides, the giant funeral car passed between an avenue of thirty-two statues of great kings and heroes, among whom were Charles Martel, Charlemagne, Clovis, and the Chevalier Bayard. Says Tarbell: "Oddly enough, this hedge of statues ended in one of Napoleon himself: the incongruity of the arrangement struck even the *gamins*. '*Tiens,*' cried one urchin, '*voilà comme l'empereur fait la queue à lui même.*' (Hello, see there how the emperor brings up his own procession.)"