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# Hannibal and Napoleon

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HANNIBAL And NAPOLEON.

It is natural to believe in great men. The search after the great man is the dream of youth and the most serious occupation of manhood; our religion is to love and cherish them. Their deeds are recited at the family fire-sides; they become a part of the children there, who grow up with the works of these great men in their minds, as well as with the desire to become like them. Their influence is ennobling: they make the world better for their having lived in it. It can be said of them "though they are dead, they still speak."

Each nation has its great men; their names are immortalized by the national poets and historians; every available opportunity is grasped to pass their names from generation to generation, from century to century. Some of these men whom we call great are the heroes, who either through patriotism or for their own aggrandizement have fought for their native lands; they have even died for it; the latter, Byron recognized when he said,

"Immortal, though no more! Though fallen, great! "

These men are not perfect by any means, they are human; Their sins of omission must be given us as well as those of commission. That they are not perfect, is shown in the study of the lives of Hannibal and Napoleon; the one, who lived many years before Christ, is remembered almost as distinctly as the one who lived in our own time; the one, the inventor, so to speak, of the art of war; the other, the perfecter.

Hannibal, the "Father of Strategy", was the son of Hamilcar. He was given the best Greek education and that he readily assimilated; the son of a great warrior he received likewise a fine military education, and the story of his swearing eternal hatred to Rome is well known. Hamilcar, when almost ready to put his cherished plans into execution, died and was succeeded by his son-in-law, Hasdrubal. The latter sent to Carthage, asking that Hannibal be given an appointment in the army. At that time there were two parties *in the* Carthaginian senate; the one represented by Hanno, the other by the supporters of Hasdrubal; after a great debate strength prevailed over wisdom and Hannibal was sent.

A great deal of curiosity and interest was felt throughout the army in Spain on his arrival. The soldiers had been devotedly attached to his father, and they were all ready to transfer that attachment at once to the son, if he should prove worthy of it. It was very evident soon after he reached the camp that he was going to prove himself thus worthy. He entered at once into the duties of his position with a degree of energy, patience and self-denial which attracted universal attention, and made him a universal favorite.

At the age of twenty-one Hannibal was unanimously elected to the chief command, Hasdrubal having met his death at the hands of the enemy. At that time Livy gave the following description of him--

"No sooner had he arrived than Hannibal drew the whole army toward him. The old soldiers fancied they saw Hamilcar in his youth given back to them; the same bright look, the same fire in his eye, the same trick of countenance and features. But soon he proved that to be his father's son was not his highest recommendation. Never was the same spirit more skilful in the most diverse things, to obey, and to command. He entered danger with the greatest mettle, he comported himself in danger with the greatest unconcern. He went into battle the first, he came out of it the last."

Through his untiring efforts, the war in Spain was soon brought to a close, and the same desire which his father had had before him, that of waging war against the Romans, was pre-eminent in him. But that was not easily accomplished; in the treaty which closed the First Punic War it was stated that war should not be made upon any of the allies of the Romans. With the restless desire to fulfill the promise he had made in his youth, Hannibal, with his army pushed forward to Saguntum, which belonged to Rome and attacked it. On his way there he gained a brilliant victory over a very superior force. He learned that an immense army was coming down upon his rear. A river was a short distance before them; he secreted a large body of cavalry on the bank of the stream and pushed on with the main body of his army to some little distance from the river so as to produce the impression upon his

pursuers that he was pressing forward to make his escape. The enemy poured down in great numbers into the stream; as soon as they were in the middle of the stream the horsemen of Hannibal rushed in to meet them. A violent battle raged in the water; great loss of life followed; men were trampled down by the elephants. At the news of that victory and also that the Carthaginians were rapidly approaching, Saguntum was much alarmed and sent ambassadors to Rome for aid and advice. Before their arrival at Rome, Hannibal had attacked Saguntum and taken it. Thus the Second Punic War commenced to the delight of the Carthaginians, to the sorrow of the Romans. When a war is begun favorably by one nation it seems to continue so; so it was with Hannibal; victory followed victory. Active preparations were entered into by the Romans; the army destined to meet Hannibal on his way from Spain fell to Scipio, the other one to Sempronius. Hannibal pushed on and came to the foot of the Pyrenees; the courage of some of the soldiers failed and they fell back. Not daunted by this, Hannibal entered the gloomy defiles of those mountains with the remainder of his army. They were finally crossed; the Rhone was the next difficulty, but Hannibal's tact and wisdom were not lacking and that obstacle was soon overcome, to be soon excelled by an even greater one.

The Carthaginian and his men found themselves at the foot of the Aps. Those must be crossed before the desired goal

could be reached. Hannibal said they must be crossed and they were. The men realized the danger of the undertaking and drew back; their leader called them around him and then addressed them : " You have surmounted the Pyranees, you have crossed the Rhone. You are now actually in sight of the Alps, which are the very gates of access to the country of the enemy. What do you conceive the Alps to be? They are nothing but high mountains after all. Suppose they are higher than the Pyranees, they do not reach the skies; and since they do not they cannot be insurmountable. They are surmounted, in fact, every day; travelers continually pass over them. What a single man can do, an army can do, for an army is only a large number of single men." Thus being exhorted and encouraged the army commenced the wearisome ascent. They were exposed to many dangers ; the people living in the mountains attacked them; the falling rocks crushed many of those brave men; a false <sup>step</sup> alarm caused many of them to be hurled many hundreds of feet below, where they were dashed to pieces on the rocks; they were half-starved; but what was their delight after many days of weary marching, when almost exhausted, to see the sunny plains of Italy lying before them. Beautiful lakes studded with still more beautiful islands, reflected the beams of the sun. An endless succession of fields, in sober autumnal colors, with the cottages of the laborers and stacks of grain scattered here and there upon them, and rivers

meandering through verdant meadows gave variety and enchantment to the view.

After a perilous descent and after the army had gained the rest they so much needed, Hannibal pushed on subduing the tribes he found at the foot of the mountains and before many days met the Roman army in a bloody battle at the River Ticinus, where he was successful. Many such battles followed and all had the same result. The army was then advancing upon Rome; the whole city was aroused; the people in their superstition beheld all the omens which, to their minds, foretold some great calamity. The Carthaginians did not think it wise to attack the city immediately, but decided to wait; the dictator, Minucius, at last risked a battle but was severely defeated. Then occurred the battle of Cannae, the last great battle fought by Hannibal in Italy. The Romans wished to drive the Carthaginians from the city; they strengthened their army determined to do this. Hannibal marched toward Cannae where he met the opposing army. The battle was terrible; it seemed that Hannibal could do nothing without stratagem. In the early part of the conflict he sent a body of his troops to the Romans as deserters. They laid down their arms and went, apparently unarmed when received by the Romans. Watching a favorable opportunity they drew forth their concealed weapons and attacked the Romans in the rear, at a moment when they were so pressed by the enemy in front that they could

scarcely maintain their ground. The Carthaginian victory was complete; after that battle Hannibal's success seemed to decline; before, the Roman generals were all inferior to him; after the battle of Cannae, Scipio was appointed and was indeed a match for Hannibal, and it was by him that Hannibal was taken a few years afterward. He was recalled to Carthage. His people did not recognize the man who had won so many brilliant victories, but because fortune had forsaken him at the last moment they forsook him; instead of receiving the praise due him, he was scoffed at and driven into exile. He went to Crete, but was driven from there and wandered from place to place until finally so pressed upon by his enemies that he was forced to drink a deadly potion rather than surrender. "His life was like an April day. Its brightest glory was in the morning, The setting of the sun was darkened by clouds and by shadows."

Napoleon, or as Emerson characterized him the Man of the World, did for the military art what constitutes the greatest advance in any art, he reduced it to its most simple, most perfect form. He was born in Corsica in 1769: just a few months after that island, formerly Italian, had been taken by the French. His mother was a most excellent woman and to her he said he owed all his greatness. The love of all things pertaining to warfare was shown from his earliest youth. At twelve he was sent to the military school at Brienne, near



Paris; he withdrew from the other students and devoted almost his entire time to the study which was to prepare him for the man and general he was to become. In winter he amused himself building snow forts: in the battles which ensued he was always the leader. None dared to disobey him; if they did they were punished in true military fashion. Many carried the scars, received in those battles, through life.

In 1785, Napoleon, then but sixteen years of age, was examined to receive an appointment in the army; the examination was successfully passed and he was appointed second lieutenant in a regiment of artillery. Two great parties, the Royalists and the Republicans were then throughout France contending for the supremacy. Napoleon joined the Republican side. He boldly avowed his sentiments and many predicted his future greatness. All that time he was devoting himself to his studies with untiring diligence. "He was meditating upon the rise and fall of empires. France, Europe even seemed too small for his majestic designs. He studied with intense interest the condition of the countless myriads of men who swarmed along the rivers and the hill sides of eternal Asia, and dreamed of being himself the founder of an empire there, in comparison with which the dynasties of Europe should be insignificant." His first great battle was fought at Toulon; He had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general and invested with the command of the artillery train at Toulon. He hastened to the scene of action and beheld with astonishment

the incapacity with which the siege was conducted. He requested the commander-in-chief to allow him to witness the effect of a few discharges from the guns. He finally obtained consent and when he saw the shot fall short of the mark he turned upon his heel and said, "These aristocrats have spoiled the quality of the powder with which I am supplied ". He made his remonstrance to the Convention, telling them that the siege must be conducted with more science and with more energy if the desired results were expected. Napoleon devoted himself untiringly to the task he had undertaken. At last all was ready for the grand attempt. Napoleon was everywhere, more reckless of his own life than that of his soldiers. He was rewarded for his bravery; the victory was his. "It was" said Scott, "upon that night of terror, conflagration, tears and blood, that the star of Napoleon first ascended the horizon, and though it gleamed over many a scene of horror, ere it set, it may be doubted whether its light was ever blended with that of one more dreadful."

Napoleon then went to Nice; he was emaciated and in need of rest. At that place he had opportunity to take his much needed rest, but he did not; on the contrary he spent the days galloping through the ravines and over the mountains making himself familiar with the country; at night he studied maps of the country, using pins covered with red sealing wax to represent the French, those covered with blue to represent the enemy. After a few hours of repose, the early hours of

the morning found him upon his horse's back exploring the intricate passes of the Alps.

A large force of Austrians was encamped near the French army; a plan was made by Napoleon to put the French army into motion and attack the Austrians: three weeks after his arrival at Nice all plans were completed and the Austrians were put to flight. All the passes of the Maritime Alps belonged to the French. Suddenly he was arrested and barely escaped the guillotine. He had proposed repairing an old state prison at Marseilles, that it might serve as a powder magazine. It was reported that he was building a second Bastille; he was arrested and was deprived of his rank as general of artillery and was assigned to a post in the infantry. That he refused and for many months was almost penniless. He formed the plan of going to Turkey to offer his services to the ruler of that country. At that time he said : "How singular it would be if a little Corsican officer were to become King of Jerusalem."

The French army in Italy suffered many misfortunes; the Convention at Paris in desperation recalled Napoleon for advice and reinstated him in his former position. Almost a famine prevailed in Paris at that time; Napoleon made all possible sacrifices to alleviate the sufferings of the inhabitants. By many kind acts he succeeded in entwining himself around the hearts of the French people. At that time he met Josephine Beauharnais, a very estimable woman, and married her. Almost at the altar he was compelled to leave her to

attend to his military duties. He joined his army in Italy where the Austrians were again surprised and put to flight at the battle of Montenotte. In that first independent campaign of Napoleon was recognized the "heroic zeal of Alexander, the intellectual subtlety of Hannibal, the reckless, self-confidence of Caesar, the broad method of Gustavus, the heart of oak of Fredrick."

His next campaign lasted from 1796 to 1797. He expelled the Austrians from Italy and ended the campaign with the brilliant victory of Rivoli. He next undertook the Egyptian campaign. Perhaps he imagined himself another Alexander conquering the Eastern world. The campaign was full of brilliant achievements and marred by but one mishap—the siege of Acre. The total result of the campaign was failure to France, though gain to Napoleon, who won renown.

In 1800 Napoleon became First Consul; the campaign of that year was initiated by the celebrated crossing of the Alps, and again was the terrible suffering and loss of life that Hannibal and his men had experienced to be repeated by another ambitious general and his followers. It culminated in the battle of Marengo; this was first an Austrian victory, but the tide soon turned in Napoleon's favor. The campaign lasted but a month and was characterized by the utmost dash and clearness of preception.

After that campaign there were five years of peace, the first of only two periods of peace in Napoleon's career.

Succeeding those five years came the memorable Austerlitz campaign. Before that Napoleon had been chosen Emperor; there occurred a blemish on Napoleon's life, on that life which heretofore had been so pure, so noble, so free from anything that was degrading. That blemish seemed to tower high above all his good deeds and over-shadow them. His great ambition led him to divorce his wife, Josephine, her whom all France loved so well. Her place was taken by Princess Louisa of Austria. After that marriage Napoleon set forth on his famous Austerlitz campaign. To make himself familiar with the country, he had for some months officers in Germany. He moved on Vienna, living on the country as he went, took it and proceeded to Austerlitz. The era of great battles dated from this one. The Austrians were surrounded beyond all hope of escape. The day had been cold, the night was cold and clear. A dense fog, however, settled upon the lower grounds enveloping friend and foe in an impenetrable sea of obscurity. "The horizon was illumined for leagues around with the bivouac fires of the antagonistic hosts. Gradually the unreplenished piles burned out and silence and darkness brooded over the sleeping armies. At four o'clock Napoleon was on horseback." The confused murmur of the advancing enemy was heard; each French soldier was up and on duty. Gradually the stars disappeared; a ruddy glow illumined the horizon, and the sun rose unclouded and brilliant, gilding the hill-tops and penetrating the ocean of vapor which rolled in the valleys. It

was the "Sun of Austerlitz". Its rising produced a deep impression upon the mind of Napoleon. Soon the noise of artillery announced the battle begun. Great loss of life followed; it was the most brilliant of the victories of Napoleon. After the close of the battle, Napoleon was found administering to the wants of the wounded and the dying. Many a dying soldier in his great agony looked up and blessed the Emperor.

He next turned his attention to Russia; accompanying the advance guard he met a large army of Prussians and routed them. The journey was long and difficult; the severe Russian winter caused much suffering in the army. The Russians attacked Napoleon in his winter quarters and the bloody and indecisive battle of Eylau resulted; then came the victory of Friedland. Many lives were lost in the French army during the winter spent in Russia; when the army left it was much diminished in numbers. That winter seemed to be the beginning of Napoleon's downfall; details received less personal attention. He was more rarely at the front. He began to rely on the eyes of others more than, with his ancient vigor, he would have done, despite his saying that "a general who sees through the eyes of others will never be in condition to command an army as it should be commanded." Until battle actually opened he lacked his old enthusiasm. After the first gun he was himself again. He was more daring than careful; he relied on his luck. He had an army difficult to

command; it was composed of men of many nationalities. They were not the old army, but they were so many men. Napoleon understood this; "We must act with caution, not to bring bad troops into danger, and be so foolish as to think that a man is a soldier."

In the campaign of 1813, Napoleon showed all his old power of conception. He began by winning two battles—Lutzen and Bautzen. "Napoleon showed how often fortune was of a man's own making. So long as he would not allow circumstances to dictate to him, fortune was constant. When he began to heed adverse facts, first indecisive victories were seen, then half successes, and by and by failure and destruction". Had he been more careful, more enthusiastic, the victory of Waterloo might have been his. That battle was fought in 1815. The English had united their armies under Blücher and Wellington: it was Napoleon's plan to break their center so as to separate them and attack each one separately. In that he failed; he was overcome with fatigue; he could not conquer sleep as of old; his health was not good; those things overcame his zeal. Those little lapses of unused time began, which were sufficient to bring him to the end of his career. The plan of campaign was as brilliantly thought out as any preceding one, but it lacked the vigor which would have brought success. The battle was lost and the French put to flight.

Than indeed began the Emperor's downfall. He returned home; "went to his own, and they received him not." He was forsaken by all of his friends: he went to Elba where he was contented for a short time, but that life of quiet was so different to the one to which he had been accustomed. He returned to France but only to be exiled to Helena, where he died a few months later. Thus darkly closed a career, the most brilliant in its success, the most influential to produce vast and enduring change on human affairs, which has ever been permitted to man.

Hannibal and Napoleon were probably the two greatest generals the world has ever seen: Hannibal in all probability made his conquests with unselfish aims; Napoleon made his for his own glory and renown.

They were warriors in thought from the cradle. Hannibal, when a mere child, had the desire to become famous as a soldier. His first recollections pictured to him his father fighting in a distant land; he shared that unconquered father's fortunes and sympathized with him in his misfortunes. While yet a boy, he had followed his father to the camp. Napoleon likewise was the son of a great general; he heard war stories; his favorite plaything was a toy cannon, with which, much to the terror of his brothers and sisters, he would wage war, plan campaigns, in which he was <sup>l</sup>always the leader, commanding his young friends, and they in their fear did not dare to dis-



obey him.

Both men received fine military educations; both devoted themselves assiduously to their studies to prepare themselves for their future greatness. The desire that was so manifest in their youth was not abandoned when they became older, but it became stronger with each year and with manhood it was satisfied.

Ere this, both had doubtless fought many battles in their imagination; both had imagined themselves conquerors and their hated enemies subdued at their hands. Hannibal in his siege of Saguntum showed the same genius, the same enthusiasm, the same fortitude that Napoleon showed in his siege of Toulon. Both were rewarded with victory in those their first important battles; both had had their wishes gratified. Hannibal's of involving the Romans in war; Napoleon's of winning renown.

Hannibal said "there shall be no Alps", and this was verified by his leading his army across, not-with-standing at the risk of many lives. Napoleon many years afterwards said the same thing and proved it in the same manner.

Both of those men were loved, even worshiped, by the soldiers under them; they were the embodiment of kindness and firmness; they valued their lives no higher than the lives of their soldiers. Although commanding men much older than themselves they showed that they must be obeyed to the

very letter of the command and they were obeyed and respected. If there were any cruelty in the natures of the two men, we find more in that of Hannibal than of Napoleon; perhaps the times and the people occasioned *it*. Napoleon was very considerate of the welfare of his men; *often* after a severe battle he was found among the wounded and dying administering to their needs.

Hannibal showed much recklessness in his warfare; it was said "he knew how to win a victory, but not how to use it." In that he differed from Napoleon, the latter being very cautious, never reckless until the close of his life when he became alarmingly so.

What did those two men do for the art of war? Hannibal taught the Romans what war really was; that there was something beyond merely marching out, fighting a battle and marching home again. "He showed them that with but a small part of their numerical force, with less good material, with less good aims, with but a few allies he could keep Rome on the brink of ruin and despair for two-thirds of a generation. He showed them for thirteen years that he could accomplish more than they could despite their numbers and without battle." Napoleon had the history of other great captains to profit by; he had not to invent; he had only to improve. "But he did for the military art what constitutes the greatest advance in any art; he reduced it to its most simple, most perfect form."

Unfortunately the deeds of those two great men were not appreciated by their kinsmen; the latter were ungrateful, perhaps envious; as the two became older they became less careful; they suffered more defeats; they were severely censured for those; they were recalled to their native land, not to receive great ovations but to be persecuted, driven from place to place, exiled to lonely islands to die.

As other great men before and after them, they died penniless, without friends, to fill a pauper's grave. Succeeding generations have recognized their great deeds and have immortalized their names.

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