

NAPOLEON: THE LAST PHASE

have no secrets. But Duroc stood alone. Great masses, who knew him only in his public capacity, chiefly as a general, adored him to the last. The private soldiers who marched from France to Waterloo were inspired with an enthusiasm for him which at least equalled that of the soldiers at Marengo or Austerlitz. But that enthusiasm diminished in proportion to remoteness from the rank and file. Officers felt it less in an ascending scale, and when the summit was reached it was no longer perceptible. It had long since ceased to be felt by those who knew the Emperor most intimately. Friendship, as we have seen, he had deliberately discarded as too close a relation for other mortals to bear to himself. Many, too, of his early friends had died on the field of battle: friends such as Lannes, Desaix, and Duroc. But some had survived and left him without ceremony or even decency. Berthier, his lifelong comrade, the messmate of his campaigns, his confidant, deserted him without a word, and did not blush to become captain of Louis XVIII's bodyguard. His marshals, the companions of his victories, all left him at Fontainebleau, some with contumely. Ney insulted him in 1814, Davoust in 1815. Marmont, the petted child of his favour, conspicuously betrayed him. The loyal Caulaincourt found a limit to his devotion at last. Even his body attendants, Constant and Rustan, the valet who always tended him, and the Mameluke who slept against his door, abandoned him. It was difficult to collect a handful of officers to accompany him to Elba, much more difficult to find a few for St Helena. The hopeless followers of ungrateful masters, the chief mourners of misfortune who haunted the harren antechambers of the Bourbons and the Stuarts, had no counterpart in the exile of Napoleon. We need not reproach a nation, for that nation found many faithful