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## CHARACTER OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

FROM ALLISON'S HISTORY OF EUROPE.

Arthur Wellesley, afterwards Duke of Wellington, was born on the 1st May, 1769. His father was the Earl of Mornington, and he was descended by the mother's side from an ancient and noble family. His elder brother, who succeeded to the hereditary honours, afterwards created Marquis of Wellesley; so that one only enjoyed the rare felicity of giving birth to a statesman whose energetic councils established the empire of England in the East, and the warrior whose immortal deeds saved the salvation of Europe in the Western Hemisphere.

The young soldier was regularly educated the profession of his choice, and received commission in the year 1787, being then in the eighteenth year of his age. Napoleon had moved the artillery two years before, at the age of sixteen, and was then musing on the shores of Flatauch; Sir Walter Scott, at the age of seventeen, was then relieving the tediousness of legal education by wandering over the mountains of his native land, and dreaming of Ananias in the grassy vale of St. Bernard's, near Edinburgh; Viscount Chabrian was inhaling the spirit of devotion and heroism, and wandering, in anticipation, to the Holy Land, amidst the solitudes of Lausanne; Goethe, profound and imaginative, was reflecting on the destiny of man on earth, like a cloud which turns up silver lining to the moon? Schiller was embodying in immortal verse the shadows of glory and the creations of fancy; and the ardent spirit of Nelson was chafing on inaction, counting the weary hours of a pacific West India station. Little did any of them think of the other, or anticipate the heart stirring scenes which were soon about to rise, in the name of which their names were to shine forth as immortal names. There were giants on earth in those days.

Arthur Wellesley, educated at Eton, served for a short time at the military academy of Angers, in France, but he was soon released from that seminary to take a part in the duties of his profession. As subaltern captain he served, both in the cavalry and infantry; in the spring of 1793 he was promoted to a majority in the 33d regiment, and in the autumn of the same year he became, by purchase, its lieutenant colonel. At the head of that regiment he first entered upon active service, by sailing from Cork, in May, 1794, landing at Ostend in the beginning of June, and being ordered to join Lord Moira's army, which was assembling in that place, to meet the Duke of York, who was in the neighbourhood of Tournay. That ill-fated prince, however, was then hard pressed by the vast army of the Republicans under Pichegru, and as he deemed it inadvisable to attempt the relief of a fortress so far in advance as Ostend, Lord Moira marched by Bruges and to the Scheldt, and crossing that river at Tête de Flandres, joined the English army camped around Antwerp.

The multiplied disasters of that unhappy campaign brought Colonel Wellesley into contact with the enemy, and taught him the value of the sword in the heat of all school, that of operations and adverse fortune. The army, now entirely separated from the Austrians, who had marched off to the Rhine, were in no sufficient strength to withstand the immense masses of the Republicans in considerable combat; but a number of actions took place with the rear of the army, in which the spirit and intelligence of Colonel Wellesley speedily became conspicuous. On the river Neethe, in a warm affair near the village of Boxtel, and in a hot skirmish on the shores of the Waal, the 33d regiment did good service; the ability with which he conducted excited general remark, and Colonel Wellesley was in consequence promoted to the command of a brigade of three regiments in the ulterior retreat from the Scheldt. They were no longer, indeed,

passed by the enemy who had turned aside for the memorable invasion of Holland, but the rudeness of the elements proved a more formidable adversary than the bayonets of the Republicans. The route of the army lay through the inhospitable provinces of Gueldreland and Over Issel; the country consisted of flat and desert heaths; few houses were to be found on the road, and these were scattered singly, or in small hamlets, affording no shelter to any considerable body of men. Over this dreary tract the British troops marched during the dreadful winter of 1794-5, through an unbroken wilderness of snow, with the thermometer frequently down at 15 and 20 below zero of Fahrenheit, and when it was somewhat milder a fierce and biting north wind blowing direct in the faces of the soldiers. In this trying crisis, Colonel Wellesley commanded the rear guard; his activity and vigilance arrested in a great degree the disorders which prevailed; and in his first essay in arms he experienced severities equal to the far-famed horrors of the Moscow retreat.

Short as was this first campaign of the Duke of Wellington, it was the best school that had been presented for nearly a century, for the formation of a great commander. War was there exhibited on a grand scale; it was in an army of sixty-eight battalions, and eighty squadrons that he had served. The indomitable courage and admirable spirit of the British soldiers had there appeared in their full lustre; but the natural results of these great qualities were completely prevented by the defects, at that period, of their military organization; by total ignorance of warlike measures in the cabinet, which planned their movements; a defective minuteness of direction, arising from too little confidence on the part of government in their generals in the field; a general want of experience in officers of all ranks in the most ordinary operations of a campaign; and, above all, the ruinous parsimony which in all states subject to a really popular government, breaks down, on the return of peace, the military force, by which alone on the next resumption of hostilities, early success can be secured. These defects appeared in painful contrast to the brilliant and efficient state of the more experienced German armies, with national resources no ways superior, and troops far inferior, both in courage and energy, were able to keep the field with more perseverance, and in the end, achieve success to which the British soldiers could hardly hope to arrive. These considerations forcibly impressed themselves on the mind of the young officer, and he was early led to revolve in his mind those necessary changes in the direction and discipline of the army, which, matured by the diligence and vigour of the Duke of York, ultimately led the British nation to an unparalleled pitch of length and glory.

It was not long before an opportunity presented itself for witnessing the capability of British soldiers when subjected to an abler direction, and led by more experienced officers. After the return of the troops from Flanders to England, the 33d regiment was ordered to the West Indies; but contrary winds prevented the transports in which it was embarked from sailing, and their destination was soon after changed for the East. Colonel Wellesley arrived with his corps at Calcutta in January, 1797. During the voyage out it was observed that he spent most of his time in reading; and after he landed in India, he was indefatigable in acquiring information regarding the situation and resources of the country in which he was to serve, so that when he was called, as he early was, to high command, he was perfectly acquainted, as his correspondence from the first demonstrates, both with the peculiarities of India Warfare, and the local cases of Indian politics. And when the division of the army took the field in January, 1798, against Tippos Sultan, the fine condition and perfect discipline of the men, as well as the skill and judgement of the arrangements made for the supplies, called forth the warm commendation of the commander in chief, who little thought what a hero he was when subsiding into the world.

The name of no commander in the long array of British greatness will occupy so large a space in the annals of the world as that of Wellington; and yet there are few whose public character possesses, with so many excellences, so simple and unblemished a complexion. It is to the purity and elevation of his principles, in every public situation that this enviable distinction is to be ascribed. Intrusted early in life with high command, and subjected from the first to serious responsibility, he possessed that singleness of heart and integrity of purpose which even more than talent or audacity, are the foundation of true and moral courage, and the only pure path to public greatness—absence of duty, a feeling of honor, a generous patriotism, a forgetfulness of self, constituted the spring of all his actions. He was ambitious, but it was to serve his king and country only; fearless, because his whole heart was wound up in those noble objects; disinterested, because the enriching of himself or his family never for a moment crossed his mind; insensible to private fame when it interfered with public duty, indifferent to popular obloquy when it arose from rectitude of conduct. Like the Roman patriot, he wished rather to be, than appear deserving. "Esse quam videri bonis malebat illi suo minus gloriam petebat eo magis sequebatur." Greatness was forced upon him, in military and political life, rather because he was felt to be the worthiest, than because he desired to be the first; he was the architect of his own fortune, but he became so almost unconsciously, while solely engrossed in constructing that of his country. He has left undone many things as a soldier, which might have added to his fame, and done many things as a statesman, which were fatal to his power; but he omitted the first, because they would have endangered his country, and committed the second because he felt them to be essential to its salvation. It is to the honor of England, and of human nature, that such a man should have risen at such a time, to the rule of her armies and her councils; but by experience, with Themistocles and Scipio Africanus, the mutable tenure of popular applause and the base ingratitude of those whom he had saved. Having triumphed over the arms of the threatening tyrant, he was equally immovable in the presence of the insane citizens; and it is hard to say whether his greatness appeared most when he struck down the conqueror of Europe on the field of Waterloo, or was himself with difficulty rescued from death on its anniversary, eighteen years afterwards on the streets of London.

A constant recollection of these circumstances, and of the peculiar and very difficult task which was committed to his charge, is necessary, in forming a correct estimate of Wellington's military achievements. The brilliancy of his course is well known; an unbroken series of triumph from Vimiera to Toulouse; the entire expulsion of the French from the Peninsula; the planting of the British standard in the heart of France; the successive defeat of those veteran Marshals who had so long conquered in every country of Europe; the overthrow of Waterloo; and the termination in one day of the military empire founded on twenty years of conquest. But these results great and imperishable as they are, convey no adequate idea either of the difficulties with which Wellington had to contend, or of the merit due to his transcendent exertions. With an army seldom superior in number of the French Marshals; with troops dispirited by recent disaster, and wholly unaided by practical experience; without any compulsory law to recruit his ranks, or any strong national passion for war to supply its want, he was called on to combat successively vast armies, composed, in great part, of veteran soldiers, perpetually filled by the terrible powers of the conscription, headed by chiefs who, risen from the ranks, and practically acquainted with the duties of war in all its grades, had fought their way from the granadier's musket to the Marshal's baton, and were followed by men who, trained in the same school, were animated by the same ambition. Still more; he was the General of a nation in which the chivalrous and mer-

cantile qualities are strongly blended together, which, justly proud of its historic glory, is excessively jealous of its military expenditure—which, covetous beyond measure of warlike renown, is ruinously impatient of pacific preparation—which starves its establishment when danger is over, and yet frets at defeat when its errors are present— which dreams in war of Cressy and Agincourt, and ruminates in peace on economic reduction. He combated, at the head of an alliance formed of heterogeneous states, composed of discordant materials, in which ancient animosities and religious divisions were imperfectly suppressed by recent fervour or present danger; in which corruption often paralyzed the arms of patriotism, and jealousy withheld the resources of power. He acted under the direction of a ministry which, albeit zealous and active, was alike inexperienced in hostility, and unskilled in combinations; in presence of an opposition, which, powerful in eloquence, supported by faction, was prejudiced against the war, and indefatigable in its support; for the interests of the people who, although ardent in the cause and enthusiastic in its support, were impatient of disaster and prone to depression, and whose military resources, how great soever, were dissipated in the protection of a colonial empire which encircled the earth.

Nothing but the most consummate prudence as well as ability in conduct, could, with such means, have achieved victory over such an enemy; and the character of Wellington was singularly fitted for the task. Capable, when the occasion required, or opportunity offered, of the most daring enterprise, he was yet cautious and wary in his general conduct—prodigal of his own labour, regardless of his own person, he was avaricious only of the blood of his soldiers; endowed by nature with an indomitable soul, a constitution of iron, he had the tenacity of purpose and indefatigable activity which is ever necessary to great achievements; prudent in council, sagacious in design, he was yet prompt and decided in action; he never ever revolved the probable dangers of an enterprise more anxiously before undertaking it, none possessed in a higher degree the eagle eye, the arm of steel, necessary to carry it into execution. By the steady application of these rare qualities, he was enabled to raise the British military force from an unworthy state of depression to an unparalleled pitch of glory; to educate, in presence of the enemy, not only his soldiers in the field, but his rulers in the cabinet; to silence, by avoiding disaster, the clamour of his enemies; to strengthen, by progressive success, the ascendancy of his friends; to augment, by the exhibition of his results, the energy of the government; to rouse by deeds of glory, the enthusiasm of the people, skillfully seizing the opportunity of victory, he studiously avoided the chances of defeat; aware that a single disaster would at once discourage his countrymen and strengthen his opponents, he was content to forego many opportunities of earning fame, and stifle many desires to grasp at glory; magnanimously checking the aspirations of genius, he trusted for ultimate success rather to perseverance in a wise, than than audacity in a daring course. He thus succeeded during six successive campaigns, with a comparatively inconsiderable army, in maintaining his ground against the vast and veteran forces of Napoleon, in defeating successively all his enterprises, and finally rousing such an enthusiastic spirit in the British empire, as enabled its government to put forth its immense resources on a scale worthy of its present greatness and ancient renown, and terminate a contest of twenty years, by planting the English standard on the walls of Paris.

### "CANONS OF GOOD READING."

This is the title of a small volume just published, by the author of "The Laws of Etiquette." There is much good reading in it apart from the rule which it lays down respecting social intercourse, the author having illustrated his meaning with divers pleasant anecdotes and elegant allusions. We commend