



NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

This extraordinary man was born at Corsica in the year 1769. Although signs of genius were noticed in him when a boy, yet none could have anticipated that the quiet and studious youth was afterwards to play so remarkable a part on the stage of life. Having chosen the military profession, he remained for some years in the ranks of the army, noticed only as an attentive and intelligent officer. The great outburst of the first French Revolution, however, soon took place, and circumstances arose which called into action his wonderful powers. Toulon witnessed the first marked display of his great military talents.

Stepping from one post to another, he found himself ere long, from being an obscure officer, appointed to the command of the army of Italy. Young and enterprising, he displayed qualities of ardour, energy, and perseverance worthy of a better cause. Victory followed victory. The skill of the oldest and most experienced generals failed when brought into contact with him, and he was soon placed at the head of an army flushed with success.

Returning home, he was consumed with a passion for military glory, and, with a bold but unscrupulous genius, he designed his expedition to Egypt. Egypt, long sunk under oppression, was made, under his rule, to bear some resemblance to the bustling and prosperous land which it had been in the days of the Pharaohs. He was made First Consul of France. The fortunes of the country, which had long declined, began, under his hand, to rally. Even the physical barriers imposed by nature did not present obstacles too great for his perseverance to overcome. The Alps themselves were

scaled by him. The crown, for which he had so long panted, was at last placed upon his brow. The Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church travelled to Paris, to preside at the ceremony of his coronation; and art lent all its aid to make the spectacle gorgeous.

Even this elevation, however, did not mark the zenith of Napoleon's power. In a series of battles he defeated every army which opposed him. As he grew in power, however, he grew also in pride. His levées and ante-rooms were crowded, not only with courtiers, but with princes and kings, longing for his smiles or a glance of approbation. But, based on unrighteousness, even this mighty empire was to pass away like the mirage.

Blinded by pride, he was tempted to invade Russia. Amidst the snows of that vast empire, he saw entombed an army surpassing in magnitude any which had ever been led forth by a conqueror in modern times. His power was sapped by this disaster. The combined monarchs of Europe rose, in the hope of deliverance from the oppression which had so long weighed them down. One by one, he saw the fragments of his authority pass away. Like a desperate gambler, he risked his all upon the die, and found himself at last a captive on the barren rock of St. Helena.

And now was to be exemplified the vanity of worldly ambition. The mighty monarch's train was reduced to a few attendants, and his territory to a plot of garden ground. He, who had made so many widows and orphans, was himself deprived of his wife and son. The schemes to which his active mind turned for recreation proved abortive. "Let us live on the past!" he exclaimed. But the retrospect exhibited only a course of selfish aggrandisement. He sickened, and pined for death. "Why," he would ask, "did the cannon balls spare me to die in this manner? I am no longer the Great Napoleon." "How fallen I am! My strength, my faculties forsake me. I do not live; I merely exist."

At other times his reflections took a religious turn: "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon love, and at this hour millions of men would die for Him. I die before my time, and my

