

CHARACTER OF NAPOLEON.

(After the style of Charles Phillips.)

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"His falchion flashed along the Nile;
His hosts he led through Alpine snows;
O'er Moscow's towers that blazed the while,
His eagle flag unrolled—and froze."

He has fallen from the pinnacle of his fame! He had climbed the fragile ladder of fortune, and it crumbled to dust beneath his greatness. He fell, as only he who has risen to such a dizzy height can fall—never to rise again. Like a meteor he flashed along the political horizon, dazzling the eyes, bewildering the senses of those who beheld him, and filling every breast with awe and apprehension, only to expire in darkness.

The wonder of his age, he sprung from nothingness to wield the mightiest sceptre in Europe. A poor corporal, he became the greatest general of his time. A penniless adventurer, he rose to be the mightiest monarch of the Old World. He handled crowns with a freedom that struck terror to the heart of every potentate and caused every throne on the continent to tremble with fear. He invaded countries at will, and made paupers kings, and princes beggars. Capable of inspiring the most heroic friendship and noble devotion in his soldiers, he possessed enemies the most bitter. A feigned friend of the people he used them as a footstool to mount to the summit of his ambition. A plebeian, he made himself the equal of crowned heads and married a Hapsburg. In the cabinet, as well as in the field, his abilities were of the highest order. His nature contained the untiring pertinacity of the Englishman, the ready versatility of the Yankee, the polished ease of the Frenchman, the polite suavity of the Italian and the honest bluntness of the German. With talents that would have made his name famous in the annals of empires he became a curse to his country and a scourge to his neighbors. Hated by his enemies, idolized by his soldiers, envied and feared by his contemporaries, beloved by his friends, execrated by posterity, he exhibits one of the strangest medleys that ever existed together in one man; and indeed he may be said to be one of the most extraordinary characters that ever "rose, or reigned, or fell."

A veteran proved and tested amidst the burning sands of Africa, the snows of Russia and Alpine summits, he turned traitor to his former allies, the Spaniards. A man, who would be thought noble, good, and generous, he possessed not the remotest trace of a conscience. Tramping under foot the sacred rights of the sovereign pontiff, overthrowing kings and dynasties, throwing into irremediable confusion the settled order of things, devastating whole provinces, and sweeping through empires like an avenging whirlwind, drenching with blood the citron groves of Italy and the sunny plains of Spain,

divorced from his wife, a murderer of innocent youth, he seemed a fiend incarnate. Amazing all by the celerity of his movements, the skillful handling of his army, his bravery in battle, and his power of selecting as his lieutenants the best of soldiers, he was indeed the most consummate general of his age.

Yet born, as it were, to make the plains of Europe run red with the blood of her best and bravest, he was a wise and prudent legislator. With one stroke of his hand he abrogated the ancient statutes and conceits, as though they were but smoke, and erected in their place the code that bears his name; which, though not the best that might have been devised, nevertheless deserves a great meed of praise as the work of a person who was no jurist. Did it not require great courage to sweep away at one stroke, like so many cobwebs, the antiquated jurisprudence of centuries and put in its place his own code of laws?

Though he could number the victims of his wars, the maimed and the blind, by hundreds of thousands, he was charitable, aye even kind, to the brave old veterans who fought under him, and when "the little corporal" rode along the lines, what a great love towards him surged up in their manly, soldier-like hearts, though he used them only as a skillful workman uses his tools?

Combining the heroic fortitude of Hannibal and the wisdom of Justinian, he may be said to have been the greatest military genius, if not the wisest monarch, in the annals of time. Whether we behold him in the camp in all the pomp and circumstance of war, on the plains of Egypt fighting with the Mamelukes, admiring the pyramids, frowned upon by the sphinxes, toiling through Alpine passes and Russian snows, or in the cabinet, surrounded by his secretaries, giving orders, dictating treaties, signing compacts or compiling codes, there is always something in him to be admired. And well could he say when leaving for the place of his exile, that lonely spot in the centre of the pitiless ocean, there to pass his last days on earth without "a generous friend, a pitying foe, strength in his arms or mercy in his woe,"

"Farewell to the Land where the gloom of my glory
Arose and o'ershadowed the earth with her name—
She abandons me now—but the page of her story,
The brightest or blackest, is filled with her fame.
I have warred with a world which vanquished me
only
When the meteor of conquest allured me too far;
I have coped with the nations which dread me thus
lonely,
The last single captive to millions in war."

"Why don't you sharpen your saw, Mat?"
asked the neighbor.

Looking up with an inimitable droll expression, he replied—

"I should think I had work enough to saw up this wood-pile without stopping to sharpen saws."