

**THE HUNDRED DAYS
OF NAPOLEON. A
POEM IN FIVE CANTOS**

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The Hundred Days of Napoleon. A poem in five cantos by Archibald Belaney

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ARCHIBALD BELANEY

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HUNDRED DAYS OF NAPOLEON.

A Poem in Five Cantos.

BY ARCHIBALD BELANEY

"Cov'rd is the man, and void of law and right,
Unworthy property, unworthy fight,
Unfit for public rule, or private care,
That wretch, that monster, who delights in war,
Whose lust is murder, and whose horrid joy,
To tear his country, and his kind destroy!"

HOMER.

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TO
SIR ARCHIBALD ALISON, BART.,

D.C.L., F.R.S., &c.

SIR,

From your "History of Europe" I first conceived the idea of writing a poem on THE HUNDRED DAYS OF NAPOLEON, and from the same fertile source have I derived much of the information necessary for so arduous an undertaking. I feel, therefore, as if I were not only paying appropriate homage to the GREAT HISTORIAN of modern times, but acquitting myself of a debt of sincere gratitude in dedicating my Poem to you, whose eloquent pen and glowing pages have so often given inspiration to my Muse in the task I have endeavoured to perform.

I remain, Sir,

Your much obliged,

Most obedient Servant,

ARCHIBALD BELANEY.

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P R E L U D E.

O Thou, who with thy trident in thy hand,
And golden crown upon thy lofty brow,
Whose empire stretches over sea and land,
The mightiest realm the world e'er saw till now ;
To whom remotest tribes and regions bow—
Not with the sullen terror of the slave,
For lov'd and honour'd, more than fear'd art thou—
Thy smile rewards the sufferings of the brave,
Who struggle for the Right by land or ocean wave ;—

A humble Bard, who long hath sought to raise,
In diapason worthy of her fame,
A song of triumph in Britannia's praise,
Would fain—and oh ! his boldness do not blame—
Blend with his minstrelsy the fairest name
That ever graced a monarch's diadem ;
Whose gentle heart her noble acts proclaim ;
Who loves to cheer, but pities to condemn,
And is of her own crown herself the brightest gem.

Then, Royal Lady, with a patient ear,
O deign to listen to the song I raise,
And let thy smile of approbation cheer
The Minstrel's spirit, as his tongue essays
To sing the story of the Hundred Days—
From Elba's flight to mighty Waterloo ;
While in the war-strife mingle gentler traits :
And never Poet inspiration drew
From a more glorious theme, or nobler listener knew.

PREFACE.

THE scene of the following Poem opens in the Island of Elba, with the escape of the fallen Emperor; and, tracing his brief but stirring career from that event, and during the period known as the Hundred Days, closes with his final overthrow on the field of Waterloo. The theme is one which might well have inspired higher poetical talents than mine; but such as my song is, I offer it to the public, with the sincere hope that my feeble efforts to describe, in poetical language, one of the most glorious epochs and triumphant contests in the history of our country, may be as kindly received as it is humbly offered.

Arising out of the Poem, but without in any way either interfering with its action, or detracting from the general interest of the story, I have introduced a short tale, meant to illustrate the lawlessness of the period referred to, and the injustice practised and injuries suffered by individuals. The character of Count Mourand is intended as a personification of the half sceptical, but heroic spirit of the French soldiery—that spirit which believed in nothing but its own unquenchable courage, and worshipped nothing but military glory and the Emperor; while in De Barrot I have endeavoured to portray a character scarcely less brave, but without any of the redeeming qualities of Mourand—a man who fought partly from a cruelty of disposition, and partly as a means of carrying out his own objects.

In the Fourth and Fifth Cantos one or two softer episodes have been introduced, which, though only ideal, may readily be imagined to have taken place under the circumstances.

THE
HUNDRED DAYS OF NAPOLEON.

Canto First.

I.

When shouts of conquest rise upon the air,
And victory is echoed through the land,
How many a groan of anguish and despair,
From aged parent or from early friend,
With the proud hail of triumph oft doth blend !
And what is glory to the widow'd wife,
With none herself and children to defend ?
She thinks but of her lov'd one slain in strife,
And curses him who caused such waste of human life.

Nor think such imprecations are in vain :—
Woe to the man on whom such curses light !
Heaven may, at times, permit awhile the reign
Of some ambitious tyrant, but when might

Is used but for oppression, and when right
 Before despotic power is forced to bend,
 And war and blood is his mad heart's delight,
 Offended Justice will not long withstand
 The retributive cries which mingling fill the land.

II.

Napoleon, smarting from defeat—
 Hurl'd from the high imperial seat
 Whereon he'd sat for thrice five years,
 Midst Europe's slaughter, blood, and tears—
 An exile from the land which he
 Had ruled with such despotic sway,
 Dwells gloomily amid the sea
 Upon an island grey ;
 Fallen from his pinnacle of pride,
 Stripp'd of his power by adverse fate,
 As if his fortune to deride,
 In mockery of regal state,
 He still retains the imperial name
 For which he barter'd truth and fame—
 Enslaved his own, and every land
 Whose power could not his arms withstand,
 And that his narrow spirit found
 Relief in such an empty sound,
 And deem'd that titles, power, and state,
 Could e'er give honour to the great ;
 Or pageantry and hollow show
 Merit on evil deeds bestow !