

NAPOLEON, THE LAST PHASE

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Napoleon, the last phase by Archibald Philip Primrose Rosebery

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ARCHIBALD PHILIP PRIMROSE ROSEBERY

**NAPOLEON,
THE LAST PHASE**

NAPOLEON: THE LAST PHASE

NEW EDITION
WITH INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

NAPOLEON

THE LAST PHASE

BY

LORD ROSEBERY

LONDON

ARTHUR L. HUMPHREYS

1906

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

PUBLISHERS seem to think that a book is not a book without an introduction. To this one there is indeed a preface; but it became, somehow, embedded in page 231, and cannot now be extricated. For this issue something more, or at any rate something else, seems to be demanded. The form of the work does, no doubt, require explanation. Some critics have, not without justice, advised readers to skip the first two chapters; others have recommended that these should be relegated to an appendix, which, after all, is much the same thing.

There is something to be said for this view, but I may be pardoned for thinking that it is unsound. Those two chapters are the necessary foundations of the book. It is true that the visitors to a house, to whom readers may be compared, do not think it necessary to explore its foundations before entering it; but it is not less true that wise visitors will not enter a house at all if they are doubtful about its security. Now, if one wishes to study seriously the life of Napoleon at St Helena it is necessary first to feel one's way through the maze of legendary literature to arrive at any chance or possibility of facts; it is necessary to discard copiously, until at last one may doubt if anything be left. The more one reads and sifts the more dubious become all these chronicles, the more questionable becomes every assertion in them; and in re-reading these two chapters my conviction is that they are unduly lenient to the records of the captivity.