

# NAPOLEON BANISHED



**The Journeys to Elba and to St. Helena  
in the Letters and Journals of  
two British naval officers**

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Captain Thomas Ussher and  
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# Napoleon Banished

## FOREWORD

At Fontainebleau on 4th April 1814, five days after the capitulation of his forces to the Allies outside Paris, Napoleon signed his abdication. By the terms of the Treaty of Fontainebleau he was banished to Elba, an island less than twenty miles long between Corsica and the Italian mainland, over which he was given full sovereignty.

In this tiny kingdom Napoleon ruled with remarkable energy for ten months, reorganizing its civil administration and its miniature army of 1,600 men, mostly Corsicans and Elbans but stiffened by a detachment of the Old Guard and two companies of Poles who had been allowed to follow him into exile. There was also a navy made up of the brig *Inconstant*, a sloop, two feluccas, a cutter and an open boat.

At his court Napoleon received a stream of visitors, most of them English. The French consul at Leghorn wrote to Talleyrand: 'The English are great admirers of Napoleon. They have bought up all the busts of him in Florence. Every English captain has a portrait of him in his cabin.' Certainly a marked sympathy seems to have existed between Napoleon and his most formidable opponents. Captain Ussher, who commanded the *Undaunted* which brought Napoleon to Elba, became his 'good friend,' and the Emperor named his sailing boat the *Ussher* as a mark of his affection. It was for a young Englishwoman—a certain Mrs. M.—who ardently admired Napoleon, that Captain Ussher wrote the letter reprinted in this book.

Early in 1815 the mistakes and failures of the government of Louis XVIII convinced Napoleon that he had only to land in France for his star to rise again. On 26th February 1815 he embarked in the *Inconstant*; on 1st March he landed near Cannes—and the Hundred Days had begun. By 20th March he was again in Paris and Louis XVIII had fled. Three months later Waterloo had been fought and Napoleon was fleeing to the south with the intention of taking ship for the United States. On 10th July he sent a message to Captain Maitland aboard H.M.S. *Bellerophon* requesting a free passage through the blockade. Three days later Napoleon had changed his mind and wished to place himself under the protection of British law. He

therefore surrendered himself to Captain Maitland. This time, however, the Allies were taking no chances and on 7th August he was transferred to Admiral Sir George Cockburn's flagship, the *Northumberland*, to begin his last journey—to St. Helena.

Once again the admiring Mrs. M. was in luck for her cousin, Lieutenant Nelson Mills, was on board. His rank did not give him the opportunities for conversation with Napoleon which Captain Ussher had enjoyed fifteen months earlier, but in the letters he wrote to his cousin and the journal he kept for her he managed to present a remarkably vivid picture of that sixty-nine days journey into exile.

*Captain Ussher's Letter*  
THE JOURNEY TO ELBA

June, 1814

. . . I need not tell you with what humble gratitude I thank God that this long and sanguinary war has at length terminated, with so much honour to our country. The sacrifices that have been made by us for the good of mankind are unexampled in history. It has fallen to my extraordinary lot to be the gaoler of the instrument of the misery that Europe has so long endured, and I am sure you will believe me, when I say that far from allowing him to think that I bear in mind any animosity towards him, from a recollection of what my country has suffered, I endeavoured, by my attentions, to quiet his uneasy mind. It appears to me like a dream when I look back eighteen months and see all Europe prostrate at his feet—and he now absolutely my prisoner. It is a glorious finish to my services, and leaves me nothing more to wish for. As Count Kalm, aide-de-camp to Prince Schwartzemberg, will set off immediately for Paris, and takes charge of my letters, I have only time to tell you that on the 14th of April the white flag was displayed at Marseilles by the inhabitants. Anxious to shake hands with my former enemies, but now my friends, I pushed into the anchorage before the town, but not without some opposition from the military, a battery having opened its fire and struck us. This appeared to me such an act of treachery that I opened my broadside, etc., and in ten minutes silenced the fire. I now saw the inhabitants assembling on the ramparts, waving white handkerchiefs. This determined me at all hazards to enter. Soon after the mayor and the municipality came off, forced by the people to apologize for the act of hostility; and until they were assured that I was satisfied with the apology, the town was quite in a state of insurrection.

I immediately went on shore with Captain Napier of the *Euryalus*, under my orders, and we were received by upwards of fifty thousand people, who literally carried us off to the town hall, where a speech was made by one of the municipality, after which we were carried to the governor's, and with him and all the authorities went to hear the *Te Deum* chaunted; after which we went in procession round the town amidst shouts of the loudest joy and enthusiasm. Such a mixture of mad joy and melancholy was never before witnessed. I assure you I saw thousands of women with their hands clasped, and extended to Heaven, bewailing the loss of husbands, brothers, sons, but partaking in the general joy of deliverance from a tyranny that cannot be

conceived, much less described. When we returned to the governor's the mob assembled round his house. He requested we would drive out in his carriage to satisfy their curiosity, which we did, and arrived at a part of this magnificent city where none but royalty are allowed to enter in a carriage. The mob tore down the iron rails, and we drove in. Our carriage was then stopped and ladies were found begging to be permitted to shake hands with us; and we were soon almost suffocated with kisses. We then made a speech, which was cheered by the loudest huzzas from immense crowds of people. At church, at concerts, the opera, all places were alike, you could hear nothing but 'Vive les Anglais,' 'Vive Louis Dix-huit.' When I entered the opera of an evening they huzzaed for half an hour. I harangued them and called out, 'Everlasting peace and friendship with our brothers the French.' They called my ideas sublime, and cheered me with the loudest acclamations. What a nation!

And now for Napoleon. On the 25th Colonel Campbell drove into Marseilles, being commissioned by Lord Castlereagh to attend Napoleon. He said he came by the express wish of Napoleon himself to request I would go round to St. Tropez, where it was intended he should embark, as he did not consider himself safe on board a French frigate. Next day I arrived at St. Tropez, but found that he had altered his route, and was at Fréjus. At one o'clock I arrived, and was introduced to the Russian commissioner, Count Schouvaloff; the Austrian, General Koeller; the Prussian, Count Truchsess; English, Colonel Campbell; and Count Kalm. Soon after my arrival Count Bertrand, his Grand Marshal, informed me that it was the Emperor's wish to see me (he is still acknowledged Emperor, and Sovereign of Elba).

When I was presented he said that he was once a great enemy to England, but now he was as sincere a friend. He said we were a great and generous nation. He asked me about the wind, weather, distance to Elba, and other nautical questions; he then bowed and retired. He was very dignified—still the Emperor. I received his command to dine with him. There was at table all the commissioners and the Grand Marshal; the conversation was most interesting.

He laughed when I asked him if he did not issue his Milan decree for the purpose of forcing America to quarrel with us. This he did not deny. He said 'all his plans were on an immense scale,' and would have been finished in four or five years. I have not time to repeat all his interesting conversation.

That night we embarked all his numerous baggage. In the morning he sent for me. He asked how the wind was, and said he had made up his mind to embark at eight in the evening. At seven o'clock he sent for me, and I

remained half an hour alone with him (an immense mob had gathered round his hotel). His sword was on the table, and he appeared very thoughtful; there was a very great noise in the street. I said to him, 'The French mob are the worst I have seen.' He answered, 'They are a fickle people.' He appeared in deep thought; but, recovering himself, rang the bell, and ordering the Grand Marshal to be sent for, he asked if all was ready. Being answered in the affirmative, he turned to me and said in his usual quick way, 'Allons.'

The stairs were lined at each side with ladies and gentlemen. He stopped a moment, and said something to the ladies which I could not hear. He walked to his carriage and called for me (not a safe berth); he then called the Austrian commissioner and the Grand Marshal. I sat opposite to him in the carriage, and we drove off. My boats were almost two miles from the town. We were accompanied by an Hungarian regiment of cavalry. It was a delightful moonlight night, the country we passed through a paradise. Then the carriage stopped, the bugle sounded, and the regiment was drawn up.

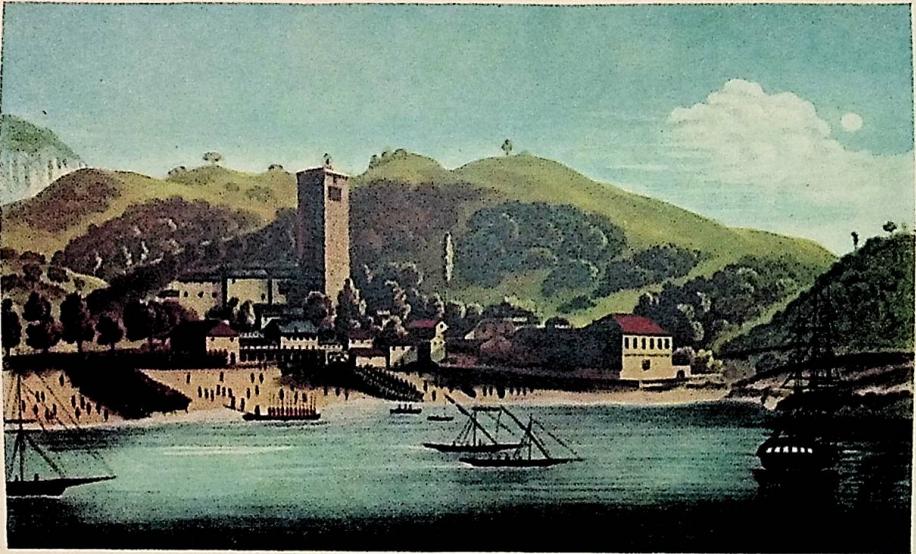
An interesting scene now opened—bugles sounding, drums beating, horses neighing, and people of every nation in Europe witnessing the embarkation of this man who had caused so much misery to them all.

I informed him that the boat was ready, and we walked together to where she was. He was handed into the boat by a nephew of Sir Sidney Smith's, who is my fourth lieutenant—rather an odd coincidence. Lieutenant Smith had been confined in prison for seven or eight years. I introduced him. The Emperor seemed to feel his conscience prick him: he only said, 'Nephew to Sir Sidney Smith; I met him in Egypt.'

When we got on board he walked round the ship. My people crowded about him, and he said 'for the first time in his life he felt confidence in a mob.' His spirits seemed to revive, and he told me next morning that he had never slept better. Next day he asked me a thousand questions and seemed quite initiated in nautical matters. At breakfast and dinner there was a great deal of conversation. He spoke of the Scheldt expedition. I asked him if he had ever thought we should succeed. He said, 'Never'; and turning a little towards the Austrian commissioner, he said, 'I wrote from Vienna that the expedition was intended against Antwerp.' He told me his motive for annexing Holland to France was for a naval purpose, and that he thought the Zuyder Zee particularly well adapted for exercising his conscripts.

At breakfast one morning he asked me to bring-to a neutral brig that was passing. I said, laughing, that I was astonished His Majesty should give such

an order, as it was contrary to his system to denationalize. He turned round and gave me a pretty hard rap, saying ‘Ah, Capitaine!’



*From a sketch by Lieut. G. S. Smith, R.N.*

**NAPOLEON EMBARKING TO GO ABOARD H.M.S. UNDAUNTED**

When we were sailing by the Alps he leaned on my arm for half an hour, looking earnestly at them. I said he had once passed them with better fortune. He laughed, and liked the compliment. He told me he had been only once wounded: it was in the knee, and by an English sergeant. He looks uncommonly well and young, and is much changed for the better, being now very stout. He showed me a portrait of the King of Rome; he is very like his father. He likewise showed me one of the Empress, which is rather pretty. We had a smart gale when off Corsica: he asked me to anchor at Ajaccio, the place of his birth; but the wind changing made it impossible. In the gale I told him I had more confidence than Cæsar’s pilot: the compliment pleased him.

He dresses very plain, wearing a green coat with the decoration of the Legion of Honour. The portrait of him with the cocked hat and folded arms is the strongest likeness I have seen. . . .

*[Here a sheet of the letter appears to be lost, and we find ourselves at Elba.]*

. . . General d’Alheme, the governor (of Elba), said he would do whatever was agreeable to Bonaparte. At eight in the evening we anchored,

and a deputation came off consisting of the governor, generals, prefect, and civil authorities. At daylight next morning Bonaparte was on deck, and remained with various officers, asking questions as to the anchorage, fortifications, etc., etc. At eight he asked me for a boat, as he intended to take a walk on the opposite side of the bay, and asked me to go with him. He wore a greatcoat and round hat. Count Bertrand, Colonel Campbell, and Colonel Vincent went with us. When about half-way he remarked that he was without a sword, and soon afterwards asked if the peasants of Tuscany were addicted to assassination.

We walked about two hours, and the peasants, considering us all as Englishmen, cried 'Vive les Anglais.' We returned on board to breakfast, and he afterwards fixed the flag of Elba, and ordered two to be made immediately, that one might be hoisted at one P.M. on the fortifications, and at two P.M. he would disembark with the other. (What a childish vanity!) The flag is a white field with a red band running diagonally through it, with three bees in the band. The bees were in his arms as Emperor of France.

The boats of the island now began to assemble round the ship, crowded with people, bands of music, etc., and shouting 'Vive l'Empereur.' At two my barge was manned. He desired me to go down first; he then called Baron Koeller, Colonel Campbell, Count Kalm, and Count Bertrand. The yards were manned, and as soon as the barge shoved off a royal salute was fired, and the same by each of the French corvettes. On the beach he was received by the mayor, municipality, and the authorities, civil and military. The keys were presented on a plate, and the people seemed to receive him with great welcome, and shouts of 'Vive l'Empereur!' We proceeded to the church in procession; thence to the Hotel de Ville, where all the authorities and principal inhabitants assembled, with each of whom he conversed. After that he mounted his horse, attended by a dozen persons, and visited part of the out-works, and dined at seven o'clock.

Next morning he was up at four, and from that until ten was on foot visiting the fortifications, storehouses, magazines, etc. At two he mounted his horse, and I rode with him about two leagues into the country, over mountains and precipices, but nothing is impassable to him. He examined the country houses, and stopped at a planter's (wine merchant) and had a cold collation. He helped me to different things, which he never does to any one else. A lady came in and offered him strawberries, which he gave to me. I took an opportunity afterwards of offering him a sprig of laurel, which pleased him much. He asked me here how I liked the wine. I said it was excellent; and he immediately ordered 2000 bottles to be sent on board to

the men. In short, his manner is always most agreeable and polite, and it's only when anxious to carry any point that he is passionate.

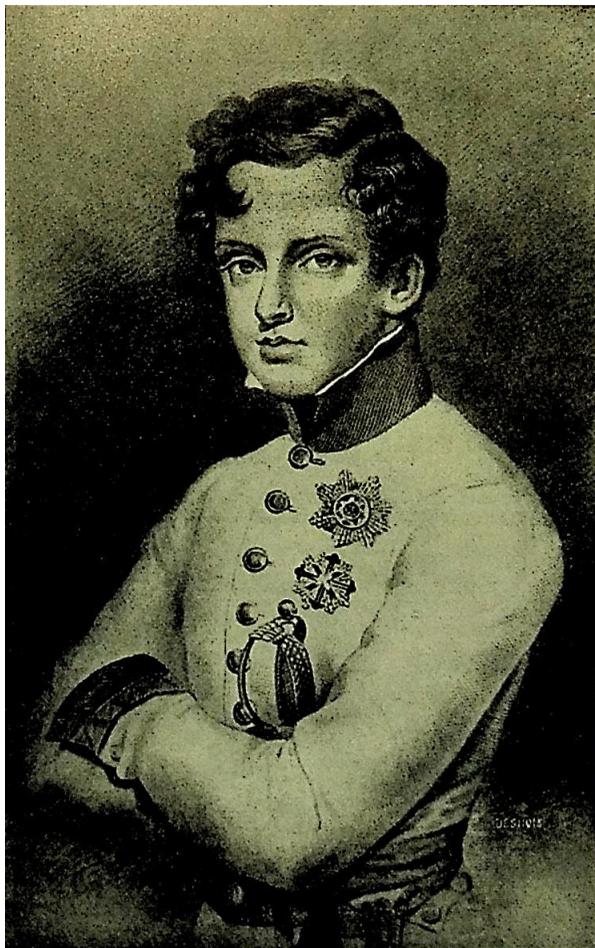
Next day we went across the island to a mountain of iron, the richest and finest mine in the world—and, what is remarkable, the revenue arising from it formerly paid his Legion of Honour. We rode through the clouds to it. I never was so fatigued in my life. The mountain is completely of iron, and is blasted with powder in the way that quarries are in England. When broken, the fragments are like pieces of diamond, of all colours. He gave me some beautiful specimens of his collection. If you choose to make the college a present of one, I will send it to you.

We afterwards went through a labyrinth to a high mountain, upon the summit of which there is a temple erected by the Romans in honour of Jupiter. I suppose he consulted the oracle. At dinner we had a boar's head, and the Emperor with his usual kindness to me helped me to the eye as a great treat. I was hard set what to do. It was rudeness to refuse, but I could not stand it, and sent it away; the very idea spoiled my appetite.

Elba is a beautiful island, possessing every advantage. The bay of Porto Ferrajo is unrivalled, and the valleys are uncommonly fertile, yielding the finest vegetables of every description, and the mountains are to the summits clothed with vines. In three or four days he visited every part of the island, conceived all his plans for building palaces, stables, aqueducts, lazarettos, etc. (The latter he begged I would plan.) His constitution is of iron—always up at four, and seldom in bed before eleven. The day the transports arrived with his carriages, horses, and guards he was on his legs from four in the morning until four in the evening, under a hot sun. He then mounted his horse and rode over two or three mountains—returned at eight o'clock, and was not twenty minutes at dinner. He sent for Colonel Campbell and myself. He stopped me for a moment in the library, and hurrying over some magnificent drawings of Egypt, stopped at Cairo, and asked my opinion of it. He then said in his quick way, 'Allons!' and we walked into the garden; and there we walked for three hours, talking of Egypt. I could not help remarking to him that his constitution was of iron in being able to undergo much fatigue—'car il montait à cheval pour se défatiguer.'

The day that he was on the summit of a mountain that showed him all the island, he turned round laughing and said, 'Ah! mon île est bien petite.' He laughed at the idea of our being caricatured, and said 'the English had a great passion for caricaturing.' I said 'John Bull caricatured and abused people when they deserved it. I shall be caricatured nursing the King of Rome.' He often compliments the nation for generosity and liberality. In

talking of Lord Wellington his admiration was unbounded. He said also that our army institutions were perfection, and that the discipline was superior to his. He also complimented my officers, and said they were the finest young men he ever saw, and that the *Undaunted* was a pattern to all other ships. He always wished to have my officers about him: a serjeant of marines, who is a great favourite, always slept in the next room to him, upon a mattress at the door.



The King of Rome

I told him we never thought him serious in his intentions of invading England. He said that he was quite serious: his object was not to conquer England, for he knew that so high-minded a people were not to be conquered by taking their capital; but he expected to throw the country into

confusion, and separate Ireland. He said his plans were on the largest scale—that in four or five years he would have had three hundred sail of the line. I asked him how he intended to man them. He said his naval conscription was fully equal to it. I told him we laughed at his naval conscripts, who were more formidable to each other than to us. . . .

P.S. Tell S. that some one said I was like Bonaparte, but not so well looking. It was a Frenchman, and he thought even with that amendment that he paid me a great compliment.

*Lieutenant Nelson Mills's Letters*

THE JOURNEY TO ST. HELENA

H. M. S. NORTHUMBERLAND,

August 3rd, 1815.

. . . Till we were on the point of sailing for Plymouth to take Buonaparte on board I did not receive your letter, as there was a mistake in the direction. As to your coming to Portsmouth, even though it should have been practicable, it would have been of no use, as he never came there. We are now under sail, and very likely shall not be able to put this in the post till we arrive at Plymouth, where we take the ex-Emperor on board. The ship is fitted out, and everything in very good order to receive him. We take him out to the island of St. Helena, and from thence we proceed to the Cape of Good Hope, and there we shall take the command. There is the *Romney* fitting out at Chatham, to come out and receive Admiral Cockburn's flag, that the *Northumberland's* ship's company may go home, for they have all been out six or seven years. I shall give you an exact account of everything that is transacted on board relative to Buonaparte, and shall expect answers from you, as it is a very great pleasure to receive letters abroad. . . .

August 5th, 1815, off Torbay.

. . . We are now sailing in company with the *Tonnant*, Admiral Lord Keith, and the *Bellerophon*, on board of which is that once great man, Buonaparte. We are standing in for Torbay, a small port where there is very good anchorage, where I expect we are going to paint the ship for the reception of Buoney and his suite. The *Northumberland* is a remarkably fine ship and sails very fast. Our Admiral Sir George has gone on board the *Bellerophon*; I believe to settle everything previous to Buonaparte's removal. . . . I shall let you hear plenty in my next. . . .

## *The Private Journal of Lieutenant Nelson Mills*

### THE VOYAGE

*August 7th, 1815.* Came on board General Buonaparte, from H. M. S. *Bellerophon*. He was saluted on the quarterdeck by the marines of the ship under arms, in the same manner as an English general. He was accompanied by his suite, consisting of the following people: General Bertrand (Grand Mareschal du Palais), his wife and three children; Comte de Montholon (General of Division), his wife and one child; General de Gourgon; le Comte de Lascases and his son, who is in the quality of page to the general; and the surgeon of the *Bellerophon*, who accompanies Buonaparte as his private physician; twelve male and two female servants.

He returned the salute by taking off his hat and bowing to all the officers who were present. He entered into conversation with Captain Beattie of the marines, respecting the length of time he had served, what actions he had been in, and if he had ever been wounded. He replied that he had served many years, had been wounded, and was at the siege of Acre. Napoleon took hold of his left ear, and gently pulling it said, 'Ah, ah! vous êtes un brave homme—brave homme!' He was very much pleased when introduced and shown all through the admiral's cabin, after which he expressed a wish to be likewise introduced to the officers of our ship, which was immediately complied with by the admiral. After inquiring individually their respective duties on board and seeming very much pleased with the discipline and regularity of the ship, they were dismissed. He was dressed in a green uniform coat with red facings, plain gold epaulets, white knee-breeches, shoe-buckles, a high cocked hat with the tricoloured cockade; on his left breast was a large silver star, and below that were the three different insignias suspended by three coloured ribbons.

Lord Lowther and Mr. Littleton had accompanied the admiral from Portsmouth to Plymouth. Napoleon, finding Mr. Littleton was a member of Parliament, had a very long conversation with him, and was particularly inquisitive respecting Mr. Whitbread, saying that if he, Mr. Whitbread, had been alive, his case (meaning his own) would have been very different. He wished very much to know what had occasioned him to commit suicide, and if Mr. Littleton knew why he did it, saying it was very singular it should happen just at that time. He then retired into the cabin fitted up for him, which was the admiral's larboard side cabin. Shortly after he went to dinner

with the admiral, the usual number of officers being at table. He ate very hearty, rose up soon, and came out to walk the quarterdeck. He again entered into conversation with Mr. Littleton, by whom he sent a private message to the Prince Regent. He requested the band might play 'Rule Britannia' and 'God save the King,' which was instantly complied with. We then got under weigh and proceeded down Channel. Fresh winds and rainy weather running down Channel, in company with the following ships: *Havannah*, *Bucephalus*, *Ceylon*, *Peruvian*, *Icarus*, *Zenobia*, *Redpole*, *Ferret*, *Zephyr*.

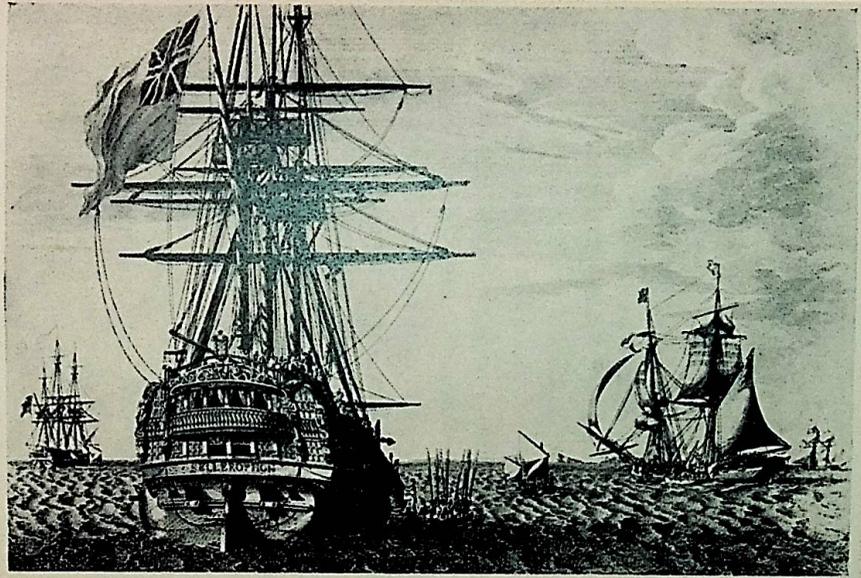
*August the 8th.*—Napoleon did not stir out of his cabin till the admiral went to dinner; he then came to table, but retired again almost immediately owing to sea-sickness, it being a very rough day. Almost all his suite were sea-sick also, especially the ladies, Mesdames Bertrand and Montholon. The former is a very amiable and good woman, but the latter is quite the contrary. Fresh winds and rainy weather running down Channel, all the squadron in company.

*August the 9th.*—About eleven o'clock Buonaparte came out of his cabin and took a walk on the quarterdeck for about half an hour, conversing alternately with Admiral Cockburn and Sir George Bingham upon the loss of the battle of Waterloo. He imputes it to this cause: in the hurry of equipping his army they were obliged to clothe a great many of the new guards in the uniform of the old; and the former, owing to their impetuosity and rashness during the action, were obliged to give way. The remainder of the army, fancying it was the old guards, gave up all hopes and retreated in the utmost confusion, so that it was impossible to rally them again. . . . After dinner . . . he retired to the admiral's after-cabin to play at cards, of which he is very fond, although he always loses. Moderate winds and fine weather standing out of the Channel, the Lizard Point bearing N.W. by W. five leagues and a half. . . .

*August 11th.*—Buonaparte walked the deck in the forenoon, it being a very fine day, attended as usual by his two confidants, Bertrand and Lascases: he takes very little notice of any of the others. The ladies also made their appearance on deck to-day. The midshipmen who were walking on the lee side of the deck attracted his notice, and he immediately crossed the deck to them, asking them if they could speak French, and if they had ever been in France. There was one amongst them who had been in prison at Verdun, and had seen him (Napoleon) when passing through that place at the head of his army to go to Russia. He immediately said, 'C'est un beau pays,' and walked away, taking one or two of us by the ears. . . . He sat down to his

general evening's amusement of cards; he plays piquet and vingt-et-un. Out of sight of land to-day.

*August 12th.*—Buonaparte did not appear on deck to-day, being unwell. . . . He does not eat his breakfast at the same time the admiral does, but has it by himself in his cabin: it generally consists of fowls, meat, and porter; he never touches tea in the morning. The French officers were all on deck in the afternoon. Fresh breezes and fine weather.



NAPOLEON GOING ABOARD H.M.S. BELLEROPHON

*August 13th.*—This being Sunday, divine service was performed by the chaplain, but neither Napoleon nor any of his officers were present. He walked the deck from three o'clock till dinner-time, and afterwards for about an hour, conversing very closely with his two confidants, who are always uncovered when in his presence. He seems to exact the same respect and obedience from them now as when an emperor. He takes an amazing large quantity of snuff of a very coarse sort; he keeps it in a large box in the shape of a cheese, and spills two-thirds of what he takes in one pinch. He frequently asks the admiral questions about the ship, such as the particular uses of different ropes; and the duties of individuals he may see passing him. Light winds and fine weather.

*August 14th.*— . . . Napoleon did not come on deck till after dinner; he entered into conversation with Colonel Sir George Bingham and the admiral upon his intention of invading England, which he says he firmly intended doing, and that the fleet under Villeneuve was to have gone to the island of Martinique to draw our fleet from the Channel. Villeneuve was then to have proceeded up the Channel, where the army, consisting of 20,000 men, were to have embarked; the praams were to have taken 6000 cavalry. He says it was his intention to have landed as near Chatham as possible, and push on directly for London, where he hoped to have carried a revolution in his favour. He knew he should have a great deal to encounter before he could accomplish his design, and that there was no hope of retreating should he not succeed. At six o'clock the ship's company's hammocks are piped down, and Napoleon is always standing with his back against the foremost gun on the quarterdeck, and four or five midshipmen always round him to keep the men from running against him. Light winds and fine weather, but a heavy swell.

*August 15th.*—This day was the anniversary of the once great Napoleon's birthday. He seemed if anything a little more enlivened and gay than usual. His officers were all dressed and paid him particular attention. At dinner also the admiral paid him a great many compliments. He walked more to-day than ever, his officers attending him the whole of the time. In the evening he sat down to cards, and for the first time since he came on board won almost every deal, insomuch that the admiral and those with whom he was playing were obliged to send out frequently for more money. Light winds and fine weather, with a heavy cross swell.

*August 16th.*—Napoleon did not rise until about twelve o'clock to-day: he very frequently takes his breakfast by himself in bed. He did not appear on deck to-day till after dinner, and then walked for an hour. Sir George Bingham was on the lee gangway looking at the squadron, on our lee beam. Napoleon went up to him, and after conversing with him for a few minutes, and taking a pinch or two of snuff, pulled him by his whiskers and walked away to converse with his two confidants against the gun, which seems to be his favourite place when on deck. Two of his servants got intoxicated and became very riotous. He requested they might be punished. They were immediately put in irons.

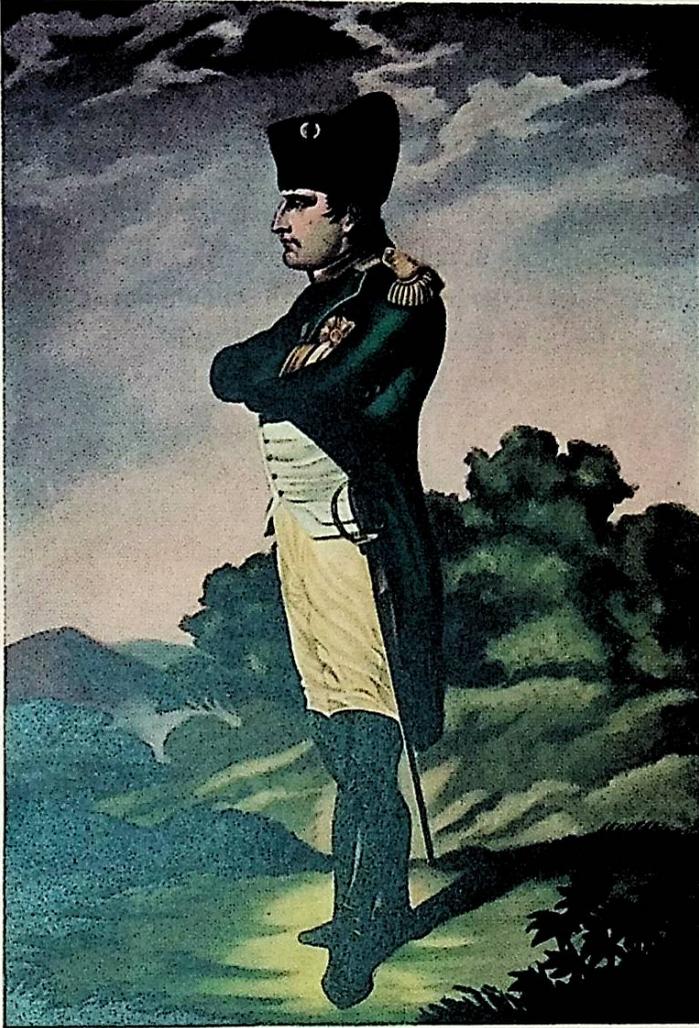
*August 17th.*—This morning, having occasion to punish some of the ship's company, the two servants belonging to Napoleon were brought up and made to understand that they were liable to the same punishment if ever they again committed such a fault. Buonaparte walked the deck after dinner

as usual, taking quantities of snuff, and very often looking at the other vessels of the squadron through his opera-glass, which is a very handsome one (made in England), and which he always carries in his pocket. He is often very near falling when the ship rolls heavy, being seemingly very weak in his legs, and was only narrowly prevented to-day by Maréchal Bertrand catching him in his arms.

*August 18th.*—Napoleon as usual appeared on deck after dinner, and entered into conversation with the admiral, to whom he said the following: ‘The burning of Moscow was the commencement of my bad fortune.’ He says that the war in Russia was the most destructive and dreadful that ever he had witnessed. On his march towards Moscow the whole country around, as far as his eye could observe, appeared like a sea of fire, owing to the towns and villages that were set on fire; which was attributed to his troops; but he gives his word of honour that it was not the case, but they were set on fire by the inhabitants previous to their desertion. He says a great number of his soldiers were burnt to death in attempting to plunder amidst the flames.

*August 19th.*— . . . Napoleon again resumed his yesterday evening’s story. He says he only intended to refresh his troops at Moscow for a few days, and then to have proceeded forward for Petersburg, where he had his secret emissaries at work learning the minds of the people, and had accounts through the means of them that the people (the Russians) were generally speaking much averse to their present form of government, and many were ready to join him on his approach to the capital; but that the disaster that happened at Moscow had frustrated all his plans and completely turned the scale.

*August 20th.*—Napoleon was not very well to-day, as we had rather a fresh breeze and heavy rains, and only walked a short time with the admiral. ‘From my first entering into a military capacity,’ says Napoleon, ‘to the destruction of Moscow, mine had been a series of good fortune and advancement in life without a parallel; and the very reverses which took place at Moscow, in case it had so happened I had been killed, would have been attributed more to my loss than to their real cause.’ Not being able to get hold of the different conversations which passed between the admiral and Napoleon daily, I shall give you circumstance after circumstance as I could catch it.



NAPOLEON

In a question the admiral put to him relative to Captain Wright and the general idea that prevailed in England as to what had occasioned his death, Napoleon seemed much surprised at the anxiety the admiral showed in wishing to know, observing at the same time that he (Napoleon) imagined it was sufficiently made public not to cause on the part of any one the curiosity which the admiral at that time showed, but without any hesitation gave Sir George the following story: An apothecary, landing on the coast of France

about that period from an English man-of-war,—which circumstance excited great suspicions on the part of the French Government,—was seized and conveyed to prison, and condemned to die unless he gave such information to them as would be of benefit to the nation. These means taking the effect desired upon the poor wretch under confinement, the fear of death compelled him to reveal the names of several persons, to the number of twenty-three, who were concerned in a conspiracy, together with Pichegru, Georges, and Captain Wright, against the lives of him (Buonaparte) and the other rulers of France. Upon this intelligence every means were used by the police of Paris to find out where these conspirators were secreted, and in the course of a few weeks succeeded so far that the greatest part of them were apprehended. Amongst these so detected was Captain Wright, who, by the order of the Directory, was conveyed to the Temple, to undergo a trial for conspiracy against the state. Accordingly a council was assembled; but a few days previous to the one appointed for his trial he put an end to himself, and he (Buonaparte) says he should have thought the inferior rank of that officer alone would in the eyes of the world have exempted him from their suspicion.

## *The Private Journal of Lieutenant Nelson Mills*

### THE CONVERSATION OF NAPOLEON

. . . During the confinement of Ferdinand of Spain in France, after being brought captive from his own country by the French, Buonaparte informed the admiral that one Baron Koltz was employed by our Government on an errand to France with a view to release Ferdinand; . . . but his plans not being laid with that skill which the then pressing circumstances required, he was suspected, as well by his having too great command of money, and a search being made, the Prince Regent's letter to the King of Spain was found in his possession, containing his Royal Highness's willingness to lend him any assistance in his power to procure the release of his Majesty, and that the bearer of the letter had the royal authority to assist him in the undertaking. Having rescued all Koltz's papers, a police officer was sent in disguise, to personate Koltz, to the place where Ferdinand was confined, presenting the letter and stating the authority he had so to act. But all he could say or do, he could not persuade Ferdinand to take any steps in attempting to escape; and Napoleon says that the pusillanimity of Ferdinand was such that he was sure if it had been the smallest risk his cowardly spirit would have deterred him from attempting it. Buonaparte then said as a joke that the above trick was played to try his mettle.

. . . In conversing further with this extraordinary personage, the admiral and him came to that part of his life when he had command of the French army in Egypt; and the admiral did not fail to make inquiries respecting the poisoning story, to ascertain if possible the veracity of a report so generally spread and believed in England to the prejudice of Buonaparte. But let it be how it will with those who believe it, the following account came from his own mouth: 'Having possession of Jaffa, with a great part of my army sick of the plague, and hard pushed by Djezzar Pasha's troops, who would enter immediately upon my evacuating the place and murder and torture the sick and wounded that remained there, I judged it more an act of humanity than otherwise to accelerate the death of these poor wretches by giving them opium,—as they were then lingering in the greatest misery,—which would have freed them from the torments that awaited them. I therefore proposed the above expedient to the medical men of the army, but met with a joint refusal, saying they could not think of doing such a thing, so contrary to the general rules of the profession; but ventured to affirm, if I would hold the place forty-eight hours longer, that the greatest part of the sick, if not all,

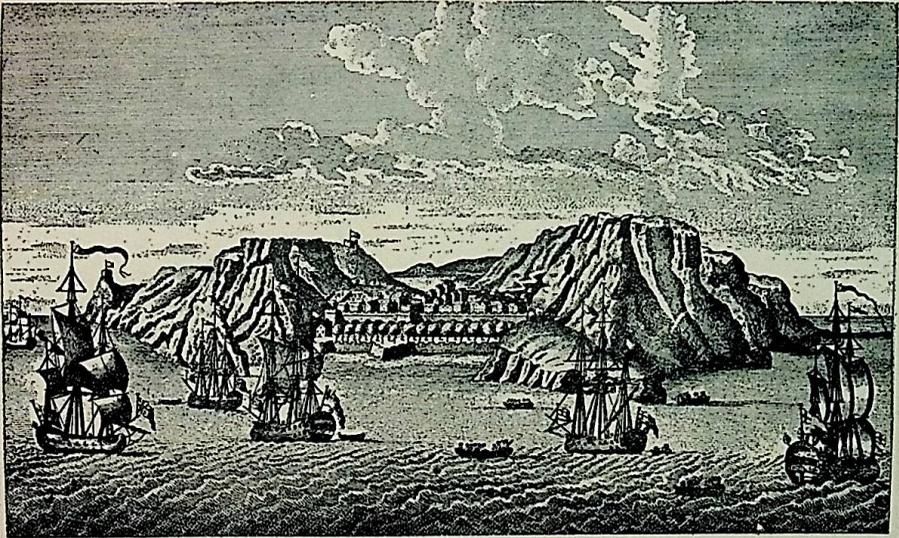
would have expired. I agreed to the proposal, and maintained the place myself for the first twenty-four hours, and left a strong rear-guard for the occupation of the other twenty-four hours; and at the end of that time I was informed that there were not above two or three alive at the time that Djezzar Pasha's troops entered.'

Captain Beattie of the marines, now serving on board the *Northumberland*, was in the British service acting against the French in Egypt at that time, and entered Jaffa immediately the French evacuated it. He says that there were but two or three French soldiers in the hospital, and that those were in the very last stage of the disease.

. . . 'The harbour of Cherbourg,' says Buonaparte, in answer to a question put to him by the admiral in relation to the marine of France, 'is, since the improvements I have ordered to be made, one of the finest in France; its repairs cost £2,000,000 sterling. The outer harbour will contain a thousand sail of the line, and the inner one the same number of ships, safe with the wind blowing from any quarter. I was particularly cautious in having it well guarded since its repairs, lest through the inspection of the English they might be tempted to destroy these works which cost me so much money, and which might be easily done by a *coup de main*.'

Speaking further of France and the navy of that country, viz., the Toulon fleet, he says it was but very indifferently supplied with sailors, and of those the greater part had never been beyond the harbour; but that he thought they must improve by the constant practice of manœuvring. Notwithstanding the damage the fleet sustained for want of men experienced in seamanship, he considered the improvement the men might derive from such a practice as adequate to the loss experienced by the fleet: indeed, he says this plan of his had excited much murmuring on the part of the people; but he did not care, and was determined to preserve, as he well knew that France must have a navy as well as an army for her better preservation. He also said he had determined to have ten frigates at sea; and if the number was made deficient, in case either of loss or capture, he could have others always ready to supply their places: that he would give orders for them to cruise principally in the Channel, as it would then require their greatest vigilance for their own safety, by sailing about the land than going further to sea; that each ship should have a certain time allotted her for her cruise, and if she was so fortunate as to arrive in a French port, the commander should be immediately promoted. In case the greatest part of this squadron might be captured by the enemy, he considered the harm they would be enabled to do to our trade perfectly adequate to the loss of his ships. On the admiral asking

him how he would be enabled to keep this squadron supplied with sailors, as he must naturally expect the greater part would be captured whilst the British had such power on the seas, he replied in answer, the marine department provided for the navy annually 20,000 men. The admiral told him such force might be obtained, but then what would it be? A set of raw, inexperienced landsmen, at least the greater part of them men unqualified to go on board a ship. However he seemed to persist that the plan in time would succeed; so that the admiral left him in his own opinion for the present.



THE ISLAND OF ST. HELENA

In further conversation with Napoleon respecting the French navy, he in addition informed Sir George that spars for masts cost the government immense sums to procure them from the Baltic, owing to the expense of conveying them to France. The greatest part were sent overland, as the safer method, and if they had been sent in ships, it was two to one that they would have been captured by the English cruisers. He says he had a great number of spars at Copenhagen at the time the English took possession of it, which the Danish Government had procured for him, and that he greatly feared they would have been taken by the English, but they arrived safely in France in a short time after.

On crossing the equinoctial line we had a very fine day, and I shall give you an account how Napoleon behaved on the occasion. In the morning we

prepared for the usual custom of shaving those who had never crossed the Line before. After those officers who belonged to the ship had undergone the operation—which is performed with an old, rusty, notched iron hoop—it came to the turn of Napoleon and suite. Buonaparte himself did not appear on deck, but begged permission of the admiral to give Neptune and his gang—the people who performed the operation—100 Napoleons in gold, which amounts to £90 sterling; but this the admiral objected to, it being in his opinion too much, but permitted him to give 20 Napoleons as a compensation for not being shaved. Next came General Bertrand with his children to the place where the ceremony was performing. He also presented the men with several Napoleons for himself, his wife and children. The other French officers came in their turns and also gave the seamen some money.

On the evening of the 15th of October, 1815, we landed General Buonaparte on the island of St. Helena. We put him on shore at seven in the evening, and disguised, to prevent the populace from recognizing him, as he detests nothing so much as to be stared at. Coming into the anchorage he was walking the deck, and several times remarked how difficult a place it would be to take if well fortified; shrugging up his shoulders at the same time, apparently at the little hopes he could have of escaping from such a rock. The morning after he landed he rode up into the country with Sir George Bingham and the admiral, to a place called the Briars, situated at the head of the valley in which the town stands, and about a mile and a half from James Town. He took such a liking to this place that he obtained permission to pitch a tent next to the door of the house, which belongs to a Mr. Balcolm, a merchant of St. Helena, who resides there with his wife and two daughters.

*Lieutenant Nelson Mills's Letters*  
THE HAIR AND THE HANDKERCHIEF

ST. HELENA, Oct. 23rd, 1815.

I could not let slip the first and perhaps the only opportunity I shall have of writing to you from this most horrible place, which if you could see you would suppose all the rocks in the world had gathered together and made themselves into an island. We have put your friend Napoleon on shore; and as nothing very particular occurred during our tedious passage but what I have regularly noted down, and made a complete journal of his proceedings while on board our ship, I shall not give you any particular account of him now. With difficulty I bribed his *premier valet de chambre* to procure about fifty of his hairs. I assure you the captain of the ship did not get so much; certainly *Buoney* has very little hair on his head, and dislikes it to be given away very much. This instant the letter-bag is closing for England with dispatches concerning this very great man. I shall take very great care of my journal and hair for you. . . .

ST. HELENA, Feb. 15th, 1816.

. . . As far as it has lain in my power I have done everything you wished me, and have procured for you a very small lock of the great Napoleon's hair, with the three different coloured ribbons which suspended his orders and which he left off a few days ago. To complete the thing properly I have the promise of a pocket handkerchief from his chief *valet de chambre*, and have not forgotten the journal, in which I have entered all I could lay hold of that he conversed about. I will not send any of the above-mentioned things, for fear of anything happening. . . . You wished me in your last to give an account of Napoleon's suite and his conduct in exile. I shall commence as well as I can.

. . . He was first of all lodged in a house in the town, next to where the main guard is kept, but riding out the next morning, escorted by the admiral and Sir George Bingham, he took up his residence at a house called the Briars. . . . He remained there very quietly until his house at Longwood—the prettiest spot on the island—was ready for his reception. The governor made him a present of a small carriage when he removed to Longwood, in which he rides out almost every afternoon. He is permitted to go three miles every way round his house without attendant; but the sentinels at those places do not permit him to go beyond them without he is accompanied by Captain

Poppleton of the 53rd Regiment. Should he attempt to go past them without being so attended he is liable to be shot by them, which he has been perfectly made to understand. His chief amusement is riding on horseback. There are seven very handsome horses brought from the Cape for him, each of which he has named: 1st, Vizier; 2nd, Mamalouke; 3rd, l'Arabe; 4th, La Solide; 5th, La Tranquille; the other two I have forgotten. He seems perfectly resigned to his fate, and in my opinion—for so great a fall—bears it remarkably well. It is an utter impossibility for him to escape from this, unless anybody favoured his intentions. . . . [*Here follows a description of Napoleon's suite, much the same as that given in the journal.*]

ST. HELENA, April 19th, 1816.

. . . I have, as far as possible, complied with your request, and have, I am glad to say, procured you his handkerchief. It has, as you said, the imperial crown and his initial in the corners. I shall not send it, not only because I expect the *Northumberland* to be in England soon, but for fear of losing it, which I would not do for any consideration, knowing how much you value it. . . . Your friend Napoleon is quite well, and to all appearance bears his fate and exile very well. He has everything he can wish for that money will procure, except his liberty. We see him sometimes, as we have two hundred men constantly going up to Longwood every day, and I belong to that party. I gave you a long detail of this before in my last letter, which I hope has arrived safe. . . .

[*This letter, apparently, has not been preserved, and Lieutenant Mills's communications end here.*]

THE END

# MINIATURE BOOKS

AN AMATEUR PEASANT GIRL	by Alexander Pushkin
A COUNTER-BLASTE TO TOBACCO	by King James I
A DOOR MUST BE EITHER OPEN OR SHUT	by Alfred de Musset
BELPHAGOR	by Niccolo Machiavelli
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	by Charles Lamb
BIBLIOMANIA	by Gustave Flaubert
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THE WHITE BLACKBIRD	by Alfred de Musset
THOMAS CATHER'S JOURNAL	A voyage to America in 1836
VOLTAIRE	Studies by Oliver Goldsmith and Victor Hugo

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected or standardised.

Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.

Inconsistency in accents has been corrected or standardised.

Illustrations have been relocated due to using a non-page layout.

Some photographs have been enhanced to be more legible.

[The end of *Napoleon Banished* by Thomas Ussher & Nelson Mills]