

Says Genuine Death Mask of Napoleon Is Now in Havana

The Editor of The New York Times:

IN a recent issue of your Sunday Magazine I read an article devoted to the death mask of Napoleon I. In the interests of the heirs of General José Lacret Morlot, whose son-in-law I am, I wish to make some statements.

Dr. Antommarchi, who was with Napoleon in his last moments, proceeded to have a death mask made of the Emperor's face as soon as the latter had died. This is accepted by all biographers of Napoleon, while it is doubtful if others were made. After the funeral, Dr. Antommarchi left the Island of St. Helena and went direct to Europe. He lived first in Warsaw and then in Paris, where he saw the ex-Empress Marie Louise, to whom he gave the Emperor's heart, thus complying with his last desires.

The affection demonstrated publicly by Dr. Antommarchi toward Napoleon I. brought him a great number of enemies. On hearing of the great veneration felt in New Orleans toward Napoleon I., he decided to cross the Atlantic, with the view of establishing his residence in that city. The influence of his enemies and

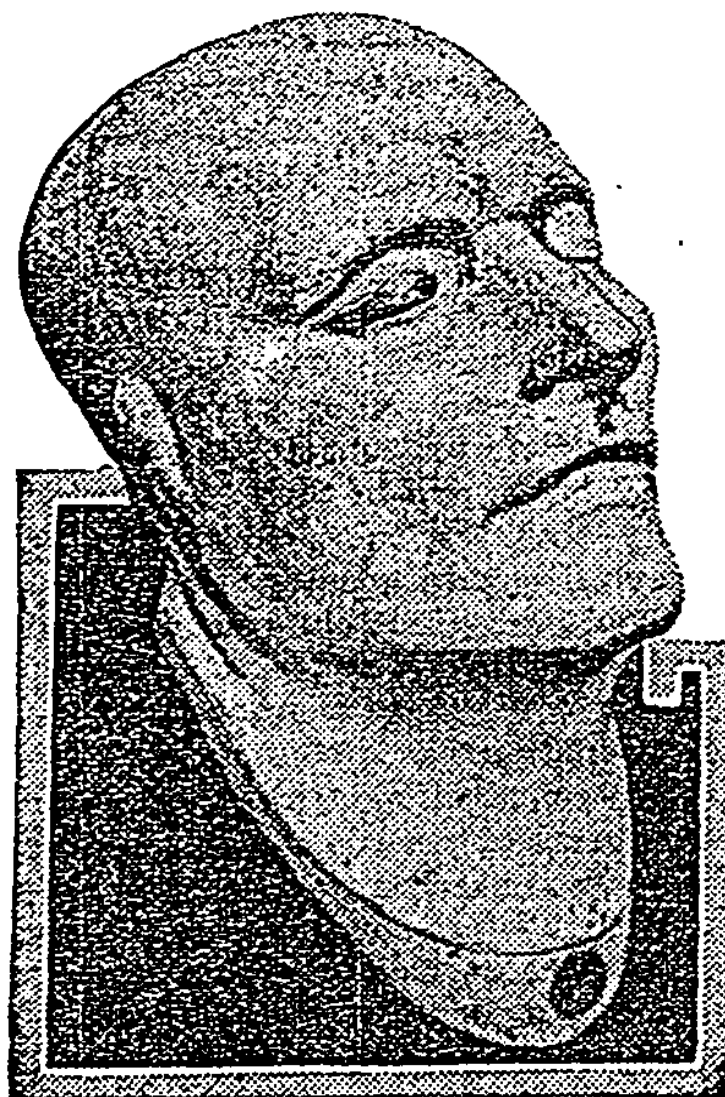
his wandering character made him soon leave New Orleans.

While some biographers say that he lived in other cities of the continent, I have enough reasons to believe that he came directly to the City of Havana at a time when it was suffering from an epidemic of yellow fever. The Island of Cuba was then ruled by General Miguel Tacón.

Dr. Antommarchi, taking advantage of the fact that a cousin of his, Antonio Antommarchi, owned a large coffee plantation near Santiago de Cuba, decided to go there with a lot of letters of recommendation from General Tacón and other people to the Governor of the Eastern Department of the Island, General Juan de Moya. This Spanish General, who had lost an eye in the battle of Bailén fighting against the army of Napoleon, was a great admirer of the Emperor, and consequently sympathized with Antommarchi to such an extent that he took him into his own house.

While Dr. Antommarchi was living in Santiago de Cuba several Englishmen asked to be allowed to obtain copies in chalk of the genuine mask, to which

Antommarchi consented. Might not these be some of the many that have appeared in Europe?



Napoleon's Death Mask in Havana.

Dr. Antommarchi died April 2, 1838, in General Moya's house. He made General Moya a present of the genuine death mask of Napoleon I.

General Moya accepted the present with great joy, as he knew its enormous value. After his death his family also kept it with great care, but on account of the wars in Cuba this family was reduced to such a poor financial condition that they were obliged to sell the mask. General José Lacret y Morlot purchased it. Though offered large sums for it, he refused them, despite his poverty.

General Lacret y Morlot died some years ago. I am his son-in-law. His widow and sons have appointed me to sell the mask of Napoleon I., if there is anybody interested in it. I have in my possession documents which prove that it was presented to General Moya, and later purchased by General Lacret y Morlot. I also have other documents which prove its genuineness, and which I am desirous to show to whomsoever wishes to take up the matter with me.

L. MINEZ GAMIZ.

Havana, Cuba.

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