

The Literary Culture and Opinions
of
NAPOLEON I.

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by
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SPECIAL NOTE.

In this study every effort has been made to find and quote the actual words of Napoleon himself on all topics which are dealt with. The French in which Napoleon expressed himself seems to offer many examples of surprising departures from normal usage but as almost all French writers on Napoleon have seen fit to pass over these without comment I have not presumed to do otherwise.

F.G.H.

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THE LITERARY CULTURE AND OPINIONS OF NAPOLEON I.

INTRODUCTION.

It has become customary for each new book or article on Napoleon to be prefaced by the author's apologies for adding yet more to the already enormous bibliography of this apparently overworked subject. It seems at first that every possible aspect of Napoleon's life, character, and times has been explored, analysed, and the findings committed to print, while works of popularisation, and often of mere reiteration, in this field are so many that although an apology is not necessary, at least a justification is required for each new attempt to cast a little more light on the character of the greatest of Frenchmen.

Whether we are hostile to his aims and ideals or perfervid in our admiration for them the fact remains that Napoleon is a pre-eminent representative of certain human qualities, of the power of the will, of energy, of concentration, a great and tragic symbol of human possibility and of human limitations, one of the few men who, in his own words "astonished the world". The more we can know of such a man the more we shall know of the human condition itself for here, magnified and realised to the bounds of human possibility, are the ambition, the day-dreams and the strivings of every individual who struggles to assert his own limited superiority in whatever tiny sphere. Nothing

which concerns such a man can be indifferent to the generations which come after him and it is in this belief that the present study has been written.

There are two obvious ways of approach to the question of Napoleon and literature, the one, the action of Napoleon upon literature, which has already received a fair measure of attention, and the other, the action of literature upon Napoleon, its part in forming his personality, his views and his tastes, in short his literary culture, and this it is which is the basis of this work. The literary culture of a man may be manifested in his words, his writings, or even in his acts, or in all three and to some extent we shall be concerned with all of them here, but in the years of his maturity in particular Napoleon's views on literature were mostly expressed in his conversations and letters, from both of which a quite considerable body of his literary opinions can be extracted, opinions which, in synthesis, together with our already detailed knowledge of his education and formative years enables us to gain a good idea of his literary tastes and of their origins.

Most biographers and historians of Napoleon have felt the need to touch upon various aspects of this subject, in passing, but none has attempted to go deeper than the fairly rapid generalisation, especially as literature had no demonstrable effect upon Napoleon's major political acts. It may be said with justice that there is need for a detailed examination of Napoleon's literary culture, and of his views on literature, in which equal emphasis is given to Napoleon and to literature,

instead of the latter being dealt with incidentally, or as an afterthought as is almost inevitable in a purely biographical or political study. In particular it is necessary to attempt to arrive at an understanding of Napoleon's views on literature as seen against the intellectual background of his time and to show how various apparently conflicting tendencies do, at this moment of literary development co-exist, not only in the Republic of Letters itself, but also in individual taste.

The chief aim of this work will be to arrive at the personal opinions and tastes of the man Napoleon but it is inevitable that the purely historical and political elements will from time to time obtrude. No life which was lived for so long and so intensely upon the stage of history, in the leading role, could possibly retain any large element of privacy and for Napoleon, once he had achieved supreme power, even his family life was continuously and completely dominated by political considerations. We can only obtain a few glimpses of the real Napoleon, the man, glimpses revealed in odd moments of unguarded frankness or of rare familiarity and these rare flashes must be used to leaven the mass of pronouncements made by the Consul and Emperor, the completely political Napoleon; only thus may we hope to arrive at a balanced view of his ideas. It is fortunate that literature was one of the topics upon which Napoleon allowed himself frank comment with comparative frequency, no doubt because the literature of the past, in particular, was not a matter of immediate political moment, so that we have a fair hope in this study of arriving at a reasonably accurate estimate of what he truly felt and thought on these matters.

I

LITERATURE IN THE LIFE OF NAPOLEON.

Before we enter upon any detailed discussion of Napoleon's literary culture it is necessary to establish beyond doubt the extent and quality of his interest in literature. The name of Napoleon is rarely connected with the world of literature except on such occasions as his various exchanges of verbal broadsides with Mme. de Staël, or his pretentious meetings with Goethe and Wieland. A few of his more spectacular remarks about literary figures enjoy wide currency, as for example the statement that he would have made Corneille a prince, or his threat to have Chateaubriand cut down on the steps of the Tuileries, but little has been done so far to prove that literature played an important part in this busy life.¹

If Napoleon's relationship to literature has been somewhat summarily dealt with this is not true of his attitude

1. Although many of the standard authors on Napoleon attempt a summary review of his attitudes to literature and to writers, this is usually written merely to achieve ~~to achieve~~ completeness of viewpoint and rarely rises above the commonplace, emphasising Napoleon's early enthusiasms for Rousseau and the Abbé Raynal, and his well-known later admiration for Corneille and Ossian. GUILLOIS alone (Napoléon, Paris, 1889, 2 vol.) gives fairly detailed attention to this aspect, in his second volume, but he was writing before much important Napoleonic material was published, e.g. - GOURGAUD - 'Journal de Sainte-Hélène' (1899) and BERTRAND - 'Cahiers de S-H.' (1949). A more recent publication CHARPENTIER - 'Napoléon et les hommes de lettres de son temps', (Paris-1935) attempts to treat of Napoleon in relation to the literature of his day, but the book is quite formless and does not deal at any length with the more general aspects of the topic. Undoubtedly the most ~~comprehensive and~~ well written work in this field is by P. GAUTIER - 'Madame de Staël et Napoléon' (Paris, 1903), although naturally its subject matter is strictly confined to the one aspect of the question.

towards books, since three very informative works have been published which aim at nothing less than proving Napoleon to have been a bibliophile.¹ This assertion is true ^{insofar} as he did show a great interest in books, and, when Emperor, a certain amount of interest also in their format and bindings, but this was probably the result not of any bibliomania, but of his wish either to build up libraries worthy of an emperor and king or suitable, on the other hand, by their small size, for easy transportation in the baggage wagons of the military household. Whether or not Napoleon is considered a bibliophile probably depends on how the word itself is interpreted, but it is hoped that by the end of the present chapter the extent of his interest both in books and in literature will have been well established.

Just as most of the biographers and historians of Napoleon pay comparatively ^{little} attention to his relations with the world of letters, so do many of the sources from which their works have been produced give the impression that literature meant little to him. The Marquis de Sayve, in his pamphlet 'Napoléon et les livres'², sums up this situation succinctly as follows: "...les contemporains paraissent ignorer la passion des livres que ne cessa ~~de~~ jamais d'éprouver ce grand lecteur. Boyle

1. G. MOURAVIT: 'Napoléon bibliophile', (Paris, 1905) a book very full of information about the reading habits of Napoleon and his libraries. This owes much to GUILLOIS op.cit., and to STUMKE. 'Napoléon et les livres' (Berlin, 1901). The books of both STUMKE and MOURAVIT were produced in extremely limited editions and when MOURAVIT was writing in 1905, the work by STUMKE was, he says, "presque introuvable". The only copy I have been able to trace is in the possession of M. Marcel Dunan of the Sorbonne. The third important work on the 'bibliomania' of Napoleon is by the Marquis de SAYVE, 'Napoléon et les livres', (Paris, 1927) a brochure of 18pp.

2. Paris, 1927 - see n.1 above.

disait qu'il n'aimait que les romans vulgaires, et Taine, généralement si scrupuleux, ose ajouter avec Mme de Rémusat qu'il lisait fort peu et n'avait aucune considération pour la littérature de son temps".¹ In the next sentence SAYVE quotes the remark of Goethe to Eckermann, in 1828, which is very much ^{nearer} the truth, as we shall see, that ~~that~~ Napoleon had studied the books he took to Egypt as a judge studies the depositions in a lawsuit. This is a very fitting description of Napoleon's reading habits, whether the books were utilitarian or pure literature.²

Typical of the memoir-writers of the period is MRS. ABELL, the former Betsy Balcombe of the ^{Brians} ~~Brains~~, where Napoleon first stayed on his arrival in St. Helena. She makes the statement that "Napoleon, as far as I ~~was able to judge~~ was capable of judging, could not be considered fond of literature. He seldom introduced the topic in conversation, and I suspect his reading was confined almost ~~entirely~~ solely to scientific subjects."³ Perhaps as Betsy Balcombe was only fourteen at the time she came to know Napoleon she may be forgiven this superficial judgement!⁴ In order to disprove this and similar assertions of Napoleon's contemporaries regarding his attitude to literature we shall now attempt to

1. Op.cit. p.6.

2. The extreme aptness of Goethe's remark will become fully apparent when we discuss some of Napoleon's detailed criticisms of literary works in later chapters, in particular VOLTAIRE'S 'Mahomet' and the 'Aeneid' of VIRGIL.

3. MRS. ABELL, 'Napoleon at Saint Helena'. (London, 1844) p. 244.

4. It is however surprising that she should have allowed this to stand since LAS CASES'S 'Mémoires de Saint-Hélène' had already appeared, in French in 1823 (London and Paris) and in translation in London in the same year. This work leaves no doubt as to Napoleon's interest in literature, and especially emphasises the important role it played in his life at Saint Helena. As anyone with MRS. ABELL'S interest in Napoleon and in Saint Helena could hardly have failed to read it we must regard the qualifying statement "as far as I could judge" as being emphatic.

trace his interest in it throughout his life, leaving until later the detailed consideration of his views on individual authors and genres. Whilst everything that follows does not necessarily demonstrate Napoleon's liking for literature in its narrower sense, it does show that it played an essential part in his mental development. Further, as we shall also see, there can be little doubt that he regarded books as one of the necessities of life and at times gave proof of a studious~~a~~, although not contemplative nature.

If heredity plays any important part in intellectual development then Napoleon would seem to have been predestined to interest himself in literature. His father, Charles Bonaparte¹, a Corsican of noble family, had studied law in 1765 at the university set up at Corte during the time of Paoli's government of Corsica. Like many other cultured young men of his day Charles Bonaparte was a versifier and had, according to Frédéric Masson,² a great facility for occasional verse, specimens of which he produced in honour of Paoli, and later, having rallied to the French cause, in honour of the first French governor of Corsica, the comte de Marbeuf.³

In spite of Charles's intellectual and cultural aspirations⁴ there is no evidence of his having taken any active part in the early education of Napoleon, but he did exert himself greatly to secure as good an education as possible for all his sons. Having

1. More correctly CARLO BUONAPARTE, b.1746 at Ajaccio, d.1785 at Montpellier, whilst on a journey in France.

2. 'Napoléon dans sa jeunesse', Paris 1907, p.11.

3. Ibid. p.11.

4. He sustained his thesis for the doctorate in Law at Pisa in Nov.1769, roughly 3 months after the ~~birth~~ birth of Napoleon, (Aug.15, 1769).

abandoned the cause of Corsican freedom after the decisive battle of Ponte-Nuovo, at which Paoli was defeated in May 1769, Charles became an adherent of the French party and in a short time gained the intimacy of the French governor. Being no doubt well endowed with the Corsican gift for intrigue he was successful in obtaining places for his sons Joseph and Napoleon in the Royal Schools in France, where free education was provided at the King's expense for the children of indigent nobles.

The two brothers were sent first to the college at Autun, in 1779, where they were intended to further their knowledge of the French language¹. Napoleon, after a stay of only a few months at Autun, went to the Military School at Brienne², where he remained for five years, a solitary Corsican in the midst of the sons of the French nobility, whom he, an ardent Corsican patriot, regarded as the enemies and oppressors of his people. Faced with the haughty, often disdainful attitude of his class-mates the young Napoleon was thrown upon himself for company and for ^{the} first time he begins to take refuge in reading, and retires to the inner privacy of his thoughts.³

1. In his youth Napoleon spoke only the Corsican patois, although his father was one of the few Corsicans to speak French. - MASSON Op.cit. p.42.

2. The nature of the schools at which Napoleon was educated will be examined in detail in the following chapter.

3. MASSON Op.cit. p.73 et seq.

Although he was not an outstanding pupil, Napoleon as is well known, had a greater aptitude for mathematics and such science as was taught than he had for literature, but as MASSON states¹, this may have been due to his poor knowledge of French, which automatically retarded him in his studies of grammar, rhetoric and literature². In addition to being a refuge for his loneliness, the intense course of reading upon which Napoleon embarked may also have been dictated by the necessity to try to make up this natural disadvantage under which he laboured. Apart from any directly utilitarian work of this type, his reading at this age was probably mostly in history and the lives of great men.

In October 1784 he was admitted to the Military School in Paris. Here, as a 'gentleman-cadet', he underwent, for one year, a course of instruction designed to produce not soldiers, but honnêtes hommes³. His studies included the classes in French given by DOMAIRON⁴, whose method of teaching was designed, as we shall see later⁴, to inculcate a love of literature, using as his examples the works of the greatest French writers, including those who were almost contemporaries. No doubt Napoleon also continued his private

1.Op.cit. p.73 and p.75.

2.Most of the teaching at Brienne was in French. Napoleon never gained any real knowledge of Latin and none of Greek. v. CHUQUET, 'La Jeunesse de Napoléon' (Paris, 1897-99)t.1,p.103.

3.Strictly military education was left to the regiments in which the cadets were commissioned.

4.DOMAIRON, Louis (1745-1807) Author of several educational works, the best known being his 'Principes généraux des belles-lettres' (Paris, 1785, 2 vols.) During the Consulate, having been discovered running a boarding-school at Dieppe, he was appointed assistant to M-J.Chénier in the work of selecting teaching staff for the new lycées. Soon after he was promoted to inspector-general.

reading at the École Militaire, but another event, the death of his father in February 1785, now cast a shadow over his life and made him turn all his energies to the task of passing-out to a regiment as soon as possible, in order to be able to help his family in its now very straitened circumstances.¹

By extreme application Napoleon passed the qualifying examination at the end of one year, quite an unusual event,² and became a second lieutenant in the artillery regiment of La Fère, then stationed at Valence. Through the troubled period which followed he moved with his regiment between Valence and Auxonne, with frequent prolonged periods of leave of absence in Corsica. Up to 1789, and until the incorporation of Corsica into France, as a department, he continued to be an ardent Corsican patriot, but having become a fervent disciple of Rousseau³ and of the Abbé Raynal he wholeheartedly embraced the ideas of the Revolution.

The period which ~~follows~~ begins with his first commission in La Fère-Artillerie and ends with his rise to something approaching fame at the siege of Toulon was also the period of some of Napoleon's most intense literary activity. Not only did he undertake a vast programme of reading which filled most of his leisure but he also began

1. See MASSON, Op.cit., p.124 et seq.

2. Most of the cadets needed two or three years to prepare for this examination - MASSON, Op. cit.p.136.

3. See my previous thesis 'Rousseau et Napoléon' (presented in the Univ. of Birmingham, 1949) for a detailed examination of this enthusiasm.

the compilation of his notebooks¹, in which we see the beginning of his characteristic method of reading, which cast aside all irrelevant matter and sought always for the concrete fact. This early reading covered a wide variety of books as can be seen from the notes he made, but the chief interest was in works of historical and political importance, while Jean-Jacques Rousseau held a special place as teacher and guide in Napoleon's thoughts. In addition, interspersed among the more strictly practical notes, we find examples of his own attempts at creative writing, usually inspired by the books he had been reading. These literary essays were often in the form of nouvelles and dealt with such subjects as the plight of Corsica², religious fanaticism in the East³, or even episodes from English history⁴. Various other writings took the form of polemical tracts, at first aimed at defending Rousseau⁵; later they developed a more independent viewpoint ~~often~~ ^{often} quite opposed to Rousseau's ideas⁶. In addition he produced numerous letters of a political character, con-

1. Edited by MASSON & BIAGI, 'Napoléon-Manuscripts inédits 1786-1791' (Paris, 1910). The interesting and in fact remarkable history of these papers is told by MASSON in the Introduction to the volume.
2. 'Nouvelle Corse', 'Manuscripts inédits' p. 381. A good stylistic analysis of these nouvelles is given by N. TOMICHE - 'Napoléon écrivain' (Paris, 1952) p. 90 et seq.
3. 'Le Masque prophète', 'Manuscripts inédits', p. 335.
4. 'Le Comte d'Essex', Ibid. p. 223.
5. 'Réfutation de la Défense du Christianisme par M. Roustan'! Ibid. p. 7. Roustan had, in his 'Offrande aux autels et à la Patrie' (Amsterdam, 1764), defended Christianity and the Reformed Church in particular, against Rousseau and Voltaire.
6. 'Mes réflexions sur l'État de Nature', 'Man. Inéd.' p. 531, and the well-known 'Discours de Lyon', Ibid. p. 538 et seq.

cerning Corsican affairs, and a history of the island in the guise of 'Letters' addressed to the Abbé Raynal¹.

This volume of notes and other writings, with the indications it gives of Napoleon's wide reading at the time, clearly proves that books, if not precisely literature, played a great part in his life from the age of sixteen onward, until he began, in 1793, to take too active a part in affairs to leave much time for contemplation. In that year (1793) he and his family had to leave Corsica² and Napoleon threw himself wholeheartedly ^{to} ~~in~~ the struggle to maintain the Revolution and to assure his own career, thereby assuring also the future of his family for which he seems to have assumed responsibility over the head of his elder brother Joseph. This flight to France brought to an end the period of

1. Ibid. p. 393. 'Lettres sur la Corse à M. L'Abbé Raynal'.

2. Pasquale Paoli, the Corsican patriot and leader, defeated at Ponte-Nuovo in 1769, had been the hero of Napoleon's lonely boyhood in France. In 1790, in answer to a deputation from Corsica, Paoli returned from exile in London, after 20 years, to lead his compatriots. He was hailed as a hero in Paris by the National Assembly and received by Louis XVI. In Corsica he became head of the patriotic faction which opposed the French party to which the Bonapartes belonged, and viewed the whole of Napoleon's family with suspicion. In 1793 Paoli, who wished to secede from France, talked of calling in the help of the English fleet. The Bonapartes now became actively estranged from the Paolists and at the instigation of Lucien Bonaparte (then aged 18 years) Paoli was accused of treason and summoned before the Convention. Needless to say this hastened the secession of Corsica from France, which Paoli proclaimed in the same year. The partisans of Paoli attacked the Bonaparte family on all sides, in open violent hostility, so that, being in grave danger they fled to Toulon in 1793.

Napoleon's youth which had been a time of great mental activity, as he himself later said, at St. Helena: "...à l'âge de puberté, Napoléon devint morose, sombre; la lecture fut pour lui une espèce de passion poussée jusqu'à la rage; il dévorait tous les livres."¹ Although he was in fact talking about his life at Brienne, he seems to have retained this passion for solitary reading until the events of the Revolution gave him the opportunity to turn his thoughts outward and to become himself an actor on the stage of history.

From the time he was first able to prove his worth at the siege of Toulon until he won the favour of the Directors by the suppression of the revolt of the Moderates and Royalists on the 13 vendémiaire, the fortunes of Napoleon were most unstable. During 1795 he was in Paris for several months, awaiting fresh employment, and having little to occupy his time he spent much of it in public reading-rooms, and in visits to the theatre as often as possible in the evenings². By all accounts his manner of life at this period was very frugal and it was doubtless this epoch which he had in mind when he told his companions at St. Helena that he could live well in France on 12 francs a day, according to the following programme: "Dîner à 30 sols, fréquenter les cabinets littéraires, les bibliothèques, aller au parterre au spectacle; un louis par mois pour une chambre....."³

1. LAS CASES 'Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène' (éd. par M. Marcel Dunan, Paris, 1952) Vol. 1 p. 92. (Dictated by Napoleon)

2. See below, Section III, ch. iv. 'Napoleon and the Theatre'.

3. General Baron GOURGAUD, 'Journal de Sainte-Hélène' (Paris, 1944) vol. 1, p. 314. (7 Feb. 1817).

An English scholar who has recently written on Napoleon gives an account of his life in Paris at this time (the summer of 1795),¹ and emphasises the part played in his life by books and literature during this period. He quotes from a letter of June 12 1795, from Napoleon to his brother Joseph, in which he notes especially that Phèdre had been performed, that the book shops were open again and that "there is a succession of lectures on history, chemistry, botany, astronomy and so forth." In fact his studious youth is not far behind him and having, as he tells Joseph, so little to occupy his mind that life has become almost indifferent to him², it is not at all surprising that he should have again turned to books for solace. In all probability at this point in his career he lived the type of life for which, at St. Helena, he drew up the budget quoted above.

This somewhat feckless period of his existence came to an end with his marriage to Joséphine de Beauharnais and his appointment to command the Army of Italy, which almost immediately followed it. Then it was that the real Napoleon began to come to life as victory followed victory in this first romantic campaign. Books, literature, the arts in general seem to have meant little to him during those days crowded with glory, except as trophies, in their more tangible manifestations, to be sent back to Paris as spoils of war.

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1. J.M. THOMPSON, 'Napoleon Bonaparte, his rise and fall', (Oxford, 1952) p.51.
 2. Ibid. p.51.

In the light of a remark he was later to make about it ¹ we may note here that one of the few times during this campaign when he apparently took any interest in literary matters was when a copy of the manuscript of Josephus, on papyrus, looted from the Ambrosiana Library of Milan, went astray on the way to Paris.² However this was an event which might have called for action from even the most unlettered general.

On his return to Paris from this campaign which had carried the French armies into Austria itself and overthrown the Republic of Venice, Napoleon was a popular hero, the outstanding figure of the day, 'le général Victoire'. In spite of public adulation the victor of Rivoli was not to be deceived, knowing that the enthusiasm of the Paris populace was apt to be short-lived. He was already looking about for fresh fields of activity since his new post as commander of the army for the invasion of England, assembled at the Channel ports, did not seem to take up much of his time, nor particularly suit his tastes. The possibility of wider scope for spectacular action in the East began to occupy his thoughts. While the practicability of his projected Egyptian Campaign was being discussed by the Directors, at the instigation of Talleyrand, Napoleon was a regular attender at the meetings of the Institut, to which he been elected, and spent much of his time in the company of scientists and literary men.

1. See below, p. 148.

2. 'Correspondance de Napoléon', (publiée par ordre de Napoléon III), Paris, 1858-1870. Vol. 3, p. 97 No. 1873. Letter from Mombello, June 6, 1797.

Although he must have been intensely preoccupied at this period with military and administrative preparations for the Egyptian Campaign, we learn from ARNAULT¹ that Napoleon devoted many of his evenings to literary discussions in his house in rue Chanteraine, which had been renamed in his honour 'rue de la Victoire'. In addition, he tells us, these reunions were of an entirely literary character and no profanes were present.² Among others Napoleon received the well-known poet of the day Legouv  ³, discussing literary matters with him and with Arnault ~~himself~~ himself, without apparently finding himself out of his depth.⁴

One of Napoleon's reasons for cultivating literary men at what might have appeared an unlikely moment was his desire that the Egyptian expedition should carry with it a complement of scientists and writers, to form the 'portable' Institut, which became the Institut d' gypte, being intended to help in the civilizing (perhaps colonizing was meant) of Egypt, but also ~~and~~ no doubt to raise Napoleon's prestige still further with the intellectuals of the day. He probably hoped that among the writers there might prove to be at

1. 'Souvenirs d'un sexag naire', (Paris, 1833). Antoine-Vincent ARNAULT (1766-1834), was a writer of tragedies, the best known of which were 'Marius   Minturnes' and 'les V nitien'. (1791 and 1798). He became an intimate of Napoleon after the Italian Campaign, where they first met, and sailed with the expedition to Egypt. He was remembered by Napoleon in his will, under which he was to receive 100,000 frs: '  Arnault, auteur de Marius'
2. ARNAULT, Op.Cit. bk.IV, p.11.
3. Gabriel-Marie-Jean-Baptiste LEGOUV  , (1764-1812) author of the poem 'Le M rite des Femmes'.
4. ARNAULT, Op.cit. bk.IV, p.8.

least one Joinville even if he dare^d not hope for a Homer. Unfortunately, although he secured the services of Arnault, on the strength of their previous acquaintance, he was unable to interest any poet of genius in his venture (the supply, in fact, being very short at the period), and finally, after unsuccessfully trying to obtain the services of Ducis¹, and Lemer cier², he had to make do with Parseval.³

In addition to his travelling Institut, Napoleon took with him to Egypt the first of his portable libraries, specially formed for the expedition, with books covering a wide range of subjects and containing a good representative collection of literary works. During the voyage Arnault was appointed to look after this library aboard the flagship Orient, and Napoleon took great interest both in the books themselves, for his own use, and in the reading habits of his staff officers, who were also allowed to borrow them. It is an interesting reflection of his tastes and preoccupations at this time that he at first told Arnault only to lend them novels,

1. Jean-François DUCIS. (1733-1816). Best known for his translations, or rather adaptations of most of Shakespeare's major tragedies into tragedies in alexandrines on the model of Voltaire. LANSON, 'Histoire de la littérature française', p.842-843 is particularly scathing on Ducis.
2. Népomucène LEMERCIER, (1771-1840). Author of a tragedy, 'Agamemnon' (1797), an historical comedy 'Pinto' (1800), and other works including epics and a 'Cours de Littérature' (1817).
3. François-Auguste PARSEVAL-GRANDMAISON, (1759-1834). Author of an epic 'Philippe-Auguste! Arnault ~~claims~~ to have recommended him to Napoleon ('Souvenirs' bk. IV, p.59) although he had published little up to that time. Arnault's observation on Parseval's part in the Expedition to Egypt makes interesting, if ironical reading today: 'Il (Bonaparte) a trouvé ~~en~~ en lui l'homme que Vasco de Gama trouva dans le Camoëns, l'homme qui possédait aussi cette bouche faite pour enfler la ~~trumpet~~ trompette épique---'.

"gardons pour nous les livres d'histoire," he is reported to have said.¹ A little later, when he saw that everyone was reading novels, he felt that he had made an error of judgment and reversed his previous decision: "Ne leur donnez que des livres d'histoire; des hommes ne doivent pas lire autre chose²."

Arnault tells us that during the voyage Napoleon himself made great use of the library and in addition, during the long periods when there were no administrative tasks calling for his attention, he would sit in his cabin with Arnault and discuss literature. Sometimes they talked of general principles and sometimes Napoleon analysed various works, arousing the admiration of Arnault for the ease with which he improvised theories upon matters one would have thought unfamiliar to him.³ Although Arnault's wonder at this may have been misplaced, since there is some evidence that Napoleon was given to reading up a subject beforehand, in order to impress his hearers in ensuing conversation,⁴ nevertheless it is remarkable that he was always so ready to use literary topics as a basis for talk on all kinds of occasion, even, as will be seen⁵, on the eve of Austerlitz, when he was probably trying to keep the minds of his generals off the impending battle.

1. ARNAULT, Op.cit. bk.IV, p.80.

2. Ibid. p.81. Although at this same time he called novels 'lectures de femmes de chambre' he was much given to reading them himself, as we shall see.

3. Ibid. p.99.

4. See TALLEYRAND'S comment on the meeting with Goethe at Erfurt, (TALLEYRAND, 'Mémoires' (Paris, 1891-92) vol.1.p.434).

5. See below, p.27 etc.

Little of any value ~~seems~~ to be known about Napoleon's interest in literature during the stay in Egypt ^{and} ~~and~~ this is hardly to be wondered at. There, even more than in Italy, he could give full play to his active genius in all its aspects. There were battles to be fought and won, campaigns to be planned, campaigns which might even have opened the gates to India, while there was a conquered country to be 'civilized', deserts to be made fruitful, in fact a complete field for him in which to develop his powers, leaving little ~~and~~ leisure for quiet reading. Doubtless, however, Napoleon did spend some time over the textbooks¹ he had with him concerning Egypt and the Levant, and he must have spent some time also in studying the Koran in order to keep himself conversant with Moslem theology and formulae with which to interlard his proclamations and his conversations with local leaders.²

However little time Napoleon had for reading he did not neglect the affairs of the mind and his guidance, inspiration and interest ~~are~~ are clearly visible in the works of the

1. During the Egyptian Campaign he is said to have frequently studied VOLNEY's 'Voyage en Egypte et en Syrie' (Paris, 1787), see G. THOMPSON, Op. cit. p. 108, but this work is not mentioned in the list of the library taken to Egypt ('Corresp.' vol. IV. p. 27). It may however have been taken by another member of Napoleon's staff, perhaps by Berthier, who called it their 'best guide in Egypt' (quoted by Thompson, Op. cit. p. 108.)
2. It may be said in passing that Napoleon always seems to have a high regard for the Mohammedan religion. G. M. THOMPSON gives a good account of his realisation of the importance of it to his plans in Egypt and of his attempts to gain the favour and official sanction of the Islamic heads of that country for his conquests and administration. (Op. cit. pp. 119-120.) See also E. LUDWIG, 'Napoléon' (Fr. trans. Paris, 1947, pp. 106-7) for his use of the Koran at this time.

Institut d'Égypte, of which he was president. In addition to the numerous scientific and often beneficent schemes for the improvement of the country, the Institut had two printing presses¹, one at Alexandria and the other at Cairo. In January, 1799, these two presses were ~~separately~~ amalgamated at Cairo to form the Imprimerie Nationale which, among other appointed tasks, produced every ten days the Décade égyptienne, which was the official organ of the Institut and dealt with literary as well as political topics.²

In spite of the great achievements of both the army and Institut in Egypt at this time it would be vain to think that either of them held the first place in Napoleon's mind. He was in fact in close touch with affairs in Paris and towards the end of August, 1799, judging the time to be ripe, he left Egypt for France.

Once again Napoleon's judgment had been sound and three months after his arrival on French soil the coup d'état of 18 brumaire brought him to power as one of the three provisional consuls. Seven weeks later he became First Consul under the terms of the Constitution of the Year VIII and his life moved into a more settled phase. No longer was he troubled by any doubts about himself or his powers and his existence began to follow the pattern which was to last until 1814.

1. The press at Cairo, which produced the French language works, was that of Marc-Aurel, printer to the Army, who had been the printer also of Napoleon's first important work 'le Souper de Beaucaire' (1793).

2. THOMPSON, Op.cit. p.121.

From this point onwards we see the real Napoleon, his opinions become less guarded in their expression and his interests more fixed. With his coming to power Napoleon's interest in the printed word does not diminish, rather does it increase since ~~as~~ he sees in literature, as, in all forms of publication, a possible ally or a powerful enemy, he sees it as something to be watched over carefully, sometimes encouraged or protected, and at other times held in check or suppressed.

Whatever the potential dangers or advantages of literature in Napoleon's eyes, however, the habits of the studious young officer remained with him although he was now master of France. Both as Consul and as Emperor Napoleon retained his love of reading and regarded it as the most rewarding of pursuits. His two secretaries MÉNEVAL¹ and FAIN² both give accounts, in their descriptions of Napoleon at work, of how he would, either in spare moments or as a respite during a long spell of concentrated effort, turn to books as a relief. In the 'Mémoires' of MÉNEVAL we learn that Napoleon used to take him

1. Claude-François MÉNEVAL (1778-1850), baron. Became secretary to Napoleon after the signing of the Peace of Amiens (1802) and passed to the service of Marie-Louise, in the same capacity, in 1813, after returning from the Russian campaign. His 'Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Napoléon' were edited by his grandson and published in Paris in 1894 (3 vol.).
2. Agathon-Jean-François FAIN (1778-1837), baron. After holding various responsible positions in the Imperial civil service he succeeded Méneval as ~~his~~ secretary in 1813. His 'Mémoires' were not published until 1908 (Paris). During his lifetime he published, under the Restoration, a series of 'Manuscrits' ('de l'An III', 'de 1812', 'de 1813', and 'de 1814') which are documents of considerable historical importance (see M. Marcel Dunan's edition of 'Le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène', vol. 2, p. 554 (note)).

into the library when they had a little spare time and show him which books he ought to read, but at the same time ~~warning~~ him against wasting his time on poetry, which he described as "une science creuse". Méneval adds however, that Napoleon did not always have such a low opinion of poets, since he saw in them "trumpets of his fame".¹ The baron FAIN, who was Napoleon's personal secretary from 1813 until the first Abdication, and again during the Hundred Days, shows Napoleon breaking off in the middle of some arduous task:² "...alors un livre devenait la ressource ordinaire de l'Empereur; tantôt il prenait dans la collection de la semaine une brochure du jour, quelque opusculé littéraire de Chénier³, d'Esménard⁴, ou de Legouvé ou quelque roman nouveau de Mme Gay⁵, de Mme de Genlis ou de Mme de Staël; tantôt il ouvrait la bibliothèque et relisait une

1. MÉNEVAL, 'Mémoires'; vol.1,p.140.
2. 'Mémoires du baron FAIN', p.105.
3. Marie-Joseph CHÉNIER (1764-1811). Younger brother of André Chénier, member of the Convention and regicide. He was a leading member of the reformed Classe de Langue et de Littérature of the Institut and well-known in his own day as a writer of tragedies, having achieved fame by the success of his 'Charles IX'. His most lasting claim to fame is perhaps the authorship of the words of the Chant du Départ.
4. Joseph ESMÉNARD (1769-1811). A journalist with royalist-constitutionalist leanings. Under the Empire he became a censor of the theatre, books, and of the 'Journal de l'Empire'. His best-known poem is "la Navigation"(1805), in eight, later reduced to six, cantos. This is an example of the long didactic poem in alexandrines, full of classical allusions and ~~po~~ periphrases in the taste of the day. He entered the Academy in 1810, but died in a carriage accident in 1811.
5. Mme Sophie GAY (1776-1852). A novelist whose work illustrates certain aspects of life during the Directory and the Empire, in such novels as 'Laure d'Estérel' and 'Un Mariage sous l'Empire'. She was the mother of the poetess and playwright Mme de Girardin.

scène de Corneille, un fragment de Tacite, les commentaires de César, quelques pages de Quinte-Curce¹ ou de Frédéric²..." This quotation from the 'Mémoires' of FAIN reveals much beside the mere fact of Napoleon turning to books for relaxation from toil. It shows quite plainly that the Emperor's reading, if not his taste, was catholic. He ranges over a wide field from the broadsheets of the hour to the works of antiquity (in translation, it must be said), touching as he passes upon the poems of his academicians and the latest novels of his opponents, indeed, had Fain wished to compose a symbolic list of his master's reading matter he could have done no better than the one he has given us.

Just as he would break off from work to turn to his books, so would he, at moments of great importance or stress frequently quote from the plays of Corneille, as almost every memorialist of the time, not excluding his valet CONSTANT³ tells us. He seems to have most often quoted lines from 'Horace' or 'Cinna' and the two most remarkable occasions on which this happened were, firstly, on the night of the execut-

1. QUINTUS CURTIUS RUFUS, (normally called CURTIUS in English). Roman historian of the 1st century. He wrote a history of Alexander the Great (10 vols.), the first two of which, together with portions of others, are lost.
2. FREDERICK II (The Great) of Prussia. His collected works, written in French, fill 33 vols. Those most likely to have interested Napoleon are "Considérations sur l'état présent du corps politique de l'Europe"; "Anti-Machiavel"; "Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Brandebourg" and his long poem "l'Art de la Guerre".
3. CONSTANT (also named Benjamin) was Napoleon's valet de chambre and shared many of his private secrets. His book 'Napoléon intime' (q.v. p.8) is of great interest for details of Napoleon's domestic life.

ion of the duke of Enghien, when, Mme de RÉMUSAT tells us, ~~that~~ he declaimed the well-known hemistich "Soyons amis, Cinna",¹ and then the lines of Gusman from Voltaire's 'Alzire':

"Et le mien, quand ton bras vient de m'assassiner

M'ordonne de te plaindre et de te pardonner."²

These lines appear so theatrically fitting for the occasion that it is to be regretted that there is apparently no means of checking the truthfulness of the report, since at that moment Mme de Rémusat says she was playing chess with Napoleon and only Josephine was present besides. However, a strong sense of the dramatic and a love for declaiming tragic verse being two of Napoleon's outstanding characteristics, there is much reason to accept this statement as authentic. The authenticity of the second instance can hardly be ~~questioned~~ questioned as it occurred in a full session of the Conseil d'État. Napoleon, cut to the quick by the indignity of Dupont's capitulation to the Spaniards at Baylen in 1808, declared that defeat should have acted as a spur: "Oh! que le vieil Horace a bien raison,

1. Mme de RÉMUSAT, 'Mémoires', (Paris, 1880, 3 vol.), vol. 1, pp. 321-2. 'Cinna' Act. V, sc. ~~VII~~. This scene occupied Napoleon's attention a great deal. He claims to have seen in it, ~~after~~ watching Monvel in the role of Auguste, a master-stroke of statesmanship. (Mme de RÉMUSAT, Op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 278-279).
2. 'Alzire', Act V, sc. vii. The note which is given to these lines in the 1819 (Paris) edition of Voltaire adds to their interest on this occasion:- "C'est le mot du duc de Guise, non à Poltrot, qui l'assassina, mais à un protestant qui avait formé ce projet pendant le siège de Rouen. Ce mot n'était qu'un trait d'hypocrisie, dans un homme qui, sous le prétexte de défendre la religion, avait immolé à son ambition tant de victimes innocentes." (Voltaire, Oeuvres complètes, Paris, 1819, 'Théâtre', vol. 2, p. 396.)

après avoir dit: "qu'il mourût," d'ajouter: "Où qu'un beau désespoir alors le secourût;" et qu'ils connaissent mal le coeur humain, ceux qui blâment Corneille et l'accusent d'avoir, sans nécessité, affaibli par ce second vers l'effet du: "qu'il mourût!" "1 It is worthy of notice here that not only did Napoleon go to his favourite author for the appropriate word on such an occasion, but also that he found it quite natural to reinforce his point of view by introducing a note of literary criticism into the proceedings of the Conseil d'État.

All these various aspects of Napoleon's interest in books, literature and even literary criticism are substantiated by many of the contemporary writers of memoirs, by historians, although they rarely dwell upon them, and by others who have since written upon different questions concerning both the man and his times. The evidence of FAIN and MÉNEVAL that Napoleon used books as a means of relaxing is corroborated by Mme de MONTHOLON, in her 'Souvenirs', which deal chiefly with the exile on St. Helena, and her testimony does serve to show that if novels were to Napoleon "lectures de femmes de chambre", he was still capable of enjoying this form of amusement himself. She tells us² that Hortense³ found Napoleon in the library at the Malmaison, just after returning from the field of Waterloo, and ~~she~~ was astonished to see that he, instead of being occupied in deciding about the future, was read-

1. PELET DE LA LOZERE, 'Opinions de Napoléon sur différents sujets', (Paris, 1833), p. 8. (See also Corneille 'Horace' act. III sc. VI).
2. 'Souvenirs', (Paris, 1901) p. 19. Quoted by MOURAVIT, Op. cit. p. 26.
3. Hortense-Eugénie de BEAUHARNAIS, (1783-1837). Daughter of Josephine by her first marriage, wife of Louis Bonaparte and Queen of Holland. Hortense rallied to the cause of Napoleon during the Hundred Days.

ing a novel. Mme de MONTHOLON adds however, that in the light of her later experience at St.Helena, she had been able to see that when Napoleon was worried or harassed he used to turn to the novel as a means of calming his nerves, just as he used hot baths to soothe his body.

As most of the men in Napoleon's entourage in the great days were preoccupied with affairs of state and war, it is the women about him who seem to have noted his literary interests. Laure JUNOT, duchesse d'ABRANTES¹, several times in her 'Mémoires' talks of his interest in literature and of the discussions upon it in which she took part. In particular she tells of one evening at St.Cloud, probably in 1806, when Napoleon, to use her own words, "présida pour ainsi dire l'Institut", by which she means that he ~~then~~ discussed literature for more than three hours.² On this occasion she says that he discussed the revolution which was taking place in the literary

1. Laure JUNOT, (1784-1838), née Permon. Her family had long been acquainted with the Bonapartes, there even being a rumour that Napoleon at one time had thought of marrying her widowed mother, although this is unlikely to be true. Laure married General Junot on his return from Egypt but was not remarkable for her fidelity to him. Her political fidelity to the Imperial cause also weakened considerably in 1814, when Junot, then governor of Trieste, suffered mental collapse, thus ruining her hopes of further largesse from Napoleon. She has left her 'Mémoires' in 18 vols. (Paris, 1831-1835). They have the advantage, unlike those of BOUR- IENNE, TALLEYRAND and others, of having been written by Laure herself and not by 'hack' writers, but they are generally regarded as quite unreliable in matters concerning her own actions and those of her family.

2. Op.cit.vol.vii,p.68. (éd.Garnier, Paris,1893).

world and he was, apparently, like most of his hearers, "tout romantique."¹ It may be stated in passing that however 'romantic' Napoleon's tastes in literature, they remained firmly in the 'classical' mould as far as the theatre was concerned.

In spite of the doubtful authenticity of much that is contained in the 'Mémoires' of the Duchess of Abrantès there is nothing surprising, as later chapters will show, in the idea of Napoleon discussing literature for three hours, nor in his undertaking literary criticism. SÉGUR² relates in his 'Mémoires' how, even on the night before Austerlitz, Napoleon engaged in a long discussion about the much debated tragedy 'Les Templiers' by RAYNOUARD, and went on to develop his own theories on tragedy.³ GUILLOIS probably draws the wrong conclusions⁴ from this conversation as he claims that it shows us how much importance Napoleon attached to literary and philosophical questions. Its real significance seems to lie rather in the fact that it shows his interest in these matters in choosing them for such a time when he needed a subject to keep the company from brooding on more disturbing matters, just as he chose the moment of his stay in the Kremlin, seven years later, to order the affairs of the ~~the~~ Comédie Française. On both occasions Napoleon doubtless wished to demonstrate his own sang-froid and also to

1. This particular episode, which raises a number of interesting questions concerning Napoleon and romantic literature, will be examined in detail later.

2. Philippe-Paul de SÉGUR, aide-de-camp of Napoleon, author of the well-known 'Histoire de Napoléon et de sa Grande Armée pendant l'année 1812'. (Brussels, 1825). Later his complete memoirs were published - 'Mémoires d'un aide de camp de Napoléon', (Paris, 1894-95) q.v. vol. 1, pp. 249-251.

3. See below Sect. XVII, ch. 4.

4. Op.cit. vol. 2, p. 398.

display his knowledge of, and care for what was going on in all fields within his Empire, but that he chose the theatre as his subject when he could equally well have chosen many other topics must to some extent be indicative of his particular interest in it. Also perhaps it illustrates his remark to Narbonne in 1812, also said to have been made in the Kremlin, "...Les lettres, la science, le haut enseignement, c'est là un des attributs de l'Empire, et ce qui le distingue du despotisme militaire."¹

Lest it should be thought that Napoleon only discussed literary matters on occasions when he alone could dominate the group it is worthwhile to note that according to Sainte-Beuve (who studied much of the documentary evidence about the Empire which was being published in a steady flood during the later years of the Restoration and the July Monarchy), Fontanes² was the accepted critic of the Empire and Napoleon liked to start him talking on literary matters and to listen to his opinions.³ It is probable also that Napoleon used Fontanes to some extent as a means of gathering knowledge on literature for use himself as occasion arose.

1. From VILLEMAIN, 'Souvenirs', quoted in 'Vues politiques de Napoléon', (Paris, 1939), p. 212.
2. Louis de FONTANES (1757-1821). Journalist and poet in a minor key. Although a royalist by sympathy and a friend of Chateaubriand, he became Grand Master of the Imperial University, in 1808. He was largely responsible for the humanistic elements which survived in the curriculum, and for the teaching of religion. He voted for the deposition of Napoleon in 1814, as a member of the Corps Législatif. At St. Helena Napoleon was bitter in his judgment of Fontanes: "Mon Université telle que je l'ai conçue, était un chef d'oeuvre dans ses combinaisons, et devait en être un dans ses résultats nationaux. Un méchant homme m'a tout gâté, et cela avec mauvaise intention, et par calcul sans doute.." ('Mémorial de Saint-Hélène', vol. 1. p. 186).

Although Napoleon did frequently gather information on certain topics, including literature, by catechising others and listening to what they had to say¹, there is little doubt that his reading continued to be regular and of wide scope. He belonged to the small number of readers who can extract the essentials of a book in a short time, he knew precisely what he was looking for and found it quickly, skimming rapidly through the rest. He once told Mme de MONTHOLON that he had read, since the day before, a particularly long and difficult book and when she declared this to be impossible he asked if she thought that he read books word for word.² On another occasion, when he could not recall some passages of a book which he had certainly read previously he declared that he only remembered those parts which might be useful to him.³

This utilitarian reason for reading was not however the only one, in spite of Napoleon's assertions. Although he read large numbers of directly useful books he also read considerable numbers of novels, ranging in quality from ROUSSEAU's 'Nouvelle Héloïse' and GOETHE's 'Werther' to the most pitiful 3.(p.28) SAINT-LEUVE, 'Causeries du Lundi', vol.IX, p.452.

1. We have many examples of Napoleon using people with a claim to expert knowledge of a subject as a means of stocking his own mind, usually by a series of quick questions. This habit persisted even at St.Helena, where, for example, the celebrated Governor Raffles of Singapore, returning from his previous appointment in the East Indies, in 1816, visited Napoleon, and, from his account of the meeting, was quite flabbergasted by the barrage of questions with which Napoleon greeted him. (v. 'Mémoires de S.-H.') vol.1, p.617.

2. SAYVE, Op. cit. p.11.

3. Idem.

efforts of the Paris literary hacks. The great novels of the period he read as works of literature, and not in the hope of gaining useful information from them, but his reading was by no means uncritical. The others, the lighter works, known at the time as 'les nouveautés'¹. he read in his own fashion and in great quantities, partly for amusement, partly in the hope of finding a writer with some spark of talent, and partly to see what light they cast on public opinion in the capital.² Even during the long journeys by coach across half of Europe Napoleon used to receive these novels, sent by his librarian in Paris, and skim through them as he sped along. Those which he found unworthy of his consideration he hurled through the carriage windows and they were subsequently gathered up avidly by the following pages, who whiled away thus many a draughty evening in bivouac.³

The supplying of these nouveautés, together with copies of all new books, pamphlets and similar material which appeared in Paris was one of the tasks allotted to Napoleon's librarian. Under both the Consulate and the Empire the librarian to Napoleon was a dignitary of great importance, included in

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1. MOURAVIT (Op.cit.p.61 et seq.) quotes the following passage from Mme de MONTHOLON:—"Les familiers de l'histoire littéraire et bibliographique du commencement du XIXe siècle savent ce qu'on entendait alors par ce terme (nouveautés), qui visait plutôt la littérature frivole, - et quelquefois un peu pire que frivole."
 2. MOURAVIT, Op.cit.pp.44-45 and p.65 et seq. etc.
 3. SAYVE, Op.cit.p.13.

the list of those who followed the Emperor whenever he moved his court. During the grandes absences he was in direct communication with the Emperor's secretary, to whom he was ordered to forward copies of all new publications as well as a bulletin of literary events, week by week.¹ When the Emperor was present at court the librarian ~~performed~~ performed the same duties in person, being admitted ^{to} the déjeuner of Napoleon at least once a week for this purpose.²

This literary intelligence service appears to have started in earnest under the Consulate, in 1801, when the following letter was sent by the First Consul to Citizen Ripault, who was at that time Bibliothécaire particulier³:

"Paris, 4 thermidor an IX" (23 July, 1801)

"Le citoyen Ripault se fera remettre, tous les jours, tous les journaux qui paraissent hormis les onze journaux politiques. Il les lira avec attention, fera l'analyse de tout ce qu'ils contiennent pouvant influencer sur l'esprit public, surtout par rapport avec la religion⁴, à la philosophie et aux opinions ~~publiques~~ politiques. Il me remettra, tous les jours, entre cinq et six heures cette analyse.

Toutes les décades, il me remettra l'analyse des brochures ou livres ayant paru dans la décade⁵, en désignant les

1. FAIN, Op.cit., pp. 67-68.

2. Ibid. p. 65. See also AUBRY, 'La vie privée de Napoléon', p. 231.

3. RIPAULT held this position until 1807, when he was succeeded by the better-known BARBIER author of the 'Dictionnaire des ouvrages anonymes et synonymes'.

4. A week earlier (15 July 1801) the Concordat had been signed.

5. The Republican Calendar and system of décades was not finally abolished until a decree of 1806. One effect of the Concordat was to seriously weaken the case for this calendar.

passages qui pourraient regarder les mœurs et m'intéresser sous le rapport politique et morale.

Il aura besoin de se procurer toutes les pièces qui paraîtront et de m'en faire l'analyse, avec des observations de même nature que celles ci-dessus. Cette analyse devra être faite, au plus tard, dans les 48 heures de la représentation de ces pièces.

Il me remettra un bulletin, tous les primidies et les sextidies, entre cinq et six heures, des affiches, placards, annonces, etc., qui mériteraient attention, ainsi que de ce qui pourrait être venu à sa connaissance, et de ce qui aurait été fait ou dit dans les différents lycées, assemblées littéraires, sermons, nouveaux établissements d'instruction publique....."¹

The librarian was appointed, in fact, as a police agency, acting over the heads of the official censors and reporting direct to Napoleon on the state of public opinion and morale, for which task he received an extra 1,000 frs. per month.

This system of intelligence seems to have remained in force throughout the period of Napoleon's rule and on occasion the librarian was upbraided for failing in some part of these duties. The particular task which seems to have been neglected most frequently, if Napoleon's 'Correspondance' is any guide, was the collecting and forwarding of new books of

1. 'Correspondance de Napoléon 1er', vol. VII, p. 201, No. 5647.

all kinds, when Napoleon was away on campaigns. In January, 1807, he instructed Méneval to complain to Ripault, in a letter, of the lack of new books arriving in the Emperor's post¹, while Ripault's successor Barbier was in a similar position in December of the following year². Here however, it is interesting to note that Napoleon seemed to be calling for books to read for amusement, rather than as mere guides to public opinion. Barbier, in desperation, risked sending two novels which he judged to be of poor quality and would apparently not have sent in the normal course of events. He received this reply for his pains: "Les romans que vous nous faites parvenir, Monsieur, sont détestables. Ils ne font qu'un saut de la valise du courrier dans la cheminée. Il vaut mieux chercher dans les romanciers qui ont paru depuis plusieurs années, quelques romans que Sa Majesté n'aurait point lus, et qui auraient quelque mérite. Envoyez le moins de vers que vous pourrez."³

The next year, 1809, writing from Laa, in Austria, four days after Wagram, Méneval once more has to complain to Barbier about his slowness in sending new books since two important works⁴ have arrived at the headquarters from private sources and nothing has so far been seen or heard of them from Barbier. The letter ends with this hard note of reproach:

1. 'Correspondance', vol. XIV, p. 147, No. 11561.

2 and 3. MOURAVIT, Op.cit., pp. 44-45.

4. FOX, 'Fragment d'Histoire d'Angleterre', and 'Du Rétablissement du Royaume d'Italie, et du droit de la couronne de France sur le duché de Parme' by M. de MONTGAILLARD.

"M. Barbier doit sentir la nécessité d'être le plus promptement possible au courant des nouveautés. Il faudrait faire prendre les ouvrages chez les libraires avant qu'ils soient livrés au public. Il me semble bien que l'Empereur peut avoir ce droit."¹

"Par ordre de l'Empereur"

Méneval

During the Russian campaign of 1812 Barbier is again found wanting in his dispatching of books. From Vitebsk, on the road to Moscow, in August, Napoleon is demanding "des livres amusants", whether they be new novels, older ones he has not read, or interesting memoirs, "car nous avons des moments de loisir qu'il n'est pas aisé de remplir ici."²

Even from Moscow, six weeks later, just before the beginning of the disastrous retreat, the call for a more speedy dispatch of books is still heard, this time in a letter written by Duroc, Duke of the Friuli, Grand Master of the Palace, at Napoleon's command.³ The accent is now once more placed upon good new books, as if to indicate that the almost desperate appeal for anything to read at all of the previous letter no longer applies.

Not all the books which the librarian was called upon to supply were for amusement, however, nor simply to follow

1. 'Corresp.' vol. XIX, p. 237, No. 15513.

2. Ibid., vol. XXIV, p. 128, No. 19052 (written by Méneval).

3. Ibid., vol. XXIV, p. 234, No. 19236 (dated 30 Sept. 1812).

the state of public opinion. The Marquis de SAYVE says¹ that it would be possible to foresee the major events of Napoleon's career by the nature of his reading at any given time. As an example he quotes the fact that in 1810, growing exasperated by the struggle with the Pope, Napoleon asks for all the books which deal with quarrels between monarchs and the Supreme Pontif. Similarly, in 1811, while planning the Russian Campaign, he asks for the necessary works for studying Russia, and more especially Lithuania.² Very much closer to the actual start of the campaign, in May 1812, Méneval is again writing to Barbier, on behalf of Napoleon, asking for works containing information about the Russian army.³ This letter ends with the strange, almost prophetic note: "Un Montaigne petit format serait peut-être bon à mettre dans la petite bibliothèque."⁴

Not only was the librarian kept busy supplying books, but also, according to FAIN, he was used by Napoleon to undertake tasks of literary research and to supply him with material for conversation, as well as carrying out various learned and scientific investigations.⁵

However great the services rendered by his librarian,

1. Op.cit., p.12.

2. Ibid. p.12

3. 'Corresp.' Vol. XXIII, p.399, No.18689. (St. Cloud, 7 May, 1812).

4. This presumably refers to the bibliothèque de voyage (ou de campagne), which Napoleon took with him on all his campaigns.

5. FAIN, 'Mémoires', pp.67-68.

and however much he trusted the literary judgment of Fontanes, these two points of contact with literature did not satisfy Napoleon. Soon after his accession to the Imperial throne he secured the services of another important informant on literary, as well as on political, social and philosophical affairs, Mme de GENLIS.¹ In addition there was FIÉVÉE², who already supplied Napoleon with fairly regular bulletins covering most of these topics. However, whereas Fiévée was mostly concerned with public opinion and morale, Mme de Genlis, as she tells us herself, was asked to write on anything she might fancy³ and a large part of her letters dealt with literary questions, in which she was very interested. She says that she often wrote upon literature, morals, and philosophy, in particular attacking the philosophes of the previous cen-

1. Stéphanie-Félicité Ducrest de SAINT-AUBIN (1746-1830), Countess of GENLIS by marriage. Before the fall of the duke of Orléans, during the Revolution, she had been governess to the future king Louis-Philippe. Having emigrated, she returned during the Consulate and was welcomed by Napoleon, probably on account of her attacks on the philosophes. As a writer she is chiefly known for her educational works: 'les Annales de la Vertu', 'Adèle et Théodore' and 'les Veillées du château'.
2. Joseph FIÉVÉE (1767-1839), publicist and minor author, his best known work being 'la Dot de Suzette' (1798). After the Peace of Amiens he undertook a mission to England for the First Consul which was very close to espionage. This resulted in his 'Lettres sur l'Angleterre' (1802). Napoleon was so pleased by this report that he engaged Fiévée to make periodical reports on the state of opinion etc. in ~~France~~ France (and esp. in Paris) during the remainder of the Consulate and Empire. Fiévée held various high official positions under Napoleon.
3. Mme de GENLIS, 'Mémoires' (Paris, 1825) 10 vols. Vol. 5, p. 118.

tury. She goes on to say that Talleyrand later told her that the Emperor was very [^]pleased with her letters, in which he found 'de la raison, du naturel, et quelquefois de la gaieté'.¹ In her letters, she claimed, she never spoke ill of anyone, although from a perusal of some of them it is obvious that this generosity was not extended to deceased philosophes.

Being supplied with information from such varied sources and not devoid of critical powers himself Napoleon was well aware of the semi-moribund state of literature at the time, except for the works of the 'irreducibles', Chateaubrian^d and Mme de Staël, whom he could hardly claim as ornaments of his reign. Realising the value of poets and writers who might lend lasting glory to the Empire, having indeed always before him the analogy of the reign of Louis XIV, Napoleon was constantly aware of the necessity for encouraging literature and the arts. Contrary to the implied opinion of many writers on this period² it is extremely doubtful whether either the censorship or the comparatively benevolent tyranny of Napoleon was the real ~~cause~~ cause of the dearth of great writing in his day. Certainly the average writer was at least as free to express his opinions as were those of the reign of Louis XIV, and indeed, social or political criticism cannot be claimed as a necessary ingredient of great literature. The root cause of

1. Ibid., vol.5.pp.118-120.

2. See CHARPENTIER, Op.cit.,p.186, SUARES, 'Napoléon'('Cahiers de la Quinzaine'),(Paris,1912),p.44, and also VERON, 'Mémoires d'un Bourgeois de Paris,(Paris,1853) vol.1,p.76.

the trouble almost certainly lay in literature itself, in the slowness of its progress in both finding and accepting new ideas and new means of expression.

Napoleon was frequently disturbed by the lack of great literature during his reign and sought to solve the problem by the means he knew best, and to which most of his other problems responded, that is to say by administrative action and legislation. Typical of his efforts to encourage literature is the following letter, written from Posen in December 1806¹:

"A M.de Champagny

Monsieur Champagny², la littérature a besoin d'encouragements. Vous en êtes le ministre³; proposez-moi quelques moyens pour donner une secousse à toutes les différentes branches des belles-lettres, qui ont de tout temps illustré la nation....."

Champagny proposed various schemes, including a new École de Port Royal, fresh honours for poets, the institution of special schools of study in the Collège de France, and the founding of a new official literary journal. All of these schemes were examined in detail by Napoleon, who replied by

1. 'Corresp.' Vol.XIV, p.68, No.11445.

2. Jean-Baptiste Nonpère de CHAMPAGNY (1756-1834). Former noble and deputy of the nobility to the States-General in 1789. Ambassador at Vienna (1801-1804), and Minister of the Interior (1804-1807). He replaced Talleyrand at the Foreign Office in 1807.

3. It is interesting to see that in Napoleon's mind everything was classified, even literature, as an activity having a connection with some specific ministry.

his well-known Observations, written from Finkenstein in 1807¹. This reply indicates that he had given much thought to the problems involved and was well aware of the difficulties inherent in any official scheme to encourage literature.

Apart from this concerted effort of 1806-7 to stimulate the writers of the epoch, Napoleon inaugurated what might almost be called a standing scheme to achieve the same end. This scheme, the system of Prix décennaux, was set up by a decree issued from Aix-la Chapelle and dated 24 fructidor, an XII (11 Sept., 1804)², a decree which was subsequently modified by another decree, five years later (28 Nov. 1809)³, ~~and by~~ widening its scope and slightly altering the methods of adjudication. As its name implies this scheme provided for the award of prizes at ten yearly intervals, on the anniversary of the coup d'état of 18 brumaire, for the most outstanding achievements and productions in the sciences, literature, and the plastic arts. There were to be, at first, nine prizes of 10,000 frs., of which literature would receive at least one for the best tragedy or comedy produced at the Théâtre Français, while another would go to the best historical work dealing with either ancient or modern history. There were also to be thirteen smaller prizes (of 5,000frs.) for

1. 'Corresp.' Vol. XV, pp. 97-102, No. 12415. See also CHARPENTIER, Op. cit. pp. 192-193. The text of this reply is reproduced at Appendix 'A' to the present work.

2. 'Corresp.' Vol. IX, pp. 521-523. no. 8015 (quoted from le Moniteur) also given by VÉRON, Op. cit. pp. 84-85. See Appendix B3.

3. VÉRON, Op. cit., p. 85 et seq. See Appendix B2 to present work.

the best translations of manuscripts from ancient or oriental languages¹ and for ^{the} best occasional poems. By these second decree these prizes were increased to nineteen and sixteen respectively and their application was more rigorously specified.

Although there is no evidence that the system of Prix décennaux did produce great works in any field, and although the prize-winners selected by the Institut in 1810 never appear to have received their prizes, due no doubt to the Emperor's preoccupations elsewhere², the very fact of the scheme's existence strengthens our contention that Napoleon was at all times interested in the state of literature during his reign, even if his motives were mixed³, and he tried, using the only methods he understood, to give it active encouragement.

Naturally Napoleon did not neglect the Institut. He did his best to ensure that the Second Class (Langue et Littérature françaises) was reminded of its ~~for~~ first duties, the making of a dictionary and the examination of important works appearing in the fields of literature, history, and erudition. In

order to keep the academicians at their appointed tasks it

1. Typical of Napoleon's attitude to most things, the translations were to be judged on their usefulness in their particular fields.
2. Much doubt still exists about the reasons for the failure to make these awards. According to the editors of the 'Bibliothèque historique ou Répertoire universel du Théâtre français' (Paris, 1823) vol. 30, p. 9, they were put off indefinitely because the jury and Institut insisted on putting forward authors and works disliked by Napoleon.
3. PELET de la LOZÈRE, 'Opinions of Napoleon' (Eng. trans. London, 1837), p. 12. He states that the object of these prizes was to divert men's minds from the study of politics.

was proposed ~~that~~ their critical observations should be published four times a year¹, while Napoleon also asked that the Minister of the Interior should lay down a precise method according to which they ought to accomplish their duties.²

As further evidence of Napoleon's interest in the world of letters, if any still be needed, there is the large number of writers, most of them now forgotten, who received pensions at his instigation. A list of these, characteristically headed "État des Gens de Lettres et Savants qui ont des pensions sur les journaux³", was drawn up by Napoleon in 1810⁴ and of the twenty-one names on the list, which includes Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Lebrun-Pindare, Palissot and M.J.Chénier, more than half are those of literary men. Certainly the amounts of the pensions, ranging from 2,000frs. to 6,000 frs. were insignificant in comparison with the enormous dotations ~~given~~ given to the marshals such as Berthier, Ney, Junot or Masséna, but it is hardly to be expected that the greatest military despot of all time should reward his rather bedraggled collection of literary men as highly as his

1. AULARD, 'Napoléon et le monopole universitaire', (Paris, 1911), p. 134.

2. 'Corresp.' Vol. VIII, p. 252, No. 6638. (26 ventôse, an XI).

3. This system of awarding pensions appears to have been peculiar to Napoleon and was apparently an accomplished form of official blackmail. The pensions were not paid by the Treasury, but were allocated for payment to various newspapers, which could obviously not refuse for fear of being banned. Similarly each newspaper had to pay its own censor.

4. 'Corresp.' Vol. XX, p. 98, No. 16105. See Appendix C.

unsurpassed field commanders.

Just as literature was frequently in Napoleon's mind during the great days, when ~~a constant flow of~~ letters, decrees and despatches about books, writers and literary criticism arrived from him almost every day in Paris, sent from temporary halting places all over Europe, so also was it a solace to him in his last exile. At Elba we know little of his reading but when the Imperial star had finally set and the Emperor himself was an unhappy prisoner on St. Helena, then he turned once more to books for ^{consolation} ~~solace~~. There on his rocky island Napoleon found that his greatest problem was to know how to pass the time, and in particular how to spend the hours between his evening meal and going to bed. He availed himself fully of all the books which his little ^{band} of companions had been able to gather together and he read widely and deeply in works of all kinds; his three chief occupations were reading, reminiscing, and carrying on his vendetta with Sir Hudson Lowe.

It is hoped that the foregoing pages will have made clear the important part played by literature in the life of Napoleon. His early, obviously far from happy, youth in France turned him in upon himself and drove him to seek escape in studying both the past and the new society proposed by Rousseau. As he matured the practical side of his nature gained control and he saw both books and writers as tools in his hands, but the habit of reading remained with him, assisting

his almost legendary powers of memory¹ to build up that vast store of detailed factual knowledge on the most varied subjects, which was such a great help to him both in administration and foreign affairs, as well as in the more mundane business of everyday conversation.. In addition he continued to read both the works of great writers and the lighter, ephemeral novels of the day. He sought also, without success, to build up a body of literature which should rival that of the age of Louis XIV, and similarly glorify his own reign. Finally, when the hour of glory was gone, he sought consolation in his living tomb from a great variety of literary works, as if paying a last tribute to a branch of human activity which he had always held in a certain consideration, but which he did not ever fully understand. From this point onward it will be our task to ~~more~~ examine in greater detail the various aspects of Napoleon's literary culture and to see whether or not ~~his~~ attitude towards literature can help us to understand better the man himself.

1. Napoleon's outstanding memory is remarked upon by almost all of those who knew him. See FAIN, Op.cit., p.75, or LAS CASES's account of Napoleon dictating his 'Mémoires' during the voyage to St.Helena. (Mémorial', vol.1, p.174.)

Section II.

THE GROWTH OF NAPOLEON'S LITERARY TASTES AND IDEAS.

I.

At School.

Until recent years the part which Napoleon's formal education at the military schools of Brienne and Paris played in forming his character and outlook seems to have been almost completely neglected, or at least regarded as of no account.¹ From a military point of view he did learn little, since it was the avowed policy of the Ministry for War to produce honnêtes hommes at these establishments, leaving military science to be taught by their regiments. It is however surprising that such a penetrating writer as Émile FAGUET should state: "...l'éducation littéraire de Napoléon jusqu'à sa sous-lieutenance fut absolument et volontairement nulle".² Particularly surprising is it that this statement is made in an essay which to all intents and purposes is a review of Arthur CHUQUET's magisterial and immensely detailed work 'La Jeunesse de Napoléon',³ in which we are given a most comprehensive account of Napoleon's schools and a full examination of their syllabuses and of some of the more important text-books in use.

1. The most recent English writer on Napoleon, G.M. THOMPSON, does not make this mistake, but emphasises the effect of the five years Napoleon spent in a state of semi-monastic seclusion at Brienne.
2. 'Propos littéraires', IV, p.352.
3. Paris, 1897-1899 (3 vols.).

It is reasonable to suppose that Napoleon gained little literary knowledge at his first school, the College of Autun, where he spent only three months. He is said to have learned enough French there to speak it fairly fluently and to write it after a fashion.¹ One anecdote concerning his stay there is quoted by MARCAGGI², according to whom Napoleon would become restless and inattentive as soon as he had grasped the essentials of a particular lesson and would exclaim to the teacher "Je sais déjà cela!" Whether true or not the story certainly denotes an attitude of mind which was to become typical of the later Napoleon.

As for the five years which he spent at the Military School of Brienne, although it is permissible, from the evidence, to conclude that he drew little benefit from his instruction in literary subjects, it must be difficult indeed to deny that it did something to shape his outlook upon literature and if/^{it} did no more than to make him aware of the prevailing taste of the day, that at least was one important positive result.

From the pages of CHUQUET's work³, which has remained unchallenged in its basic statements, and is likely to con-

1. G.M. THOMPSON, Op.cit., p.7. Until this time Napoleon spoke only the Corsican patois.
2. 'La Genèse de Napoléon', (Paris, 1902), p.67.
3. 'La Jeunesse de Napoléon'; Frédéric MASSON also, in his 'Napoléon dans sa Jeunesse' (Paris, 1907), covers the same ground in detail and in this particular field adds little to CHUQUET.

tinue so unless any fresh documents come to light in the future, we gain a comprehensive view of the administration, teaching and objectives of the Military Schools both at Brienne and Paris which Napoleon attended, as well as a good account of the life led by the pupils. At Brienne the basis of the instruction given was contained in a directive for such establishments issued ^{by} Saint-Germain, the Minister for War, a directive in which it was laid down that the élèves du roi¹ must learn to look after themselves without servants, to live simply without indulgence², and must play games and do physical exercises to fit them for their intended profession. Social attainments such as music, dancing, and even fencing are not to be over-emphasised in the curriculum; it was the declared aim of the minister to produce "des esprits éclairés et des cœurs honnêtes". To this end ~~they~~ they are to be taught the catechism of the abbé Fleury, German rather than logic, and enough latin to be able to read the latin authors, but their time is not to be wasted on latin verse composition and rhetoric. History and geography are to be taught intensively, using the pocket atlas of Robert de Vaugondy, but they are also to read frequently

1. The total number of pupils was about 110, of whom 50 were élèves du roi, sons of poor nobles, their education being entirely at government expense. Napoleon belonged to this group. (MASSON, Op.cit., p.56).
2. All the requirements of the élèves du roi, including their pocket money, were to be met out of a government grant of 700 livres per year.

the lives of great men, and especially those contained in the pages of Plutarch. In addition they are to study the finest historical passages ("les belles scènes historiques") of French drama, enough mathematics for military purposes and certain types of drawing chiefly concerned with fortification.¹

Each of the various schools to which the directive applied probably had its own way of interpreting it, especially as the nine royal colleges of the day were in the hands of four different religious orders. Brienne was the only one of these schools carried on by the Minimes, a comparatively small teaching order, so low in numbers that they had to call in lay teachers for mathematics, foreign languages, writing, drawing, fencing and dancing.² The teaching of literary subjects was in the hands of the Minimes themselves and the course was spread over the work of all the classes, from the septième (classe de grammaire) to the seconde. No Greek was taught and Latin was intended to be the basic discipline. The pupils recited parallel works in French, such as the 'Fables' of La Fontaine which were analogous to those of Phaedrus, or Delille's translation of the episode of Aristaeus from the 'Georgics' of Vergil. The junior classes construed the texts of the 'Appendix de diis'³, the 'Selectae'⁴, the

1. CHUQUET, Op.cit., vol.1, p.88.

2. MASSON, Op.cit., p.57.

3. I am indebted to M. Marcel Dunan, Professeur à la Sorbonne, p.47. Notes 3 and 4 (cont.)

As for the 'Selectae' (abbrev. for 'Historiae selectae') this was the name of a book well-known to schoolboys in the age of classical education in France, used, according to M. Dunan, up to the time of his own grandfather. It was a collection of passages by selected authors.

Roman history of Eutropius¹, the Fables of Phaedrus, the 'Lives' of Cornelius Nepos², the eclogues of Vergil (omitting the eighth), and selected 'Colloquies' of Erasmus. In the higher classes they concentrated on serious works of history, the 'Commentaries' of Caesar, the 'Jugurtha' and 'Catilina' of Sallust, the 1st and 21st books of Livy, ^{as well as} Cicero's speeches against Catilina and his defence of Milo, and of Marcellus, the 'Odes' and 'Satires' of Horace, the 1st, 2nd and 6th books of the 'Aeneid', and the 4th book of the 'Georgics'.³

Each class had lessons in the French language, while some of the 'advanced classes also studied French literature . As was usual at the time, in addition to textual study the scholars were taught the elements of rhetoric, figures of speech, the three types of oratory (forensic, political and religious) and three kinds of style, 'le style simple, plus difficile à attraper qu'on ne se l'imagine, et dont la Bruyère offre un exemple dans son portrait du petit-maître; le style sublime, dont l'écueil est l'enflure, le style tempéré dont le modèle était, selon les Minimes, une scène du 'Télémaque', les adieux de Philoclès à la grotte de Samos.'⁴

1. FLAVIUS EUTROPIUS, (4th Cent.A.D.) Secretary to the Emperors Constantine and Julian. 'Breviarum Rerum Romanorum ab urbe condita'.
2. CORNELIUS NEPOS, friend of Cicero and Catullus. The work referred to here, 'Vitae excellentium imperatorum', is often ascribed to Aemilius Probus, except for the lives of Atticus and Cato the Censor, but the rest may in fact be abridgements by Probus of works by Nepos.
3. CHUQUET, Op.cit., p.103.
4. Ibid. p.104.

The different types of poem were also detailed to the pupils, and their characteristics enumerated, together with the names of their greatest exponents, lists containing more than one name which has not proved worthy of the esteem in which it was then held. Apart from dictating these impressive lists of names, names which ~~have~~ must almost all have been lacking in substance for the pupils, the Minimes often read to the class ~~extracts~~ from authors of both the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries. These extracts included passages from Voltaire's 'Essai sur la Poésie épique', from his 'Mort de César', and the episodes of the murder of Coligny and the speech of Mornay to Henry IV from 'la Henriade'. Their preferences however seem to have been for the XVIIth century, for Corneille and Racine, for Fénelon, Bossuet, Fléchier, Massillon, and Boileau. In particular they recommended the description of Calypso's cave from 'Télémaque', the funeral orations of Condé¹, Turenne², and Montausier³, Fléchier's description of the grief of the Jews at the death of Judas Macchabée³ (in his oration upon Turenne) came in for special praise, as did the imprecations of Camille in Corneille's 'Horace', Clytemnestra's reproaches to Agamemnon in Racine's 'Iphigénie', the account of the murders committed by Athalie, and the prophetic fervour of Joad.⁴

As was to be expected in view of their choice of literary passages, itself indicative of the taste of the period,

1. Delivered by BOSSUET, ~~BOSSUET~~ (1687)

2. " " FLECHIER, (1676).

3. " " FLECHIER, (1690).

4. CHUQUET, Op.cit. pp.104-105.

the oracle of the Minimes was Boileau-Despréaux.¹ From him they took their doctrine concerning purity of language, usage and literary construction; they echoed his words on Homer, Horace and Malherbe. From his own writings they selected for special praise the 'Satires' and the passage in praise of Louis XIV which he put into the mouth of la Mollesse in the second canto of the 'Lutrin'.¹ The taste of the Minimes was not always so reliable, as is proved by the fact that, according to CHUQUET², they regarded the 'Histoire des Chevaliers de Malte' by the abbé Vertot³ as a classic and the pupils had to learn by heart, or make summaries of, whole passages from this book. Here again, however, it is difficult to blame the teachers since the work had enjoyed wide popularity in the 18th century.

History and Geography were also taught at Brienne, but the instruction consisted almost entirely in learning by rote long lists of towns, provinces, capitals, or dates and battles, in an almost mediaeval fashion.⁴

From this account of the teaching of the Minimes it would appear that they gave a good grounding, according to the fashion of the day, in linguistic and literary subjects. The truth seems to have been rather different since, in spite of the wide range covered by the teaching, ^{it} too much

1. Idem.

2. Op.cit. p.105.

3. René VERTOT (l'abbé), (1655-1735). Author also of an 'Histoire des révolutions romaines'.

4. CHUQUET, Op.cit., p.106.

that given
 resembled ~~the teaching~~ in geography and history, being little but mechanical repetition for the teachers, who were often not very well versed in their subjects themselves. The inspector appointed by the Minister for War complained that the Minimes frequently lacked any vocation for teaching and were too often transferred to other schools¹. In addition they are said to have been lax in supervising the scholars, who only did such work as pleased themselves. It is interesting to notice here that Lucien Bonaparte, in later years, attributed his brother Napoleon's notoriously bad spelling to this lack of application by both pupils and teachers at Brienne.² Whether this is true or not, according to a contemporary of Napoleon at Brienne, Raynaud des Monts, the teaching was weak in all subjects except mathematics.³

We have no very definite information about Napoleon's reactions to this curriculum, although in view of the little he said about it in later life it would not seem to have left any very lasting impression⁴. His progress appears to have been greatest in mathematics and geography, presumably the two subjects he judged most immediately useful to him⁵, while history was already his favourite subject and the one to which he devoted most of his spare time. Since Latin was

1. Ibid. p. 107.

2. Idem.

3. Ibid. p. 113.

4. See for example the little that is said of the teaching at Brienne in the 'Mémoires de Sainte-Hélène'.

5. CHUQUET, Op. cit., p. 128.

intended as the basic discipline at Brienne, a measure of Napoleon's benefit from the instruction he received can be gained from his attitude to this one subject. CHUQUET tells us¹ that Napoleon preferred French to Latin and made good progress in it, probably because he could see its immediate utility. Not only did he dislike Latin, but also the pedagogic apparatus associated with it, the grammatical explanations, and exercises in syntax. His lack of taste for Latin was no doubt further accentuated by the knowledge that it was not taught at the École Militaire in Paris, to which he hoped to go.² It is of some interest to see that, in later years, when founding military schools himself, Napoleon prescribed the study of Latin at the Prytanée³ only for those pupils who did not intend to follow the career of arms.⁴

Summing up the results of Napoleon's stay at Brienne CHUQUET says "...quoique élevé dans un collège, Napoléon n'a pas reçu l'éducation du collège. Il n'a pas fait, à proprement parler, ses études classiques, et il s'est trouvé libre de toute tradition, garanti contre toute imitation."⁵ CHARPENTIER⁶, doubtless following CHUQUET, although he seems to claim the discovery as his own, also emphasises this differ-

1. Ibid., p. 127.

2. Idem.

3. The name given to the military schools set up by Napoleon at Paris and St. Cyr.

4. CHUQUET, Op. cit., p. 128.

5. Idem.

6. 'Napoléon et les Hommes de lettres de son temps', pp. 218-219.

ence between Napoleon and earlier French statesmen, whose great wisdom and mental balance, he says, resulted from a prolonged and profound classical education. He does not carry this line of thought to its logical conclusion, by which, quite easily, their classical education could also be blamed for helping to produce the Revolution, nor does he realise that Napoleon, "who completely lacked a sense of equilibrium"¹ could justly claim to have brought a measure of stability out of the anarchy of the Directory and to have reconciled opposing elements of all parties and factions in his administration.²

However small the benefit Napoleon drew from the classical part of his education at Brienne, the course there did at least bring him into contact for the first time with the great Classical Age of France, and above all with the chief exponents of the French classical theatre, Corneille and Racine, and, let it be said in fairness to the taste of time, Voltaire. Like so many men of the modern world since ~~this time~~, Napoleon first met the Ancients at second-hand, in versions which, frequently interpreted the classical view of life in terms of contemporary social convention and language. // Even if the *ham.*

1. Ibid., p. 219.

2. On the recurring tendency to judge Napoleon only by his military ambitions, and in particular by the campaign of 1812, there is no better possible comment than Shakespeare's:
 "The evil that men do lives after them;
 The good is oft interred with their bones."

Minimes gave only a mediocre treatment to the great writers of the XVIIIth century they did Napoleon the service of introducing him to a body of literature which he considered throughout his life as the ideal towards which ~~the~~ others ought to strive. We shall^{see}/later how the tastes of the Minimes, as reflected in their teaching of French literature, remained with Napoleon throughout his life. Although the teaching brothers were doing no more than pass on the accepted views of the day in these matters they did at least introduce Napoleon to the literature of the grand siècle and to say that his years at Brienne taught him nothing of literature is to do them less than justice.

Whatever the failings of the formal education offered at Brienne, Napoleon was already, during his stay there, beginning the process of self-education which he continued for many years, until he was too much caught up in affairs to have time for contemplation and study. The very circumstances of Napoleon's life at Brienne on his arrival there tended to cut him off from his fellows. He was a foreigner, hardly acceptable to his French comrades either as a compatriot or as a social equal and the effects of this were to intensify his longing for his native Corsica, and also to cause him to study hard in private in order to succeed, as much for the honour of his beloved island as for himself.

The boys at Brienne are said to have been allotted patches of ground in the garden of the school and Napoleon

is supposed to have used his to arrange for himself a private retreat in the foliage, to which he retired with his books during leisure hours¹. Of the works which he went there to read we know little. Possibly he took out the copy of Plutarch which was used in class and he borrowed books in quantity from the school library². In view of the way his tastes developed it is reasonable to assume that he studied history and geography, with the aim of acquiring ever more facts in these subjects. He may also have begun his studies in ~~history~~ Corsican history and in the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, although very probably these latter were not easy to obtain in a school run by a religious order³. CHUQUET imagines that Napoleon must have read the 'Jardins' of Delille⁴, and in particular the episode about Potaveri, the Tahitian, who is brought to Paris from his distant island. In spite of all the kindness and attention which is shown to him, he is moved only by the sight of a tree which grows also in Tahiti, and which makes him think for a moment that he is back at home.⁵

1. CHUQUET, Op.cit., p.118.

2. MASSON, Op.cit., p.75.

3. Napoleon claimed, when talking to ROEDERER, that he first read 'la Nouvelle Héloïse' at the age of nine. As he was not quite ten when he first came to France he did very well to read this large work in a strange tongue at that age.

4. Jacques DELILLE (abbé), (1738-1813). Translator of Vergil and Milton, professor of Latin poetry at the Collège de France. 'Les Jardins' was published in 1780, followed by 'l'Homme aux champs' (1800), 'la Pitié' and 'l'Imagination' (1803), and finally 'la Conversation' (1812). These are all didactic poems in the extremely figured manner of the time, and consist of several cantos.

5. CHUQUET, Op.cit., p.115.

The parallel between Potaveri and the young Napoleon is obvious and the latter certainly knew this poem at least by 1791, when he quoted it in his well-known 'Discours de Lyon'¹ of which we shall speak later.

Of his reading at this time we learn practically nothing from Napoleon himself, except for a statement he made at St. Helena when he said that, during the battle of Brienne, in 1814, he was nearly killed by a Cossack close to the very tree where, as a boy, he used to sit to read Tasso's 'Jerusalem Delivered'.² Although he gave it its French title there would have been nothing improbable in his reading the original Italian version, if it were available. Although GOURGAUD throws some doubt on the truth of this story, in his account, by commenting that a few days earlier Napoleon had said it was a cannon-ball which had ~~almost~~ almost killed him, there is frequent evidence, at different periods of his life, that he was familiar with this poem. As an example, once again, at St. Helena, he compared Mme de Staël to its two heroines Armide and Chlorinde.³

From Brienne Napoleon passed on, in 1785, to the École Militaire in Paris, where the cloistered life was continued, but this time under military and not monastic supervision, and in surroundings of greater magnificence,

1. Ibid., p. 115.

2. LAS CASES, 'Mémorial', vol. 1, p. 319, and GOURGAUD, 'Journal', vol. 2, p. 28.

3. LAS CASES, Op. cit., vol. 2, p. 453.

with rather more bodily comforts¹. There is an embarrassingly large amount of information available about the administration and instruction at the École Militaire,² but apart from literary teaching, it is sufficient to note that it had the best riding school in Europe. Although it was directed by a general, and was directly under the control of the Minister for War, little more military instruction was given than at Brienne.

One important difference between Paris and Brienne was the greater concentration upon teaching in the former school. The pupils worked eight hours a day, each class lasting two hours, while the groups were of reasonable size, consisting of 20 to 30 cadets. Each class was always taught by the same teacher in any one subject and if he were ill an assistant was always at hand to replace him³. Latin was no longer taught and the only literary study was French literature, of which the principal teacher was DOMAIRON.

A good idea of Domairon's teaching methods can be obtained from his textbook 'Principes généraux des Belles-Lettres' a work in which he included all the notes he had previously dictated to his pupils on grammar, usage and literature. That

1. The École Militaire was located in the building which still bears that name, situated at the end of the Champ de Mars, in the plain of Grenelle. In napoleon's day it was still of very recent foundation, having been instituted in 1776, by the maréchal de Belle-Isle, and the financier Pâris-Duverney. The building, by the architect Gabriel, was completed between 1751 and 1756. (MASSON, Op.cit. pp. 92-93).

2. CHUQUET, Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 185 et seq., also MASSON, p. 92 et seq.

3. CHUQUET, Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 185.

4. Paris, 1784-5, 2 vol.

Napoleon knew this book well there can be no doubt. He not only sought out its author and promoted him to the rank of inspector-general in the Imperial University, but he also recommended his book for use in the Prytanée at Paris, in 1802, and at St.Cyr in 1805. The work was frequently found in the Imperial libraries and a copy even found its way to St.Helena, where Napoleon said that, as a book he had used in his youth, even if it were not perhaps the best of all manuals of grammar and literature, it was still the one which had the greatest attraction for him¹.

This book, which acquired such a considerable sentimental value for Napoleon, underwent several editions, the first in 1784-5, in 2 vols., and the last, after the death of its author, in 1815, now extended to 3 volumes by the addition of further points and examples. It is an extremely detailed work, attempting in the manner of many similar textbooks of the period to teach everything by the simple act of making a catalogue to which a certain amount of explanatory matter was added. In his preface to the first edition DOMAIGNON says: "Chargé d'enseigner les Belles-Lettres Françaises (sic) aux Cadets Gentilshommes de l'École Royale Militaire, je me suis attaché à leur donner des notions générales, mais précises, de tous les objets importants qu'elles renferment, et qu'il n'est pas permis à l'homme du monde d'ignorer." He goes on to indicate, in some detail, the methods he has used to explain

1. LAS CASES, Op.cit., vol.2, p.307.

the art of writing correctly and well and the rules of the French language. In addition, he tells us, he has added a number of general observations on the art of writing letters.

The second part of the 'Principes généraux' deals with literature, both prose and verse, this being studied after grammar in accordance with Domairon's precept "Il faut passer par les épines de la grammaire avant d'arriver aux fleurs de l'éloquence et de la poésie¹". He gives a summary of the productions, and not the literary history, of the four great ages of literature: the ~~the~~ age of ^{Philip} ~~Philip~~ and Alexander, the age of Caesar and Augustus, the age of the Medicis, and the age of Louis XIV. This is followed by an essay on the 'Origins and princip^{le}als of the Arts' and the 'Rules of Literature', in which he repeats dogmatically the rules governing the writing of different kinds of genre including one from which we should like to think that Napoleon drew great benefit: 'Les Discours pour haranguer les Troupes'¹.

Such literary criticism as is contained in the 'Principes généraux' is not remarkable for originality and is normally limited to praise of good achievements within the 'rules'. It cannot be compared in any way to the work of real critics such as Laharpe and is probably no better nor worse than that of any other 18th century schoolmaster. In his preface DOMAIRON says "J'ai cité des exemples, et même en assez grand nombre" and he does reveal himself,

1. Quoted by CHUQUET, Op.cit.vol.1,p.200.

although by no means original, in this either, as a firm believer in the method of teaching by 'morceaux choisis'. The theatre is treated at some length and tragedy in particular receives a long disquisition, restating the conventional views of the time, but liberally illustrated with quotations from the better works of Corneille, Racine and Voltaire, and from the 'Rhadamiste' of ~~Crébillon~~ Crébillon.¹

Whatever the failings of DOMAIRON's textbook², judged by ~~the~~ present standards, the teaching which it represented seems to ~~have~~ have made a powerful impression on the pupils at the École Militaire. According to CHUQUET Domairon would declaim the lines of Corneille and of Racine to the class and enlarge upon the qualities of the heroes of French tragedy. Very possibly it was from this source that Napoleon first

1. Prosper Jolyot de CRÉBILLON (1674-1762). 'Idoménée' (1703), 'Atrée et Thyeste' (1707), 'Électre' (1708), 'Rhadamiste et Zénobie' (1711). He enjoyed a great vogue in his lifetime but his works might be called 'theatrical' in the worst sense of that word. (See LANSON, pp. 646-7, and BRUNETTIÈRE, 'Époques du théâtre français' 9e conférence, 'La Vie et le Théâtre de Crébillon' (Paris, 1896).
2. Although the book had been recommended previously for use in the École Militaire in Paris, the minister Ségur did not authorise it for all the Royal Schools because, he found it too full of matter and too detailed. "Le grammairien voulait épuiser son sujet dans tous les points, et les matières qu'il embrassait étaient en si grand nombre que les cadets n'auraient pas le temps de les étudier". (Quoted by CHUQUET, Op.cit., vol.1, pp. 200-201). In the following pages CHUQUET gives details of the somewhat ~~unpleasant~~ undignified discussion between the author and the authorities over the use of this book in the military schools.

learnt by heart those lines from these authors which were so frequently upon his lips. As if anticipating this idea CHUQUET recounts a story¹ told by one of Napoleon's fellow pupils, a story which closely concerns one of the passages from Corneille's 'Cinna' most frequently mentionned by Napoleon. It is said that when Domairon declaimed the line "Soyons amis, Cinna, c'est moi qui t'en convie," the class would complete the couplet in a whisper:- "On trouve le bonheur dans les bras d'une amie." Anyone who has been a schoolboy will agree that the story is extremely probable and such an association of ideas would certainly help to impress the line on the memories of those present.

Whether or not the teaching at the École Militaire was supplemented by such unofficial aids to memory as the foregoing, there is little room to doubt that, whatever Napoleon's natural inclinations in literature, he underwent a competent indoctrination in the taste of the times and, in particular, in the French classical theatre, before his schooldays ended. How FAGUET can have concluded, after reading CHUQUET, that Napoleon learned nothing of literature at school is indeed difficult to comprehend. Certainly he had gained little knowledge of the inner meaning or of the real significance of literature, his teachers, both the Minimes and Domairon, being largely preoccupied with questions of form in a narrow sense. However, almost any literary education will only give the pupil an idea of the taste of his time

1. Op.cit., vol.1, p.202.

and indicate to him those authors and works it judges worthy of his attention, a task which Napoleon's teachers performed, probably confirming him thereby in the views of the century, especially in all that concerned the theatre.

In all the literary instruction which Napoleon had received the emphasis had been put on the major genres, and more particularly on verse, especially tragedy and epic. Other lesser genres were touched upon but apart from oratory, and especially pulpit oratory, they had been passed over rapidly. French lyric poetry was hardly mentionned, which is not surprising as its great age had not yet come, nor had that of the novel, which received merely a passing mention from Domairon.

As far as Napoleon was concerned one important function of this teaching was to provide him with lists, lists of grammatical points, of figures of speech, of the different genres and forms of literature and of their exponents. To many another this might have been a distinct disadvantage, but Napoleon's mind thrived on lists for which he had a passion throughout his life.

While one must agree that Napoleon, and presumably not he alone but his condisciples also, did not receive the solid grounding in the Latin and Greek classics which had become traditional in France, he did meet the gallicised version of the classical background through some acquaintance with the writers of the age of Louis XIV. In addition he acquired some knowledge of the literature which the prevailing taste est-

eemed, and received it moreover, in a form which was peculiarly suited to his type of mind so that at least he had food for thought in future. Whatever may be said to the contrary it does seem that Napoleon drew some benefit from his literary education, even though it was almost by accident.

II.

THE ARTILLERY SUBALTERN - 1785-1793.

If previous writers on the youth of Napoleon have been prone to dismiss too hastily the literary training he received at school they have, almost without exception, spent much time and ink on the following period, from his leaving the École Militaire in 1785 to his first real feat of arms, at the siege of Toulon in 1793. This span of eight years is generally regarded as the period in which he not only grew to full manhood and a partial realisation of his powers, against the background of a rapidly disintegrating social order, but also the one in which he made good such gaps as he perceived in his education. Many extremely able and trustworthy scholars, headed by the indefatigable Arthur CHUQUET¹ and the better documented Frédéric MASSON² have given a very complete account of Napoleon's reading during this time, together with a detailed analysis of the development of his thought and of the various influences, literary and otherwise, which worked upon him. In view of the completeness of this information it is not the intention here to repeat all that has been said already by others, but rather to analyse it and to attempt to define the development of Napoleon's literary tastes and ideas up to the siege of Toulon.

1. 'La Jeunesse de Napoléon', vols. II and III. (1897-1899).

2. 'Napoléon dans sa jeunesse', éd. définitive, (1922) p. 135 et seq.

Before embarking on the study of the literary aspects of this period of Napoleon's career there are ^{other}/factors to be taken into account, the greatest of these being the outbreak of the Revolution, together with the intellectual ferment which preceded it, its progress roughly coinciding with the most formative period of Napoleon's adolescence. As a result of the Revolutionary movement ~~in~~ in France there was an upsurge of Corsican national feeling, ^{un}der the leadership of Paoli, triumphantly returned from exile, a movement to which Napoleon at first rallied with joy, only to desert it later for the greater opportunities offered by the new egalitarian France. In the midst of this turmoil and uncertainty the young officer also learnt something of the practical side of military life and soon found opportunities for demonstrating his unrivalled powers of leadership and planning. This is indeed the epoch which fostered the ~~young~~ development of the callow young subaltern of 1785, not into the rather florid Emperor of middle life, but into the lean, ardent and imaginative young general who conquered ~~the~~ Italy and Egypt.

Napoleon's life during this period very closely reflects the upheavals and political preoccupations of the age. For most young officers in modern armies, even in time of war, there is a long period during which they serve under experienced superiors, following the traditional routine of manoeuvre and administrative drudgery while they slowly mount the ladder of promotion to command a company or a battery;

rarely, if ever, can they have the chance of making decisions of more than a tactical significance. The first four or five years of Napoleon's military life certainly followed this pattern, but with the coming of the Revolution, the emigration of large numbers of officers, and the revived hopes of Corsican independence there came both the chance of more ~~and~~ speedy promotion and the possibility of playing a real part in the moulding of events.

In order to understand Napoleon's mode of life at this time it will be necessary to outline briefly his movements and doings up to the siege of Toulon. He left the École Militaire after one year, in September 1785, having prepared the passing out examination in almost record time. He was posted to the regiment of artillery of La Fère, as a second-lieutenant, La Fère Artillerie being one of the best regiments of the arm, and then stationed at Valence. After a year's service in that garrison Napoleon returned to Corsica, on leave, the first time in eight years. This leave was apparently of long duration and during it he undertook to straighten out the financial affairs of his family and he obtained, on the pretext of ill-health, a prolongation of leave for a further six months. He employed this time to go to Paris to press his family's claim for payment of an agricultural subsidy due to them from the government.¹

1. Napoleon's father, three years before his death, had undertaken a contract to grow mulberry trees in Corsica. Having invested large sums in this venture the family finances were left in a state of extreme precariousness when the government suddenly cancelled the contract.

There is ^{of uncertainty} some amount/in all the accounts of Napoleon's doings at the time, when both his stay in Paris and his leave were coming to an end, but in the extremely civilised, or perhaps merely inefficient manner of the army of 18th century France, he was granted a further extension of leave until June 1788, which he spent once more in Corsica, largely occupied with family affairs. Of his first three years as an officer, Napoleon spent more than half the time on leave.¹ Returning ^{from} ~~the~~ Corsica in June 1788 he rejoined his regiment at the town of Auxonne, where he ~~remained~~ remained until September, 1789, in which month he again left for a leave of six months which he managed to prolong to sixteen months, not returning until January, 1791. By this time the young Napoleon was an ardent supporter of the Revolution and almost the whole of his leave was spent in political activities, spreading the new ideas in an island which was still flying the fleur de lys, although the rest of France had already adopted the tricolour.

At this time, in Corsica, Napoleon first began to show his remarkable powers of organisation and his energy. Having successfully urged the adoption of the tricolour he set about forming a club at Ajaccio, and finally, the raising

1. The amount of time Napoleon spent on leave during this period arouses biting comment from a recent writer, Henri d'ESTRE, himself a regular officer ('Bonaparte, les Années obscures', Paris, 1942). ~~He writes~~ The following comment is typical of this writer's attitude: "On a beau s'appeler Napoléon, sa formation militaire dut en souffrir, d'autant que la technique d'une arme spéciale participe un peu de l'érudition, qu'elle exige de l'application, de la constance, de la suite, toutes choses dont même le génie ne saurait dispenser." Op.cit.p.41.

of a garde nationale. From Ajaccio he carried the movement into the interior and performed the same services for the inhabitants of Bastia, despite the opposition of the French governor. For several months he was one of the moving spirits in the revolutionary circles of Corsica, taking part in a rising in Ajaccio, and writing letters on political topics to prominent men, with an eye to publication,¹ as well as numerous revolutionary proclamations, manifestoes, and justifications of various popular risings. The impression one gains of Napoleon at this point is ~~this~~ that of a young man beginning to feel his powers and intoxicated by his own success as a leader.

About this time Napoleon met his hero, Paoli. The meeting was by accident, near the scene of Paoli's defeat in 1769 at Ponte-Nuovo. Napoleon is said to have declared, quite without tact, after Paoli had explained the plan of battle: "Le résultat de ces dispositions a été ce qu'il devrait être!"² It was from that moment no doubt that Paoli acquired a certain distaste for the young artillery officer.

After so much feverish activity Napoleon rejoined his regiment, taking care to cover his absence by a screen of certificats de civisme issued by various Corsican local and municipal authorities.³ He did not return alone but was accompanied by his younger brother Louis, whose education he had

1. The well-known letter to Matteo Buttafuoco dates from this period. Buttafuoco was a deputy of Corsica to the States-General.

2. Henri d'ESTRE, Op.cit., p.47.

3. MASSON, Op.cit., pp.249-250.

undertaken because of his family's reduced circumstances. On arrival at Auxonne he was not only welcomed ~~back~~ but also ^{given} ~~received~~ his back pay for the time he had been overdue, a clear indication both of the power of certificats de civisme and of the shortage of officers loyal to the new order.

At Auxonne he returned to his former studious habits, working, among other things, at a history of Corsica which had been engaging his attention for some time. It was with regard to this work that he received his first rebuff from Paoli who refused to lend him various documents which he had requested, replying with the damning comment that youth is not the correct time of life for writing history¹. However, Napoleon found consolation in the activities of the club at Auxonne and in his self-appointed task of keeping up the revolutionary zeal of the rank and file of his regiment.

In this same year, 1791, Napoleon returned to Valence, but the autumn found him back once more in Ajaccio on leave, taking a more active part than ever in local politics and managing, in spite of both legal and financial obstacles, to get himself elected as one of the lieutenant-colonels of the National Guard of Ajaccio. With this battalion he attempted to take over the citadel of Ajaccio, an affair which caused the city authorities to report adversely on his conduct to the Minister for War. As a result of this and of his having

1. MASSON, Op.cit., p. 257.

been absent from a review¹ (the result of having overstayed his leave once more), he was now officially dismissed from his rank in the artillery. On receiving the news he hurried off to Paris to plead his cause. Such was the shortage of trained officers that he not only secured reintegration into the artillery, but also the promotion to captain which would have been his due but for his defection.

Never in a hurry to return to his regiment, Napoleon stayed on for some time in Paris, witnessing many outbreaks of mob violence in the summer of 1792. Finally, in the autumn of that year he found a pretext for returning to Corsica for what proved to be the last fateful occasion. On his arrival he found the islanders deeply divided into two factions, the Paolists on the one hand, tending more and more to look for foreign support, and on the other hand the party loyal to France and the Revolution. Napoleon's inclination was towards the latter and smaller of the two factions so that the antipathy between himself and Paoli increased.

Perhaps to justify his presence in Corsica Napoleon took part in an expedition against Sardinia, an expedition organised by the French government, but under the command of Paoli. Napoleon actually participated in a diversionary attack against La Maddalena, an islet between Corsica and

1. The Legislative Assembly had decreed, as a result of the menacing external situation and the numbers of officers who had emigrated, that there would be a general review of the army between Dec. 25, 1791, and Jan. 10, 1792. Any officer illegally absent from this review would be dismissed the service. (Henri d'ESTRE, Op.cit., p.65).

~~and~~ Sardinia, the attacking force being under the command of Paoli's nephew Colonna-Cesari. Due to the latter's incompetence this was even more of a dismal failure than the main expedition and Napoleon, in a report he wrote to clear the honour of the volunteers he commanded, made no secret of where the blame lay. No doubt incensed by the fact that a copy had been sent to the Minister of War, the Paolists began to turn ~~against~~ against the Bonapartes. Young Lucien Bonaparte, then at Toulon, brought affairs to a head by openly accusing Paoli of treason¹, an accusation which was actively followed up by the Convention in Paris. There was now a clear break between the Bonapartes and the followers of Paoli which resulted in open hostilities and the flight of Napoleon's family to France.

Napoleon at last returned to his military duties and became a staff officer to the artillery headquarters of the Army of Italy, being chiefly occupied in the supervision of coastal artillery in Provence. Almost by chance he took part in the capture of Avignon, which was held by the insurgent Federalists of Marseilles. It was directly after this action that Napoleon produced his small pamphlet 'Le Souper de Beaucaire' which takes the form of a discussion between a soldier of the Convention and four other citizens, two of them merchants from Marseilles, another a manufacturer from Montpellier, and the fourth a citizen of Nîmes, all of them more or less

1. For the text of this accusation see MASON, Op.cit., p.333.

in sympathy with the defeated Federalists. The soldier convinces the rest, at length, that the Federalists are fighting in a hopeless cause, not because they are wrong, but because ~~they~~ they are not strong enough. The Convention is right and will triumph because it has gained all the advantages. Here for the first time apparently we see the real Napoleonic philosophy emerging, "La force crée le droit!"¹ This little work was well received by the local representatives of the Convention and several thousand copies were printed at the Treasury's expense.

By means of the strange facilities which the Revolution seems to have offered, especially at this time, to those who knew the right people, and in particular the representatives on mission, Napoleon passed from the service of the artillery commander at Nice to become commander of the artillery at the siege of Toulon, a city which had welcomed in the English from the sea and was holding out against the Convention, reinforced by British and Neapolitan troops. Napoleon is said to have produced the master-plan for the capture of the town and his skillful use of the limited artillery made a deep impression, resulting in rapid promotion to the rank of brigadier-general; already he was beginning the climb which was to lead to as yet undreamed of heights.

If this particular period of Napoleon's life has been treated at some length it is because it is little known to

1. See Henri d'ESTRE, Op.cit., p.113.

English readers and at the same time it is very important for a full understanding of the man and of his political ideas which were so much concerned with stabilising ~~the French~~ French society after the great upheaval which he had, in his youth, helped to bring about.

It was during this period that the young man emerging from the military schools passed through a stage of intense intellectual curiosity, leading him to espouse the enthusiasms of the day, firstly, for those writers and thinkers who produced the intellectual climate of the Revolution, and then, almost inevitably, for the Revolution itself. During the years of constant social change and disturbance, from 1789 to 1793, when loyalties were changing almost daily on every hand, the young Corsican patriot found himself transformed, almost by force of circumstance, into the rising young French officer who supported the Jacobins: the idealistic youth became the realistic, hard-headed, and ambitious young man of twenty-four.

At this point in Napoleon's life our main concern here is with the intensive periods of study to which he devoted himself during garrison duty at Valence and Auxonne. In his leisure hours he read, pen in hand, many of the books which had been no more than names in a list to the schoolboy, as well as a great many others, mostly of history or geography, which he may have lighted upon either by chance or by design. Fortunately the notes he made during his reading have survived¹

1. NAPOLÉON, 'Manuscrits inédits' ed. by MASSON and BIAGI, (Paris, 1910).

and in them we can follow fairly closely the workings of his mind. Not only do we see which books Napoleon read, but also which portions of them interested him most, while in the original writings, which sometimes accompany the notes, the influence of recent readings is clearly discernible. These notebooks have already been the subject of a most comprehensive examination by Arthur CHUQUET¹, over fifty years ago, in which he exhaustively investigates each stage of the young Napoleon's development and traces almost every possible influence. ~~back to its source~~. Rather than merely repeat the findings of CHUQUET therefore, let us attempt to summarize them, together with such material from other sources as may be useful, and draw any conclusions which appear justifiable.

The reasons why Napoleon undertook this heavy programme of reading are not far to seek. As an intelligent and ambitious youth he would certainly have realised that there were wide gaps in his education which he could only fill in now by his own efforts. He must also have wished to learn more of the ideas of the philosophes, ideas which, although everywhere discussed, would certainly not have been taught to him at school. In particular Napoleon's Corsican patriotism must have stirred him to study the works of writers who had become identified with hatred of oppression and love of justice. Finally, and probably by no means ~~the~~ the least important reason, was that he found garrison duty extremely boring,

1. 'La Jeunesse de Napoléon', vol. 2.

a fact which he himself revealed, years after, when he told Mme de RÉMUSAT¹ that at this period of his life he sought escape from boredom by reading novels.

In the years before 1793, when he finally broke with the cause of Corsican nationalism, ~~Napoleon~~ Napoleon's intellectual development was inextricably bound up with his reading and note-taking¹ and is marked by sporadic literary efforts of his own. The mentality of the man of action ~~and~~ began to develop after 1789, but at first his attempts to influence events were extremely amateurish, the works of an enthusiastic youth inspired by the slogans of Rousseau. Not until the siege of Avignon and the 'Souper de Beaucaire' does the pragmatic side of his nature seem to have exerted ~~itself~~ its supremacy over this youthful idealism. Even during the first Italian Campaign the phrases and gestures of the youthful revolutionary are still to be seen, although by then they are but thin cover for the steel-hard realist beneath.

In the large body of Napoleon's writings from 1785-1792 (when he left France on the last decisive journey to Corsica), there are three constant preoccupations. The first and most impelling is his Corsican patriotism which led him

1. Mme de RÉMUSAT, 'Mémoires' (Paris, 1880). Vol. 1, p. 267. Claire-Elisabeth-Jeanne-Gravier de RÉMUSAT, née de Vergennes. the daughter of a Maître des Requêtes, who died on the scaffold during the Terror. She married Augustin-Laurent de Rémusat in 1796. In 1802 the Rémusats gained the favour of Napoleon, through Josephine, and were appointed Prefet du Palais, and Dame du Palais respectively. After the divorce, Mme de Rémusat accompanied Josephine in her retirement. Her husband became chamberlain and Surintendant des spectacles. Under the Restoration the Rémusats rapidly transferred their allegiance to the Bourbons.

to study the history of Corsica, then there is his interest in history in general, arising apparently from his desire to understand politics and the art of government, topics which probably led him to the third of these preoccupations, the ideas of the 'philosophical' writers, of Rousseau, Raynal,¹ and the Voltaire of the 'Essai sur les Moeurs'.

As has been indicated, Napoleon's main interest at first was Corsica, the natural result of his background and of very recent history, since his own arrival in the world coincided with the loss of his country's hopes of freedom. ~~The~~ The plight of his native island is always in his mind and the very first of his early manuscripts, dated April 26, 1786², is an essay on Corsica, written on the sixty-first birthday of Paoli and bemoaning the loss of Corsican liberty. A second piece follows, a homily on suicide³, in which the young man feels that he can no longer live since his beloved

1. L'abbé Guillaume RAYNAL (1713-1796). His only work of note is the 'Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes', (Amsterdam, 1770). The book was banned by order of the Paris Parlement as anti-religious and RAYNAL had to flee from France (1781-1787). The work was in fact the result of collaboration between ~~Raynal~~ RAYNAL and a large number of Encyclopaedists, including, among others, Saint-Lambert, Guibert, d'Holbach, Naigeon, and even Diderot himself (see FEUGERES, 'L'abbé Raynal et la Révolution française', pp. 2-3). CHUQUET, Op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 18-19, gives the following ~~approx~~ appreciation of Raynal:- "C'est Raynal que la France de 1789 regarde comme le précurseur et l'apôtre du nouveau système politique, Raynal dont le nom vole ~~au~~ au début de la Révolution sur la bouche de tous les patriotes, Raynal dont le fatras déclamatoire emportait, selon l'expression de Vaublanc, tous les suffrages de ses contemporains jusqu'au jour où il écrit à l'Assemblée constituante sa fameuse lettre de remontrances.... et où Anarcharsis Cloots dit tout haut que cet écrivain sans talent n'a d'autre mérite que celui de l'entrepreneur Ranckoucke et s'est fait une superbe queue de paon avec la plume des Diderot, des Naigeon, et des Holbach'."

country is enslaved. These are followed in Napoleon's cahier, over a year later, by a brief note intended as a preface to his 'History of Corsica',¹ a work probably inspired by the hope that he might be able to bring the wrongs of his country to the notice of the States General when they met. In spite of the lapse of time between these pieces it is quite clear from their content that his patriotic ardour has not cooled and the only reason for this apparently unproductive period is that he was too busy elsewhere to have time for writing or study.²

The history of Corsica, which finally took the form of letters ('Lettres sur la Corse') in 1790, were addressed to Raynal, whom Napoleon had already met, on one occasion, at Marseilles. The first two letters were in fact despatched to Raynal, by the intermediary of Joseph Bonaparte, in 1790. It is not known whether Joseph actually met Raynal, nor is there any record of the latter's opinion on the letters³. For our study of Napoleon's development during this period the text

(Notes from p.76) 2. MASSON ET BIAGI, pp.1-4.

3. Ibid. pp.5-6.

1. Ibid. p.24.

2. During this time Napoleon was occupied with family affairs, which eventually took him to Paris. The note 'Sur l'histoire de la Corse' is preceded in the cahier by an account of an encounter Napoleon had with a prostitute, in the gardens of the Palais-Royal, recounted in typical Rousseauesque style.

3. MASSON 'Nap. dans sa jeunesse' p.231 et seq. He tells of Napoleon's early hopes for this work. At first he intended to address them to the minister Brienne, and after the fall of the latter, to Necker. He also recounts how Napoleon submitted them to one of his former teachers at Brienne, Dupuy, but did not accept his suggestion to tone down the more stinging attacks on France.

of these letters ¹ is important as it shows Napoleon to have been sufficiently ardent in his Corsican patriotism as to be willing to compromise his career by the bitterness of his attacks upon the French. His education in France and the commission which he held had as yet done nothing to alter his loyalties.

CHUQUET has noted² that Napoleon, in preparing this work, made use, among other sources, of the 'Corsican History' of the abbé Germanes³ from which he may have learned that his hero Paoli read daily in the works of Machiavelli, and studied the republics of antiquity. It is indeed a striking coincidence that soon after Napoleon had produced his 'Lettres sur la Corse' he also read and ^{made} notes from Machiavelli's 'History of Florence'⁴ while he had already taken copious notes from Rollin's 'Histoire ancienne'⁵, notes dealing with Persia, Greece, Athens, Sparta, Thrace, and Scythia.

The 'Lettres sur la Corse', although based on such first-hand material as Napoleon could obtain, including Boswell's account, were frankly propagandist and highly selective in that they contain only those facts and anecdotes

1. 'Manuscripts inédits', pp.393-445.

2. Op.cit., vol.2, p.62.

3. The abbé Germanes (or Germanès), 'Histoire des révolutions de Corse depuis ses premiers habitants jusqu'à nos jours',² Paris, 1771 (2 vols.).

4. He probably read this work in the translation of M.de Barret, (Paris, 1789 - 2 vols.) See 'Manuscripts inédits', p.499.

5. Charles ROLLIN (1661-1741). Recteur de l'Université (1694), historian and writer on pedagogical matters: 'Traité des Études' (1726), 'Histoire ancienne' (1730 onward, 12 vols.), and 'l'Histoire romaine' (1738, 9 vols.).

which underline the sufferings and heroism of the Corsicans and blacken their oppressors. Their literary value is not high and they show little stylistic originality, being couched in conventional rhetorical terms and heavily weighted with sentimental episodes in the taste of 'la Nouvelle Héloïse'. The same approach and style is found in other of Napoleon's works on Corsican subjects in the years around 1789. There is an imaginary exchange of letters between Sir Robert Walpole and ex-king Theodore of Corsica¹, a story, probably written in 1789, and called simply 'Nouvelle corse'², which graphically describes the sufferings of an old Corsican and his daughter at the hands of the French, and other letters of a more directly political nature, addressed to 'M. Giubega, Greffier en chef des États'³, and to Matteo Buttafuoco, the Corsican deputy to the National Assembly⁴. Finally, in the same year as these two letters (1791), Napoleon composed the

1. 'Manuscrits inédits', p. 33. THEODORE 1st. was in fact the baron Neuhaus (c. 1690-1756), a German ~~and~~ adventurer who assisted the Corsicans against the Genoese and proclaimed himself King of Corsica in 1736. Having crossed to the mainland to attempt to find assistance for Corsica he was prevented from returning. Finally he sought refuge in London, where he was imprisoned for debt and Walpole opened a subscription on his behalf. THEODORE appears as one of the six ex-kings in VOLTAIRE'S 'Candide' (ch. 26). Candide and Martin dine with the six kings and THEODORE says characteristically "J'ai fait frapper de la monnaie, et je ne possède pas un denier;.... j'ai longtemps été à Londres en prison sur la paille; j'ai bien peur d'être traité de même ici....."
2. Ibid., p. 381.
3. Ibid., p. 390.
4. Ibid., p. 446 (January, 1791).

celebrated 'Discours de Lyon', an answer to the question set by the Academy of Lyons: "Quelles vérités et quels sentiments importe-t-il le plus d'inculquer aux hommes pour leur bonheur?" Napoleon's answer, a long essay, in phrases borrowed from Rousseau and Raynal, but expressing many of his own ideas, made free use of examples taken from Corsican history while Paoli receives a full measure of praise.¹ Later, at St. Helena, according to O'Meara, Napoleon admitted he was pleased that neither the 'Lettres sur la Corse' nor the 'Discours de Lyon' had ever been published as they were written "in the spirit of the day, at a time when the rage for republicanism existed, and contained the strangest doctrines that could be promulgated in support of it."² Contrary to ~~what~~ what Napoleon also said to O'Meara on this occasion, he did not win a gold medal for his 'Discours'; in fact the jury decided not to award the prize.

It has already been mentioned that Napoleon's passion for Corsica led him to read a translation of James Boswell's 'Account of Corsica', a book which he apparently borrowed from his father³. Boswell's enthusiastic description of Paoli must have been very much to the liking of Napoleon

1. Ibid., p.545 et seq. (for example).

2. Barry O'Meara, 'Napoleon in Exile, or a voice from St. Helena', (London, 1822), vol. 2. p. 168.

3. CHUQUET, Op.cit., vol. 2, p. 51.

and CHUQUET has pointed out striking examples of parallel passages in Boswell's "Account of Corsica"¹ and the writings of the young Napoleon. Some of these, such as the comparison between Paoli and Lycurgus, are not very conclusive, but a much more likely case of simple plagiarism is the use by Napoleon, in a petition to the Municipality of Ajaccio, of the motto from an old Dutch medal frangimur si collidimur which is quoted by Boswell in his 'Account', and which Napoleon is unlikely to have obtained from any other source, even though he quotes it in French.²

During these years Napoleon's historical reading was wide³. He took copious but selective notes, being especially careful to include any figures relating to the size of armies, the number of prisoners taken, or cannon lost in battles, the distances of marches, or any other points of practical military importance. Above all, however, he was interested in the background to recent French political history, making much use here of a work called 'l'Espion Anglais'⁴ which appears to have been a comprehensive survey of recent French history and events in France. Most of the historical

1. London, 1768.

2. CHUQUET, Op.cit., vol.2, pp.39-40. The text of the petition, drawn up by Napoleon for the Société des Amis du Peuple of Ajaccio in the spring of 1793, is contained in MASSON, 'Napoléon dans sa jeunesse', p.337. The passage in question reads: "Citoyens magistrats, notre ville est malheureusement divisée et l'union peut seule nous sauver. Notre devise est celle que prit un peuple aujourd'hui puissant: Nous périssons si nous nous heurtons."

3. The actual notes he took from this reading, together with indications of the books he read, are contained in 'Manuscrits inédits'. An interesting account of Napoleon's note-taking technique is given by Dr. N. TOMICHE, in her recent work 'Napoléon écrivain', p.81 et seq.

works consulted by Napoleon are of little interest in a study of his literary ideas² since only Voltaire's 'Essai sur les mœurs' could, among them, lay claim to literary value. Although Napoleon's reading in history and geography bulks large in the total of his youthful notes it need detain us no longer here¹ once we have noted that he was already scanning these works for facts and figures, not for theories or for philosophies of history.

If Napoleon did not look for any abstract theories in the history books he was looking for information about the workings of administrations and of different types of governments; also he took an especial interest in the political aspects of religion. In his extracts from John Barrow's 'History of England'² he took careful note of religious matters, including the religion of the Druids, the military prowess of bishops in the Middle Ages, the power and the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, and the struggles of Henry VIII with the papacy and with non-conforming sects in England. There are also several notes in the following vein which recalls the style and att-

4. (from p. 81). 'L'Espion Anglais, ou correspondance secrète entre milord All'Eve et milord All'Ear (sic)', London, 1784. See 'Manuscrits inédits', p. 256 et seq.

1. A list of the works of history and geography (incl. travels) from which Napoleon made notes in his cahiers is included at Appendix D.

2. 'Manuscrits inédits', p. 150 et seq. Napoleon used the 'Histoire nouvelle et impartiale d'Angleterre depuis l'invasion de Jules César jusqu'aux préliminaires de la paix de 1763', (traduit de l'anglais de John Barrow), Paris, 1771-1773. The translation goes no farther than 1689.

itude of Voltaire: "Cromwell fut d'abord libertin. L'esprit de religion le prit et il devint prophète"¹, or this item which follows a reference to the Quakers and strongly recalls Voltaire's account of George Fox:² "Jacques Naylor se mit dans la tête qu'il était le sauveur du monde. Il fit son entrée à Bristol avec ses disciples qui s'écriaient Hosana! Il fut pris, arrêté, enfermé à ~~Bridewell~~ Bridewell, réduit au pain et à l'eau; ses illusions se dissipèrent."³

Napoleon's notes abound in echos of Voltaire, Rousseau, and of the abbé Raynal, while his original writings, in particular the 'Discours de Lyon' of 1791, show quite clearly that the major formative influence on both his thought and his style at this time was the writings of the philosophes. During his periods at Valence and Auxonne Napoleon became an ardent disciple of the philosophe who was most akin to him in many ways, Jean-Jacques Rousseau.⁴ There were strong links between Rousseau and Corsica: had he not been asked by Matteo Buttafuoco in 1764 to prepare a draft constitution for that country, a task which was rendered futile by the French occupation of the island in 1768? Indeed he had even considered going to live in the island⁵. All this had come

1. 'Manuscripts inédits', p.213.

2. 'Lettres philosophiques', 3e Lettre - 'Sur les Quakers'

3. 'Manuscripts inédits', p.214.

5. See VAUGHAN, 'The Political Writings of J-J. Rousseau', Cambridge, 1915, vol.2, p.293 et seq. and also ROUSSEAU, 'Confessions' 2e. Partie, livre XII (1765).

4. The attitude of Napoleon to Rousseau's works and ideas is the subject of a former study ~~study~~ by the present writer, 'Rousseau et Napoléon', presented as an M.A. thesis in the University of Birmingham (1949).

about, according to Rousseau in his 'Confessions', as a result of his few lines about Corsica in the 'Contrat social':

"Il est encore en Europe un pays capable de législation: c'est la Corse. La valeur et la constance avec laquelle ce brave peuple a su recouvrer et défendre sa liberté mériterait bien ~~quelque~~ que quelque homme sage lui apprît à la conserver. J'ai quelque pressentiment qu'un jour cette petite île étonnera l'Europe."¹

Although the text of Rousseau's 'Projet de Constitution' could not have been known to Napoleon, in spite of his claim to have known the terms of it from Raynal², there is no doubt that he must have been drawn to Rousseau by his feeling for Corsica and later intoxicated by the style and the apparent clarity of the 'Contrat social'. Signs of the influence of this work are very apparent in Napoleon's own writings prior to 1793, and its phrases are echoed for a considerably longer period, even in the proclamations of the victor of the Italian and Egyptian campaigns. This influence is most marked in the earlier years of Napoleon's study, in 1786 for example, when he wrote the 'Réfutation de Roustan', defending Jean-Jacques against the Swiss pastor's attacks, and in

1. "Du Contrat social", Livre II, ch.X.

2. LUCIEN BONAPARTE, 'Mémoires', Vol.2, pp.139-140. In a conversation between Napoleon and Lucien Napoleon claimed that Raynal had described the projected Constitution for Corsica as "un samigondis où la plupart des principes dits libéraux étaient sacrifiés." It appears improbable that anyone apart from Rousseau, Buttafuoco, and perhaps Paoli knew anything of the text of this draft. See VAUGHAN, Op. cit. vol.2, p.293 et seq.

1788 when Napoleon himself drew up a draft constitution for the Calotte¹ of the regiment of La Fère. This draft constitution for a subalterns' association approaches its subject with all the gravity of Rousseau's own approach to problems of larger human society and, beginning with an harangue on the aims and purposes of law, it takes the pacte primitif as its starting point. The whole plan of the piece is clearly modelled on that of the 'Contrat social', as its paragraph headings testify, and the similarity is further strengthened by the great emphasis throughout on equality between the members as the basis of the society.

This short but typical ^{piece} of 1788 probably marked the end of the period in which Rousseau alone was Napoleon's guiding star. It was followed by a long spell of concentrated study, chiefly of history, and during which apparently the young officer first ^{encountered} the vast rambling 'Histoire des deux Indes' of Raynal. If Rousseau's 'Contrat social' was no longer the favourite reading of Napoleon he was still in the grip of Rousseau's phraseology and his own style still a pastiche of the master's. However, when, in 1791, he set out to write the 'Discours de Lyon' he began by reading once more the

1. 'Manuscripts inédits', p.35. The editor MASSON gives the following description of the purpose of the Calotte:
 "Dans l'ancienne armée.... le conseil de la Calotte était une société formée par les officiers de chaque régiment au-dessous du grade de capitaine pour se défendre contre l'arbitre des chefs, réprimer certains écarts de conduite et se maintenir dans les traditions de l'honneur militaire."

'Discours sur les causes de l'Inégalité' and the result of his reading was not a defence of Rousseau but a clear disagreement with him on a number of cardinal points. In a short note¹ he emphatically rejected almost all of Rousseau's ideas about man in a state of nature and he followed this rejection by an account of his own ideas on the subject, ideas which are much more conventional, presuming that man had always been a social being; society had, he said, begun with the first men.

These reflexions on the state of nature are the basis of the 'Discours de Lyon' and the beginning also of Napoleon's change of viewpoint. It is perhaps significant that the notes end thus:² "...s'il serait vrai de dire qu'en l'homme, le sentiment et la raison ne sont pas inhérents à l'homme³, mais seulement des fruits de la société, il n'y aurait alors point de sentiment et de raison naturelle; point de devoir pour la vertu; point de bonheur pour la vertu. Ce ne sera pas le citoyen de Genève qui nous dira ceci." From his choice of words in the last sentence it would appear that he

1. 'Manuscrits inédits', p.531, (No.1).

2. Ibid. p.533.

3. This repetition is typical of Napoleon's style at all times when writing or speaking more or less spontaneously. In some respects he never seems to have fully mastered the French language, in spite of the periodic attempts to prove that he was a great writer of prose, which may be true in a rather restricted sense. This question of the repetitiveness of his style is discussed by N. TOMICHE, Op. cit., p.203, where it is defended as a characteristic of the spoken word, which, was, according to Mme TOMICHE, always the basis of Napoleon's writings.

had been studying ~~the~~ quarrel between Voltaire and Rousseau, and was even beginning to desert the latter for the former.

The 'Discours de Lyon' itself¹, a work which at first appears merely to be a pastiche of Rousseau, does in fact contain a germ of original thought although it is deeply buried in a mass of ill-digested ideas and information borrowed from all his recent reading, and in particular from Raynal who receives his own little eulogy in the opening paragraphs. The development of the ideas is quite logical; the author ~~quite~~ rightly begins to answer the question set by the Academy by defining the word 'bonheur'. It is, he says, of two kinds, physical, depending on the satisfaction of all the animal needs, and intellectual, which is by the far the more important: "Sentir et raisonner, voilà proprement le fait de l'homme." Having established what he means by 'happiness' Napoleon develops the question of physical happiness which seems to consist in achieving contentment with what we have and accepting our lot². He goes on to deal with moral questions - the 'happiness of the intellect' - becoming much less easy to follow in the process.

If he really means what he says, and at this time he probably still does, the feelings (le sentiment) are at the

1. 'Manuscrits inédits', p.538 et seq.

2. In spite of the remarks we have just made about Napoleon's growing interest in Voltaire any attempt to see these ideas as an unsophisticated interpretation of the celebrated "Il faut cultiver notre jardin" is to be discouraged since there is no sign that Napoleon ever either read or was interested in 'Candide'.

base of all happiness and are also the cement of society: "C'est le lien de la vie, de la société, de l'amour, de l'amitié. C'est ce qui unit le fils à la mère, le citoyen à la patrie."¹ Through the feelings one arrives at happiness, unless these feelings are corrupted by the passions and the worst of these, incredibly enough, is ambition. However, le sentiment is not sufficient alone. To be completely happy one must know how to use the power of reason: "Dans les sciences morales², une vérité de sentiment, développée par une logique naturelle, donne la raison pour résultat, ou une série de vérités qui perfectionnent la société, la législation, qui prescrivent des règles de conduite: c'est ainsi que sont nés les 'Dialogues de Platon'³; le 'Contrat social', le 'Livre de l'Entendement'."⁴ Reason is to be the guide of the feelings and therefore must be strictly trained. The only means of doing this successfully being by the discipline of mathematics; in particular, said Napoleon, that class which is destined to govern its fellows must undergo an especially rigid training in logic and mathematics.

1. 'Manuscrits inédits', p.549.

2. Ibid.p.562.

3. Napoleon had recently been reading Plato and making notes from the 'Republic'.(Ibid.p.89).

4. Presumably John LOCKE'S 'Essay on Human Understanding'. Although there is no evidence to suggest that Napoleon ever read the book itself he frequently referred to Locke by name. He may well have read something of ~~de~~ Voltaire's account of Locke's ideas in the 'Lettres philosophiques'. It is suggested by N.TOMICHE (Op.cit.,p.112) that he may have read the summary of the 'Essay' given by Condillac in his 'Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines'.

From this brief outline of napoleon's main arguments it seems fairly clear that although he disagrees with one of Rousseau's main assumptions about the state of nature, the majority of his speculative ideas still bear a very strong impression of the kind of reasoning particular to the philosopher of the feelings. CHUQUET¹ has once more listed a number of examples of similarities in detail between both the thought and the style of the 'Discours' and those of Rousseau.

There is however something fresh in the 'Discours' , a sign of a new napoleon, probably the result of much reading of history, of much exercise in mathematics, and of a certain amount of experience in practical affairs. There are signs of an increasing interest in the concrete, the mathematical; the Napoleon of the Codes and of the balanced budgets is beginning to appear, Napoleon the administrator, to whom metaphysicians, philosophes and 'ideologues' were anathema.

Another important aspect of the 'Discours' is the part played in it by ideas culled from the vast work of RAYNAL. Although few of the major ideas could be attributed to this source there are many places in which Napoleon echoes the words of the abbé, whom he regarded at this time as his literary protector, having already been in communication with him about the 'Lettres sur la Corse'.

Traces of Napoleon's reading of Raynal are present to some extent in much of his early writing although he only

1. Op.cit., vol.2, p.219.

saw fit to take notes from the first volume of the 'Histoire des deux Indes' and ~~dealt~~^{they} dealt only with historical fact and afterwards with the customs of India and the East Indies. Here ~~Here~~ again Chuquet¹ has collected enough parallels between the writings of Napoleon and those of Raynal to make it quite clear that they shared many points of view, especially on religious matters. Raynal, in spite of his nominal connection with the Church, was certainly ~~not~~ outspoken in his attacks on the priesthoods of all nations and Napoleon follows him in many particulars, attacking monasticism, the papacy, ecclesiastical celibacy and theological obscurantism.² Caution must be observed however in attributing too much influence to Raynal; little of his thought was original and almost all of it is contained in the works of Voltaire, of Rousseau, and of the Encyclopaedists³. There are a hundred possible sources, well-known at the time, from which young Napoleon could have obtained the ideas CHUQUET attributes to Raynal, but it is probable that the 'Histoire philosophique des deux Indes', which is almost a bazaar of 'philosophical' ideas, acted as a suitable collecting point from whence Napoleon gathered them up.

Napoleon's enthusiasm for this slightly threadbare representative of the philosophical sect was not due to any marked lack of judgement on his part but merely reflects the opinion of the times. There were other considerations in

1. and 2. Op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 22, 28-30, 43, 46, 219-220.

3. See above, p. 76, note 1.

the case of Napoleon which led him to the works of the abbé, one of these being his sympathy for the Corsicans in their struggle for independence. Further, Raynal had acquired a certain air of martyrdom in the philosophical cause by his exile from France. However, quite apart from the new ideas contained in the 'Histoire philosophique' Napoleon may well have been drawn to it in the first place by its title since he was interested in history of all kinds and it was only from the historical section of the work that he made any appreciable amount of notes. It is not impossible that it was at about this time, after reading Raynal's book and the chapters in Rollin's 'Histoire ancienne' dealing with Egypt, Carthage, Assyria and Persia¹ that Napoleon first began to feel the attraction of the East and the interest in India which at one time led him to think of going to serve in the artillery of the Sultan of Turkey or of the Indian princes², and which also probably helped to inspire the Egyptian Campaign with its ultimate aim the conquest of India.

All who knew Napoleon at this point of his career regarded him as an enthusiastic supporter of the 'philosophes' as he himself admitted at St. Helena. He told an amusing story to illustrate this concerning his proposal, while on leave in Corsica, that for the good of agriculture his uncle the Archdeacon's goats should be extirpated. His uncle, quite

1. See 'Manuscrits inédits', pp. 93 and 123 et seq.

2. See CHUQUET, Op.cit., vol. 3, p. 27 (Quoting from the 'Mémoires' of Lucien Bonaparte).

furious at this suggestion, reproached Napoleon for being a novateur and accused the new 'philosophical ideas' of endangering the lives of his goats.¹ In addition to the somewhat biased view of the Archdeacon Lucien we have another indication of Napoleon's outlook in 1787 from his brother Joseph. He tells us² that when Napoleon returned to Corsica on leave in that year he was a passionate admirer of Rousseau, "ce que nous appelions être habitant du monde idéal"; he was also a connoisseur of the plays of Corneille, Racine and Voltaire, which the two brothers used to declaim together. He brought with him a large trunk containing the works of Plutarch, Plato, Cicero, Cornelius Nepos, Livy, Tacitus, Montaigne, Montesquieu and Raynal. Several of these books, especially Plutarch, and Cornelius Nepos he had known at school and had obviously retained a liking for them, while the others show the way in which his tastes were developing.

Although by no means conclusive the above list of books does seem to bear out the conclusion that although Napoleon was a disciple of the philosophes his knowledge of their works, apart from Rousseau and Raynal, was scant. From his notes we know that he had read Voltaire's 'Essai sur les mœurs'³ in 1791, and there are possible indications, as we

1. LAS CASES, Op.cit., vol.1, p.651.

2. 'Mémoires du Roi Joseph', vol.1, p.32.

3. 'Manuscrits inédits', p.514. According to the editors Napoleon must have used either the Geneva edition of 1756 or the Paris edition in 6 vols.(no date). This would account for certain gaps in the subject matter as summarised in Napoleon's notes since both of these editions, for fear of the censor, were less complete than the later ones.(p.514, footnote 2).

have already noted, that he may have read the 'Lettres philosophiques'. Of the major polemical works of Voltaire, as of the philosophical stories, there is no mention, an oblivion which they seem to share with the works of all the other Encyclopaedists and even with the 'Encyclopédie' itself.

This lack of mention of the 'Encyclopédie' is a very surprising fact since Napoleon must have heard of the work and it would have provided just the kind of tabulated/^{information} he so earnestly sought after at this age; the only possible/^{reason} seems to be that in view of the great cost of the work none of the libraries to which he had access can have contained it. CHUQUET once more, ever on the alert for possible influences, has suggested that a 'Parallel' between Christ and Apollonius of Tyana, which Lucien in his 'Mémoires'¹ attributes to Napoleon in his youth, at Ajaccio, may well have been inspired by a similar article by Diderot in the 'Encyclopédie'². This is possible although it cannot be verified as the manuscript of Napoleon is lost, but the much more likely source of the idea would seem to be found in Voltaire's 'Essai sur les Moeurs' where he clearly hints at the same parallel.³

We have seen from the list Joseph provides that Napoleon knew the works of Montesquieu quite early in his career, probably being attracted to this writer by the clarity of his exposition and the interest of his subject matter. Having

1. Vol. 2, p. 142.

2. Vol. 13 (art. 'Pythagorisme'). See also CHUQUET, vol. 2, p. 32.

3. See for example the 'Introduction' to the 'Essai', ch. XXXIII, 'Des Miracles'.

presumably studied the 'Esprit des Lois' at about the same time as he was reading Rousseau and Raynal it is surprising that Napoleon should have said so little about him either in his notes or in his letters. The only reference to Montesquieu at this period seems to be a passing mention of a minor point from the 'Esprit des Lois', merely by way of illustration, in a letter to Pozzo di Borgo about the troubled state of Ajaccio, presumably in 1790.¹ For the moment however, although Napoleon may have appreciated Montesquieu's clear but impassive political analysis, it was the more openly revolutionary and passionate Rousseau and Raynal who held Napoleon's attention as their mood more nearly resembled his own.

As a young man with a certain leaning towards the natural sciences, an attitude fostered both ^{by} his own pragmatic nature and by the spirit of the times, Napoleon studied the 'Études de la Nature' of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and some of Buffon's 'Histoire naturelle'. About the first of these works he remarks quite simply in his notebook that he had not had it in his hands long enough to make any notes from it, but he adds the significant comment "Sa théorie du flux et reflux m'a paru assez bizarre."² Throughout his career, as we shall see, Napoleon maintained that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was ignorant of mathematics and a poor scientist,

1. CHUQUET, vol. 2, p. 11. The text of the letter is given in full at the end of the volume in the 'Notes et Notices', No. XXI, pp. 310-311.

2. 'Manuscripts inédits', p. 280.

and it was always this theory of the tides which he evoked to prove it.¹ Napoleon quite obviously found Buffon much more impressive and took many notes from the 1st, 2nd and 4th volumes of the 'Histoire naturelle' (1744 edition). His chief interest seems to have been in the theories of the earth's formation, in geographical details such as the extent and depths of different seas, with a particular eye also to their tidal systems, and in other similar features of the earth's crust. The rest of the notes are from those parts of the 2nd and 4th volumes which deal with the processes of human reproduction, the sexual habits and peculiarities of different races, and finally, the table of vital statistics established by Dupré de Saint-Maur². As these notes were taken in 1789, when Napoleon was already 20 years old we can assume that his interest was scientific and not merely adolescent curiosity.

Just as at this stage Napoleon subscribed to the advanced views of the day on political and religious questions and shared the general interest in natural science, so also did ~~he~~ he share the enthusiasm for England which had grown up in France during the century. Napoleon's oracles, Rousseau

1. It is perhaps hardly necessary to state here that the tides are accounted for in the 'Études de la Nature' by the melting of the polar ice-caps during the daytime and their subsequent re-formation in the cold of the night.
2. 'Manuscripts inédits', pp. 280-316. The tables of Dupré are found in BUFFON ('Histoire naturelle', Paris 1744) in vol. 4. These tables were the result of researches into mortality in 12 Parisian and provincial parishes.

and Raynal, ~~to say nothing of Voltaire and Montesquieu,~~ ^{while Voltaire & Montesquieu} ~~praised~~ ^{Praised} various aspects of English life, in particular, the English constitution and the comparative liberty which existed under it. Rousseau had also given a most endearing picture of the English character. Many years later, at St. Helena, Napoleon, who was ^{by} then sadly disillusioned, declared that it was due to this portrayal of milord Bomston that the good impression of the English character had been formed in France prior to the Revolution¹. As far as Napoleon was concerned, however, his early enthusiasm for the English had other causes. There was a special bond of sympathy between the English and Corsica. Not only had Boswell stirred up English opinion in support of Paoli, but the great leader himself had found refuge in England in his time of need. Furthermore, as the English were frequently at war with France they must have appeared natural allies to the Corsicans seeking to throw off the French yoke. *styles taken*

So far we have only considered the philosophical and historical studies of Napoleon in his formative period, but he himself said that at this time he also took to reading novels and even tried to write some himself². Such an enthus-

1. LAS CASES, Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 665.

2. See Mme de REMUSAT, 'Mémoires', vol. 1, p. 267: "...je me suis mis à lire des romans, et cette lecture m'intéressa vivement. J'essayai d'en écrire quelques-uns, cette occupation mit du vague dans mon imagination, elle se mêla aux connaissances positives que j'avais acquises, et souvent je m'amusais à rêver, pour mesurer ensuite mes rêveries au compas de mon raisonnement."

iastic disciple of Rousseau must almost certainly have read 'la Nouvelle Héloïse' at an early age¹, indeed he claimed to have read it at the age of nine. Whether or not we accept this ~~this~~ somewhat improbable assertion it is still quite certain that many of Napoleon's early writings ~~are~~ show remarkable similarities to Rousseau's novel. One of Napoleon's attempts at a short story, entitled 'Nouvelle Corse'², which probably dates from 1789, tells the story of an Englishman sailing from Leghorn to Spain. His ship is forced to take shelter near a rocky isle off Corsica. The narrator goes ashore and is settling down in his tent for the night when he encounters, in a most dramatic fashion, an exiled Corsican and his daughter who at first take him to be French. His life is saved when he convinces them that he is English and the old Corsican then recounts the tale of his suffering at the hands of the French. There is a strange mixture of both incident and styles taken from Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, and even from 'Robinson Crusoe', to whose situation the stranded traveller compares his own, but it is the ~~spirit~~ spirit and style of Rousseau which are most in evidence and the characters speak throughout with the sentimental emphasis which sets the tone of conversation in

1. The question of Napoleon's knowledge of, and liking for 'la Nouvelle Héloïse' has been dealt with at length in my previous thesis 'Rousseau et Napoléon', ch. 5, p. 108 et seq.
2. 'Manuscrits inédits', p. 381 et seq. No. XXXV.

'la Nouvelle Héloïse'.

The second of Napoleon's works to reflect Rousseau's novel is the well-known 'Clisson et Eugénie'¹, a more ambitious tale, but which remained at the stage of an uncompleted sketch. The date of this work is still in dispute since the other (military) manuscripts with which it was found date from the years 1793-5, but MASSON in the Introduction to his 'Napoléon dans sa jeunesse'² places it at about the same time as the 'Nouvelle Corse' (circa 1788-9) because it is in a similar style. The present writer inclines to the opinion that it does in fact belong to a later date since there is a strong parallel between the story and Napoleon's own unhappy love affair with Désirée Clary in 1794-5³. Whatever the date of the piece however, the influence of Rousseau's novel is undeniable. It tells the story of a young man, born to the trade of arms, who suddenly falls in love and marries the woman of his choice. During his absence at the wars she falls in love with a young officer whom her husband, now a

1. Published by ASKENAZY, 'Manuscrits de Napoléon 1793-5, en Pologne', (Warsaw, 1929). Bilingual edition (French and Polish) It first appeared in France, in a less correct version, in 'l'Illustration' of 17 January, 1920.

2. p. III.

3. I have discussed this question at length in my 'Rousseau et Napoléon' ch. 5. It is even possible to suggest a still later date for the story since there are similarities even with the infidelities of Josephine during the Italian Campaign. In 1795 there was talk of marriage between Napoleon and Désirée Clary, daughter of a rich merchant of Marseilles. This was probably only prevented by the disgrace of Napoleon after Thermidor. Désirée later married Bernadotte, becoming in due course Queen of Sweden. N. TOMICHE, Op. cit., pp. 96-97, accepts, apparently without question, the date 1795 for 'Clisson'. In her stylistic analysis of the piece, although Rousseau is inevitably mentioned, the many obvious similarities with the 'Héloïse' are omitted.

general, has sent to her as a messenger. The hero, in despair, seeks and finds death in battle. Although the military setting is pure Napoleon and quite unlike Jean-Jacques, the same sentimental overtones are present in every line. The heroine, Eugénie, has many of the characteristics, both physical and intellectual, of Julie, while Clisson is almost a transformation of Saint-Preux into the man of action. The essential crisis of the plot is underlined by a storm just as the great struggle in the hearts of Rousseau's protagonists takes place during the storm on the lake; ~~and~~ similar likenesses can be found even in minor details of the two works.

Rousseau's 'Héloïse' was not the only sentimental novel known to the young Napoleon, although it was apparently the only one to have much influence upon his own literary efforts. He said, in later years, that at the age of 18 he had 'devoured' Richardson's 'Clarissa'¹, which statement, if correct, would indicate that he read it in 1788, either ~~in~~ in Corsica or at Auxonne on his return and by this time it is highly likely that he already knew 'la Nouvelle Héloïse' well. At some point early in his life Napoleon also read Goethe's 'Werther'² and it would not be at all surprising if it were at about the same time as he was enjoying both

1. See MONTHEOLON, Op.cit., vol.2, p.99 (16/3/17) and GOURGAUD, Op.cit., vol.2, p.37 (17/3/17) The slight discrepancy in dates has little importance as the diarists probably had to write from memory on occasion, after a lapse of some days.

2. See J. HOLLAND ROSE, 'The Personality of Napoleon', p.210. He repeats ~~the story of~~ Napoleon's claim to have read 'Werther' seven times.

'la Nouvelle Héloïse' and 'Clarissa'..

There are indications from Napoleon's writings that he read many other literary works of varying kinds and of even more varied value during these years.. He took note¹ of expressions new to him and of strange exotic words from the 'Alcibiade'² of Ranquill Lieutaud, from Marmontel's novel 'Les Incas'³, and from the 'Chaumière indienne' of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. He also noted many things which were new to him from Ariosto's 'Orlando Furioso', parts of which, together with some of the 28th chapter of 'Les Incas' had been rendered into French verse by a brother officer of Napoleon in La Fère artillerie, Captain Gassendi, another disciple of Rousseau and a friend of Napoleon.⁴

We have seen already how at school Napoleon received his initiation into the dramatic taste of the day. Already he was acquainted with the works of the major French writers of tragedy and we have heard how, in 1788, he and his brother Joseph recited together the plays of Corneille, Racine and

1. 'Manuscrits inédits', p.504 et seq.
2. An imitation of a novel by M.Meissner, in German. Lieutaud's book was published in Paris in 1789. MASSON states that Napoleon's notes are taken from the historical notices which follow each section of the book.
3. Jean-François MARMONTEL, (1723-1799). A follower of the philosophes and contributor to the 'Encyclopédie'. His literary works are filled with 'philosophical' ideas, this being especially true of his 'Contes moraux'. 'Les Incas' ('ou la destruction de l'empire du Pérou') was regarded as his chef d'oeuvre by most of his contemporaries.
4. CHUQUET, vol.2,p.209, footnote.

Voltaire. In view of this it would appear that the well-known liking of Napoleon for the masterpieces of the French Classical Theatre was not a taste which developed comparatively late in life, but something which began almost in his first years in France and remained with him always.

During Napoleon's youth there are, for obvious reasons, not so many references to actual performances of plays as we find in the later years, but there are sufficient indications of his constant interest in the dramatic art. Most of his references at this time are to tragedies but it is, strangely enough, from a play which, although ~~was~~ tragic in conception, was not a tragedy in the great French tradition that we get the first glimpse of Napoleon's emerging ideas on the role of the drama in society and that play was the 'Beverley' of Saurin.¹ Napoleon refers to this play, a drame bourgeois based on the English play 'The Gamester' by E. Moore, in his 'Discours de Lyon' where he sees it as a useful lesson in morality and thinks others like it might fulfil a social purpose provided that they are not too much concerned with love : "...le spectacle réitéré de l'amour ne peut être bon qu'à l'homme déréglé."² Here already is the first sign of one of Napoleon's constant criticisms of the

1. Joseph SAURIN, (1706-1781). Member of the Académie Française, author of several plays none of which has survived on the stage. 'Beverley' appeared in 1768. Its English prototype, 'The Gamester' was performed in London in 1753.
2. 'Manuscripts inédits', p. 557.

theatre, he wanted the love theme to be replaced by another, more in keeping with the spirit of the age, declaring later that tragedy should be regenerated by substituting political necessity for the fatality of the Greek tragedy, and agreeing with Voltaire that the ideal tragedy would be devoid of a love interest.

During Napoleon's stay of two months in Paris at the end of 1787 he frequented the theatre and especially the Italiens. We can gain some idea of the plays he probably saw then by his remarks in the 'Discours de Lyon' since, in that work, obviously aiming at creating an impression of broad culture, he brought in a mention of almost everything he had ever read or seen performed. Furthermore, from the way in which he quoted the plays he knew he appeared to regard them already, just as he was to do in later years, purely as lessons in conduct or morality, but at this stage his approach is still coloured by the emphatic sentimental attitude of a young disciple of Rousseau. Nowhere is there any sign of appreciation of the literary or formal beauty of the plays, indeed Napoleon was, according to ~~many~~ many of those who knew him, never capable of appreciating the music of the alexandrine, nor of ~~stuttering~~ declaiming it properly¹. In the theatre, as elsewhere he was looking for that which was useful.

1. See for example BOURRIENNE, 'Mémoires', vol. 2, p. 146: "Bona-
parte, insensible aux charmes de l'harmonie poétique, n'
avait pas même assez d'oreille pour sentir la mesure des
vers, et il n'en pouvait pas réciter un sans en altérer le
mètre."

From the passage in the 'Discours de Lyon' in which Napoleon shows off his knowledge of tragedy¹ it is clear that he was conversant already with Racine's 'Andromaque' and 'Phèdre', with Corneille's 'Cinna', and with 'Zaïre', 'Brutus' and 'Alzire' of Voltaire. It was for Corneille's 'Cinna' that he reserved his greatest praise, linking it in the same sentence with his greatest blame for 'Alzire'. At this stage it was still the nobility of the clemency of Augustus in 'Cinna' which held his delighted attention, not until considerably later, in 1803, did he claim to see this episode as a master-stroke of political tactics. Unlike 'Cinna', which, said Napoleon, could not be performed too often², Voltaire's 'Alzire' should not be performed at all. He described it as "un spectacle ~~si~~ bizarre" and his detailed criticism of it is so typical of his writings at this time that it worth quoting at length³: "Quel est donc cet homme étonnant qui a l'Amérique à venger? Environné de ses braves, il jure d'enfoncer le poignard de la fureur dans le sein des assassins d'Ataliba. Il n'est pas pour moi un simple mortel, il est le dieu de la justice, de la force, le génie tutélaire de cette belle et vaste contrée. Ma transpiration se ralentit, mon âme est en suspens, mon coeur vole vers lui; il n'a pas une perplexité que je ne partage. Lorsque je/^{le} crois prêt à frapper, je me prosterne devant le

1. 'Manuscrits inédits', pp. 557-558.

2. Idem.

3. Idem.

Créateur, Conservateur, Régulateur de la vie: je lui dis:
 'Ton peuple est le faible opprimé: daigne le secourir. Jadis ,
 ton ange extermin~~er~~^a cent quatre-vingt mille oppress^{eu}~~ers~~;
 aujourd'hui serais-tu moins juste? Sennachérib était-il ~~plus~~
 plus coupable ou les Israélites plus persécutés? Dieu des
 bons, fléau des méchants, âme du monde! Si les miracles sont
 indignes de ta puissance, celui-ci ne le serait pas de ta
 bonté.....' Ce moment de recueillement m'enlève un moment du
 spectacle. J'y reviens pour y voir, ~~oui~~^{oui}, pour y voir Zamore,
 aux pieds d'une femme, oublier la patrie, la vengeance, ses
 concitoyens¹; je me frappe la tête avec les mains et je sors
 hurlant contre l'auteur et le parterre."

What a wealth of 'influences' is obvious in this
 turgid paragraph; the Supreme Being of the philosophes, ~~himself~~
 who yet remains the God of Israel, is invoked, with a careful
 observation about miracles worthy of the deists, to avenge
 the oppressed peoples of America, all of this in an aside
 worthy of Saint-Preux, but mingled with traces of school
 rhetoric and bearing the stamp of the worst pages of Raynal.
 However, the passage ends with a dramatic assertion of the
 writer's personality, almost symbolic, in fact, of the next
 stage of his development. From the young man who has just dis-
 covered the tail end of the Age of Reason and ~~that~~ is at the
 same time in the grip of the new literature of the feelings

1. In later pages we shall see the very similar criticism
 made by Napoleon at St. Helena of Voltaire's 'Mahomet'.

we shall see the emergence of the self-possessed young general who would, by a complete self-subordination to the logic of reality, attain supreme power in less than a decade.

During his time/^{as} a junior officer Napoleon had retained his interest in the tragic theatre and developed it by seeing the plays in performance and he had also made the acquaintance of certain aspects of the contemporary novel. Of poetry he seems to have read little, with the exception of Ariosto, but this is not surprising in an essentially unpoetic age. His passionate enthusiasm for Corsican independence ~~and~~^{had} led him to Rousseau and ^{to} certain of the philosophes and his knowledge of their works had almost certainly helped to encourage his enthusiasm for the Revolution and helped the growth of his jacobinism. However, although Napoleon was a true son of the Enlightenment in some ways, sharing its views on religion and, at first, the republicanism of the 'latter-day' philosophes, he did not develop their broad love of humanity; once he had lost the generous flush of his early patriotism, in the turmoil of the Revolution, he rapidly/^{developed} a cynical attitude towards mankind and an almost contemptuous view of human nature. Already, during this period, Napoleon's mind was beginning to work in the manner which was later to become so characteristic; although apparently studying avidly the ideas of the philosophes he was not seeking any absolute values or principles in their works but only looking for that which would be directly useful to him for the furtherance of what-

ever cause might, at a given moment, be uppermost in his mind.

III.

GENERAL BONAPARTE.

The life of Napoleon as a junior officer had been one of mingled periods of bookish study and of hot-headed youthful action in Corsica, in the troubled years of semi-anarchy in the island from 1790 to 1793. After establishing his competence at the siege of Toulon he found himself, at twenty-four, a general of artillery, attached to the Army of Italy. A general of this age was not unusual at the time, many of the men who later became marshals of the Empire, Davout, Augereau¹, Masséna², Jourdan, Lefebvre, Macdonald, Pérignon, Sérurier and Victor³ were all generals before Napoleon, some of them when even younger, while Hoche and Moreau³ were already commanders in chief of armies, one at the age of twenty-five, the other at twenty-four. Napoleon, however, was born with a gift for intrigue and an insight into human nature and situations which they lacked. After several years of difficulty, during which he was more than once in disgrace, he was able to win the favour of the Director Barras, save the régime on the night of XIII vendémiaire of the year IV (Oct 8th. 1795), and finally win for himself the command of the Army of Italy, in March 1796. From this point on he was not to look back.

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1. Augereau and Masséna were still non-commissioned officers when Napoleon was already an officer of several years service.
 2. Victor had been gunner in La Fère artillerie while Napoleon was an officer in that regiment.
 3. Both Hoche and Moreau were private soldiers in 1789.

During the years between the siege of Toulon and his gaining the command of the Army of Italy little is known of Napoleon's reading or of his literary interests if he had any. It is possible that ^{he} may have written 'Clisson et Eugénie' in late 1795, but as there is no proof of this it cannot honestly be used to illustrate any aspect of his views in that year. Throughout this period, however, traces can be ^{found} still in his letters of the style, and sometimes of the sentiments of Rousseau¹ but these grow less as more active occupations begin to fill his waking hours with practical problems.

The state of mind of the young general in 1793 and 1794 is perhaps best summed up by another Corsican, MARCAGGI, who compares him to the Corsicans of old, of the heroic days of Corsica: "...comme eux il ne concevait ~~pas~~ que l'idéal militaire et les réalités de la politique; comme eux... il avait l'orgueil de soi, l'impatience de toute autorité, l'énergie indomptable, l'ambition immodérée, l'esprit vif et l'âme ardente."² Already in 1793, with the 'Souper de Beaucaire' the political opportunist and the disciple of force had begun to show himself in Napoleon and it was this aspect of his personality which became dominant between 1793 and 1799 when he took up the office of Consul.

1. Traces of the style of Rousseau, even perhaps of Ossian and other heralds of Romanticism can be clearly seen in his letters to Josephine during the Italian Campaign.
2. MARCAGGI, 'La Genèse de Napoléon', Paris, 1902, p.439 et seq.

Some measure of Napoleon's mental development from the days of his enthusiastic youthful adventures in the Corsica of the early Revolution to the able and calculating opportunism of his attitude on the return from Egypt can be gained from a brief study of his political ideas and methods at this epoch. By the time he wrote the 'Souper de Beaucaire' in 1793 the former enthusiastic supporter of the cause of Corsican nationalism had become the French officer who supported the Convention. Having always been a jacobin because at first he saw in jacobinism the greatest hope for Corsican liberty, and also because he was a follower of Rousseau and Raynal, he now supported the Convention, but apparently for different reasons. According to the 'Souper de Beaucaire' his enthusiasm for the Convention was due to more simple, almost military reasons; it had the support of the majority and a preponderance of force. He became a friend of the younger Robespierre¹ and with the downfall of the Robespierres in 1794 Napoleon's star appeared to wane. After Thermidor he spent a fortnight in prison as a suspect but he was, typically, not so deeply engaged in the policies of Robespierre as to be unable to extricate himself. After a period of more or less desultory campaigning with the immobile Army of Italy, as a general of artillery, during which he kept clear of politics, Napoleon was again in Paris in May 1795. He had been transferred to the army in the Vendée, a situation

1. Augustin ROBESPIERRE, (1763-1794). Younger brother of Maximilien, was deputy for Paris in the Convention. As a representative on mission in the Midi he met Napoleon. He was executed with his brother after Thermidor.

for which he had little taste and his protests against it led to his reduction to the rank of colonel and a period of inactivity in Paris, awaiting fresh employment.. Baron FAIN tells us¹ that during this time Napoleon began to move in circles where extreme republicanism and jacobinism were unpopular and, not wishing to be accused of bad taste, he learned^e to dissemble his real feelings. From this point Napoleon^{oleon} certainly did keep his political views hidden and never again did he openly espouse any political party or faction, but hung back until the decisive ~~the~~ moment, before giving his support to the cause which best suited his own interests.

In the field of literature Napoleon's ideas, in their outward expression at any rate, underwent a similar change. For the most part the earlier enthusiasms were now replaced by a more restrained appreciation while politically controversial authors, although they might receive lip-service on occasion, were quietly relegated to the background. Above all, in this period, Napoleon was increasingly seeking, particularly as the Egyptian Campaign approached, to use both literature and literary men for purposes which are not the principal ends of literature.

Napoleon's stay in Paris from May 1795 to March 1796 was the decisive point of his early career. At first, from May to October 1795, he was frequently in a state of desperation, without hope for the future and several times on the

1. Op.cit., p.312.

verge of suicide, his only solace being reading at the Bibliothèque Nationale, where he spent most of his days¹. Unfortunately we know nothing of what he read in these months. If he made any notes from his reading their are lost, while his correspondence gives no inkling of the books over which he spent his time. His evenings, in so far as his purse allowed, were spent at the theatre, especially when the plays of Corneille or Racine were on the bill². Later, when he had begun to re-establish his fortunes, in the winter of 1795, he must have had less time for literary pursuits and appears to have given himself up almost entirely to the performance of his military duties.

Throughout the victorious campaign which followed Napoleon's appointment to the Army of Italy there is little ~~if~~ any literary activity. It is true that his proclamations and letters still bore the trace of Rousseau's language, and some of his ideas also, but these had become universal currency during the Revolution and probably had no connection with Napoleon's real feelings. One of his letters at this time in which he talks of Montesquieu's 'Esprit des Lois' which shows the kind of subject with/ he was now occupied, the making of constitutions for Italian states, for which task he may have used Montesquieu as a guide³, since his only previous experience had been his youthful attempt at a constit-

1. }- MOURAVIT, Op.cit., pp. 28-29.

2. }- MOURAVIT, Op.cit., pp. 28-29.

3. This letter appears in 'Corresp.' vol. III, p. 417 and was sent/Passeriano, 5e jour complémentaire, an V (19/9/1797).
from

ution for the Calotte of the regiment of La Fère.

Even though Napoleon was too ~~was~~ busy to give much attention to literature during the Italian Campaign at least one literary man was sufficiently impressed already by Napoleon's successes to submit for his approval his latest play. Shortly after the battle of Rivoli¹ the poet ARNAULT sent to Napoleon a copy of his tragedy 'Oscar'. Napoleon's reactions to 'Oscar' have not apparently been recorded but he was very favourably impressed by Arnault himself when he met him soon afterwards in Milan, where he had been brought by General Leclerc, to witness his marriage to Pauline Bonaparte. According to Arnault's own account² Napoleon's interest in him was not ~~main~~ at first due to his literary abilities but to the fact that the general believed him to have the makings of a diplomat. The friendship prospered and during the time of preparations for the Egyptian Campaign and also ^{during} the outward journey to the East Arnault enjoyed a certain measure of Napoleon's confidence and claims to have been his literary adviser "soit que mon caractère et mon esprit eussent pour lui quelque attrait, soit qu'il entrât dans ses vues d'avoir à sa disposition un représentantⁿ de la littérature de l'époque, un homme par l'intermédiaire duquel il pût connaître l'opinion des gens de lettres et agir sur cette opinion..."³

1. Rivoli was fought on Jan. 14th, 1797.

2. Napoleon appears to have thought at first that writers might be suitably employed in diplomatic posts, c.f. his employment of Chateaubriand in Rome in 1803-4.

3. ARNAULT, 'Souvenirs d'un Sexagénaire', vol. IV, p. 5.

As a result of this friendship ARNAULT is the chief source, and fortunately a very fruitful one, of our knowledge of Napoleon's literary activities in the months just before the Egyptian Campaign.

From other sources¹ we learn that, on his return from Italy, Napoleon quickly returned to his studious habits although now the volatile Josephine must often have rendered concentration difficult as her fidelity was already more than suspect to ~~Napoleon~~ her husband. However, he collected together a number of serious works including Condillac's 'Cours d'Études',² Bacon's 'Essays', and Mme de Staël's 'De l'Influence des passions'. This was also the time when he was beginning to organise literary discussions at his house in ^{de} rue Chantereine, presumably to attract well-known figures in literature and the arts who might be persuaded to accompany the expedition to Egypt. It was during these literary meetings that certain of Napoleon's more lasting, mature ideas about literature seem to have been heard for the first time in public. His interest in the subject had by now become firmly pragmatic and ARNAULT recalls³ that everything, to Napoleon, was related to the interest which was dominant

1. SAYVE, Op.cit., p.8.

2. The Abbé CONDILLAC (1714-1780), was tutor to the Prince of Parma. His works include the 'Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines', (1746), 'Traité des sensations', (1754), and the 'Cours d'Études du prince de Parme' (1769-1773) (13 vols.).

3. Op.cit., vol.IV, p.8.

in his mind; politics. He was incapable of considering literature divorced from reality, or to see the work of an author in relation to the author's aims but only in relation to his own. "Les productions des arts, comme les découvertes des sciences, ne lui plaisaient entièrement qu'autant qu'elles étaient d'application utile à ses besoins présents."¹

ARNAULT was certainly in a position to appreciate the force of Napoleon's literary criticisms since he first read his own tragedy 'les Vénitiens' at one of the gatherings at the rue Chantereine. The subject was well calculated to interest Napoleon who had but recently overthrown the government of Venice; he praised the piece for its local colour, but considered that the Senate of Venice was not represented as sufficiently odious. ARNAULT objected that he had shown all the rigour of Venetian institutions and laws, but Napoleon was not satisfied. This rigour, he said, had been justified by ARNAULT because it was in defence of liberty, a reason which might therefore excuse all kinds of things and make the French appear in the wrong when they had used those very in-

1. Although the present writer has not studied in detail Napoleon's attitude to science it would appear that here also, as ARNAULT says, he had little interest in the more abstract idea of pure research. Above all he liked quick results ~~and discoveries capable of immediate application~~ and discoveries capable of immediate application. Rarely did he see the long-term possibilities of scientific discoveries. This is perhaps best illustrated by his attitude to Fulton's steamboat and submarine: although providing quite a large sum of money for the ~~the~~ initial development of these he rapidly lost interest when they were not immediately successful.

stitutions as their reason for overthrowing the senate.¹ All Napoleon's criticisms of 'les Vénitiens' were not concerned with politics however. ARNAULT says² that, instead of his original tragic ending to the play, by which both the hero, Montcassin, and the Heroine, Blanche, died at the hands of the executioner, he had substituted a happy ending "à la prière de nos dames", in which they were both saved. When Napoleon heard the play read he wept at one point, but on arriving at the happy ending he said: "Je regrette mes larmes. Ma douleur n'est qu'une émotion passagère, dont j'ai presque perdu le souvenir à l'aspect du bonheur des deux amants. Si leur malheur eût été irréparable, la profonde émotion qu'il eût excitée m'aurait poursuivi jusque dans mon lit. Il faut que le héros meure." SAINT-BEUVE repeats this story,³ quoting ARNAULT, and remarks that it was this 'Aristotelian advice from the mouth of Alexander' which, when followed by the poet, raised the play from the plane of melodrama to that of tragedy.⁴ As far as Napoleon's tastes are concerned this episode would seem to indicate that he had already adopted the view that each dramatic genre should be pure and produce one definite ~~sort~~ type of effect. This idea it was which led to his dislike for the drame or genre mixte, as he told

1. ARNAULT, Op.cit., vol.IV, pp.9-10.

2. Ibid, p.11.

3. 'Causeries du Lundi', vol.7, p.505. (Paris, éd. Garnier frères, 3rd edition, n.d.).

4. 'Les Vénitiens' was performed with success on Oct.16, 1797.

both Goethe and Wieland when he met them in 1807.¹

It was not only in the theatre that Napoleon's taste was reaching maturity. His attitude towards poetry, according to ARNAULT, was already fixed in the mould and was to change little during the rest of his life. Lyricism, although by no means an outstanding feature of the poetry Napoleon read, remained outside his grasp since it was not amenable to his methods of analysis. Once, when he and Arnault were reading ~~Arnault's~~ Jacques Delille's poem 'Les Jardins', each line was hotly discussed and Arnault's point of view by no means always carried the day. They came at last to the lines which the poet addressed to his muse:²

"N'empruntons pas ici d'ornement étranger;

Viens, de mes propres fleurs mon front va
s'ombrager;

Et, comme un rayon pur colore un beau nuage,

Des couleurs du sujet je tiendrai mon langage."

Up to that time the unfortunate Arnault thought he had understood this passage, but after hearing Napoleon's analysis of it he doubted whether he would ever comprehend it again. It is to be regretted that he does not give us all the detail of Napoleon's remarks but his ^{own} final remark is revealing: "Le fait est j'en avais moins compris que deviné le sens."³

Napoleon would almost certainly have been incapable of appreciating such a point of view since his mind was always in

1. TALLEYRAND, 'Mémoires', vol. 1, pp. 426 and 436.

2. 'Les Jardins', Chant 1, ll. 25 et seq.

3. ARNAULT, Op.cit., vol. IV, p. 100.

search of the concrete image, always wishing to interpret any statement by appeal to the forms of objective reality ~~or~~ or the unsubtle standards of common sense.

In spite of these discussions on aesthetics, the real purpose of these literary meetings was, as ARNAULT has stressed, utilitarian. Napoleon was seeking the services of men of letters not only for ^{the} Institute of Egypt which he intended to organise, but also to celebrate in verse the doings of the expeditionary force and in so doing, obviously, to immortalise its chief. At first there was a naive mediaeval air about the whole concept, although it was in reality not far removed from what was expected from Racine as historiographe du Roi, nor from Voltaire's idea of his own functions as a court poet when he produced his poem on the battle of Fontenoy. This idea of the role of the poet and singer of hauts faits may have been connected, in Napoleon's mind with the seemingly new cult of Ossian, whom he had hardly mentioned before this time. Perhaps ~~also~~ also the sentimental, romantic side of Napoleon's nature, which was normally kept well in check, was now being allowed a little play, ~~freed~~ fired as he was by the thought of an expedition into such a mysterious and little-known area, and fraught with dimly seen possibilities. This ossianic attitude is revealed by Napoleon's comments when the singer Lays refused to join the expedition: "Quant à Lays, je suis fâché qu'il ne veuille pas nous suivre, c'eût été notre Ossian; il nous en faut un, il nous faut un barde, qui dans le besoin chante à la tête des colonnes."¹

1. Ibid. vol. IV, p. 35.

Although he seems to have unwittingly confused the role of Ossian with that of a Taillefer, the story nevertheless shows the grandiose, ~~in~~ almost epic manner in which he regarded all that was connected with the coming campaign.

On the outward voyage to Egypt Arnault, as we have said, exercised the function of librarian on the Orient and also spent much time in literary discussion with Napoleon. He turned the general's attention to Homer and together they read some of the 'Odyssey'. Although in later years Napoleon came to appreciate Homer for the precision of his detail when describing warlike operations, at this stage he was merely amused by his oddities and hypercritical of such matters as the conduct of Penelope's suitors, which he contrasted ~~in~~ with that to be expected of his own troops: "Si nos cuisiniers se conduisaient comme eux en campagne je les ferais fusiller. Voilà de singuliers rois." ARNAULT's efforts to explain the difference in customs and conduct between the two ages met with fresh mockery and Napoleon ended by flatly declaring his preference of Ossian to Homer.¹

During this voyage Napoleon kept the poems of Ossian by his bedside, his favourite among them being 'Temora', which he often read aloud to Arnault. His remarks on this poem can only ~~be~~ have been dictated by the charm of a fresh enthusiasm: "Ces pensées, ces sentiments, ces images, disait-il, sont bien autrement nobles que les rabâchages de votre 'Odyssée'. Voilà du grand, du sentimental et du sublime."

1. Ibid., vol. IV, pp. 83-84.

Ossian est un poète; Homère n'est qu'un radoteur."¹ All Arnault's attempts to convince him to the contrary failed.

Ossian was not the only fresh enthusiasm displayed by Napoleon on board the Orient since he seems also to have revealed his liking for Goethe's 'Werther' for the first time although he probably had read it much earlier². It is indeed not altogether surprising that when he was engaged on the most imaginative and romantic of his campaigns Napoleon should have returned to his liking for the works which appealed to the imagination and the emotions rather than to the intellect.

This romantic enthusiasm did not continue at the same intensity after Napoleon had sated his curiosity for the mysterious East. His disenchantment as far as 'natural man' (whom he mistakenly identified with the desert Arab)^{was concerned} is well-known in the form in which he expressed it to ROEDERER³,

1. Ibid., vol. IV, p. 84. ARNAULT also ~~mentions~~ gives an account of how badly Napoleon read Ossian:- "...la langue lui tournait souvent. Remplaçant tantôt un T par un S, et tantôt un S par un T, il faisait quelquefois des liaisons qu'on pourrait appeler 'dangereuses', estropiant les mots, ou mettant un mot pour un autre, effet de sa précipitation, qui prêtait un caractère moins épique que burlesque à son enthousiasme.....".
2. Ibid., vol. IV, p. 121. BUFFENOIR, 'Hommes et demeures célèbres de Marc Aurel à Napoléon', (Paris, n.d.), p. 343, says that Napoleon read Ossian during his garrison days at Auxonne. We have found no evidence to support this but it would appear, from the 'Mémoires' of Mme de Chastenay (vol. 1, p. 284) quoted by P. van Tieghem ('Ossian en France', vol. II, p. 4), that Napoleon discussed the poems of Ossian with her in May 1795, during a long conversation which they had together on literary matters.
3. ROEDERER, 'Journal', p. 165- "L'homme sauvage est un chien".

four years later. Less well known is his remark, in a letter to his brother Joseph, which was intercepted by the British fleet: "Oh, Jean-Jacques, que ne peut-il voir ces hommes, qu'il appelle 'les hommes de la nature!' Il frémirait de honte et de surprise d'avoir pu les admirer."¹

Even though we may conclude that by this time Napoleon's literary tastes and ^{ideas} ~~ideas~~ were more or less fixed we must avoid the too tempting path of drawing hasty conclusions from what has been said so far. It is easy to presume that, although somewhat tempered by his disillusionment with the theories of Rousseau, especially after his experience of the East, Napoleon's real liking was for imaginative, emotive literature, for Ossian, for 'Werther' and 'la Nouvelle Héloïse', which ^{le} ~~he~~ he cultivated an 'official' taste for the classical theatre, a taste moulded by the precepts of Boileau's 'Art Poétique', and dictated solely by political motives. Something approaching this point of view is put forward by SAINT-~~BEUVE~~ ², who was probably interested in claiming Napoleon as a 'romantic', but the truth may well lie between these extremes.

Ossian, 'Werther', and 'la Nouvelle Héloïse', these were almost certainly the preferences of the Corsican elements

1. 'Copies of letters from Egypt intercepted by the fleet', (London, n.d.), pp. 3-4, No. 1.

2. 'Causeries du Lundi', vol. 7, pp. 504-505. (Article on ARNAULT).

which always remained in his character, the imaginative sensitiveness and warm blooded approach to life born of the island's struggle for independence. These it was which formed the passionate, eager Napoleon of the earlier years who lived on under the no less real exterior of the Consul and Emperor. The harder, calculating and political side of his nature was not a facade but ~~but~~ a definite part of his complicated character, the result of his Italian¹ ancestry and his French education and hardened by his experience of the Revolution. This was the Napoleon who would have made Corneille a prince and who wished to see tragedy purged of the weaker human emotions and built around the logic of political necessity.

As with so much in human affairs, Napoleon's literary tastes cannot be expressed in clear cut terms of black or white, he was neither a romantic as ~~SAINT-LEBEUVE~~ or LAURE JUNOT¹ would have us believe, nor was his mind set uncompromisingly in the 'classical' mould; he had a liking for works which it pleases us to consider as belonging to either ~~the~~ category, according to which part of his nature they moved. Above all we must not try to fit Napoleon into categories of this sort which may perhaps be applicable to literature and even to authors, but certainly ^{not} to readers.

1. LAURE JUNOT (Duchesse d'Abrantès) 'Mémoires', vol. VII, p. 68.

Section III.

CONSUL, EMPEROR, and EXILE.

1.

The Elements of Napoleon's Literary Ideas.

Between Napoleon's return from Egypt and the coup d'état of 18 brumaire there is but a very short interval of time¹ during which his literary views cannot have undergone any important changes. These views were already very little different from those he was to express during the following years of the Consulate, while the opinions of the Emperor and later, of the exile, were for the most part only developments or repetitions of those of the First Consul. If we may consider the taste of Napoleon to be already formed by the time of his return from Egypt, then we have arrived at a point where we may discuss it as a relatively fixed characteristic of the man.

We have already seen, in previous pages, that even at a comparatively early age Napoleon's standards of judgment and criticism were not those of the aesthete nor of the literary critic, they were based rather on the values of the politician and the man of affairs. Some of the earliest critical notes in his cahiers concern the scientific value of the

1. He disembarked at Fréjus on Oct. 9th, 1799, precisely one month before the coup d'état on Nov. 9th.

theories of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, thus setting the tone of many of his later remarks, not only about scientific works but also about plays, novels, and poems, which must all, with rare exceptions, be true to Napoleon's idea of objective reality. This rule, however, might on occasion be waived if the reason were political necessity, which was always for Napoleon the highest good. However firmly we may establish the personal tastes of Napoleon there will always be occasions on which he will apparently belie them in public if it serves his immediate purposes.

Naturally enough all aspects of literature did not interest him equally but it is easy to discern three outstanding topics in the literary field which are of major importance for this study, albeit ~~in~~ for very different reasons. Of the greatest political interest for Napoleon was the intellectual legacy of the philosophical movement of the 18th century. Not all of the contributors to the 'Encyclopédie' were dead, some of them, like Morellet¹, even survived the Empire, while others like Raynal² and Marmontel³, had only recently died and their doctrines, although somewhat modified by ~~the~~ the events of the Revolution, continued to exercise a ~~powerful~~ powerful influence which was a constant danger to the new ^sde⁵potism.

A mixture of political and personal motives charact-

1. d. 1819.
2. d. 1796.
3. d. 1799.

erised Napoleon's approach to the other major literary development of the 18th century, the new outlook which heralded the coming of romanticism. Although both philosophical and 'pre-romantic' writers are extremely important here, it is doubtful whether either group had so much real interest for Napoleon as had the theatre, or more correctly, tragedy. His interest in tragedy was still strongly tinged by political ~~and~~ considerations but this does not alter the fact that it was the form of literature which had the greatest attraction for Napoleon in his maturity.

Such is the importance of the three topics just mentioned that each of them requires, and receives in the following pages, a study at some length. This does not mean that all the rest of the wide field of literature was neglected by Napoleon, but its importance is incomparably less for him. By nature he was inclined to prefer the noble genres and tragedy above all others, but the epic also had a certain place in his affection because of its necessary connection with great ~~deeds~~ deeds and feats of arms. Another strong reason for his interest in the epic was, paradoxically enough, the lack of competent epic poets to embellish his reign. We have seen how he ~~had~~ hoped to find a poet of epic calibre to celebrate the doings of the Army of Egypt and a similar idea was manifested again in the inception of the Prix décennaux. By his second decree on this subject (of Nov. 28, 1809) Napoleon laid it down that one of the more valuable

grands prix of 10,000 frs. was now to be given for the best epic poem.¹

In spite of such artificial attempts to stimulate epic poets, attempts which could at best only have produced fresh imitators of Voltaire, Napoleon seems to have realised, in later years, something at least of the true nature of the epic. At St. Helena he produced a long critical appreciation of the Second Book of Vergil's 'Aeneid'² in which he assessed the account of the capture of Troy according to the strictest views of realism and probability, backed up by his own experience in the capture of cities. His conclusion is that Vergil wrote like a "schoolmaster who had never taken part in great events", but Homer, he said, would have made the account much more true to life; it was easy to see that he had been to the wars, in spite of the assertions of the commentators who said that he had spent all his life in the schools of Chios.³ This may be said in defence of Napoleon's views that, although realism or even probability are not essentials of the epic, such poetry does, at its best, spring from a tradition which is still alive when it is written, and the events which it describes should have an air of naive credibilty which is not always present in the 'Aeneid'.

1. VÉRON, Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 85.

2. See APPENDIX E

3. 'Corresp.' vol. XXXI, p. 493. This same preference for Homer is also noted by General BERTRAND, Op.cit., p. 66: "L'Empereur trouve 'l'Enéide' un poème très inférieure à 'l'Illiade'. Homère doit avoir fait la guerre: il est vrai dans tous les détails de ses combats."

It is not surprising that Napoleon's interest in tragedy and epic did not extend to other forms of poetry when the nature of late 18th century poetry is considered. The celebrated poets of the day, Delille, Legouvé, Esménard and others confined themselves almost entirely to long descriptive and didactic poems which could not claim distinction for their poetic qualities. The only merit of such poems lay in the possible value of their subject matter and if Napoleon desired instruction or information on any topic with which they dealt he would certainly have preferred a good prose work by a member of the Institut to the stiffly ~~marshalled~~ marshalled lines of the poets.

Had Napoleon's reign produced a great poet it is impossible to judge how his works would have been viewed by the Emperor, although it is reasonable to suppose that this would have depended very much upon their form and content. The answer to this question is suggested perhaps in the appreciation of Napoleon's attitude to poets and their muse by his secretary MÉNEVAL, who was sufficiently close to him to be able to form some authoritative opinion:- "A l'exception de la vraie poésie¹, dans laquelle il reconnaissait l'élévation des idées unies à l'éclat du style, il regardait la versification comme une occupation frivole qui faisiat perdre beaucoup de temps sans utilité. Le mécanisme des vers, la gêne de l'hémistiche et de la rime n'allaient pas à l'abandon

1. Presumably by 'la vraie poésie' MÉNEVAL means tragedy or epic.

et à la vivacité de ses idées. Napoléon était né poète. Ses vastes pensées, l'originalité de sa parole et de son style, ses proclamations attestent une imagination forte et féconde. Comme Platon il mettait dans sa prose plus de poésie que beaucoup de poètes n'en mettent dans leurs vers. Comme Platon aussi il aurait ~~pu~~ été enclin à reconduire, hors des frontières de la République, les poètes en les couronnant de fleurs."¹

MÉNEVAL's conclusions are corroborated by those of other memorialists of the period², but even such a well-advertised contempt for poets did not prevent Napoleon from realising their usefulness as 'trumpets of his fame'.³ CHARPENTIER, in his 'Napoléon et les Hommes de lettres de son temps'⁴ says, quite correctly, that Napoleon's view of the poet's function was to celebrate the great feats of French arms and the most glorious epochs of French history. The epic was to have been their true domain and they were to work in close harness with the historian, history and literature together being instruments for arousing French national feeling and extolling the Emperor.

1. 'Mémoires', vol. 1. pp. 122-123.

2. v. ARNAULT, Op. cit., vol. IV, p. 100 (Napoleon's criticism of Delille), Mrs. ABELL, Op. cit., p. 244:- "I have heard him speak slightly of poets and call them rêveurs". See also the letter to the librarian Barbier, calling for more books to be sent to Napoleon, when on campaign, and ending with the words "envoyez le moins de vers que vous pourrez." (Quoted by MOURAVIT, Op. cit., pp. 44-45).

3. MÉNEVAL, Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 140.

4. q. v., p. 189.

Napoleon seems to have disliked the lesser poetic genres of his day very largely on account of their obvious artificiality, but this did not prevent him from wishing to reinstate that most artificial of all forms of verse, the occasional poem. In this he probably hoped to achieve two objects at the same time: by offering literary prizes on occasions of dynastic importance he was both continuing a custom of the ancien régime, thus helping to increase the impression of continuity between the old France and the new, and also encouraging young poets who might eventually become the ornaments of his reign. The marriage with Marie-Louise and the birth of the King of Rome were both celebrated in this manner but the prize-winners were not, generally speaking, either young or particularly talented.¹ Strangely enough it was Savary, the Minister of Police, who presented to Napoleon the report on these poems, but in spite of his assertion that they were incontestably superior to those produced in earlier reigns by La Fontaine, Quinault, and J-B. Rousseau² it is extremely difficult today even to find a copy of them.

MÉNEVAL³ tells us that although Napoleon approved the judges' choice in the competition following the birth of the King of Rome, he also went over their heads and awarded a special prize, as an encouragement, to the youthful Casimir

1. Such established poets as Tissot, Esménard, Millevoye, Parceval, Michaud, Baour-Lormian and Luce de Lancival were the chief prize-winners in the various categories.

2. A. CHUQUET, 'Inédits Napoléoniens', vol. 1, p. 69.

3. Op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 444-445.

Delavigne¹. ~~But~~ Perhaps Méneval introduces this anecdote because he wishes to claim the honour of bringing the poem to Napoleon's notice, but this does not detract from the fact that the Emperor was apparently capable of recognizing signs of poetic talent when he saw ^{them} ~~it~~.

If his reign suffered from a lack of poets it was at least prolific in novelists of various merits. We have seen that Napoleon himself was a great reader of novels of all types, which, together with technical and historical works, formed by far the largest proportion of his reading.² He did not neglect the more literary novels and kept well abreast of the publications of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, of Mme de Staël, and of Chateaubriand, while he already knew those of Rousseau, Goethe, Marmontel and others from the time of his youth. At St. Helena his consumption of novels was very great, although, as ever, he quickly gutted them and cast them aside.³ There is little evidence upon which to base any assessment of Napoleon's taste in novels and it is not even clear that he considered the novel as a genre worthy of serious consideration, except perhaps in the hands of writers like Rousseau

1. Casimir DELAVIGNE, (1793-1843). Author of a collection of classical odes, 'Les Messéniennes' (1818-19) and of various tragedies and dramas, the best known being 'les Vêpres siciliennes' (1819), 'Marino Faliero' (1829), 'Louis XI' (1832), and 'les Enfants d'Édouard' (1833). As a dramatist he touches on the fringes of romanticism. As a poet, although not great, he was probably better than most of those who won prizes in this competition.

2. SAYVE, Op.cit., pp. 12-15, and MOURAVIT, Op.cit., p. 22.

3. MOURAVIT, Op.cit., p. 60.

or Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, where its purpose was, he considered, to awaken a sentimental response in the reader or charm him by the eloquence of its descriptions.

Apart from the pronounced personal preferences, which are to be discussed later, the whole question of Napoleon's taste and judgment in contemporary literature is more complex than it at first appears. It is well known that in literary matters he relied heavily upon the advice of men of letters such as Fontanes¹, or of blue-stockings like Mme de Genlis², and most of all upon the judgment of Lebrun, the Arch-Treasurer of the Empire, whom he considered a master of French prose style.³ So great was this dependence upon Lebrun, according to Mme de Montholon⁴, that Napoleon, when discussing literary matters, would frequently begin, ingenuously, "Lebrun me disait..." Since Lebrun had already translated the 'Iliad' and was later to translate the 'Odyssey' it is not improbable that Napoleon's revaluation of Homer may have been a result of his conversations with the Arch-Treasurer. Whether

1. CHATEAUBRIAND, 'Mémoires d'outre tombe', vol.1, p.486.

2. Mme de Genlis, 'Mémoires', vol.5, pp.118-119.

3. Comtesse de MONTHOLON, 'Souvenirs', p.152.

Charles-François LEBRUN, (1739-1824), 3rd Consul, and later Arch-Treasurer of the Empire, Duke of Piacenza. He became governor of Holland in 1810. He had been secretary to the Chancellor Maupeou in the reign of Louis XV. Napoleon placed great confidence in his financial ability as well as in his literary talents. (see LAS CASES, Op.cit., vol.1, p.402 and vol.2, p.190). Lebrun's literary works consist of translations of the 'Iliad', 'Jerusalem Delivered', and the 'Odyssey', this last during the Restoration.

4. Comtesse de MONTHOLON, Op.cit., p.152.

this is true or not the possibility exists and suggests that all of the many literary ~~views~~ opinions expressed by Napoleon were not necessarily completely his own. ~~Although~~ Every attempt has been made in the following pages to show the sources of Napoleon's ideas and to quote as ~~authoritative~~ authoritative ^{at} only those which have some claim to be Napoleon's own since it is better to err on the side of caution than to follow Sainte-Beuve and assume that Napoleon was "un grand critique à ses heures perdues".¹

1. 'Nouveaux Lundis', vol.7,p.261.

II.

'PHILOSOPHES' and IDEOLOGUES.¹

Of the various aspects of Napoleon's literary interests under which are/discussion the 'philosophical' literature of the 18th century could hardly claim first place if ~~their~~ ^{its} importance here were judged by the amount of time Napoleon seems to have devoted to ~~their~~ ^{its} study. Although in his youth he spent much time over the volumes of Rousseau and Raynal, there is little to indicate that he read at all deeply at any time in the works of Voltaire, Diderot or the Encyclopaedists. In the various comprehensive accounts of the after-dinner readings at Longwood for example, there is no mention of any 'philosophical' works, although the complete works of both Rousseau and Voltaire were contained in Napoleon's library at St. Helena.² Various of the writings of these two authors were found also in most of Napoleon's libraries, ~~and~~ ^{and} even in the library taken to Egypt there were four volumes of romans by Voltaire, by which is meant, presumably, the 'contes philosophiques'.³ The greatest literary monument to

1. If this word is used throughout in its French form, it is because no adequate English rendering seems to exist. Philosophers consistently refuse (whether justly or not) to allow Voltaire and Diderot among others, a place in their ranks. However, even the 'Oxford English Dictionary' allows ideologue as meaning "a theorist or visionary", which words cover precisely what Napoleon meant by 'idéologue'.
2. ADVIELLE, 'La Bibliothèque de Napoléon à Sainte-Hélène', p. 19, and BRITISH MUSEUM, Additional MSS. No. 20,229, f. 71. 'Catalogue of books separated from the private collection of the Emperor, May, 1821'
3. 'Corresp.' Vol. IV, p. 27, note 4.

the philosophical movement, the 'Encyclopédie', was found in the three major libraries built up by Napoleon, at Malmaison, at the Trianon, and at the Tuileries¹, but he never seems to have referred to the work in any of his letters and but once in passing in any of his reported conversations².

In spite of his apparent lack of interest in the works of the philosophes and Encyclopaedists, no literary productions are in fact of greater importance to the study of the political aspects of Napoleon's reign. He was fully aware of the importance of the philosophes in preparing the way for the Revolution and considered that both Voltaire and Rousseau had played major parts in bringing it about. It is even perhaps indicative of the change in outlook which occurred in Napoleon as far as these two authors were concerned that, during the Consulate he declared to Stanislas Girardin that Rousseau had prepared the Revolution³, whereas at St. Helena he held that Voltaire was its most influential cause⁴. Whatever the relative merits of the two as causes of the Revolution, there could be no doubt that Rousseau had fathered the ideology, in so far as there was one, of jacobinism, while Voltaire incarnated the anti-religious and anti-clerical ideas of the Revolution; for these reasons alone Napoleon was extremely anxious to eliminate the political and philosophical influence of both of them.

1. MOURAVIT, Op.cit., p.98.

2. LAS CASES, Op.cit., vol.2, p.87.

3. Stanislas de GIRARDIN, 'Mémoires', (Paris, 1834), vol.1, p.189.

4. MONTHOLON, Op.cit., vol.2, p.240. (24 Dec. 1817).

Efforts to lessen the influence of the philosophes called for tact and cunning, especially in the early days of the Consulate, since open attacks would soon have gained for Napoleon the reputation of a counter-revolutionary. This however was not the only danger, the philosophes still had a large following in France in 1799¹, a following which was both influential and concentrated, consisting of the majority of members of the Institut, many of whom stood close to the government. In the true spirit of Napoleonic policy these followers of the philosophes were to be won over while their idols were quietly overthrown; later, when Napoleon's power was firmly established, the ideologues themselves were to be quickly brought to heel if they were too indiscreet in expressing heterodox opinions.

The hypocritical approach which Napoleon used towards the ideologues was not the result of any personal feelings in the matter but a necessary concomitant to his religious policy. In political^s he had little to fear from them since it was easy for him to demonstrate that his own rule, based on realities, was superior to the idealistic attempts of the Revolution to bring to life the theories of its intellectual forebears. At the same time it was useful for one who claimed to be the heir to the Revolution; to be able to

1. In this connection see the article by R. FARGHER, published in 'The French Mind' (Oxford, 1952), entitled 'The Retreat from Voltairianism 1810-1815'.

quite the stock phrases of Rousseau, to claim that his power as Emperor rested on a contract between the people and himself, ~~confirmed~~ confirmed by the plebiscites¹, or even, in moments of stress as in 1813, to threaten to abdicate in order to be able to go back among the crowd to take up again his share of the sovereignty of the people². In religious matters, however, where practical demonstration was not possible, and where even lip-service to the formulae of the philosophes was not possible, lest it estrange the catholics, Napoleon was constrained to carry out a more open and thorough police operation. Under the new régime, although all religions were to be tolerated, the state religion, Catholicism, was to be respected by all since it closely concerned the dignity and validity of the Emperor's coronation, the ceremony which to Napoleon was the consecration of the new social order. The followers of the philosophes had to be converted if possible, or at least kept quiet; everything was to be done to prevent their attempts to ridicule religion or the Church, while an open declaration of atheism was a sure

1. J. HOLLAND ROSE, 'Napoleon', (London, 1902), vol. 2, p. 467 deals with the petition from the Senate asking Napoleon to take the title of Emperor. This petition speaks of a contract between the Emperor and the nation. It is hardly necessary to point out that Rousseau would not have accepted this interpretation of contract, nor perhaps even that of Napoleon himself in his proclamation to the inhabitants of San-Domingo during the Consulate: 'Les Consuls de la République vous annonce le nouveau pacte social....' 'CORRESP.', vol. 6, p. 53, No. 4455. *etc.*

2. LAS CASES, Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 211.

method of calling down an imperial rebuke.¹

The policies which have been outlined were closely followed by Napoleon who began, immediately on his return^{ur} from Egypt, to attempt to win the suffrage of the Institut. His first acts on arriving in Paris were calculated to reassure the members of that body of his interest in science and the arts. He wrote to Laplace² to thank him for a copy of his 'Mécanique céleste' which he had sent to Napoleon, and on the 1er brumaire the general unostentatiously took his place at a séance of the Institut, to which he had been elected. On the 5e brumaire he returned to the Institut to give an account of Egypt to his fellow members, among whom he did not lack supporters. According to VANDAL's³ account

1. The best known of these rebukes would seem to^{de} that to the atheist LALANDE, which was contained in a letter sent from Schönbrunn to the Minister of the Interior (13/12/1805) "C'est avec douleur que j'apprends qu'un membre de l'Institut..... cherche à faire parler de lui, tantôt par des annonces indignes de son ancienne réputation et du corps auquel il appartient, tantôt en professant hautement l'athéisme, principe destructeur de toute organisation sociale.... Mon intention est que vous appeliez auprès de vous les présidents et les secrétaires de l'Institut, et que vous les chargiez de faire connaître à ce corps illustre.... qu'il ait à mander M. de Lalande, et à lui enjoindre, au nom du corps, de ne plus rien imprimer, et de ne pas obscurcir dans ses vieux jours ce qu'il a fait dans ses jours de force pour obtenir l'estime des savants..." 'Corresp.', vol. XI, p. 472.
2. VANDAL, 'L'avènement de Bonaparte', Paris, 1908. (16 ed), vol. 1, p. 265.
Pierre-Simon de LAPLACE (1749-1827), celebrated mathematician and astronomer. He was the inventor of the equation which bears his name and which^{made} a contribution of lasting value to the study of heat, electricity and magnetism.
¹ His 'Mécanique céleste' appeared in 5 vols. between 1799 and 1825.
3. Op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 265-267.

Monge¹, Berthollet², Volney and Cabanis³ helped to marshal opinion in Napoleon's favour. As he had done in Egypt he continued to sign his letters 'Bonaparte, Membre de l'Institut' and gave every sign of gaining greater satisfaction from his membership of that body than from all his victories in the field. He not only flattered the self-esteem of the ideologues, but also pretended to share their views, not omitting to make a pilgrimage to one of their 'shrines', the house at Auteuil where the widow of Helvetius⁴ lived. There he praised the virtues of the quiet life spent in philosophical pursuits, 'like a Cincinnatus who has read Rousseau'.⁵ The scientists and philosophers of the Institut were charmed by this conduct for here apparently was the 'philosophical general' who respected the power and rights of the intellect, in contrast to coarse swashbucklers like Bernadotte and Augereau; in brief,

1. Gaspard MONGE, (1746-1818). Celebrated geometer and engineer. His jacobinic zeal caused him to be made Minister of Marine in 1792. He was one of the founders of the École polytechnique. Having met Napoleon during the Italian Campaign he became one of his most fervent admirers and followed him to Egypt. He later became a count of the Empire and senator. He was made a peer of France during the Hundred Days.
2. Claude-Louis BERTHOLLET, (1748-1822). Chemist, noted for his discovery of the bleaching power of chlorine. A friend of Napoleon, to whom he owed much, he nevertheless abandoned his cause in 1814.
3. Claude-Adrien HELVETIUS, (1715-1771). Encyclopaedist and sensualist philosopher with an utilitarian bias. His works are 'De l'Esprit', (1758) (banned, and burned by the public hangman), 'De l'Homme', and 'Le Bonheur', published posthumously in 1773.
3. Pierre-Jean-Georges CABANIS, (1757-1808), physician and writer, friend of Mirabeau. Professor of clinical medicine in the Paris medical school from 1797. Became a senator under the Empire.
5. VANDAL, Op.cit., vol.1, p.265: also P. GAUTIER, Op.cit., p.12.

in the ^{words} ~~words~~ of VANDAL "Bonaparte les enjôla supérieurement."

Once he was secure in the office of ~~First~~ Consul Napoleon rapidly grew cooler towards the ideologues and his coolness reached its peak at the time of the conclusion of the Concordat. From this time on he was continually on the look-out for voltairians and others who might still try to bring religion into disrepute. Fouché, until he fell from office, was frequently in receipt of letters from Napoleon ordering action against those who were not sufficiently respectful towards the Church, and, on one occasion even, in 1807, he received a letter from the Emperor, then at Warsaw, in which the 'Journal de l'Empire' and the 'Mercure' were strongly censured for carrying their attacks on the 'philosophes' to a point where they became ridiculous, and for affecting religion to the point of hypocrisy.¹ Mme de Staël was also the frequent subject of these letters and Napoleon was much angered on perusing her 'Delphine', in 1805, to discover that she had included tirades against the catholic religion which he was so busily trying to re-establish.²

In all that affected his religious policy the Emperor was extremely touchy and hard to please, possibly because he was at times not quite certain himself as to the proper relationship which ought to exist between himself and the

1. 'Corresp.', vol. XIV, p. 192, No. 11629 (14 Jan. 1807).

2. BAUSSET, 'Mémoires', (Paris, 1827), vol. 1, p. 53.

pope. However, as a general principle, he sought to eliminate the influence of the philosophes even in the manner of thinking or speaking about religion in the ruling circles of the Empire so that no less a person than Joseph Bonaparte, King of Naples, received the following ~~the following~~ missive, dated from Finkenstein, 14th April, 1807:-

"Puisque vous voulez que je vous parle de ce qui se fait à Naples, je vous dirai que je n'ai pas été entièrement content du préamb^{le} de la suppression des couvents. Pour ce qui regarde la religion, il faut que le langage soit pris dans l'esprit de la religion et non dans celui de la philosophie. C'est là le grand art de celui qui gouverne, et que n'a point un homme de lettres ou un écrivain..... Ce préambule est tout philosophique, et je crois que ce n'est pas là le cas; je trouve que c'est insulter les hommes que l'on chasse...."¹ Nowhere can we find a better illustration than this of Napoleon's attitude to religion and politics. In closing the monast^{ries}, an act which was a direct result of 18th century thinking and would have overjoyed Voltaire, Raynal and the Encyclopaedists, he would have the decree couched in terms which did nothing to harm religion itself, and which cloaked the fundamentally 'philosophical' nature of the act.

Joseph seems to have been an habitual offender in Napoleon's eyes because ~~of~~ ^{of} his liking for the company of

1. 'Corresp.', vol. XV, p. 73, No. 12379.

writers and ideologues. He drew rebukes several times for his efforts on behalf of Mme de Staël and even when King of Naples, only a few months after the letter just quoted, he was warned by Napoleon about the danger of consorting with such people. Napoleon's words in this letter have become well-known: "Je les regarde comme des coquettes; il faut les voir, causer avec eux, mais ne pas prendre les unes pour femmes que les autres pour ministres."¹

Although Napoleon was quick to hurl his thunderbolts at any ideologue who might attack religion, he nevertheless ensured that the more influential of them were found places in the various organs of government. CHARPENTIER lists² the names of eminent ideologues and collaborators in the 'Décade philosophique' who accepted places in the Sénat conservateur, the Tribunate, or the Corps législatif, a list which includes such figures as the liberal Benjamin Constant and the regicide M.-J. Chénier. Napoleon realised that only thus would he be in a better position to buy their support and to control their utterances. He also carried out a cunning manoeuvre with regard to that temple of the ideologues, the Pantheon, where the Revolution had deposited the remains of Voltaire and of Rousseau. In a letter to Champagny, dated February 26, 1806, he orders reconstruction of the Pantheon to be started. Fine memorials are to be built for Voltaire

1. Quoted by CHARPENTIER, Op.cit., p.57.

2. Ibid., p.58.

and General Leclerc, Napoleon's brother-in-law, while ~~Stanislas~~ ^{Stanislas} Girardin is to be asked to request that Rousseau's body be returned to him for burial on his estate at Ermonville, according to Jean-Jacques' desire in his will.¹

In his attacks on philosophy and irreligion Napoleon found many willing helpers. The most notable of these was Chateaubriand who produced his 'Génie du Christianisme' at almost the same time as Napoleon concluded the Concordat. This conjunction was too timely to be fortuitous and Napoleon was grateful to the author² even though he did not like him overmuch. In a conversation which Chateaubriand records in his 'Mémoires d'Outre-tombe',³ Napoleon discussed the book with him and produced the following homily on religion, which, if it pleased Chateaubriand and ridiculed the ideologues, was not very fervently Christian:- "Le christianisme? Les idéologues n'ont-ils pas voulu en faire un système d'astronomie? Quand cela serait, croient-ils me persuader que le christianisme est petit? Si le christianisme est l'allégorie du mouvement des sphères, la géométrie des astres, les esprits forts ont beau faire, malgré eux ils ont encore laissé assez de grandeur à l'infâme."

The period of amity between Napoleon and Chateaubriand, when the ideologues were their common foe, was extremely short and ended abruptly with the execution of the duke of

Enghien in 1804. Napoleon had no other ally of such emin-

1. 'Corresp'. vol. XII, p. 102, No. 9890.

2. 'Mémoires d'Outre-tombe', (éd. G. Levaillant, Paris 1948-9)

3. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 81.

Vol. 2, p. 42.

ence in his fight against the ideas of the 18th century, but there was no lack of claimants for the position. One of these, Mme de Genlis, would like to take a great deal of credit for turning Napoleon's thoughts towards the danger of 18th century thinking. In her 'Mémoires',¹ she tells of how Napoleon asked her if she would write to him regularly on any aspect she pleased of the contemporary scene. She denies that she was ever so regular a correspondent as Napoleon wished and says that she kept ~~her~~ matters of religion, morality, literature, and criticism of the philosophes, adding with a certain air of resignation "et ce n'est pas ma faute si je ne l'ai pas rendu dévot."

Mme de Genlis shows by her further remarks that not only the ideologues were deceived by Napoleon's pose as a friend of their ideas. She claims that a certain amount of courage was needed at this period (soon after Napoleon became Emperor) in attacking the philosophes in her letters "... car tout le monde savait ... que l'empereur avait fait, étant premier consul, une visite à Madame Helvétius, en lui disant qu'il avait voulu voir la veuve d'un grand homme."

Chateaubriand in his 'Mémoires' does not mention Mme de Genlis in this particular connection but gives the credit to his friend Fontanes for having turned Napoleon against the philosophes. Fontanes, he tells us,² hated the

1. Vol. 5, pp. 118-119.

2. Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 486.

press, la philosophaillerie, and l'idéologie, and passed on his hatred of them to Napoleon. Although Fontanes' influence on Napoleon was probably much less than either he or Chateaubriand thought, he was responsible for diminishing^{ing} the part played by science and 18th century rationalism in the Imperial University. ^{However,} ~~but~~ the conclusion of AULARD ('Napoléon et le monopole universitaire') seems to ~~sum up the whole~~ ^{offer the most likely} ~~relationship between them.~~ ^{explanation of the success Fontanes achieved here:} Napoleon, says AULARD¹, did not put almoners back into the schools for love of religion, but out of self-interest, in an attempt to domesticate religion in France and make it docile.

Mme de Genlis, Chateaubriand, and perhaps Fontanes himself may have been under certain illusions regarding Napoleon's outlook on 18th century ideas, but FIÉVÉE, another enemy of the philosophes and their disciples can hardly have laboured under the same error. As a journalist he was probably used to ~~receiving~~ receiving instructions from the Imperial police and in 1807, the year in which Napoleon, although so busy elsewhere, seems to have been particularly touchy on religious matters, Fiévée states² that he had been informed by Fouché that the Emperor would not be averse to reading attacks on philosophy in the press, provided that they were not carried to such lengths as they would

1. Op.cit., p.365.

2. 'Correspondance et Relations avec Bonaparte', (Paris, 1836), (3 vols.), vol.2, pp.291-292.

be under the Bourbons.

Fiévée was indeed a fierce opponent both of the philosophes and of the Institut¹, and already in 1804 and 1805 he had urged upon Napoleon the necessity for carrying out a complete censorship of the books to be used in schools². As early as 1804 he warned Napoleon against the large number of new editions of 18th century authors which were being published: "...tous les livres du 18e siècle sont une satire de ce qui existe, car ce qui existe est le possible, et les écrivains philosophiques n'ont prêché que l'impossible."³ These attacks were a recurring theme in Fiévée's notes to Napoleon and seven years later, in 1811, he still judges the philosophes to be dangerous and accuses Napoleon of being afraid of them, "...l'empereur les craint et les ménage, parce qu'il pense qu'ils font encore les réputation⁵s...."⁴ This judgment however, seems to have been motivated not so much by Napoleon's actions as by the fact that the followers of philosophy had just been attacking Fiévée.⁴ It will be seen that even those like Mme de Genlis and Fiévée who had private access to the Emperor were far from having a clear comprehension either of his character or of his policy.

Napoleon did not rely entirely on attacking the id-

1. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 259.

2. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 86-88, and ~~pp. 231~~ p. 231.

3. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 40.

4. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 124. The rest of this particular letter rather ingenuously makes clear the real reason for this attack upon the ideologues.

eologues in the press, nor on protecting religion by administrative action. He was himself enough a man of the 18th. century to ~~must~~ know that the basis of its thought had been ~~founded~~ a real revolution in philosophy, in the true sense of that word. He was well aware that the most important intellectual fact of the century had been the victory of Locke's sensualist philosophy over Cartesianism and one of his triumphs, in his own eyes, was to obtain a professor of philosophy in the Faculty at Paris who was not a follower of Locke. It was not until 1811 that this regenerative voice was found in Royer-Collard¹ who was appointed to the chair of the History of Philosophy. So pleased was Napoleon with this find that he is said to have completely ignored Royer-Collard's omission of the usual panegyric on the Emperor in his opening address to the Faculty. In his enthusiasm Napoleon said to Talleyrand "Savez-vous, Monsieur le Grand Électeur, qu'il s'élève dans mon université une nouvelle philosophie très sérieuse.... qui pourra nous débarrasser des idéologues en les tuant sur place par le rai-

1. Pierre-Paul ROYER-COLLARD (1763-1845). Philosopher and statesman. Was a member of the Council of Five Hundred for a short time in 1797. Appointed to his chair in the Faculté des Lettres in Paris in 1811 he appears to have taught chiefly the principles of the Scottish philosophers Reid and Stewart, whose systems accepted an intuitive knowledge of external reality. ROYER-COLLARD became the originator of the doctrinaires, under the Restoration, the party which desired a constitution based on historical principles and modelled on the English monarchy. Guizot, Cousin, and the duc de Broglie belonged to this faction. R-C. became ~~president~~ president of the Chamber of Representatives in 1828.

sonnement?" Royer-Collard is said to have remarked, when the Emperor's statement was made known to him: "L'Empereur se méprend: Descartes est plus intraitable au despotisme que ne le serait Locke."¹

So far we have been dealing with Napoleon's attitude to the philosophes and ideologues on a political plane, viewing it in relation to the re-establishment of the Catholic religion in France; it is time now to enquire into the effects which philosophy² had had upon the mind of Napoleon ~~himself~~ himself in religious matters. We have already seen that as a youth he was a defender of Rousseau's views on civil religion, his own early religious views having been apparently based on those expressed in the 'Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard' and the chapter on civil religion in the 'Contrat social'. From Raynal he acquired strong feelings, some of which he later put into practice, about the position of clergy in the state, and in particular he shared Raynal's views on the uselessness of monasticism. We cannot find positive proof of any ideas he may have taken over from Voltaire, although he obviously knew much of his writing on the subject. However, the one cardinal notion which he gained from all these writers and probably many others besides, was that of the political importance and influence of religion.

1. CHARPENTIER, Op.cit., p. 141. (Quoted from MERLET, 'Tableau de la littérature française de 1800-1815').
2. The word philosophy is here used in the sense in which the French equivalent was ~~used~~ used at the time in question, to denote doctrines and intellectual climate engendered by the philosophes.

J. HOLLAND ROSE, in his 'Personality of Napoleon'¹, has given a concise but comprehensive study of Napoleon's personal beliefs in which he has adequately disposed of propagandist writings such as the 'Sentiment de Napoléon sur le Christianisme' by the Chevalier de Beauterne², which work attempted, under ~~Louis Philippe~~ Napoleon III, to prove that Napoleon was a true son of the Church. The final summing-up of Napoleon's beliefs by Holland Rose, in spite of its dated language, probably remains the truest estimate which can be arrived at: "...by the help of reason alone, he struggles up the world's great altar-stairs, uttering the questions that echo down the ages: 'What am I?' 'Why am I here?' 'Who made all that?' "³

Although Napoleon died, like Voltaire, in a more or less doubtful state of grace, he lived like Voltaire also, in a permanent state of wondering agnosticism. During his active life, although he asked the three questions quoted above, he had little time or inclination to delve deeply into these matters, it was only at St. Helena that he seems to have begun to give any consistent thought to religious questions on a personal plane. Of his various companions in exile Napoleon chose Gourgaud, a devout catholic, as his confident in religious matters. Several times he called

1. London, 1912. Lecture VI, 'Napoleon the Thinker.' pp. 215-222.
2. 'Sentiment de Napoleon sur le Christianisme, d'après des témoignages recueillis par feu le chevalier de Beauterne;' (Paris, 1864).
3. "The Personality of Napoleon", p. 222.

for Gourgaud expressly to discuss religion and almost always, during 1817, he seems to have put forward ideas which were completely materialistic¹. Strangely enough his reading of Milton in Boismorand's translation drew from Napoleon the following remark which can hardly be taken seriously:-
 "Si j'avais à ~~avoir~~ avoir une religion, j'adorerais le soleil, car c'est lui qui féconde tout, c'est le vrai dieu de la terre."²

In spite of his numerous materialistic pronouncements it would be unwise to regard them as conclusive since they may well have been made to sting the morose Gourgaud to reply. What is of more importance for our study is that he used arguments which were typical of Voltaire and of the Encyclopaedists, arguments which show him to have been quite conversant with their methods. Like Voltaire, or even d'Holbach, he frequently questioned both the divinity and the very existence of Christ by recourse to historical and documentary evidence, making use of similar examples to theirs. Having seen a copy of the manuscript of Josephus³ in Milan, a copy which he had sent to Paris as spoils of war, Napoleon quoted this historian of the Jews as having omitted any reference to the darkness "over all the earth"⁴ at the Cru-

1. GOURGAUD, Op.cit., vol.2, p.325 (27/12/17). "J'avoue que de voir, à la guerre, tant d'hommes passer dans un instant de la vie à la mort me rend matérialiste."

See also Ibid. vol.2, p.251 (16/9/17), "La plante est le premier anneau de la chaîne dont l'homme est le dernier. Je sais bien que c'est contraire à la religion, mais voilà mon opinion. Nous ne sommes tous que matière."

2. Ibid., vol.1, p.299. MOURAVIT, Op.cit., p.131 tells us that it was Boismorand's translation which was used.

ifixion. Napoleon goes on to add that, in the manuscript, the only reference to Christ consisted of four or five lines which had been added afterwards, a pious fraud of the early Christians, according to Voltaire in the 'Essai sur les Moeurs'¹. Napoleon ~~adds to~~ ^{increases} the voltairian flavour of this account by adding, maliciously, "Le pape m'a bien tourmenté pour avoir ce manuscrit."² Also at St. Helena, in the same strain, he set Gourgaud on the task of proving by mathematics that it was impossible for the celebrated spring of water which Moses produced in the desert to satisfy the thirst of 2,000,000 Jews, after having himself dictated a note to prove the impossibility of it. "Voilà pourtant comment on abuse les hommes" was his final comment.³

Like the philosophes Napoleon was shocked by the exclusiveness of Christianity, or more correctly perhaps, of Roman Catholicism: "Mais Socrate serait damné, Platon, les Mahométans, les Anglais, c'est par trop absurde!"⁴ He would believe in Christianity, he said, if it had existed since the beginning of the world⁵, and also like the philosophes, he would, he said, have been a believer if there were but

(from p. 148). 3. Josephus was frequently cited by the Encyclopaedists and by Voltaire. See art. 'Bible' by DIDEROT, in the 'Encyclopédie' (vol. 2), and 'Essai sur les Moeurs' ch. VIII.

4. St. Luke's Gospel, 23, 44. and Matthew, 27, 45.

5. Ch. IX, 'Fausses légendes des premiers chrétiens'.

2. GOURGAUD, vol. 2, p. 225.

3. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 228.

4. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 225.

5. Idem.

one religion, received by all men since the world began¹, a step from which it is not difficult to proceed to Voltaire's argument that all religions contain within them the basic principle of the universal religion, which is the belief in one divine Creator; this last step ~~alone~~ Napoleon did not take in these conversations with Gourgaud. Whatever conclusions Napoleon may have failed to draw from his own arguments and whatever he may have said against the philosophes his very methods of reasoning about religion show quite clearly that his whole outlook on this matter was much closer to that of the ideologues than it was to the bishops. The difference between Napoleon and the ideologues was that he was above all a man of action and of practical affairs, "l'arithmétique incarnée", as SUARES called him², who had probably never before had time to give ~~deal~~^{much} of thought to these problems. During the years of his glory his whole attitude to religion would appear to be best summed up by his statement before the Conseil d'État on March 4th, 1806: "Je ne vois pas dans la religion le mystère de l'Incarnation mais le mystère de l'Ordre social."³

1. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 325.

2. SUARES, 'Napoléon', ('Cahiers de la Quinzaine') Paris, 1912, p. 29. As regards religion, Napoleon could in all probability have said with Molière's Don Juan: "Je crois que deux et deux sont quatre, et que quatre et quatre sont huit".

3. GARROS, 'Itinéraire de Napoléon Bonaparte', Paris, 1947, p. 257.

Whatever their ultimate political importance may have been, the philosophes, with the exception of Rousseau, had in the main concerned themselves with only one social factor, religion. Their ~~whitish~~ attacks on the Church and its dogmas were certainly heavy with the possibilities of political repercussion, but they did not avowedly interest themselves to any marked degree in political theory. The whole climate of political thinking in the 18th century in France had been established by one who can hardly be called a philosophe in its accepted sense, and yet who was largely responsible for the growth of the movement towards political liberation, Montesquieu.

Such a writer, by the very nature of his subject, could not have failed to interest Napoleon and it is a matter for some surprise that his works do not appear among those which were annotated by the young artillery lieutenant in the years up to 1793. However it is clear that Napoleon was familiar with Montesquieu by name and by repute in 1791¹, the year in which he probably first read his works², and in any case it would have been almost impossible for one who had so avidly studied the 'Contrat social' not to have wanted to know something of this writer who is so frequently mentioned with admiration by Rousseau. It is

1. 'Manuscripts inédits', p. 470.

2. According to his compatriot Pozzo di Borgo, he and Napoleon had read Montesquieu together in 1791, in Corsica. (See N. TOMICHE, Op.cit., pp. 20 and 135, quoting from MAGGIOLLO's 'Pozzo di Borgo' (Paris, 1890), p. 26.

not until considerably later, in 1797, that there is documentary proof of Napoleon having any detailed knowledge of Montesquieu, although there is every probability that he had studied the 'Esprit des lois' many years before.¹ By 1797 the artillery subaltern had already become the highly successful general and it was whilst occupied in drafting constitutions for the newly overrun Italian states that he voiced the criticisms of Montesquieu's definition of the three powers within the state, which we have already mentioned.² In particular he attacked Montesquieu's admiration for the English constitution and his theory that the making of war and peace is a function of the legislative power. The first of these two criticisms had already been made by Rousseau in the 'Contrat social',³ but the second is based upon a misconception since Montesquieu does not appear to

1. See p.151, note 2.

2. 'Corresp'. vol. III, p. 417. Letter from Napoleon, at Passeriano, 5e jour complémentaire, an V, to Talleyrand, at a time when the constitutions for Genoa and the Cisalpine Republic were under discussion. Here is the passage relating to Montesquieu:— "...Malgré notre orgueil, nos mille et une brochures, nos harangues à perte de vue et très bavardes, nous sommes très ignorants de la science politique et morale. Nous n'avons encore défini ce que l'on entend par pouvoir exécutif, législatif et judiciaire. Montesquieu nous a donné de fausses définitions. Non pas que cet homme célèbre n'eût pas été à même de les donner bonnes. Mais son ouvrage, comme il le dit lui-même, n'est qu'une copie d'analyse de ce qui ~~existait~~ a existé ou existait. C'est un résumé de notes faites ou dans ses voyages ou dans ses lectures. Il a fixé les yeux sur le gouvernement d'Angleterre; il a défini en général le pouvoir exécutif, législatif et judiciaire, ce que l'a défini en général le législateur anglais.

Pourquoi, effectivement, regarderait-on comme une attribution du pouvoir législatif, le droit de guerre et de paix?"

3. q.v., livre III, ch. XV, in particular.

make such a statement at all, in fact he explicitly says that it is by his executive power that the prince makes war or peace¹. It is difficult to see why such an important part of the 'Esprit des Lois' should have been misunderstood if Napoleon had really studied the work conscientiously. It is however fairly certain that although this may have been due to a misreading, or to a slip of the pen even, it is unlikely to have been a deliberate distortion of what Montesquieu had said since it could not have been of any use to Napoleon at this point to make such a misrepresentation.

When STENDHAL, in his 'Mémoires sur Napoléon',² says that the Emperor had not read Montesquieu as he should be read he may be referring to errors like the one we have just quoted, but more probably he is alluding to the use by Napoleon of quotations from Montesquieu to support actions and policies which would not have received that author's unqualified approval. It was in 1804 especially that Napoleon saw fit to bring Montesquieu to his aid when looking for suitable authorities to support and justify the new imperial régime and the creation of a new nobility. Reporting to the Senate, in November 1804, on the vote which conferred the hereditary succession upon his family, Napoleon invoked Montesquieu in support of the new order: "Ce n'est

1. 'De l'Esprit des lois', Livre XI, ch. VI, 'De la Constitution d'Angleterre.'

2. Quoted by CHARPENTIER, Op.cit., p. 213.

pas, a dit l'immortel auteur de 'l'Esprit des Lois', ce n'est pas pour la famille régnante que l'ordre de succession est établie, mais parce qu'il est de l'intérêt de l'État qu'il y ait une famille régnante."¹ On the question of a new aristocracy Montesquieu was, if anything, even more helpful and Napoleon did not hesitate to stress the need for intermediate powers which were to be "...effectifs, subordonnés et dépendants, qui servissent de canaux à la puissance suprême."²

Montesquieu was not only a source of quotations and examples but also a useful counterbalance to Rousseau. In 1803, when Napoleon was intent on consolidating the internal stability of France, and interested above all in combating republican and jacobinistic ideas, in preparation for the Empire, a new edition of the works of Montesquieu appeared, an edition which was given an enthusiastic review in the 'Moniteur'³ by Laharpe.⁴ Although Napoleon did not have

1. ROEDERER, Op.cit., p.224.

2. Ibid., pp.203-204. (v. 'De l'Esprit des Lois', livre II, chIV.).

3. 'Moniteur', 20 nivôse, an XI. (10 Jan. 1803).

4. Jean-François de LAHARPE (1739-1803). Friend and disciple of Voltaire who later turned against him and all the other philosophes, after being imprisoned in 1794 for criticism of Robespierre's oratorical talent. In spite of many attempts at writing tragedies he was unsuccessful with all except his first, 'Warwick', which made him celebrated at the age of 23. The poet N.J.L. Gilbert said of LAHARPE "Il tombe de chute en chute au trône académique". His real vocation was in literary criticism, of which he was the acknowledged master during his lifetime. His greatest claim to fame is his 'Cours de littérature ancienne et moderne' (1790-1806, in 16 vols.) usually known as the 'Lycées'.

Napoleon, although apparently not loth to make use of Laharpe's talents, did not seem to have a high opinion of his character: "Voilà un homme qui a bien usurpé sa réputation. Je n'aime ni sa personne ni son talent. Il a

a high respect for Laharpe, the review appeared in the journal which, above all others, represented the official viewpoint. In this criticism Montesquieu was compared to Rousseau, much to the latter's disadvantage, he being treated as the philosopher of Revolution^{at}, the enemy of property, whose thesis, like the policies of the Revolution, aimed at the destruction of what existed in order to rebuild society on a theoretical basis. In the new epoch of stability, said Laharpe, Montesquieu was much to be preferred to Rousseau: "Aujourd'hui que les hommes et les choses reviennent successivement à leur place, on peut assurer que celle qu'aura toujours Rousseau comme écrivain éloquent, ne sera jamais rien à côté de celle de Montesquieu comme philosophe politique."

Evidence of Napoleon's personal views on Montesquieu is, unfortunately, very scant, but such as there is does not suggest that he did in reality prize him very highly. Our chief source of knowledge on this topic is the account

given by VILLEMAIN¹ of Napoleon's conversations with été plus athée qu'aucun de ceux qui fréquentaient le baron d'Holbach et tous les encyclopédistes; il a été le flatteur ~~et le courtisan~~ bas et rampant de Voltaire; puis il a fait des abjurations toutes plus absurdes et méprisables les unes que les autres, parce qu'il n'avait pas de conviction." (Napoleon to Cardinal Maury) Duchesse d'Abrantès, Op.cit., vol.VII, p.79.

1. 'Souvenirs contemporains d'histoire et de littérature', (Paris 1854-5), vol.1, p.149. François Villemain (1790-1870), became a teacher of literature at the Ecole Normale in the last years of the Empire. In 1816¹ became Professor of Eloquence française at the Sorbonne, after having been an assistant to Guizot in the chair of History. Became Minister of Education under Louis-Philippe, (1839-1844). A writer of some merit, he was elected to the Academy in 1821, becoming secrétaire perpétuel in 1832.
- 2.

Narbonne¹, conversations in which Montesquieu and the writers of the previous century as a body seemed to have suffered severe criticism from the Emperor. He expressed himself in no uncertain way on these matters: "Je n'aime pas la philosophie politique du 18e siècle; je ne l'aime pas même dans ceux qu'on répute les plus sages. Voyez-vous, il y a toujours en eux du déclamatoire. Ceux qui doivent agir ne faisaient pas alors d'assez grandes choses pour que ceux qui regardent et raisonnent pussent écrire avec élévation et simplicité. Aussi, voyez Montesquieu lui-même, que d'erreurs, avec un esprit merveilleux! Il est magistrat dès l'enfance; il veut une Monarchie tempérée par des gens de robe; et il perce de mille traits l'esprit chrétien; il déchire tant qu'il peut la robe de l'Eglise; il admire en platonicien ces républiques grecques plus inapplicables de nos jours que le gouvernement de la tribu de Juda; et il prétend être Monarchiste; il pose en principe l'honneur pour ressort principal de sa Monarchie; et il vante jusqu'à la corruption du Gouvernement Britannique."²

Such criticisms, although by no means valid when regarded from the viewpoint of Montesquieu himself, or even

1. Louis de NARBONNE-LARA (1755-1813). Natural son of Louis XV. Favourable to the new ideas of 1789 and 1791, he became commander of the constitutional guard of Louis XVI. He was later forced to emigrate to escape arrest, but returned to France during the Consulate. He became a divisional commander in 1809 and later held many important diplomatic posts as a result of his part in arranging the Marriage of Napoleon and Marie-Louise.
2. VILLEMAIN, Op.cit., vol.1, p.149.

of his century, have in fact a real validity when considered in the only manner ~~Napoleon~~ in which Napoleon was given to thinking about such matters, that ^(it) is to say, in²⁾ relationship to his own political ideas and practice. In the 18th century, said Napoleon, only Frederick the Great had known how to govern and he had learnt how^w to do so only by making war, all the rest, especially the writers, including Montesquieu, had been content to follow the precepts of Tacitus¹, who falsified history for the sake of eloquence.² Here Napoleon would appear to be underlining the source of many of his own political ideas; it was not in the pages of the 'Esprit des Lois' that he found the basis and essentials of his régime, but rather in the life and writings of Frederick II.

Napoleon said disappointingly little about the general ideas of Montesquieu, but on one occasion at least, if Villemain's account is to be trusted³, he did subject one of that author's minor works, the 'Dialogue de Sylla et d'Eucrate', to a detailed criticism from which it did not escape unscathed. Once again he was talking to Narbonne, who had, on his instructions, visited the École

1. It is well known that Napoleon had a great dislike for TACITUS and was even given to defending Nero against his chronicler. Here it is interesting to note, however, that at Erfurt, in 1809, he declared to Wieland that he found Montesquieu superior to Tacitus. (BUFFENOIR, Op.cit., p. 159.)

2. VILLEMMAIN, Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 149 et seq.

3. See below, p. 159, note 2.

Normale when Villemain himself was lecturing on this 'Dialogue'. Napoleon's opinion was not flattering:-

"...mais qu'est-ce que cette conversation de Sylla et d'un sophiste grec, dont vous étiez hier si fort occupé? De quelle lumière, de quelles idées justes cela peut-il remplir de jeunes esprits de notre temps et de mon règne? Quelle faste de langage! En vérité, si je m'en souviens bien, dans ce tête-à-tête c'est Sylla qui est le bel esprit et le rhéteur. Que veut dire ~~ce~~ ce bouclier qu'il avait sur les murailles d'Athènes et ce javelot qu'il avait^{*} à Orchomène? Jamais général romain ^{eut-}~~est-~~il un javelot? Et est-ce ainsi, par quelques images physiques toujours misérables et inaperçues dans la grandeur des masses, qu'on fait ~~se~~ saillir la puissance du génie et sa domination sur les hommes? Non: des colonnes dirigées, des marches tout à coup commandées, une force irrésistible jetée sur un seul point, et un homme à l'écart, immobile, qui prévoit, qui juge et qui inspire tout de sa pensée, voilà le grand Capitaine, soit avec la tactique et les feux de l'art moderne, soit avec les instruments inférieurs de mort, dont disposait l'antiquité.

Pour nous qui avons fait la guerre, pour vous (Narbonne) qui avez su l'organiser, voilà l'idée qu'il ^{faut}~~est~~ donner de cette puissance divine du Commandement militaire. Maintenant allons au fait. Quelle est la morale de ce parlage magnifique de Sylla? Aucune. L'écrivain, ou son pseudonyme grec, a l'air de donner des regrets à cette ancienne République Romaine qui ne pouvait plus durer trois jours. Il craint que Sylla

** Villemain's note.*

n'ait donné un fâcheux exemple, en prenant le pouvoir, et une inutile leçon de modération, en le quittant. Est-ce là ce qu'aurait dit Machiavel et ce que devait penser un esprit politique? N'était-ce pas le moment de comprendre et de bien expliquer la nécessité de ce qui, dans le monde, revient à certains, de ce que moi je devais faire dix-neuf ans plus tard? Non, je le répète, rien de cette pompeuse analyse des actes de Sylla n'est vrai; et la faire admirer, c'est fausser de jeunes esprits. ..."¹

Although ~~SAINT-BEUVE~~ doubts the reliability of VILLEMMAIN's reporting,² and may have much justification for so doing, the passage just quoted contains far too much of the real ~~Man~~ Napoleon to be a complete fabrication. The Emperor had obviously used his familiar technique of acquainting himself with the work under discussion, at some time beforehand. In the actual discussion his remarks rapidly attain a subjective level and his criticisms are chiefly concerned with factual points of practical politics, casting aside the language of rhetoric since the images in which it talks do not measure up to hard reality as he knows it. The pity

1. VILLEMMAIN, Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 149 et seq.

2. ~~SAINT-BEUVE~~ ('Lundis', vol. XI, p. 489) says: "On ne doit accueillir qu'avec la plus grande défiance tout ce que Villemmain nous a donné des conversations de M. de Narbonne avec Napoléon. C'est refait de tête et de mémoire, et en vue des circonstances présentes. Ce n'est pas plus vrai que les 'Conciones' ou le 'Dialogue de Sylla et d'Eucrate!'. le procédé est le même et l'intention plus louche. Villemmain est un rhétoricien, le contraire d'un esprit sincère historique et d'une nature véridique."

is that he should have spent himself at such length on this relatively unimportant work^{of} Montesquieu when a similar appreciation of certain chapters of the 'Esprit des Lois' would have been more revealing. However, from the few authentic references which we possess, it is fairly clear that, apart from some lip-service when the occasion demanded, Napoleon had little regard for Montesquieu's political insight. For Napoleon there was one way only to acquire ~~the~~ political wisdom, and that was through the exercise of political power. However pragmatic were the arguments of a writer they were of necessity drawn from the experience of others and being generalisations, failed to conform to Napoleon's firm opinion, borne out by his practice, that circumstances alter cases. If Napoleon found Frederick II a better teacher of politics than Montesquieu it was because he always preferred the man who could do a thing to the man who could merely write about it.

In this chapter we have, of necessity, been much more concerned with the political activities of Napoleon than with his literary culture and in view of the topic it could hardly have been otherwise. Of the personal elements which appear from the foregoing pages, the most interesting is the obvious, unsurprising paradox on religious matters. There can be little room for doubt that Napoleon was either an agnostic or^a deist, or even possibly an atheistic materialist, but his political interests forced him to repress whenever possible those ideologues who held the same type of views.

In matters of personal religious belief he was truly a son of the 18th. century even though he did not publicly avow it, but it is impossible to point to any one or two writers and say "there is the source of Napoleon's religious ideas." Not unnaturally he shared the ideas of the century in which he was born and educated, and was influenced by the whole cultural background of that century. However, as CHARPENTIER says¹, he was as far from the humanitarian ideas of the 18th century as he was from the France of the traditionalists. He shared the cynicism and the materialism of the century but not its faith in the inevitability^{-ibly} of human progress in the moral sphere. He did appear to share that faith in material progress which was so characteristic of the Encyclopaedists and at St. Helena he frankly connected this faith with a declaration of materialism, although as often, he may merely have been trying to torment the unfortunate Gourgaud: "...nous ne sommes que matière; l'homme a été créé par une certaine température de l'atmosphère. Les hommes^{sont}/jeunes et la terre est vieille. La race humaine n'a pas plus de six à sept mille ans d'existence, et dans des ~~milliards~~ milliers d'années d'aujourd'hui, l'homme sera bien différent de ce qu'il est à présent. Les sciences seront si avancées que peut-être trouvera-t-on le moyen de vivre toujours. La chimie végétale, la chimie agricole sont encore dans l'enfance.....L'aimant, l'électricité,

1. Op.cit., p. 205.

le galvanisme. Que de découvertes on fera dans des milliers d'années!"¹

In politics, after an early apprenticeship to the school of Rousseau and a certain amount of study of the group^dwork done by Montesquieu, Napoleon rapidly left all his masters behind to become not a great political writer, or thinker, but perhaps the greatest practitioner of the political arts that the world has ever seen. Almost certainly he owed his political greatness not to the works of any theorist, but to those same qualities, in particular to that rapid insight and perception of possibilities and reality, which had made him also a great captain.

1. GOURGAUD, Op.cit., vol.2,p.251. 16 Sept.1817.

III

NAPOLEON AND ROMANTICISM.

It has been said in previous pages that Napoleon shared all the major tastes of his day in literary and intellectual matters. However, there was nothing of the bel esprit in him, his interests were not dictated by the taste of the salons, but inculcated by his education or fostered by some inclination arising out of his character or racial background. Since he was not a man of literature, nor even an intellectual, in the narrower sense, it is not surprising that his tastes show little originality, rather is it to be wondered at that they embraced so many of the cultural manifestations of the day. As an individual Napoleon shared the viewpoint of Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists on matters of religion, although he strongly denied it as a politician, while he wholeheartedly carried forward the 18th century belief in science and material progress. In the theatre the classical, heroic, and disciplinarian sides of his nature, aided by his education, led him to love the great works of the French tragedy, almost to the exclusion of all others, and yet this same Napoleon was an enthusiastic admirer and defender of Ossian, of 'Paul et Virginie', and a sentimental reader of the 'Nouvelle Héloïse'.

This apparent paradox of taste was not at all remarkable. The intellectual and cultural history of the

18th century is almost based upon this dichotomy of reason and sentiment and there are enough instances of native Frenchmen who shared both points of view to ~~make~~ make it quite unnecessary to invoke Napoleon's Corsican background as a justification. In Napoleon, however, the streak of sentimentality was much less important than it seems to have been in a large part of the French reading public in the period before the Revolution. As we shall see there was a certain measure of sentiment in this hard man of war, a sentiment not unconnected with the Corsican feeling for the family or clan, but a sentiment which, in the young Napoleon, was not devoid of self-pity. Self-dramatisation is not far removed from self-pity and both of these were much in evidence in the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whom Napoleon adored in his most formative years. Self-dramatisation also, in various forms, came to play an important part in Napoleon's life; it was at first a useful political device which rapidly became a habit, as it did also with many another great man.

If there was any one aspect of Napoleon's mind which particularly predisposed him to appreciate the new literature it was his imagination, a faculty which was apparently more developed in him than in most of his contemporaries. The vast imperial designs for Europe, the grandiose character of his campaigns, the very contempt even for textbook strategy which marked his earliest military ventures, all of these show that Napoleon's imagination suffered no-

thing from being allied to such astounding powers of calculation, in fact the logic, precision, clearsightedness and ruthlessness all seem in the end to have been but the servants of this brimming imagination which ~~was~~ constantly called upon these powers, whose pre-occupation was with the possible, to help it achieve the impossible.

If we may assume that Napoleon's imagination, coupled with his cultural background, disposed him favourably towards incipient romanticism in literature, and as there can be little question of showing any great originality of taste on Napoleon's part, the important matter which remains is to arrive at a clear idea of his attitude ~~was~~ towards the new literature (the sign of a movement in ^{to} taste and emphasis) which ^{appeared} ~~occurred~~ in the late 18th century and developed during, and at times, it appeared, in spite of Napoleon's ~~reign~~ reign.

Although we are familiar with the idea of Napoleon reading and quoting Ossian at intervals throughout his life (although rarely at such frequent intervals or dramatic junctures as legend would have us believe) we are also used to regarding the Emperor as the enemy, indeed as the persecutor of Chateaubriand and of Mme de Staël. Both are based on fact and a superficial view might suggest that here again is a paradox although in truth there is none. It is necessary once more to take the political factor into account, to realise that the author of the songs of Ossian was not a

Frenchman, Jean-Jacques was dead, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre docile in political matters, while Chateaubriand and Mme de Staël were much alive and, for different reasons, opposed^{to} the Imperial régime. Napoleon's attitude to the two great founders of French romanticism has little to do with literature, it was the result of a clash of irreconcilable opinions, of unbending personalities, and even to a certain degree, of political necessity; in this work therefore, little will be said of these aspects, most of which have been adequately treated elsewhere.¹

If it is necessary to guard against ~~making~~ looking for paradoxes where none exists it is equally necessary to avoid using the term romantic or romanticism in a manner likely to indicate that they had any real literary meaning until late in the reign of Napoleon, apart from their use by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others to indicate something little more than 'picturesque'.² LAURE JUNOT, ~~who was later~~

1. P. GAUTIER, 'Madame de Staël et Napoléon', (Paris, 1903) covers this particular relationship in a comprehensive and masterly fashion.
G. CHARPENTIER, 'Napoléon et les Hommes de lettres de son temps' (Paris, 1935) deals with the political aspects of Napoleon's dealings with Chateaubriand as well as with many other lesser figures. Although the arrangement and form of this book leave much to be desired the factual account of the relationships is reasonably full.
 There is also an article in the 'Revue des Études Napoléoniennes' (vol. 2, 1912) p. 167 et seq. on 'Chateaubriand et Napoléon' by Albert Cassagne.
2. c.f. ROUSSEAU'S description of the Lac de Bienne from the 'Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire': "Les rives du lac de Bienne sont plus sauvages et romantiques que celles du lac de Genève."
F.C. GREEN 'French Novelists from the Revolution to Proust' (London and Toronto, 1931) quotes an attack by JOUY on

~~to become~~ the celebrated, or notorious Duchess of Abrantes, appears to fall into this trap in her 'Mémoires' when she describes a long discussion with Napoleon at St. Cloud, apparently in 1806.¹ This conversation would seem to be a proof of Napoleon's conscious leanings towards romanticism; he is said to have spoken of the revolution which was taking place in literature: "Lui aussi était comme nous, tout romantique. Ossian, comme on le sait, était de toutes les productions de la nouvelle école, celle qui se trouvait toujours en harmonie avec lui; il avait, comme on le sait aussi, les sensations d'une délicatesse infinie, et tout ce qui parle à l'imagination lui remuait l'âme vivement. Il n'y mettait aucune prétention." In part this is true, Napoleon indeed loved Ossian, he had a certain measure of the sensibility of the romantics, and above all a ~~power~~ powerful imagination, but nowhere else does he seem to have been aware of the 'revolution' in literature and nowhere else did he discuss it. Napoleon's liking for the new imaginative and evocative literature never apparently suggested ~~it~~ to him any possibilities of comparison to other types of literature, but only to other individual authors as for example when he compared Ossian to Homer, during the voyage to (from p. 166). the genre romantique, in his 'Hermite de Guyenne' (1813), when the word appears to have acquired more or less its present meaning, and he mentions that it had already been used occasionally in the same sense.

1. 'Mémoires', vol. VII, p. 68.

Egypt. It is likely that the Duchess, in view of her known literary sympathies, was recasting a remembered discussion on Ossian to use it as an added support for her own literary predilections.

It was in the field which we now call Pre-romanticism that Napoleon showed the greatest interest, in the works of those writers who were more or less unconsciously leading to a renewal of the form and substance of literature. Further, among these it was only the most outstanding who were known to Napoleon. Ossian apart, it was Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and the young Goethe whose novels he read and admired. Almost certainly he must have known something of the other, lesser, writers but except for Volney, author of the celebrated 'Ruines'¹ none of them is mentioned in his writings or conversations insofar as we know them. The important German literary movement of the Sturm und Drang seems to have passed unnoticed by Napoleon who, in his interview with Goethe at Erfurt, according to Talleyrand's version², admitted that he knew little of Wieland or of Schiller, having only read the latter's 'Thirty Years War', a work of which he had formed no very high opinion.

Once again lyric poetry was completely ignored, nowhere is there the slightest sign that Napoleon knew anything of the many imitators of Young's 'Night Thoughts',

1. 'Les Ruines, ou méditations sur les révolutions des empires' (Paris, 1791).

2. TALLEYRAND, 'Mémoires', vol. 1, p. 426 et seq.

nor of Gessner's 'Idylls', to which Paul van TIEGHEM attributes such a large role in preparing the way for Romanticism.¹ Nowhere is there any sign that Napoleon's readings, nor his tastes, in this type of literature were in any way remarkable or wide; just as he admired the great writers of tragedies who were universally admired, so did he admire those works of a more imaginative kind which were commonly appreciated by his contemporaries, although it must be admitted that the poems of Ossian probably made a greater impact upon him with their sham sublimity than they did on many of his fellows whose literary discernment was greater.

As was to be expected it was in his youth that Napoleon first began to feel the charm of this type of literature. His sentiment and his imagination were early stirred, as we have seen, by the works of Rousseau, although it was not the tearful 'Nouvelle Héloïse' but the equally ~~appeal~~ impassioned appeal for political liberation of the 'Contrat social' which at first produced the greatest effect on him. His views on Rousseau may have changed in later years, making the 'Contrat social' less and less welcome as a political text-book for his subjects, but the 'Nouvelle Héloïse' remained his constant companion, few books figured so often in the catalogues of his libraries and ^f few except for the great masters of tragedy were so often read at St. Helena.

1. P. van TIEGHEM, 'Le Prérromantisme', (Paris, 1923), vols. 1 and 2.

In common with most of the human race Napoleon underwent a period of emotional unrest during and just after adolescence and it was at this time that the influence of Rousseau's novel was first strongly felt. Whenever the rough draft of 'Clisson et Eugénie' may have been made it was certainly not much later than 1795 and it clearly shows the impact which the 'Nouvelle Héloïse' had made upon Napoleon.¹ Here, in this short ~~work~~ work the unpractised writer is clearly tending ~~the~~ towards the romantic view of life, a romanticism tinged with an heroic ideal from Plutarch, but which clings to the well-worn language of the 18th century and shows little sign of originality or genius.

For a young man of Napoleon's fervour it is not surprising that he should have attempted the literary expression of his feelings at a time ~~when~~ when one love affair had come to naught and his mind was much occupied with the possibility of others. 1796, the year of his marriage to Josephine and of the beginning of the first Italian Campaign, produced numerous letters in which the language and sentiments of the 'Nouvelle Héloïse' were frequent², but this style was soon replaced by the more familiar forceful Napoleonic prose as he became ever more successful. Rousseau's

1. See my previous thesis 'Rousseau et Napoléon' for a detailed study of the similarities between 'la Nouvelle Héloïse' and 'Clisson et Eugénie'.

2. See 'Rousseau et Napoléon' ch.IV.

novel, however, was still one of the books chosen for inclusion in the library to be taken to Egypt.

During the high summer of the Empire there is little evidence of Napoleon spending tearful hours over the letters of Julie and Saint-Preux, but the book still figured prominently in the Imperial libraries. More particularly, in the library of the Tuileries there was a copy in four volumes which bore the stamp Cabinet de l'Empereur, a stamp reserved for those books Napoleon kept apart for his personal use and which were normally housed in his study.¹ It is tempting to surmise that from the time of his second marriage in 1810 he spent many an hour basking in the reflected felicity of the Wolmar household at a time when he too enjoyed a few brief years of happiness in his own family circle. Unfortunately, for lack of proof, this idyllic possibility must remain a sentimental conjecture.

When the Empire had crumbled and Napoleon was on his lonely island in the ocean he once more turned to Rousseau's novel for consolation in his enforced leisure. In the very early days of his exile, before Longwood was ready to receive him, Napoleon spent a considerable time one day at the Briars, in the company of Las Cases, reading and discussing the book. During the afternoon he laid the volume aside with the words "cet ouvrage a du feu, il remue, il

1. 'Die Bibliothek Napoleons I und der Kaiserin Maria Luise', pub. by the Library Exhibition (Berlin) 1931. p.11.

inquiète" and he continued to discuss the author's attitude to love throughout his afternoon walk. That day, says Las Cases, ended as it had begun, with readings from the 'Nouvelle Héloïse'.¹

As Napoleon became more settled in his place of exile and less easily touched by facile emotions his critical habit returned. He began to be less stirred by the sentiments expressed by Rousseau and more critical of his faults and in particular of his improbabilities of plot, especially was he sceptical of the conduct of Wolmar towards Saint-Preux.² He did not confine himself to criticism of the subject matter of the book, however, but attacked the style as well, assailing Rousseau at one of his most vulnerable points, his verbosity. Napoleon was a ~~great~~ great lover of clarity and conciseness in literature, a characteristic which was coupled with his method of reading, by which he went straight to the essential points with hardly a glance at the surrounding mass of words. This method has great advantages, not only when dealing with Rousseau, but also with certain historians of the 18th century, in the reading of whose diffuse volumes Napoleon probably developed it. He suggested, in January 1816, after reading Vertot's 'Révolutions romaines', that a large amount of the book could be cut out and proceeded to illustrate his point by crossing out all that he considered inessential, declaring that it

1. LAS CASES, Op.cit., vol.1, pp. ~~225-226~~. 283-284.

2. GOURGAUD, Op.cit., vol.2, p.100.

would be indeed useful if this process were to be applied to all the major works of the French language, except perhaps Montesquieu.¹

It may well have been that this was the period at which Napoleon took it upon himself to correct Rousseau's style, applying the technique we have just spoken of to the 'Nouvelle Héloïse'. According to an article in the 'Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau',² there exists at Geneva a copy of the novel believed to have been part of the library which accompanied Napoleon ~~him~~ on his campaigns, and which he may have had with him later at the 'Briars'.³ In this volume are numerous corrections, made in pencil, which consist of deletions accompanied by a marginal note or two in Napoleon's hand. Almost without exception these corrections are of matters of style, ruthlessly removing what is superfluous or repetitive, leaving only the bare idea in its essential form. The effect of these passages, corrected by Napoleon, is well summed up by the author of the article, O. REVERDIN, thus: "...ces corrections parlent à l'imagination. Elles nous montrent, aux prises l'un avec l'autre, le tempérament de Napoléon, tout de promptitude et

1. LAS CASES, Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 365.

2. Vol. XXX, 1943-5 (Geneva, 1946). O. REVERDIN, 'Napoléon correcteur de style de Rousseau', p. 143 et seq. This article contains the full texts of the corrections by Napoleon.

3. See my previous 'Rousseau et Napoléon' p. 128 et seq. for the probable history of this copy of the 'Nouvelle Héloïse' and how it may have been at St. Helena.

d'action, et celui de Rousseau, porté à la rêverie."

During the remainder of his exile Napoleon spent less time and study on the 'Nouvelle Héloïse' and his remarks about Rousseau were chiefly confined to brief critical pronouncements on his political ~~and~~ or philosophical views. However, this does not detract from the fact that Rousseau's novel was one of the works which Napoleon knew extremely well and returned to at intervals throughout his life. Although he may have wished to ^{the flow} stem/of words in which Rousseau too frequently submerged his sentiments, there is little doubt that Napoleon was moved, as were most of his contemporaries, by this book which did so much to open the way for a new literature.

~~We have already noticed that Napoleon's taste in works which we now call 'pre-romantic' seems to have closely followed the generally accepted ideas of the day, and confined itself for the most part to those authors who were the major precursors of the new movement.~~ It is not surprising ~~therefore~~ that Rousseau's literary pupil and the friend of his last years, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, should also have won Napoleon's admiration for his novels if not for his 'scientific' works. In view of all the circumstances it was inevitable that a relationship of some kind should establish its^elf between the two men. Napoleon had shown an interest in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's novels as early as 1791, when he as a young lieutenant at Auxonne had taken

copious notes¹ from the 'Chaumière indienne', being obviously much ~~more~~ impressed by the exoticism of its vocabulary. Words from the Hindustani and other Indian languages, which abound in this book, were noted by Napoleon, frequently because of their strangeness of sound, it would appear, and for their evocative effect, rather than out of a simple desire to produce a glossary.

As a member of the Institut Bernardin would certainly have come into contact with Napoleon on the latter's return from Italy at the end of the first~~st~~ Italian Campaign, but the intriguing author, always ready to find new protectors and new pensions, forwarded~~d~~ copies of his major works to ~~Napoleon~~ Napoleon within a few days of his arrival in Paris.² Napoleon's letter of thanks already seems to indicate something of his opinion of Bernardin. Although the books are said to have included the novels and the 'Études de la Nature', Napoleon pointedly ignores this last work and says: "Il manque à la 'Chau~~mi~~ère indienne' une troisième soeur". He does justice to Bernardin when he says, in the same letter "...votre plume est un pinceau".² It is not improbable also that a few years ^{earlier} Napoleon had also been attracted by the Rousseauesque philosophical pretensions of the 'Chaumière indienne', a mood which had become quite foreign to him by 1797.

¹ 'Manuscrits inédits', p. 506 et seq.

² 'Corresp. Générale', vol. III, p. 461, No. 2387. This letter, dated from Paris, 23 frimaire, an VI (13 Dec. 1797) thanks Bernardin for the copies of his works which Napoleon says he has just received. He had returned to Paris a week before, on Dec. 5, 1797.

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was one of the few writers of lasting merit to receive a pension from the consular government (decree of Aug. 27, 1802). We learn from PELET de la LOZERE¹ that when Napoleon mentioned this fact in the Conseil d'État, during a discussion on the founding of the Imperial University, in 1807, he made it clear that ^{the} pension had been awarded to Bernardin for his two novels 'Paul et Virginie' and the 'Chaumière indienne' ^{and} he roundly condemned once more the 'Études de la Nature'. In Napoleon's opinion the author should have been expelled from the Institut for such ignorance of the most elementary scientific principles as he displayed in that work and its use as a textbook in schools was expressly and very ~~not~~ wisely forbidden.

Throughout his life Napoleon maintained this same attitude towards Bernardin and at St. Helena he still found ~~him~~ 'Paul et Virginie' a book which stirred his feelings deeply but did not blind ^{him} to the weakness of the author's scientific knowledge. In his new enforced leisure Napoleon found time to be more critical of the novelist also and ^{enough} he still did justice to the author's qualities² and described his style as " le langage de l'âme"³, he criticised

1. Quoted in the 'Dictionnaire Napoléon' (Paris, 1854) 2nd ed. pp. 528-529 (art. 'Université') also in 'Napoléon, Vues politiques', (Paris, 1939), pp. 220-221.
2. MONTHOLON, Op.cit., vol. 2, p. 127, and vol. 1, p. ~~128-129~~ 264. GOURGAUD, Op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 132-133 and vol. 2, p. 98.
3. MONTHOLON, Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 264.

certain aspects of 'Paul et Virginie' which shocked his ideas of probability. He considered that the letter which Virginie^{ie} ~~wrote~~ wrote to her mother from France was laughable¹ while the character and purpose of the hermit who lived alone also appeared quite ridiculous to him².

When this last criticism was made, in February 1821, Napoleon had but three months to live and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was almost the last writer, along with his master Jean-Jacques, to suffer the criticisms of the fallen Emperor. The Grand Marshal Bertrand, in his frank account of Napoleon's last days, recounts how, on this occasion², Napoleon read 200 pages of 'Paul et Virginie' and proceeded to work out the budget of Mme de la Tour: "Elle vivait dans une case avec sa fille et un vieux nègre, Dominique, qui cultivait 20 arpents. L'Empereur suppose qu'elle doit employer son nègre. Elle devait avoir une pension, quelques diamants qu'elle avait vendus. Mille écus de rentes, voilà son budget tel que l'Empereur le suppose. Elle mange sur des feuilles de bananiers; cependant la vaisselle est si bon marché." Not content with this realist criticism Napoleon passed to wider issues and personalities, linking Bernardin with Rousseau, declaring that they both professed a great love of morality which their own conduct did not bear out. He inveighed against the scientific ignorance of Bernardin and

1. GOURGAUD, Op.cit., vol.2,p.98.

2. BERTRAND, 'Cahiers de Sainte-Hélène',p.58 (8/2/21).

the feckless parasitic life of Jean-Jacques, adding a word of praise, by way of comparison, for Voltaire, who had, he said, made his fortune by the fruits of his literary labours¹. He again repeated his praise of 'Paul et Virginie': "Qu'il (Bernardin) fasse des fables, des romans comme 'Paul et Virginie', c'est bien, il y excellait....", but, returning once more to his usual example he again criticised the theory of the tides from the 'Harmonies de la Nature', the very first criticism which he had ever levelled at Bernardin, in 1789, when he first looked into a copy of the 'Études de la Nature'.²

Napoleon appreciated the lasting contributions which both Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre had made to literature, the depth of sentimental analysis of the former and the picturesque exoticism of the latter. He had sufficient literary taste, possibly innate, possibly inculcated by conversations with Lebrun, Fontanes and others, to reject the over-emphasis and improbabilities of both of them. As early as 1797 he was apparently correct in his judgment of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre when, passing over the plot and the psychology of 'Paul et Virginie' he is content with the remark "...votre plume est un pinceau". Finally it is to the credit of Napoleon that he did not attempt to deny the literary ability of the two authors although he developed the

1. Later researches have proved conclusively that Voltaire gained his fortune not by his literary activities, but by his financial and business acumen. v. DONVEZ, 'De Quoi vivait Voltaire', (Paris, 1949).
2. MASSON et BIAGI, 'Napoléon, Manuscrits inédits', p. 280.

~~the~~ greatest dislike for the political, ideas of the one and an open contempt for the scientific ability of the other.

Both Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre had, in different ways, explored new ~~fields~~ fields in their novels, both ~~of~~ ~~of~~ them had looked outside of France for essential ingredients in their work. Bernardin had situated his story right away from France, in the tropics, using the exotic flora and fauna as a means of holding the reader's attention and ~~demonstrating~~ demonstrating his own descriptive powers. At the same time he was probably not entirely uninfluenced by foreign works such as 'Robinson Crusoe', but it was Jean-Jacques who most clearly stepped outside the French tradition to take his inspiration from the English novelist Richardson and to introduce into the 'Nouvelle Héloïse' that rather fashionable character in mid-eighteenth century France, the virtuous Englishman, in the person of Lord Edward Bomston.¹ In his youth Napoleon had shared the admiration of his century for things English, but for different reasons than those normally current. As we see from his 'Nouvelle Corse',² he admired the English as friends of Corsican independence, as protectors of Corsican exiles like King Theodore and Paoli. With the Revolution in France and his own break with Paoli Napoleon's enthusiasm for England waned and the rest of his career contained much that maintained his respect for the English, but little that could renew his liking for

1. See TEXTE, 'J-J. Rousseau et les origines du cosmopolitisme littéraire.' (Paris, 1895).

2. 'Manuscripts inédits', p. 381 et seq.

them. Quite ~~much~~ apart from his personal feelings, however, Napoleon was concerned throughout his reign to arouse and sustain French nationalism to the point of xenophobia, a studied policy which¹ applied to literature as well as to politics.

One of the essentials of the new literature which was heralded by Rousseau and his pupil Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was the very cosmopolitanism both in ideas, form, and outlook which Napoleon was frequently at pains to discourage in later writers like Mme de Staël. At St. Helena also Napoleon criticised the cosmopolitan tendency in both Rousseau and Voltaire insofar as it concerned the English¹ but he had unconsciously aided the movement into which it was to develop by his own love for one of the early inspirations of Romanticism, Ossian. It is very doubtful if ~~Napoleon~~ Napoleon ever considered the possibility of a connection between the vogue of Ossian in ~~France~~ France and the search by Mme de Staël for fresh themes and inspirations in the literatures of foreign countries, although the two phenomena are manifestations of the same imaginative urge. The very connection of Ossian with the book 'de l'Allemagne' by Mme de Staël brings to mind also the fact that Napoleon was, ~~at any rate~~ ~~in his youth,~~ an admirer of Goethe's 'Werther' and well

1. LAS CASES, Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 665, June 1st, 1816.

"L'Empereur attribuait ~~en~~ grande partie au beau portrait de ~~milord~~ Édouard, dans la 'Nouvelle Héloïse', et à quelques pièces de Voltaire, la belle réputation du caractère anglais en France. Il s'étonnait de la facilité de l'opinion dans ce temps-là: Voltaire et Jean-Jacques l'avaient gouvernée à leur gré..."

enough acquainted with the book to discuss fine points of detail with the author when they met in 1808. In truth, ^{few} ~~the~~ young men of the day outside the actual body of ^t littérateurs and beaux esprits can have been more affected than Napoleon by this new intellectual cosmopolitanism ~~thence~~, although he does not seem to have recognised it for what it really was.

Napoleon's taste for both 'Werther' and Ossian seems to have come to him comparatively late. In his early notebooks and letters there is no mention of either of them, but they both first come into prominence in ARNAULT's account of the voyage to Egypt and its preparation.¹ We have seen how Napoleon was brimming with Ossianic ideas when he was preparing his Egyptain Campaign and how he read the poems on board the Orient. ~~It would seem that he was in the habit of reading Ossian aloud, a privilege he shared with Corneille.~~ At one point during the voyage, according to ARNAULT, both Ossian and 'Werther' entered into the discussion ~~together~~ at the same time. Werther himself at one point quotes Ossian², lines which Napoleon said came from the songs of Selma but Arnault assured him that they were from the poem of Berathon. Each of them wagered a Louis on his choice and when Ossian was consulted Napoleon was the loser, but as often happened on such occasions, he forgot to pay the louis.³

1. ARNAULT, Op.cit., vol.IV, p.84.

2. According to ARNAULT this was the passage from Berathon, beginning "Zéphir importun, laisse-moi reposer: laisse-moi rafraîchir ma tête dans la rosée du ciel, dont la nuit m'a couvert..." (Letourneur's translation). See also

P.van TIEGHEM, 'Ossian en France', vol.1, ch,VII ('Werther' et

3. ARNAULT, Op.cit., vol.IV, p.121 et seq. Ossian).

We hear little more of 'Werther' during Napoleon's life except for the occasion at Weimar when he discussed it with its author and claimed to have read it seven times, a claim which is not altogether incredible if he had it with him during the voyage to Egypt and throughout the Egyptian Campaign. The actual question discussed by Napoleon and Goethe was that of the motive for Werther's suicide¹, a discussion which has given rise to ~~much~~ conflicting comment by later writers.²

If 'Werther' ~~was~~, as seems probable, enjoyed but a short spell of favour with Napoleon, Ossian, on the other hand can claim to have been, with Corneille, his most constant literary companion. Napoleon's interest in Ossian contributed greatly to the vogue of Ossian, the mode ossianique, in France, a literary fashion which, according to Van Tieghem³, who quotes Lamartine in support⁴, "s'était exercée peu après sa première campagne d'Italie; elle se développa à son retour d'Égypte, et donna tous ses efforts lorsque le vainqueur fut devenu le maître." Another contemporary witness, Delécluze, also quoted by VAN TIEGHEM⁵, says that the spread of the Ossianic cult, which was due to Napoleon, was so great that it held its own with the prevailing

1. J.H. ROSE, 'The Personality of Napoleon', p.211.

2. See Appendix F for a clarification of this question.

3. 'Ossian en France', vol.2, p.21.

4. 'Confidences', livre VI, vi. "C'était le moment où Ossian, le poète de ce génie des ruines et des batailles, régnait sur l'imagination de la France."

5. Op.cit., vol.2, p.21. (Delécluze, 'Souvenirs de soixante années' (Paris, 1862), p.48.).

mania for ancient Greece, and Ossian offset the glory of Homer. VAN TIEGHEM holds that the mode ossianique corresponded roughly with the rise and fall of Napoleon and was almost entirely due to his taste for this vague emotive poetry.¹ Even as early as 1797 no less a critic than Fontanes praised Ossian in a letter to Napoleon, saying that he was reputed to carry a copy of the poet's works always with him in his pocket, even in the thick of the fray,² just as Alfred de Musset later said that a copy of Ossian crossed the ~~Barr~~ Beresina with Napoleon.³

There is little or nothing to be added to the various references to Ossian during Napoleon's career as Consul and Emperor which VAN TIEGHEM has collected in his 'Ossian en France'. He tells of the many manifestations of the Ossianic cult during this time, including Le Sueur's opera 'Ossian, ou les Bardes', at the first night of which, in 1804, Napoleon and Josephine were present. The composer was richly rewarded with the cross of the Legion of Honour and sums totalling 8,400 francs.⁴ In 1800 a medallion-portrait of Ossian appeared on the walls of the library at Malmaison, a sign of especial favour which was further reflected ~~in~~ in

1. Ibid., vol. 2, ch. 1, p. 3.

2. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 6, ('Lettre à Bonaparte - Mémorial de 22 août, 1797'). Quoted also by SAINT-LEBEUVE, 'Portraits littéraires', II, p. 264.

3. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 10. (Quotes MUSSET, 'Oeuvres', IX, 137 - 'Un mot sur l'art moderne'). There seems to be no other proof of this.

4. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 128.

the commissions received by Gérard¹ and Girodet² for large canvasses on Ossianic subjects.³

From the early days of Napoleon's reign Ossian was recognised almost as an official 'favourite poet', indeed the First Consul had told Népomucène Lemer cier that just as Alexander had chosen Homer and Augustus had chosen ~~Vergil~~ Vergil, so he Napoleon had chosen Ossian as his favourite poet, adding that the others were already taken!⁴ The Ossianic cult was ~~very~~ rapidly taken up by courtiers and flatterers, giving rise to the numerous translations and adaptations of the songs which were produced by Baour-Lormian⁵ and others and became a marked feature of the literary scene during the Empire.⁶ Advantage was taken of this well-known taste

1. François Gérard, baron, (1770-1837). Pupil of Pajou, of Brenet, and later of David (1786). His best known work is the 'Bataille d'Austerlitz' (shown at the salon of 1810). He was best known as a portraitist and his sitters included most of the Imperial family, Louis XVIII, the Tsar, and Wellington. His Ossianic canvas was 'Ossian évoquant les fantômes sur les bords du Lora'.
2. Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson (known as Girodet de Roucy) (1767-1824). Pupil of David. He grew enthusiastic over Ossian and produced Ossianic pictures for Malmaison, 'Les Ombres des guerriers français reçues par Ossian dans le palais d'Odin', the original of which is now lost.
3. VAN TIEGHEM, Op.cit., vol. 2, p. 142.
4. Ibid., p. 8 (quoting LEMERCIER, 'Moïse' (1823), p. 209).
5. Pierre-Marie-François-Louis BAOUR (1772-1854), b. at Toulouse, he added LORMIAN to his name around 1795, when his literary work began to appear (a translation of 'Jerusalem delivered'). Opposed by inclination to the philosophical sect, he embraced the cult of Ossian and his translation of the bard's works was admirably timed to coincide with the rise of Napoleon. He received many honours from the Emperor and became to some extent a court poet, writing poems on the Concordat, the marriage of Napoleon and Marie-Louise, and the birth of the King of Rome. He did not hesitate to change his allegiance at the Restoration and was received into the Academy in 1815.
6. VAN TIEGHEM, Op.cit., vol. 2, chs. II and III.

of Napoleon by the city of Padua, which sent Cesarotti, the Italian translator of Ossian, to greet Napoleon on its behalf, to Milan. Napoleon invited the translator to dinner where he sat between the Emperor and the Viceroy Eugène while the conversation was for a long time taken up by ~~the~~ praise of Ossian.¹

While still more examples could be found of Napoleon's admiration for Ossian during the Consulate and Empire it is just as interesting to see that he did not desert his favourite poet during the sad years of exile, when he might have been expected to turn against the romantic ideas of his youth. In the accounts of the surrender at Rochefort and the voyage to St. Helena written by English naval officers, all three of them mention Napoleon's liking for Ossian. MAITLAND tells us that Ossian was among Napoleon's books on the ~~Bellerophon~~ Bellerophon²; GLOVER, secretary to Admiral Cockburn, who commanded the Northumberland in which Napoleon travelled to St. Helena, discussed Ossian with him and the ex-Emperor said that he did not know what the poems were like in English but they were very fine in French³. The surgeon of the Northumberland, WARDEN, a Scot, reported the following remark made to him by Napoleon: "You have a writer whom I greatly admire; I believe he is of your country, a Scotchman - Macpherson, the author of Ossian."⁴ This state-

1. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 8.

2. "The Surrender of Buonaparte and his residence on H.M.S. Bellerophon", London, 1826, p. 139.

3. USSHER and GLOVER, 'Napoleon's Last Voyages', London, 1895, (ed. J. H. Rose), p. 109.

4. "Letters written on Board H.M.S. Northumberland" (1816) p. 135.

ment is interesting in that it is the only time Napoleon makes any ~~recorded~~ recorded reference to the authorship of Ossian, a question in which he seems to have taken little interest, accepting the poems, or rather their translations, at their face value and finding them sufficiently moving in themselves without being worried about their authenticity.

It would appear that Ossian was never chosen for reading aloud on the days when after-dinner readings took place at St. Helena since the chroniclers of the exile, painstaking recorders of even the most ephemeral novel perused by their master, make no mention of the bard. Unless both MAITLAND'S and GLOVER'S accounts are wrong Napoleon had a copy of Ossian with him on the Bellerophon and the Northumberland, a copy which would have remained with him at St. Helena, so that, having the book at hand, it must have been of deliberate choice that it was not included in the readings. This is not altogether strange since it was ^{usual} ~~usual~~ to choose plays, which were obviously more suitable for reading aloud, but it may well have been also that Napoleon found the emotions called up by Ossian were too personal to be shared. On one occasion, August 7th, 1816, Napoleon talked as if he were no longer so great an admirer of Ossian as he had been formerly. LAS CASES¹ recalls a conversation about Bernadotte in which Napoleon claimed that the marshal's son bore the name Oscar because he, Napoleon, had been his godfather and

1. Op.cit., vol. 2, p. 133.

at that time, he said, he was full of twaddle about Ossian ("je radotais d'Ossian"). Whether or not his passion for Ossian had declined, according to Chateaubriand, Napoleon read the songs again, in Cesarotti's Italian translation, shortly before his death¹, an event which, if true, would strengthen the idea that towards the end he returned once more to those books which had been his companions during the early days of his military career.

It is to be regretted that almost all of Napoleon's critical remarks about Ossian are expressions of praise and usually very brief. Nowhere, not even during the voyage to Egypt, did he venture any reasoned criticisms, as he did of Corneille, of Rousseau, or even of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. In consequence of this it is not possible from Napoleon's own comments to gain any clear idea of why he liked Ossian, nor of which aspects of the poems he most admired. Although we can be sure that Napoleon held Ossian in the greatest esteem we can only hazard guesses as to the reasons for this esteem. Almost all of the possible guesses in this field have already been made by a variety of writers including Villemain, Sainte-Beuve, and even Anatole France, guesses which have been collected and analysed by Paul VAN TIEGHEM, whose conclusions leave little to

1. 'Mémoires d'outre-tombe', vol. 2, p. 662. I have not been able to trace the source of this information and the writer may have been repeating a current legend. However, in his edition of the 'Mémorial' of LAS CASES, M. Marcel Dunan states (vol. 1, p. 224, footnote 1) that Cesarotti's translation of Ossian was taken to St. Helena.

be added.^{1/}

If there is any fault in VAN TIEGHEM's reasoning on the question of Napoleon's liking for Ossian it is that he dismisses too rapidly the attitude which Villemain attributed to the adulators of Napoleon: "(ils) ne manquaient pas de trouver ~~un~~ rapport, une affinité secrète, entre l'héroïsme simple et rude des guerriers calédoniens, et la simplicité, la candeur d'héroïsme qu'ils attribuaient au héros moderne."² If this was the natural attitude of flatterers it does not appear any the less real as an attitude Napoleon may have adopted himself, especially after the first Italian Campaign. At a time when French affairs were almost anarchical, when valour and daring could achieve so much, and a successful general was almost a law unto himself, it does not seem improbable that Napoleon should identify himself with these semi-lawless warriors of the ~~ancient~~ songs of Ossian who fashioned their own destinies. Furthermore, what better preparation could there be for this attitude than the intense self-dramatisation which had been a characteristic of the young disciple of Rousseau, only a few years earlier.

It is possible that Napoleon merely found in Ossian a source of fantasies which answered half-realised ambitions within him, or perhaps simply ~~as~~ a safety-valve for his brimming imagination, "un thème vague et comme musical qui

1. VAN TIEGHEM, op.cit., vol.2, pp.11-13.

2. Quoted by VAN TIEGHEM from VILLEMAIN, 'Dix-Huitième Siècle' 6e leçon, ~~11e~~ p.4.

lui permettait de rêver", in the words of SAINT-~~BEUVE~~¹. VAN TIEGHEM, however, looks deeper; was it possible, he asks², that Napoleon, who said "Pour moi, l'immortalité, c'est le souvenir laissé dans la mémoire des hommes"³ found a sympathetic echo in these songs, whose heroes^e, unlike those of ancient Greece, had no supernatural protection, but relied on their own strength and courage to win for them this same immortality of glory. Enlarging upon this, Van Tieghem sees in the very paucity of supernatural elements in Ossian a further attraction for the fundamentally irreligious Napoleon.

Taking as his basis another passage from the 'Mémoires' of Bourrienne⁴, who says that Napoleon had a vague, unrealistic side to his ~~nature~~ character, (by which he probably meant that he had a powerful ~~imaginative~~ imagination) which was stirred by Ossian, while the positive part of his nature delighted in Corneille, Van Tieghem, whilst denying this, draws a parallel between Ossian and Corneille which is not without value. He believes that it was not the vagueness, not the 'nuages' in Ossian which Napoleon admired, but rather the character of Ossian's heroes^e, their valour, their noble souls, their rectitude, and their austere pompous virtue, like that of the Roman ~~her~~ heroes of Corneille, who shared

1. 'Causeries du Lundi', vol. 7, pp. 504-505. Not quoted by VAN TIEGHEM, whose quotations from Sainte-Beuve are, on this particular topic, apparently rather pointless and do not form a very coherent paragraph. (Op.cit. vol. 2, p. 11).

2. Op.cit., vol. 2, p. 12.

3. BOURRIENNE, 'Mémoires', II, p. 421. (Quoted by V.T.).

4. Ibid., III, p. 171.

their passion for glory. All these things are to be found more directly expressed in Corneille without the concomitant vagueness, but in both Ossian and Corneille there are the same lack of concrete detail, the same feeling of abstraction, the same hyperbolical tendency, and a similar degree of over-emphatic sublimity.¹ Here is the most logical of all the explanations of Napoleon's preference, even though it may be perhaps a little too rational to explain such an irrational phenomenon as the literary taste of an individual.

As a final reason VAN TIEGHEM, suggests that it may have been the vaguely poetic and pompous prose of Le Tourneur in his translation of Ossian which attracted Napoleon. He had a poor ^{opinion} ~~idea~~ of verse except in the theatre, and read it extremely badly. However badly he may have read Ossian (or Le Tour[↑]neur) he was not troubled by rhythm or rime, which would in any case have made little effect on him, but he was free to devote his attention entirely to the evocative pleasure of the tales themselves and to the sentiments expressed in them.²

Napoleon's admiration for Ossian may have been due to ~~any~~ any one or more, or perhaps all, of the reasons we have discussed, but almost certainly it was not due to the reason which SAINTE-BEUVE, as a standard-bearer of romanticism, would have us believe. In his attempt to place Napoleon

1. VAN TIEGHEM, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 13.

2. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 13.

squarely on the side of the Romantics he says of his attitude to Ossian: "Il provoquait des idées, un genre et un ordre de créations dont il cherchait vainement le poète autour de lui. Ossian, qu'il invoquait souvent, n'était qu'un thème vague et ^{comme} musical qui lui permettait de rêver, ce que nul ne réalisait à son gré; ce n'était qu'un nom dont il saluait un genre et un génie inconnu."¹ In his next sentence SAINTE-BEUVE would also make us think that Napoleon was hoping to see tragedy develop into something in between Corneille and Shakespeare, presumably into something which resembled the plays of the Romantics, and which was, incredibly enough, what Ossian symbolised for him. Such arguments are mere play upon words: if Ossian had any symbolic value for Napoleon it was probably best expressed by Girodet in his picture, now lost, of 'Ossian welcoming the shades of French warriors to the palace of Odin'.²

Although SAINTE-BEUVE was, in the instance just quoted, playing the sophist, his contention that Napoleon was an unsuspecting forerunner of Romanticism is true in fields other than the theatre. To claim that Napoleon would have favoured

1. 'Lundis', vol. 7, p. 504.

2. This title also illustrates the curious confusion of thought by which Ossian was quite unhistorically and unjustifiably coupled with Scandinavian mythology. This is remarked upon by M. Dunan in his edition of the 'Mémorial' (vol. 2, p. 133, n. 2) where he states that this wrong impression caused Bernadotte to purchase Gérard's picture 'Ossian évoquant les fantômes sur les bords du Lora' in 1814, as a reminder of the ancient 'national' beliefs of Sweden.

the plays of the Romantics is wildly extravagant, his whole attitude to Romanticism would have been coloured not by literary but by political considerations. If proof of this be needed we have only to examine Napoleon's treatment of the two writers who, during his reign, could claim already to represent different aspects of the Romantic movement, they were Chateaubriand and Mme de Staël.

As a result of the strong emphasis which Romanticism placed upon individualism and the reaction of the individual against his environment, the movement of necessity attracted to itself those who were by nature ill-designed to fit into the Napoleonic scheme. There is much truth in Chateaubriand's complaint that Napoleon wished to regiment literature¹ and he chiefly desired to do so in order to produce a period of literary glory which would rival that of Louis XIV. ~~Viewed~~ Viewed dispassionately Napoleon's calculations were quite logical. The great literary age of the 17th century followed the troubles of the Fronde, just as the Empire followed the Revolution, and in both periods France had entered upon an epoch of stability, if not of tranquillity, of order, of discipline, and of greatness, under an all-powerful despot who was, on balance, benevolent. In the intellectual sphere both periods come at the end of great movements of ideas, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. It so happened that Napoleon either could not know, or overlooked, some very import-

1. 'Mémoires d'outre-tombe', (ed. by Levaiillant) vol. 2, p. 49.

ant factors affecting the development of literature. The great writers of the French Classical Age probably owed more to the 16th century rediscovery of ancient Greece, to Richelieu and to the founding of the Academy than they did directly to Louis XIV . They had also that enthusiasm which comes of being innovators and a great contempt for their immediate literary ancestors.

One of the capital errors of Napoleon's literary policy, as we shall see, was to try to compete with the age of Louis XIV on its own ground, by using genres and styles in which it alone had excelled. After an age in which almost every one of the solid foundations of the old society had been sapped ~~from within~~ from within and without, Napoleon tried to rebuild the literary edifice of an hundred years before, after even its greatest admirers, like Voltaire, had almost unconsciously assisted in completely undermining it. The new epoch of literary greatness was approaching, but it was to use its own forms, the novel and the lyric poem, and impose its own values, it was to be dedicated to the cult of the individual and not a disciplined expression of general psychological truth. In their conception of the monarch's role both Louis XIV and Napoleon could be called Romantics, and both of them had so identified the state with himself that there could be room for no ~~other~~ other individuality; here lies the crux of Napoleon's attitude towards Romanticism. He could appreciate and even enjoy the purely literary romanticism which was becoming evident

in the works of Rousseau and of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, to say nothing of Ossian, but the real rebellious full-blooded Romanticism, which like so much in Napoleon's own personality, sprang from self-dramatisation, this was too much for him, as we shall see from his treatment of Mme de Staël and Chateaubriand.

By its nature Romanticism, even before it was fully conscious of itself, implied not merely an attitude to literature, but to life, to society, and thus to politics. In spite of this it did not imply any consistent political outlook to all its adherents at any one time even, as we see from the diametrically opposed views of Chateaubriand and Mme de Staël, who were only united by their dislike of Napoleon,¹ but in both cases this dislike had its deepest roots in personal feelings since both had, at one time sought the despot's favour. It is truly difficult to disentangle the feelings of Napoleon towards these two writers on purely literary matters because of the involved pattern of political and personal dislikes and animosities which they provoked in him. Since this study is interested in these relationships only insofar as they concern Napoleon and literature an attempt will be made to eliminate the detail of political complications in dealing with them.

1. An example of the opposing viewpoints of Mme de Staël and of Chateaubriand is to be found in the 'Lettre à M. de Fontanes' (published at the end of the 1875 (Paris) edition of the 'Génie du Christianisme') on the second edition of Mme de Staël's 'De la Littérature'.

The story of Napoleon's relations with Chateaubriand¹, both political and literary,^{revolves} around one major work, the 'Génie du Christianisme'. When Chateaubriand returned to France from emigration, early in 1800, he had already produced, whilst in exile, his 'Essai sur les révolutions'², and he was known to be at work on other major projects, but his return to France and his comparatively favourable reception by the new government was due not to his literary fame or ability but rather to the protection of his friend Fontanes.³ In March 1801 Chateaubriand published an extract from his promised new work and this extract was 'Atala'. The success of 'Atala' seemed to augur well for the ~~'Génie du Christianisme'~~ 'Génie du Christianisme' itself, but at the same time it aroused the criticism and derision of the powerful, or at least influential group of ideologues centred around the Institut. It was at this very same period that Napoleon was pushing forward with certain measures of internal policy, the re-establishment of the Catholic Church and the Concordat, measures which had most to fear from the influence of this same group of ideologues so that here, at least, was an enmity which the author and the Consul shared.

1. An excellent résumé of this relationship is given by Hippolyte BUFFENOIR, 'Napoléon 1er et Chateaubriand' in the 'Revue politique et littéraire' (1898) 4e série, vol. X, No. 8, p. 236 et seq.
2. London, 1797.
3. See Yvon LE FEBVRE, 'Le Génie du Christianisme de Chateaubriand', Paris, 1929, chs. I and II.

The success of 'Atala' enabled Chateaubriand's faithful friend Fontanes, whose influence with the Bonaparte family was continually increasing, to introduce him into the circles of Lucien and Elisa Bonaparte, where he read some of the outstanding parts of the 'Génie du Christianisme' before it was published. Through these channels news of the coming work and of its immediate usefulness reached the First Consul, who took steps to win over the author to his government. Chateaubriand, avid for celebrity and success, was not blind to his opportunity and in letters and articles in the 'Mercure',¹ he had already given signs of admiration for Napoleon. He at first thought of dedicating the work to the First Consul, but in the event this was left to the second edition of 1803. As it was, the preface of the first edition contained certain passages of thinly veiled homage and the long-awaited work itself appeared on the 24 Germinal, year X, four days before the celebration of the great Te Deum at Notre Dame for the signing of the Concordat and of the Peace of Amiens.²

Napoleon must have been very pleased to find such a powerful literary ally for his religious policies. If his later treatment of Chateaubriand in offering him a diplom-

1. It is interesting to note here that this same 'Mercure' was suppressed in 1807 because of an article Chateaubriand published in it. (Thompson, op.cit. p. 201).
2. LE FEBVRE, Op.cit., pp. 68-81. The timing of the 'Génie', according to LE FEBVRE, was also largely due to the advice of Fontanes.

atic post in Rome was not sufficient proof of his gratitude we have the testimony of MÉNEVAL¹, who says that Napoleon was highly pleased by the coincidence of the publication of Chateaubriand's book and the signing of the Concordat. BAUSSET² also says that when the second edition was dedicated ~~to~~ to Napoleon he declared that he had never been better ~~praised~~ praised.

Chateaubriand's own account of the event is contained in a preface to the work which he wrote in 1828 and in it he says: "Bonaparte, qui désirait alors fonder sa puissance sur la première base de la société, et qui venait de faire des arrangements avec la cour de Rome, ne mit aucun obstacle à la publication d'un ouvrage utile à la popularité de ses desseins. Il avait à lutter contre les hommes qui l'entouraient, contre des ennemis déclarés de toutes concessions religieuses: il fut donc heureux d'être défendu au dehors par l'opinion que le 'Génie du Christianisme' appelait. Plus tard il se repentit de sa méprise; et au moment de sa chute il avoua que l'ouvrage qui avait le plus nui à son pouvoir était le 'Génie du Christianisme'."³ The last part of this

1. 'Mémoires', vol. 1, p. 84.

2. 'Mémoires', vol. 1, p. 19.

3. Quoted from the preface of 1828, as printed in the edition of 1875 (vol. 1, p. 2). No exact reference has been found for the last statement, which CHATEAUBRIAND attributes to Napoleon. The whole of this passage is also a verbatim transcription of what Chateaubriand says in the 'Mémoires d'outre-tombe' (vol. 2, p. 42).

statement is highly suspect, especially since it was written in 1828, and the only authority for it seems to be Chateaubriand himself.

The period in Chateaubriand's life which followed the publication of the 'Génie du Christianisme' began with high marks of consular favour, nomination to the diplomatic post in Rome, followed by the offer of the post of Minister in the Valais. These high hopes were abandoned by Chateaubriand in 1804, when he resigned after the execution of the Duke of Enghien and they were followed by the long period of coldness and distant hostility between him and Napoleon during which, in the words of Albert CASSAGNE "Il y eut une sorte de pacte. Chateaubriand promet de se tenir tranquille, moyennant quoi on lui promet de le laisser tranquille."¹ That Napoleon clearly understood the character and attitude of Chateaubriand seems clear from the remark he once made to Metternich about him: "Il fait de l'opposition parce que je ne veux pas l'employer.... S'il voulait user de son talent pour la ligne qu'on lui désignerait, il pourrait être utile. Mais il ne s'y prêterait pas, et il n'est dès lors bon à rien."² The whole policy of Napoleon towards literature is epitomised by that statement, ~~and it helps to answer the question as to why his reign produced no great literary revival.~~

1. ^SCASSAGNE, op.cit., p.175. Unlike later dictators, Napoleon sometimes made, and kept, tacit understandings of this sort.

2. Quoted by CASSAGNE, op.cit., p.174.

In 1810, after the Austrian marriage, when Napoleon was tending to turn against the men of the Revolution, he appears to have made a second bid for Chateaubriand's support, possibly as a result of further intervention by Fontanes, who was now Grand Master of the University. November 9th, 1810, was the date upon which the Prix décennaux were to be awarded, under the terms of the decree of 24 Fructidor, year XII. Napoleon apparently desired that the Institut, which put forward^a recommendations for these prizes¹, should suggest the 'Génie du Christianisme' either for the tenth or eleventh grands prix, which were for the best work of literature to combine the greatest novelty of ideas with elegance of style and talent in composition, and for the best work of general philosophy. In the event it was recommended for neither, the Institut preferring, after some discussion, to put forward the 'Lycées' of La Harpe for the

1. The prizes were to awarded in the following manner:-
a jury was set up consisting of the four life-secretaries of the four classes of the Institut and the four presidents in office the year before the prizes were to be distributed. This jury would make a preliminary choice of the works to be awarded prizes and this report was sent to the Minister of the Interior. He sent back to each class of the INstitut that part of the report which concerned it, the class then considered it and reached a final decision. The results were to^{be} confirmed and published by Imperial decree, but the Emperor reserved the right to challenge and revise the findings of the different classes. As was to be expected with such a cumbersome system, the classes revoked the jury's findings and Napoleon failed to agree with those of the classes as far as the prizes for literature were concerned.

(See LE FEBVRE, op.cit., p.140.)

tenth prize and Sicard's 'Cours d'instruction d'un sourd-muet de naissance' for the eleventh. These recommendations were forwarded to the Emperor and the Institut received the following letter in reply, from the Minister of the Interior:-

"Sa Majesté désire connaître pourquoi l'Institut ne fait pas mention dans son rapport sur les prix décennaux, à l'occasion du dixième ou onzième grand prix, du 'Génie du Christianisme' par M. de Chateaubriand, ouvrage dont on a beaucoup parlé et qui est à sa septième ou huitième édition. Je vous prie de vouloir bien convoquer la Classe pour qu'elle indique les motifs qui l'ont déterminée à garder le silence sur cet ouvrage." (9th December, 1810).¹

There was only one answer to such a letter. The Class of Language and Literature, after an attempt at avoiding the issue by saying that the work was neither philosophy nor literature, was forced to discuss ~~the~~ it and issue an opinion upon it, appointing a commission of five members to examine it in detail.² The final opinion of the Class, which more or less summarised the findings of the commission, was double-edged, but it still did not recommend that Chateaubriand should receive a prize, instead it contented itself with stating "Enfin, la Classe pense que l'ouvrage, tel qu'il est, pourrait mériter une distinction."³

1. LE FEBVRE, op.cit., p. 142.

2. The five members of the commission were the abbé Morellet, Arnault, Lacretelle, Daru, and Sicard.

3. LE FEBVRE, op.cit., p. 153. The full text of the 'Opinion' issued by the Class is given at ~~LE FEBVRE~~ Appendix 'G'.

Against such tenacious opposition, led by the survivors of the philosophes in the Institut, Napoleon did not insist and nothing further is heard on the matter. Chateaubriand was no doubt consoled by the renewed publicity which this debate had given to his work and also by his election, a few months later, in February 1811, to the Academy, where he succeeded one of his most ardent opponents, the regicide Marie-Joseph Chénier. The affair of Chateaubriand's inaugural address, which Napoleon refused to allow him to read to the Academy¹, was an entirely political matter and had no bearing on literature. From that time the relationship between the two men was one of open political hostility in which literature counted for little.

It is noticeable that in spite of the role played ~~played~~ by Chateaubriand and the importance of some ~~of~~ of his works during the Consulate and Empire, Napoleon expressed very few opinions about the writings although he was more liberal in making judgments on the man. At the time when the 'Génie du Christianisme' was useful to his policy Napoleon naturally appeared to regard it favourably, as in the already quoted remark to BAUSSET, when it was dedicated to him. Later however, at St. Helena, according to O'MEARA², he described the work as "un galimatias", which appears to be much nearer the truth ~~both objectively and~~ as an opinion

1. For accounts of the stir, ^{caused} by Chateaubriand's reception at the Academy see P.P. de SÉGUR, 'Mémoires', vol. 1, ch. XXIX, and LAS CASES, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 668 et seq., together with the clarifying notes.

2. Op. cit., vol. 2, p. 364.

Napoleon is likely to have formed about it. There is no particular ^{reason} to doubt that Napoleon may have said that Chateaubriand had received the 'sacred flame' and that his style was nearer to that of the prophets than to that of Racine¹, such an opinion, which distinguished between the remarkable style and the frequently inept material of much of Chateaubriand's work had already been expressed by members of the commission set up to examine the 'Génie du Christianisme' in 1810 and it was by no means unknown for Napoleon to use the opinions of others as his own.

Chateaubriand's particular form of Romanticism, although ^{as} far as the style is concerned, not unlike that of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, does not seem to have spoken to Napoleon's imagination. Apart from political considerations, he did not like the imaginative, sometimes fantastic approach to life and reality which he found in Chateaubriand's writings. He thought him too illogical to produce a good political tract, "Il y mettra bien des fleurs, mais les fleurs ne suffisent pas; il faut de la logique serrée: de la logique."² This would probably also ~~have~~ have been the

1. BUFFENOIR, op.cit., p.146.

2. GOURGAUD, op.cit., vol.1, p.327. Napoleon had been discussing an unnamed political work of Ch., which may have been the 'Essai sur les Révolutions', but is more likely to have been the pamphlet 'De Bonaparte et des Bourbons' (Paris, 1814). Napoleon is said to have first read this at Fontainebleau in 1814 - "Il le jugea avec l'impartialité d'un joueur de génie qui sent la partie perdue et trouve un dernier plaisir à discuter les coups qui lui sont portés. Il ne s'étonna point d'être attaqué dans sa défaite par celui qui lui avait résisté dans sa puissance."

(CHARPENTIER, op.cit., p.167.)

attitude of Napoleon to a great deal of the literature produced by later disciples of Chateaubriand ~~also~~. If there is any particular conclusion to be drawn about literature from this conflict of minds it is that Napoleon did not see in Chateaubriand the precursor of a new literary movement but rather a man of genius able to produce highly imaginative works which could greatly move the public, and therefore either extremely useful or extremely dangerous to the government.

Compared to Mme de Staël, Chateaubriand caused comparatively little trouble to Napoleon. It has been said of Voltaire that in his hatred of intolerance and persecution he became a persecutor of the Church and it might likewise be said of Mme de Staël that she, from various parts of Europe, between 1800 and 1814 provoked and ~~persecuted~~ persecuted Napoleon as much as she suffered persecution from him. The most important cause of friction between the two was without doubt the conflict of their equally strong and determined personalities. The other points of disagreement, that is to say the political and the philosophical, both spring from this conflict of personalities to a large extent. In spite of her protestations to the contrary¹, it would appear that Mme de Staël's attachment to the idea of liberty was much less important in this matter than was the fury of a woman scorned. Since this whole question has been thoroughly ex-

1. See Mme de Staël, 'Dix Années d'exil' (London, 1821).

amined already by P. GAUTIER ('Madame de Staël et Napoléon'), the personal elements of the quarrel will only be summarised here but the important literary and philosophical issues will require more detailed treatment.

When the Directory was on the brink of downfall, in 1798 and 1799, Mme de Staël was the self-appointed leader of the intellectual group centred around the Institut, although most of the members of that body would hardly have recognised her claims to such a position. While Mme Tallien and Joséphine de Beauharnais were the undisputed leaders of fashionable society, Mme de ^{Staël} ~~Setäl~~, on the strength of her liberal opinions and her still comparatively small literary output¹, was a rallying point for the ideologues, a position which came to her the more easily as she was the daughter of Necker² and a woman of wealth. When Napoleon, on his return from Italy, became a member of the Institut and appeared for a short time in the role of the 'philosophical general' Mme de ~~Setäl~~ Staël was at first both deceived and flattered by this clever pose.³ Napoleon realised the import-

1. Up to 1799 this included a novel, 'Sophie' (1786), a tragedy, 'Jeanne Grey' (1790), both of which caused little sensation, ~~and a number of other~~ 'Lettres sur Rousseau' (1789), 'Réflexions sur la paix intérieure' (1795) and 'De l'Influence des passions' (1796).

2. Jacques NECKER (1732-1804). The Swiss financier, appointed director of the French Treasury by Maurepas, in 1776, and director-general of Finances in 1777. In 1781, largely as a result of his 'Compte rendu présenté au roi', he fell from favour and resigned. Following the fall of Brienne he was again appointed Director-General of Finances in 1788, he resigned again, but was recalled in 1789 at the request of the National Assembly. He resigned in the following year and returned to Switzerland where he remained until his death.

3. GAUTIER, op.cit., p. 12.

ance of her influence in the salon society of the Directory and it was known that he read her works¹, although his opinion of them, which he did not publicise[?], was not flattering, as we shall see.

Mme de Staël seems to have recognised early the potentialities of Napoleon and seeing in him the future leader of France, she doubtless aspired to the role of first lady in the land². During the interlude between the Italian Campaign and the expedition to Egypt she did her utmost to force her company and her ideas upon Napoleon, missing no opportunity for approaching him and causing him, finally, in desperation, to defend himself by snubs of emphatic brutality³. Once Napoleon had gained supreme power Mme de Staël, quite unable to achieve the position of influence she had hoped for, gave herself up to the passionate defence of personal and political liberty, doing her best to play some part in affairs by encouraging the liberal sentiments of Benjamin Constant, who was a member of the Tribunate, while

1. Idem.

2. According to Napoleon at St. Helena, on his return from Italy Mme de Staël had written to him to say that it was "une erreur des institutions humaines qui avait pu lui donner pour femme la douce et tranquille Mme Bonaparte." LAS CASES, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 358.

3. The best known of these is reported by GOURGAUD (Op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 102-103) as follows: "A une fête chez Talleyrand elle vint s'asseoir près de lui, lui parla deux heures, et enfin lui fit cette brusque question: "Quelle est la femme la plus supérieure de l'antiquité et de nos jours?" L'Empereur lui répondit: 'Celle qui a ou a eu le plus d'enfants.'"

at the same time she was enjoying a certain measure of confidence and protection from other members of the Bonaparte family, in particular from Joseph and Lucien¹. The constant intrigues in which she indulged and her by no means unmerited attacks on the repressive nature of Napoleon's régime at last led to her exile from Paris. From this (time) in 1803 onward Mme de Staël spent a great part of her (time) and energy in plotting with the enemies of Napoleon on the one hand and entreating to be allowed to return to Paris on the other. Until 1811, in spite of numerous sorties into France and even into Paris itself, the attraction of Parisian society being the thing she most regretted², she made the family estate at Coppet in Switzerland her headquarters. Coppet came to have much the same significance to Napoleon's government as Ferney must have had to the police of Louis XV. A continual stream of agents from foreign powers visited the Swiss retreat and a constant web of intrigues was being woven there, but until 1811 it remained ^{secure} from the attentions of the Imperial police. When even Coppet was no longer a safe headquarters Mme de Staël fled to Russia, and thence

1. At his time Napoleon frequently used Joseph as an intermediary between himself and Mme de Staël to transmit rebukes and warnings, such as that contained in the letter of 28 Ventôse year VIII (19 March, 1800) in which she was censured for her conduct and in particular for abandoning her husband in poverty. (LECESTRE, op.cit.p.13). See also LUCIEN, 'Mémoires', vol. 2, pp. 233-248.

2. See the opening chapters of 'Dix Années d'exil'

travelled to England after ~~passing~~ passing through Sweden¹.

Unlike Chateaubriand, whose writings were almost the only thing/which found favour in Napoleon's eyes, Mme de Staël's literary output had just the opposite effect. Each succeeding book seemed to widen the distance between them, although Mme de Staël herself relied on the stir created by her works as they appeared, to bring about a more favourable official outlook towards her.² There seems to have been a complete lack of understanding by Mme de Staël both of Napoleon's character and of his policies if she really believed that her novels were unlikely to arouse his displeasure, although it is quite possible that she did not realise that certain things which could be discussed and ridiculed under the Bourbons with comparative impunity, including for instance the French character, were no longer regarded as unpolitical by Napoleon, in view of the importance he attached to the new nationalism.

Whereas Napoleon said little about the 'Génie du Christianisme', he did not hesitate to criticise the major works of Mme de Staël and his criticisms were motivated

1. The 'Correspondance' of Napoleon contains numerous letters dealing with Mme de Staël, her attempts to stay in Paris, to be allowed to return to it, and her clandestine visits to friends there. Fouché in particular incurred Napoleon's wrath for his lack of firmness in dealing with her. Mme de Staël recognises Fouché's tact in her 'Dix Années d'exil'. The following letters in the 'Correspondance' are among the most important written by Napoleon against Mme de Staël: Nos. 7152, 12176, 12397, 12427, 12550, 12569, 12649 and from LECESTRE (op.cit.) Nos. 135, 140, 149, 200, 306, 307, 693, 705 and 770.
2. This was particularly true of 'Delphine'; see BAUSSET, op.cit. vol. 1, p. 53 and GAUTIER, Op.cit., p. 105, and of 'Corinne' (GAUTIER, p. 193.)

by political and not literary considerations. Napoleon himself said, very clearly "...de la politique! N'en fait-on pas en parlant de morale, de littérature, de tout au monde!"¹ Throughout ~~the~~ 18th century it ^{had} gradually been growing more difficult to distinguish literature from ~~the sciences~~ metaphysics, moral philosophy, or even politics, but with the dawn of the new era it was becoming more and more identified with political movements and factions as it became more and more preoccupied with the individual, while the state in its turn, as it ^{it} approached a point of power and efficiency unknown to the ancien régime, became more concerned with the direction and control of literature as a political weapon. It is against such a background that we must judge both the works of Mme de Staël and Napoleon's criticisms of them.

At the time of the expedition to Egypt, when Mme de Staël was already an established figurehead of the Parisian intelligentsia, it was not surprising that Napoleon should have included among the small number of books which he took as his own private collection, a copy of her "De l'Influence des Passions".² This particular work is typical of certain aspects of Mme de Staël's thought, that part of it

1. GAUTIER, op.cit., p.193.

2. MOURAVIT, op.cit., p.12. MOURAVIT traces the history of this collection and attributes its formation to Pauline Bonaparte, in view of the enlaced monogram BP or PB, which is found on the books. The more usual explanation of this monogram is that it is a compound of Bonaparte and Pagerie, from the maiden name of Josephine. On his return from Egypt Napoleon left these books at Marseilles.

which continued the intellectual tradition of the 18th century and had little to do with Romanticism, except for its debt to Rousseau. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that Napoleon read the work or expressed any opinion upon it at this period, but a few years later during the Consulate, in a conversation with Lucien, he speaks very disparagingly about the book, which he either thought, or affected to remember, was called 'De la Perfectibilité humaine'.¹

This discussion, which is reported by Lucien in his 'Mémoires', has the ring of authenticity and illustrates very well the essentials of Napoleon's criticisms of living writers during his period of power. Such criticisms were usually based on a quick analytical reading which paid little attention to literary factors, and the actual judgment was of the author rather than of the book.² In this particular instance the two brothers had been discussing Mme de Staël and her reputation as an intellectual, Lucien having just attempted to effect a reconciliation between her and the First Consul. Napoleon, as usual, reproached Mme de Staël for her constant intrigues and counselled Lucien to advise her that prudence is the best policy. He still appeared to be fairly well disposed towards her, saying that he would never do her any harm unless he was forced to, but at the

1. LUCIEN BONAPARTE, 'Mémoires', ch. XI (vol. 2), pp. 233-248.

2. This is true of all genres except in the theatre, where Napoleon often gave a thorough study to new plays, comparing them to Corneille, as a rule.

same time he declared that he had always disliked women of her kind. When Lucien, to avoid a ~~thorny~~ thorny issue, said that her reputation was based upon her books, not on her conversation, Napoleon replied that he had no longer time to read novels and he did not understand a word of her philosophical works. He continued as follows, ranging Mme de Staël along with the ideologues of the Institut and attacking them all together: "...un soir après avoir entendu Roederer, Pictet, Deodati, Benjamin Constant et d'autres esprits de ce calibre exalter un traité sur la perfectibilité humaine, ou quelque chose comme ça, oui je crois que c'était là le titre du livre extatique, je me suis mis à l'étude, au moins un quart d'heure pour tâcher d'y comprendre quelque chose. Le diable m'emporte si j'ai pu déchiffrer, je ne dirai pas les mots, il n'en manquait pas et de grands mots encore, mais toute l'attention de mon intelligence n'a pas réussi à trouver un sens à une seule de ces idées réputées si profondes." LUCIEN implied that Napoleon was not perhaps very well versed in philosophical argument: "Eh bien, vous avez raison, said Napoleon, aussi les métaphysiciens sont mes bêtes noires. J'ai ~~rangé~~ rangé tout ce monde-là sous la dénomination d'idéologues... chercheurs d'idées (idées creuses en général)..... ces pauvres savants-là ne se comprennent pas eux-mêmes. Comment pourrais-je m'entendre avec eux pour gouverner, ainsi qu'ils le prétendent? Oui, ils ont la rage de se mêler de mon gouvernement: les bavards! Mon aversion va jusqu'à

l'horreur ^u pour cette race d'idéologues. Je ne suis pas fâché qu'on le sache."¹

It is obvious that the Mme de Staël Napoleon is attacking here is the femme philosophe, the disciple of the 18th century and not the Mme de Staël of the literary manuals, the founder member of the Romantic movement. Historically there is no reason why, at this time, Napoleon should have had a different view of her, but his attitude here is important precisely because he continues to see her in this same light even after the appearance of 'Delphine', 'Corinne', and 'De l'Allemagne'. Where ~~others~~ others saw in these later works the opening of a new field of literary activity and the exploration of new little-known literatures, Napoleon found only a suspect cosmopolitanism, aimed at the weakening of the spirit of French nationalism, and just as dangerous to his régime as the anglomania of the previous century had been to the House of Bourbon.

Cosmopolitanism was not the only fault Napoleon found in the work of Mme de Staël. Her novels 'Delphine' and 'Corinne', with their unconventional attitudes to morality and lack of respect for the established usages of society placed too much emphasis on the right of the individual to self-determination and were too dangerous to the newly rebuilt social order for the liking of Napoleon.² In addition

1. LUCIEN, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 238-242.

2. GAUTIER, op.cit., p. 105 et seq.

'Delphine' made the Protestant religion, as seen through the character of M. Lebensei, seem more admirable than the Catholic, at a time when the First Consul had just concluded a Concordat with the Pope. The English character was again exalted as it had been by Rousseau; how vain, in the light of all this, was Mme de Staël's hope that the success of 'Delphine' would pave the way for her triumphant return to Paris.¹

The second novel 'Corinne' did nothing to correct the ~~the~~ opinions Napoleon had already formed about Mme de Staël. Not only did the authoress refuse to include any of those flattering references to the régime which, as Fouché pointed out to her, were necessary, but she repeated the faults of 'Delphine'. In particular Napoleon objected to the ~~continued~~ ^{continuing} lack of French patriotism, to the obvious comparison between the frivolous d'Erfeuil and the grave Oswald: As he said later at St. Helena "Je ne puis pardonner à Mme de Staël d'avoir ravalé les Français dans son roman."² At St. Helena also he compared Mme de Staël to her heroine Corinne. The sentiments she professed for him on his return from Italy had, he said, been worthy of Corinne³ and later the Imperial police had intercepted a letter from her to her husband which was 'ardent', even 'furious' in its passion, "C'était ^à Corinne, tout à fait Corinne."⁴ In all the works of Mme de Staël it was this same wildness both of the ~~mind~~ ^{intellect} and of the

1. GAUTIER, op.cit., pp. 113-115. 3. LAS CASES, op.cit., v. 1, p. 358.
 BAUSSET, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 53. 4. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 187.
 2. GAUTIER, op.cit., pp. 194-195.
 LAS CASES, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 187.

imagination¹ which Napoleon disliked just as he disliked them in the woman herself.

The last of Mme de Staël's works to be published during Napoleon's reign, 'De l'Allemagne', inevitably aroused his anger. The official reason for its being banned in France, according to Mme de Staël herself, was that she had said nothing of the Emperor, nor of the French campaigns in Germany.² GAUTIER sums up the real reasons for the attack on 'De l'Allemagne' as follows: it was, he says "Un livre qui, dans la pensée de l'auteur, est surtout une ~~œuvre~~ oeuvre de combat, politique autant que littéraire, une attaque à peine dissimulée contre l'Empire, contre l'esprit de l'Empire, contre la France de l'Empire..... un livre enfin, dont toutes les tendances morales, sociales, politiques, littéraires même doivent choquer, irriter Napoléon: tel est le livre 'de l'Allemagne' de Mme de Staël."³ As GAUTIER says earlier⁴, the chief cause of the banning of the work was probably the state of public opinion in France in 1810, resulting from the continual bad news from Spain and the general fatigue of the unceasing wars.

Unfortunately, although a great deal of correspondence about the suppression of the book exists, there are no real judgments of its contents by Napoleon. The only

1. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 358.

2. 'Dix Années d'exil', pp. 120-121.

3. Op. cit., p. 279.

4. Ibid., p. 231.

guide we have as to what he really objected to is found in a letter (dated 28th September, 1810) to the Duke of Rovigo (Savary, Minister of Police), in which he says that the book could be published if Mme de Staël would ~~remove~~ remove the passages relating to the Duke of Brunswick and three quarters of the passages in which she exalted England. The author would only ^{allow} the book to appear complete or not at all.¹ Quite clearly, if Napoleon had objected to the cosmopolitanism of Mme de Staël's earlier work, 'De l'Allemagne' must have aroused his anger even more on this score, so that when Savary, in his letter of Oct. 3rd. 1810², to Mme de Staël said "Votre dernier ouvrage n'est point français" he was merely echoing the words of his master.

At St. Helena Napoleon's opinions of Mme de Staël did not change, he still disliked her lack of self-control and her ^{'European'} ~~'European'~~ outlook, but he may on one occasion have given a more balanced judgment both of her literary work and of their relationship one to another than he had ever done before. In October 1816, according to LAS CASES³, after a

1. Ibid., p. 251.
2. 'Dix Années d'exil', pp. 118-119.
3. Op. cit., vol. 2, p. 454. The editor gives the following comment in his footnote: "Que Napoléon ait, avec le recul, mieux jugé de la valeur de Mme de Staël ou simplement estimé prudent d'atténuer son hostilité, soit enfin qu'il y ait là une manœuvre personnelle de Las Cases à la suite de contacts dont il parlera au 15 novembre, cette espèce de 'repentir' mérite d'être relevé." The 'contacts' referred to here are, according to vol. 2, p. 586 "quelques personnes qui lui sont fort attachées (à Mme de Staël), de ses plus intimes" who assured him that she had, in private, been much more favourably inclined to Napoleon than in her writings.

long discussion one day on women writers (the detail of which is not reported) Napoleon declared that, in spite of all her faults, when all was said and done, nobody could deny that "Mme de Staël est une femme d'un très grand talent, fort distinguée, de beaucoup d'esprit: elle restera." His summing-up of their continual quarrel as given in the same account is probably too good to be true¹, but he may well have thought what LAS CASES makes him say: "Et malgré tout le mal qu'elle a dit de moi..... je suis loin assurément de la croire, de la tenir pour une méchante femme: tout bonnement c'est que nous nous sommes fait la petite guerre, et voilà tout."

It will be seen from the foregoing that Napoleon chiefly criticised Mme de Staël's works with regard to that aspect of them which was frankly propagandist, disliking them for almost precisely the same reasons which estranged him from the author herself, for their lack of discipline, their philosophical, often anti-religious and anti-Catholic views based on the ideas of the previous century, for their failure to glorify the Napoleonic régime, and above all for their lack of national feeling. The very means by which Mme de Staël most influenced the new literary movement which was being born, her looking outward beyond the borders of France to other literatures and cultures, was the aspect of her

1. See p.214,note 3.

work Napoleon disliked most. He had himself helped to forward the tendency she exemplified by his proclaimed liking for Ossian, but he would not tolerate such anti-French ideas in others, more especially when, according to his own method of classifying writers, they were 'ideologues' as well.

+ + + +

The most striking feature of Napoleon's outlook on 'Romantic' literature, by which we here mean those works in which individualism, imagination, fantasy and exoticism play a large part, is that he was much moved by its earlier, more purely literary manifestations and strongly opposed to its later, and not necessarily logical development. The sentimentality of Rousseau, the objective exoticism of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the vague, outlandish and pseudo-sublime heroics of Ossian, all these Napoleon could enjoy in the right circumstances, but the two immediate precursors of Romanticism, Chateaubriand and Mme de Staël, represented new tendencies which they expressed perhaps more in their lives than in their works, and the chief of these, one of the few things they had in common, was a strong individualism, undisciplined and indocile, which did not fit into the new social pattern. As Romanticism developed this characteristic became almost the hall-mark of the artist, the supreme individualist who fitted into no society and this maladjustment was often one of the mainsprings of his art.

In the works of Chateaubriand and of Mme de Staël Napoleon did not see the beginnings of a new period of literary greatness because he was looking for a different kind of literary renaissance, which would in fact not have been a renewal at all, but a revival, a return to the forms of the grand siècle. Napoleon cannot be blamed for failing to realise that such revivals rarely produce anything of value in the liberal arts unless they are a true rediscovery of a past age, since many of the eminent literary men of the period held similar views and even continued to hold them after time and events had proved them wrong.

IV.

NAPOLÉON AND THE THEATRE.

To the contemporaries of Napoleon it was well known that he was more interested in the drama than in any other form of literature. His interest in it was wide, covering both the plays themselves, dramatic theory, acting, theatre administration¹, and, naturally, censorship. In addition Napoleon was well aware of the political value of the theatre as a guide to public opinion², as a means of influencing opinion, and as a means of adding to the glories of his reign, although, as will be seen, in this last respect he was sadly disappointed.

It has already been said in earlier chapters that Napoleon's formal education at Brienne and Paris had inculcated in him the accepted tastes and standards of the day in all that concerned the theatre. His enduring interest in

1. This aspect of the question, which is outside the scope of this work, is fully dealt with by L.H. LECOMTE in his large volume 'Napoléon et le Monde dramatique' (Paris, 1912). This book deals with the whole of Napoleon's concern with the physical aspects of the theatre in great detail, but does not enter into any detailed literary discussion.
2. Even in the crudest sense this is true since Napoleon appears to have judged his popularity from the reception accorded him when he went to the theatre, as the following conversation shows: (he was talking to ROEDERER)
 "Eh bien! demanda Bonaparte, qu'est-ce qu'on dit? - Je trouve que l'opinion est fort mauvaise. - Et pourquoi trouvez-vous cela? J'ai été fort applaudi la dernière fois que j'ai été au spectacle."
 (ROEDERER, 'Journal', pp. 171-172 (8 March, 1804).

the subject does credit to his masters, and more especially to Domairon, of the École Militaire, certain of whose ideas were taken up and developed by his pupil. Although the note-books of the young artillery lieutenant do not contain any detailed references to the theatre, when he produced the 'Discours de Lyon' in 1791 he was sufficiently interested in it and acquainted with it to introduce a sharp criticism of Voltaire's 'Alzire'¹ and sundry references to ~~other~~ other plays. Four years later, in 1795, when he spent a good deal of time in Paris with slender resources Napoleon visited the theatre as often as his friends would invite him² and he was at the theatre on the 12 Vendémiaire, year IV, at a performance of Saurin's 'Beverley', when he heard the news of the rising of the sections, the rising which he was called upon to suppress on the morrow, the fateful 13 Vendémiaire.³

After the coup d'état of 18 Brumaire one of the new Consul's first cares was to organise, ^{the} ~~and~~ despatch of a troupe of actors to the army he had left behind in Egypt⁴. As further proof of his interest during the Consulate, Napoleon attended no less than sixty-three public performances of plays of various types between March 3rd, 1800 and March 5th, 1804⁵. Some of these attendances at theatres may

1. 'Mansucrits inédits', p. 557. 2. LECOMTE, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

3. Ibid., p. 4. 4. Ibid., pp. 15-16. His attempts at first failed and were gayed by the vaudevillistes of Paris, but another troupe was secretly prepared at Toulon and Marseilles and despatched to Egypt.

5. Ibid., pp. 74-96.

have been dictated by political motives but it can hardly have been such motives which made him risk comparison with Marie-Antoinette by organising a large number of amateur performances at the consular 'courts' of Malmaison and Saint-Cloud. Napoleon and Josephine did not ^{take} part personally in the plays but members of the Bonaparte family did so, as did most of his staff¹. LUCIEN says that these plays were extremely badly done², but LAURE JUNOT, who apparently took part on occasion, gives a more indulgent view. In her account the company at first preferred short, light comedies,³ but at Napoleon's request they became more ambitious and undertook larger pieces, the parts being distributed according to ability. At this time, she declares, the plays were well produced but later everyone had a hand in it and they declined⁴.

As if to demonstrate⁵ still further his interest in the theatre, Napoleon was on terms of almost intimate friendship with the great tragic actor Talma.⁵ Although the stories

1. Idem. 2. LUCIEN, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 256.

3. The plays she names ('Mémoires', vol. 3, p. 386) were mostly fairly recent pieces. They are 'Les Héritiers' (by DUVAL, 1801), 'les Étourdis', (ANDRIEUX - 1786), 'les Rivaux d'eux-mêmes' - (presumably the anonymous piece first performed in 1714 - see H.C. LANCASTER, 'Sunset.. Parisian Drama 1701-1715', p. 306.), and 'Défiance et Malice' (author not yet discovered). Later they performed the 'Barber of Seville', with the following cast: - Rosine - Hortense de Beauharnais, Bartholo - Bourrienne, Basile - Eugène, l'Eveillé - General Savary. (Ibid. p. 387). *Unfortunately we are not told who played 7 years.*

4. Idem.

5. François-Joseph TALMA (1763-1826). Made his début at the Comédie Française in 1787. He had a varied career during the Revolution and finally reached his greatest heights during Napoleon's reign. He sought to introduce a more realistic note into the declamation of classical verse.

of Napoleon receiving lessons in dramatic poise from this actor are generally discounted¹, he frequently² discussed the technique of acting with him and this may not have been without influence on some of Talma's interpretations of his regal roles.² One such discussion is said to have been in progress on the morning when a deputation arrived from the Corps législatif to congratulate Napoleon on his elevation to the Empire. He seized the opportunity to impress upon Talma that great men act in a natural way, saying "Par exemple, en ce moment nous parlons comme on parle dans la conversation, eh bien! nous faisons de l'histoire."³ This story, which seems to have originated from Talma himself, certainly illustrates Napoleon's feeling for the dramatic occasion.

During the most brilliant period of the Empire, although Napoleon's interest in the theatre became more directly political, his attendances at performances of all sorts, but chiefly of tragedies, were frequent and only interrupted by the necessities of war.⁴ Great occasions such as the Interview with the Tsar at Erfurt in 1808 were marked by numerous performances of French tragedies by a troupe of

1. See for example M. Marcel Dunan's note on this subject in his edition of the 'Mémorial', vol. 1, pp. 403-404.

2. See below pp. 247.

3. TISSOT, P-F. 'Souvenirs historiques sur la vie de Talma', Paris, 1826, pp. 34-35.

4. See Appendix H for a list of tragedies and comedies which Napoleon saw in performance (from LECOMTE, Op. cit. pp. 491-2).

actors specially brought from the Comédie Française. Even at Dresden in 1813, when the tide of his fortunes had already turned, Napoleon sent for another troupe which was, significantly enough, only required to perform comedies¹. It was at Erfurt, and Weimar also, in 1808, that Napoleon met Goethe and the main topic of their conversation was the theatre, and in particular tragedy, Napoleon even trying to persuade Goethe to write a new play on the obvious theme of Caesar, which would be, he said the greatest of all his works.²

When Napoleon was no longer able to summon the greatest living dramatist at his pleasure, and thousands of miles of sea separated him from the Comédie Française, although unable to see performances of his favourite plays he still found a great solace in reading them, usually aloud, during the interminable evenings at Longwood. So common was this pursuit that almost every page of the various diarists of the exile ends on a similar note to this one from the 'Récits' of MONTHOLON: "Le soir, après le dîner, il lut les 'Plaideurs' et s'en amusa fort."³ Napoleon himself was well aware of his addiction to play-reading

1. BAUSSET, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 184-186.

2. FISCHER, 'Goethe und Napoléon' (Frauenfeld, 1900) pp. 102-3.
"Der grösste Dichter der Zeit stand vor ihm; er hatte den „Mahomet“ übersetzt; sollte er nicht seine beste Kraft an den grossartigsten Stoff der Vergangenheit, an den „Cäsar“ setzen? Ein echt napoleonisch-goethe'scher Cäsar - „dass könnte die Hauptaufgabe Ihres Lebens werden!“ "

3. Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 199 (18/12/15).

and on one occasion commented on the fact that they had reached eleven o'clock without the help either of tragedy or comedy.¹ Mme de MONTHOLON, who is not always as deferential in her 'Souvenirs' as are the male diarists, tells of how Napoleon would ask "Qu'est-ce qu'il faut lire aujourd'hui?" The others, good courtiers to the last, would reply "Une tragédie!" Apparently however, at one time Napoleon had such a taste for 'Zaïre' that she and the irritable Gourgaud, being unable to endure it any longer, had made a plan to lose the book if Napoleon's taste did not change.²

From the records of these readings at St. Helena it is clear that Corneille and Racine were the favourite authors and 'Cinna', 'Phèdre' and 'Iphigénie' the favourite plays, although Voltaire's 'Mort de César' runs them close. The actual ^{range} was very wide, both in authors and plays, including some of the very mediocre as well as the masterpieces. In the field of tragedy, as well as 'Le Cid', 'Polyeucte', 'Horace', 'Cinna', 'Sertorius' and 'la Mort de Pompée' of P. Corneille, 'Andromaque', 'Phèdre', 'Bajazet', 'Mithridate', 'Iphigénie', 'Athalie' and 'Esther' of Racine, they read such works as Voltaire's 'Zaïre', 'Sémiramis', 'Oedipe', 'Adélaïde du Guesclin' and 'Mahomet'; the 'Atrée et Thyeste' of Crébillon and his 'Rhadamiste et Zénobie', the 'Médée'

1. LAS CASES, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 262 (28 Aug. 1816).

2. Op.cit., pp. 149-150.

of Longpierre¹, 'Inès de Castro' of Lamotte², Laharpe's 'Mélanie', 'Venceslas' of Rotrou, and 'les Gracques' of M-J.Chénier. As a conscious sortie into the field of comparative literature they also read the 'Medea' of Euripides³ as well as his 'Hippolytus', the 'Oedipus' of Sophocles and various tragedies by Aeschylus, all of these in translation.

In comedy the field was smaller, but the reading was once more wide, covering all the main plays of Molière and several of his farces, the 'Turcaret' of Lesage, all the works of Beaumarchais, including the 'Mère coupable', the 'Philinte de Molière' of Fabre d'Églantine⁴, 'l'Avocat Pathelin'⁵, and Racine's 'Plaideurs'. Although all these works⁶ were not necessarily chosen by Napoleon and choice

1. H-B. de REQUELEYNE, baron de LONGPIERRE, (1659-1721). He held a court appointment under the Regent Orleans. He produced ~~four~~ 'Sésostris' and 'Électre', both tragedies, as well as 'Médée'.
2. Antoine Houdar de LAMOTTE (1672-1731). Often known as LAMOTTE-HOUDAR. Dramatist and fabulist. 'Inès de Castro' (1723) was his most successful tragedy. Other works include a translation of the 'Iliad' (1714), 'Réflexions sur la Critique' (1715) and 'Fables' (1719).
3. GOURGAUD, op.cit., ~~vol. 1~~ vol. 1, p. 186 inter alia.
4. Philippe-François-Nazaire FABRE d'ÉGLANTINE (1755-1794). His first success was the 'Collatéral', followed by the 'Philinte de Molière' (his best known work, based on Molière's 'Misanthrope') and 'l'Apothicaire'. He was the author of the Republican Calendar with its picturesque nomenclature and of the well-known song 'Il pleut, il pleut bergère'. He perished on the scaffold with the Dantonists.
5. Presumably the 'Avocat Pathelin' (1706) of BRUEYS and PALAPRAT, based on the earlier mediaeval farce.
6. These lists were compiled from the following sources: LAS CASES, 'Mémorial', GOURGAUD, 'Journal de S.H.', MONTHOLON, 'Récits de la captivité de l'Empereur à S.H.', the Countess MONTHOLON, 'Souvenirs de Sainte-Hélène', and General BERTRAND, 'Cahiers de Sainte-Hélène'.

was indeed dictated by the available material, such a broad reading-list must have indicated more than a half-hearted interest in the theatre. It is unfortunate that the memorialists did not record all of Napoleon's comments on the plays they read, but as later pages will indicate his taste did not change appreciably in exile; many of the lesser known works quoted above were not read more than once or twice, a sure sign of Napoleon's lack of interest.

So far we ~~xxx~~ have been looking at Napoleon's interest in drama chiefly from a personal point of view, but as with all things the ~~personal~~ interest became less obvious during the ~~xxx~~ years of power, giving way steadily before political considerations. It is true however, that for Napoleon such considerations^{now} equally well be subjective since he could have claimed as his motto "l'État, c'est moi" with almost more right than Louis XIV.

For Napoleon the theatre was inextricably bound up with that important matter public opinion. This connection was twofold, on the one hand the theatre could be dangerous if controlled by men of doubtful loyalty, but on the other hand it could be useful when completely subservient to the Master. In this last respect Napoleon was fortunate in inheriting from the Revolution a state theatre, the Comédie Française, and the Opera, which was almost completely under governmental control.

The measures taken by Napoleon to regulate the theatres

both of Paris and of the rest of the Empire show the same regard for geometrical planning and precision as marked his administration in other spheres. His first move in this direction occurred only a few months after his assumption of power and took the form of instructions issued to ^{his} brother Lucien, then Minister of the Interior, in a letter of 15th Germinal, year VIII (5th April, 1800).¹ No play was to be produced in Paris without permission from the Minister and the head of the education division of the Ministry was in effect made responsible for censorship. The same rule was to apply to the departments of France. The Minister was also to consider means of reducing the number of theatres and, at the same time, to think of ways of encouraging dramatic authors who were both successful and acceptable. As if to ^{show} ~~why~~ why he had suddenly decided on these steps the letter ends with the post-script: "Le Premier Consul verrait avec plaisir la suppression du couplet qui lui est personnel dans le vaudeville du Tableau des Sabines."

For the next few years more pressing affairs seem to have prevented Napoleon from giving much thought to the regulation of theatres, but a decree, of June 8th, 1806, reduced the number of theatres in all the great towns of the Empire to two, and to one in the smaller towns.² In July of the following year he brought about the threatened re-

1. 'Corresp.', vol. VI, p. 210. no. 4706.

2. LECOMTE, op.cit., p. 175.

duction in the number of theatres in Paris and allotted to each of those remaining a definite sphere of activity.¹ Although these measures were no doubt partly due to his desire to have a logically ordered, easily regulated body of theatres in the Empire, there is probably some truth also in PELET de la LOZERE's assertion that it was done in the interests of theatrical standards and to ensure the financial stability of those remaining.²

The censorship of plays was certainly not neglected by Napoleon who, not content with the activities of the official censors installed at the Hôtel Carnavalet, wrote himself on occasion to Fouché ~~et~~ or to Cambacérès on matters of this kind which informants had probably brought to his notice.³ In the later years of the Empire the censorship of plays became very rigid, under the baron de Pommereul and was quickly spread to the new provinces of the Emperor's dominions.⁴ In 1810, when Holland was reunited to the Empire, after the abdication of Louis Bonaparte, the theatre was almost strangled by the censorship⁵ and when various new German provinces were added in 1811 almost all the more recent plays of Schiller, Goethe and Kotzebue were banned in Hamburg and elsewhere.⁶ Although the Imperial censorship

1. Ibid, p. 162.
2. PELET de la LOZERE, op.cit., p. 284 et seq.
3. e.g. LECOMTE, op.cit., p. 127 - Letters to Fouché, from Potsdam (Oct. 1806) and to Cambacérès, from Berlin (Nov. 1806).
4. ~~EXCELSIOR~~ G. LENOTRE, 'Ena suivant l'Empereur', p. 102 et seq.
5. Idem.
6. LECOMTE, op.cit., p. 187. The banned plays were SCHILLER's 'Die Räuber', 'Maria Stuart', and 'Wilhelm Tell'; GOETHE's 'Faust' (pt. 1), WERNER's 'Attila'; and 6 plays of KOTZEBUE.

did become extremely heavy-handed in the later years it is to the credit of Napoleon that he re-introduced ~~on~~to the French stage those great works of the tragic theatre which had been banned by the Revolution because of their preoccupation with the doings of kings and princes. However, even Corneille, Racine and Voltaire were not entirely to be trusted and the poet Luce de Lancival, and later Esménard, was given the task of suppressing lines ~~was~~ likely to be treated as allusions.¹

Napoleon's personal attitude towards this censorship appears to have been somewhat ~~ambivalent~~ inconsistent, if the various accounts are to be trusted. CHARPENTIER cites the instance of 'Tartufe', in which one of the censoring staff working under Esménard took the liberty to make deletions. Napoleon is said to have had the unfortunate scribe dismissed with the comment "Cet homme est bête, ce n'est pas une place de censeur, c'est une place d'inspecteur de la halle qu'il lui faut."² Another case, of rather a different nature, was that of the opera 'Richard Coeur de lion', for which Sedaine³ had written the libretto and Grétry⁴ the music.

1. Ibid., pp. 270-271. 2. CHARPENTIER, p. 119.

3. Michel-Jean SEDAINE (1719-1797). Dramatic author, b. in Paris. Best known for his 'Philosophe sans le savoir', he also wrote 'le Déserteur', 'Aline' and 'Richard Coeur de lion'. The song which gave this opera particular piquancy ~~was~~ during the captivity of Louis XVI was the song of Blondel "O Richard, ô mon roi, l'univers t'abandonne..."

4. André-Ernest-Modeste GRÉTRY (1741-1813). b. at Liège, settled in Paris 1767. Although concert-master to Marie-Antoinette, he rallied to the Revolution and later to Napoleon, from whom he received the Légion d'Honneur and a pension of 2,000 frs.

This opera had almost become a symbol of the Royalist cause at the time of the captivity of Louis XVI and consequently had been banned. In spite of its connection with the Royalists Napoleon allowed it to be performed, upon Grétry's insistence, in 1806, and he was so pleased with the music that Grétry was rewarded by the gift of 6,000 frs in a costly snuff-box.¹

Napoleon was afraid of the allusions which might be found in a great many plays but he was also well aware that others contained allusions which could be very useful and he did not hesitate to select such plays for performance on appropriate occasions. BOURRIENNE² gives an ~~ex~~ illustration of this quite early in Napoleon's career, during the Consulate, when Voltaire's 'Oedipe' was performed on the occasion of the visit of the King and Queen of Etruria, in June 1801. As the King of Etruria owed his throne to Napoleon the lines spoken by Philoctète: "J'ai fait des souverains et n'ai point voulu l'être"³ could not have been better chosen to illustrate the paradoxical situation, and it was applauded accordingly by the audience, in the presence of the new king and his consular patron. Napoleon, says BOURRIENNE, did not hide his satisfaction.

There are many instances of Napoleon having personally chosen plays for special occasions because of their approp-

1. LAS CASES, op.cit., vol.1, p.530. (See also editor's note).

2. 'Mémoires', vol.2, p.416. 3. VOLTAIRE, 'Oedipe', act 2, sc.V.

riateness, but none more important, nor more remarkable than at the time of the meetings with the Tsar at Erfurt in 1808. The best players of the Comédie Française were called to Erfurt to perform before what must have been almost the most distinguished audience ever to fill a theatre. TALLEY-RAND¹ gives a detailed account of the choosing of the plays to be presented, all of which were tragedies, presumably since Napoleon judged comedies to be too undignified for such a gathering. He sent for Dazincourt, the director of court plays, to ask him for his advice, but curtly rebuked him for suggesting 'Athalie'. "Fi donc! said Napoleon, "Voilà un homme qui ne me comprend pas. Vais-je à Erfurt pour mettre quelque Joas dans la tête de ces Allemands?"

'Cinna', he held, was more suitable, for is it not in 'Cinna' that the lines occur:-

"Tous ces crimes d'État qu'on fait pour la couronne,
Le ciel nous en absout, alors qu'il nous la donne,
Et dans le sacré rang où sa faveur l'a mis
Le passé devient juste et l'avenir permis.
Qui peut y parvenir ne peut être coupable;
Quoi qu'il ait fait ou fasse, il est inviolable."²

Even Napoleon could not have thought expressly of every possible allusion in the chosen plays for, as TALLEY-RAND³ says, almost all of the historical pieces contained numerous references which could be made to apply to some

1. 'Mémoires', vol. 1, p. 403 et seq. 2. 'Cinna', act 5, sc II.
3. Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 429.

aspect of Napoleon's career. The hatred which Mithridates bore the Romans recalled Napoleon's hatred of England and at the lines

"Ne vous figurez point que de cette contrée,

Par d'éternels remparts Rome soit séparée:

Je sais tous les chemins par où je dois passer",¹ it was whispered among the audience "Oui, il sait tous les chemins par où il faut passer; qu'on y prenne garde, oui, il les connaît tous." Voltaire's 'Mahomet' was even better for the aptness of many of its lines, such as these:-

"Les mortels sont égaux; ce n'est point la naissance,

C'est la seule vertu qui fait leur différence.

Il est de ces esprits favorisés des cieux,

Qui sont tout par eux-même, et rien par leurs aïeux.

Tel est l'homme, en un mot, que j'ai choisi pour maître;

Lui seul dans l'univers a mérité de l'être."²

or,

"Qui l'a fait roi? Qui l'a couronné? La Victoire."³

According to TALLEYRAND⁴ it was however the following lines which Napoleon was expressly waiting for as the culminating allusion,

"Au nom de conquérant et de triomphateur,

Il veut joindre le nom de pacificateur."⁵

Here it was, he says, that Napoleon, by a clever show of

1. 'Mithridate', act 3, sc. I.

2. 'Mahomet', act 1, sc. IV.

3. Idem.

4. Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 432.

5. 'Mahomet', act 1, sc. IV.

emotion, let it be seen that this was the guiding principle of his career.

The most surprising choice of all, for performance a few days later at Weimar, was Voltaire's 'Mort de César'. Talma is said to have expressed surprise to Napoleon that he should have chosen such a play for performance under the circumstances, but Napoleon's reply^{it} clearly showed that he had not selected/without good reason: "Serait-ce donc mal à prouver à l'Europe personnifiée par ses souverains, que des vers empreints d'une haine vigoureuse contre la royauté m'effraient peu, qu'on me les dit en face et par mon ordre, que ma puissance est à l'abri des allusions?"¹

The great importance which Napoleon attached to tragedy is illustrated also by the amount of time he devoted at all periods of his life to discussing the works of tragic authors with a gravity and an earnestness which would not have been unbecoming to the highest affairs of State. A great number of Napoleon's conversations and remarks on the subject have been recorded, with more or less apparent fidelity, while almost every writer on Napoleon has felt himself compelled to attempt to draw conclusions, or at least to pass on the conclusions of others, about his ~~own~~ tastes in tragedy. The trend of these conclusions has long been established; Napoleon was a great admirer of the French

1. LECOMTE, op.cit., p. 236.

Classical tragedy of the 17th century and more especially of Corneille. Racine he liked less because he was less heroic, and his admiration for Voltaire, who was closer to Napoleon's own generation, was qualified by many reservations. Furthermore, Napoleon liked the ordered regularity of the works of Corneille and of Racine, the precisely stated nobility of mind of the heroes of Corneille's best plays, and the comparatively simple plots, which revolve around mighty themes of state or austere conceptions of duty. This it was, ^{the} the submission of the individual to/idea of duty or honour, the basic theme in fact of much of Corneille's work, which he admired above all.¹

Such writers as have tried to depart from these conclusions have usually done so because they have an axe of their own to grind and the views they submit will not stand any detailed scrutiny. LAURE JUNOT is one of the few ~~people~~ people among those who really knew Napoleon well, to assert that he admired Shakespeare², but Napoleon himself is reported to have spoken quite otherwise: "Je l'ai lu (Shakespeare): il n'y a rien qui approche de Corneille et de Racine: il n'y a pas moyen de lire une de ses pièces, elles font pitié."³ There is every reason to prefer this statement to that of LAURE JUNOT since Napoleon was always opposed to any mixing of genres, even reproaching Wieland, at Erfurt,

1. See 'Vues politiques', p. 234, (quoting from VILLEMAIN), and ARNAULT, op.cit., vol. IV, p. 99.

2. Duchesse d'ABRANTES, Op.cit., vol. VII, pp. 69-70.

3. 'Dictionnaire Napoleon', 2nd ed. Paris, 1854, p. 199.

for not liking "les genres tranchés et exclusifs".¹ Not only did he dislike the drame and similar 'mixed' forms, but he was also a declared partisan of the 'rules' in tragedy and an admirer of Aristotle² as the legislator of Parnassus, although his knowledge of him was probably confined to what he had learnt from Domairon, who, in his 'Principes généraux des Belles-Lettres',³ deals at length with tragic theory, closely following Aristotle as understood by the French commentators. Finally it must be noted that Napoleon could not ~~have~~ read English and his knowledge of Shakespeare was therefore limited to imitations produced by Voltaire and Ducis, and presumably also to Letourneur's translation.⁴

SAINTE-BEUVE, for obvious reasons perhaps, also attempted to show that Napoleon did not mean what he said that Corneille was the greatest of all dramatists. What Napoleon was really seeking was something between Shakespeare and Corneille, something which we may presume, would have been close to the drame romantique. Such a partisan guess is quite

1. TALLEYRAND, Op.cit., vol.1, p.436.

2. See ROEDERER, Op.cit., p.254 (11 Feb.1809).

3. q.v., p.314 (vol.2).

4. LETOURNEUR'S translation of Shakespeare appeared between 1776 and 1782, in 20 vols. This translation was completely in prose, except for the incidental songs, which were rendered in blank verse. LETOURNEUR attempted to make certain of Shakespeare's images and expressions more suitable for French taste. The whole is notable for many gross errors and much suppression, often of long passages. (See P.VAN TIEGHEM, 'Le Prérromantisme', p.212 et seq., 'Le Découverte de Shakespeare ~~xxx~~ sur le continent',).

unwarrantable and is based on the one hand on Napoleon's liking for Ossian, and on the other on his often ~~and~~ declared notion that politics, and above all political necessity, should replace love and fate in tragedy.¹ As we have already said, Napoleon did not see any necessary connection between tragedy and any other branch of literature, even in matters of taste, while there is nothing in the type of political tragedy he envisaged which could not be fitted into the framework of a play by either Shakespeare or Corneille.

Napoleon was not a man of facile enthusiasms and few people either living or dead won his whole-hearted admiration; Pierre Corneille was indeed favoured to belong to this small group of those Napoleon did admire almost without reserve, and to be, among them, almost certainly the one who was praised most unstintingly. CONSTANT, Napoleon's valet, says that he noticed that Napoleon almost always had a volume of Corneille's works upon his table, and that he frequently declaimed lines from 'Cinna' in the privacy of his room.² This admiration, however, was not something Napoleon kept purely to himself, it was a part also of his 'public' self, of the Emperor and King. On occasion he liked to think of what he would have done for Corneille if he had lived during the Empire, he would, he said, have made him a prince, or a minister³, and on one occasion,

1. 'Lundis', 7, pp. 504-505, ('Arnault'). The passage is reproduced in full at Appendix 'I'. 2. 'Napoléon intime', p. 8.
3. 'BOURRIENNE', vol. 2, p. 146, and 'O'MEARA', op. cit., vol. 2, p. 391.

he even declared that he would have made him a king.¹ As it was, following the example of Voltaire, he took an interest in the surviving members of Corneille's family and made plans for their future as late as May 1813¹, when he had much else to occupy his thoughts.

SAINTE-BEUVE, once more, would have it that Napoleon did not say that he would have made Corneille a minister, but only a prince, since the ^{latter} is a title of honour only, and he Napoleon, would never have made a man a minister on the strength of his poetry². Here again SAINTE-BEUVE has reached a conclusion which is quite contradicted by other witnesses. Napoleon stated quite clearly on at least two occasions that he thought Corneille had a natural genius for understanding affairs of state. Once at Boulogne, presumably in 1804, Napoleon said to Mme de RÉMUSAT³ "Celui-là (Corneille) avait deviné la politique, et, formé aux affaires, eût été un homme d'État." In 1811 he repeat-

1. LECOMTE, op.cit., p.401. "Je l'eusse fait prince, premier ministre," déclarait-il. Il eut fait plus, si l'on en croit cette note conservée aux Archives, et qui suit un projet de décret attribuant aux demoiselles Catherine et Marie-Alexandrine Corneille, descendants en ligne directe du grand tragique, une pension annuelle et viagère de 300 frs:- "Ceci est indigne de celui dont nous ferions un roi. Mon intention est de faire baron l'aîné de la famille avec une dotation de 10,000 frs; je ferais baron l'aîné de l'autre branche avec une dotation de 4,000 frs, s'ils ne sont pas frères. Quant à ces demoiselles, savoir leur âge et leur accorder une pension telle qu'elles puissent vivre." (Dated 24th May, 1813).

2. 'Nouveaux Lundis', vol.VII, p.207. ('Corneille').

3. 'Mémoires', vol.1, p.278.

ed this idea in a conversation with Cardinal Maury¹:

"Corneille avait appris dans sa tête l'art de la guerre; car, où l'~~avait~~^{avait}-il connu, et pourtant il le savait! Ses maximes d'État sont toutes d'une immense portée et aucune n'est de son époque. Ce ne sont pas les ruses de Mazarin, ce ne sont pas les ~~maximes~~ cruautés de Richelieu; c'est la grandeur antique. Où avait-il pris tout cela? Dans lui-même, dans son âme. Eh bien! savez-vous comment cela se nomme, M. le cardinal; c'est du génie."²

As if to complete his eulogies of Corneille and carry them to their crowning conclusion Napoleon one day declared, according to his brother JOSEPH,³ that he would have liked to be his own posterity in order to hear what a poet like Corneille would have made him feel and think and say. Such was the opinion Napoleon had formed of the genius of Pierre Corneille that there is every reason to believe that, unlike Rostand's Aiglon, he would have been disappointed even by Victor Hugo.

It has already been remarked upon in these pages that Napoleon's interest in any writer was almost entirely confined to a few of his works, and chiefly to those which were the most widely/^{known} or the most successful. As far as

1. Jean Siffrein MAURY, (1746-1817) Son of a cobbler of the Vaucluse, he entered the Church and was much admired for his eloquence. Entered the Academy in 1785. A right-wing member of the Constituent Assembly, he emigrated in 1792, and was made a cardinal in 1794. He accepted the Archbishopric of Paris from Napoleon in 1810.

2. GUILLOIS, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 395.

3. 'Mémoires', vol. 1, p. 38.

Corneille was concerned Napoleon seems to have followed the same pattern. Although he certainly saw other plays by Corneille¹, and almost certainly must have read some of them, he appears to have turned a blind eye to that dramatist's many failures, basing his admiration for him mainly on 'Le Cid', 'Cinna', and 'Horace'. 'Polyeucte' merely seems to have been useful, rather as a contemporary pièce de circonstance might have been, on the occasion of the Concordat. Apart from rather vague generalisations of the kind already quoted about the genius of Corneille, Napoleon's criticisms of his favourite dramatist ^{rarely} ~~rather~~ rose above the statement of the obvious.

According to Napoleon, if his words to Narbonne in 1812, as VILLEMMAIN reconstructed them, are to be believed², 'Cinna' had always ^{made} ~~had~~ a great impression on him. Here is what he said of it, and the conclusions on Corneille to which it apparently led him: "Quel chef d'oeuvre que 'Cinna'! comme cela est construit! comme il est évident qu'Octave, malgré les taches de sang du Triumvirat, est nécessaire à

1. See Appendix H.

2. VILLEMMAIN, op.cit., vol.1, p.157. There is little in this particular passage which is unlikely to have been said by Napoleon. The political allusions are obvious, but Napoleon does not seem to have been afraid of such open declarations in private conversation with those he trusted. By 1812 it is difficult to see that any particular person could really be aimed at under the guise of Octave, it would appear to be an apology for the Jacobins as a group, or more particularly for the regicides, who held office under the Empire.

l'Empire, et l'Empire à Rome! La première fois que j'entendis ce langage, je fus comme illuminé, et j'aperçus clairement dans la politique et dans la poésie des horizons que je n'avais pas encore soupçonnés, mais que je reconnus faits pour moi.¹ Le cardinal de Richelieu se plaignait de Corneille; il ne lui trouvait pas un esprit de suite, une dépendance assez docile. Cela se peut. Ce génie..... ne devait reconnaître la souveraineté du Génie que dans une pensée maîtresse pour son propre compte. Un premier Ministre, un favori servant et régissant n'était pas son chef naturel, mais comme il m'eût compris."² The idea that there was some kind of natural affinity between himself and Corneille, that they would have understood each other and been complementary one to the other may well have arisen out of Napoleon's views on 'Cinna'. Almost certainly it was his favourite tragedy and he had, he said, known it by heart³. He liked it because it dealt with great issues⁴, although BOURRIENNE declared that what Napoleon, ^{most admired} in it was the "long and admirable tirade against popular government."⁵ It appears however, ~~that~~ from what he once said to Mme de Rémusat,⁶ that Napoleon really came to understand the play and appreciate it in his own rather special way after he had one day seen a perform-

1. This last short sentence may well be unauthentic as it seems almost too good to be true.

2. VILLEMAIN, op.cit., vol.1, p.157.

3. TALLEYRAND, op.cit., vol.1, p.404.

4. Idem.

5. 'Mémoires' of BOURRIENNE, vol.2, p.405. This presumably refers to the speeches by Cinna himself in act 2, scI.

6. Op.cit., vol.1, pp.278-279.

ance in which the actor Monvel¹ played the part of Augustus:
 "... il n'y a pas/^{bien} longtemps que je me suis expliqué le
 dénouement de 'Cinna'. Je n'y voyais d'abord que le moyen
 de faire un cinquième acte pathétique, et encore la clémence
~~par~~ proprement dite est une si petite vertu, quand elle
 n'est point appuyée sur la politique, que celle d'Auguste,
 devenu tout à coup un prince débonnaire, ne me paraissait
 pas digne de terminer cette belle tragédie. Mais, une fois,
 Monvel, en jouant devant moi, m'a dévoilé le mystère de
 cette grande ~~conception~~ conception. Il prononça le "Soyons
 amis, Cinna," d'un ton si habile et rusé que je compris que
 cette action n'était que la feinte d'un tyran, et j'ai app-
 rouvé comme calcul ce qui me semblait puéril comme sentiment.
 Il faut toujours dire ce vers de manière que de tous ceux
 qui l'écoutent, il n'y ait que Cinna de trompé."

George Bernard Shaw, in a letter to the press, once
 said² that Napoleon's successes in the field were in large
 measure due to his professionalism. It is equally true to
 say that no politician and few autocrats have had a more
 'professional' interest in their craft than Napoleon and he

1. Jacques-Marie BOUTET, (dit MONVEL), (1745-1812). Became a member of the Comédie Française in 1772, but went to Sweden in 1781 and remained there until 1786. On his return to Paris he joined the company of the Théâtre des variétés du Palais Royal, which joined with Talma's troupe in 1791 to become the Théâtre de la République. It was MONVEL who, in 1793, gave the sermon from the pulpit of St. Roch in honour of the goddess Reason. In 1799 he became a member of the reformed Comédie Française. He was the father of the ~~well~~ celebrated actress Mlle Mars, who also enjoyed Napoleon's favour.
2. 'New Statesman and Nation', Oct. 9th, 1948. Letter from G.B. Shaw following a review of a book on Napoleon.

assumed that Corneille had, in writing 'Cinna', divined the secrets of the tyrantsⁿ art and knowingly built up the play around them. Perhaps few literary critics would agree with Napoleon here but it is not improbable that he was really more capable ~~for~~ of understanding the actions of the historical Augustus Caesar than was Corneille. Finally, in order not to be unjust to Napoleon's early teachers, it must be mentioned that DOMAIRON also had a high opinion of 'Cinna'.¹

There was a clear relationship, as might be expected, between Napoleon's liking for a play and the number of times ~~he~~ he saw it performed. Of Corneille he saw 'Cinna' twelve times and 'Le Cid' eight,² which would make it appear that the latter play was his second favourite since he saw it more frequently than the rest of Corneille's plays. 'Polyeucte' had six performances³, followed by 'Horace', 'Nicomède' and 'la Mort de Pompée' with five performances each.⁴ Of all these plays except 'Polyeucte' few of Napoleon's ideas have survived, although he must have expressed many at various times. His interest in 'Le Cid' was demonstrated by his indignation on one occasion during the Consulate when, having seen a performance of it he demanded to know why the role of the Infanta had been left out. On being told that it was considered irrelevant and absurd he warmly defended Corneille, saying that this role was in fact most

1. DOMAIRON, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 358. 2. LECOMTE, op.cit., p. 491.

3. and 4. Idem.

appropriate as Corneille had wanted to give the highest possible idea of the Cid's character and it was a great honour for him to be loved by the daughter of his king, as well as by Chimène. "Rien ne relève ce jeune homme comme ces deux femmes qui se disputent son coeur."¹ The 'Confessions' of Arsène de la Houssaye², a one-time director of the Comédie Française, contain another anecdote about 'Le Cid' which, if true, further illustrates the attention Napoleon gave to all matters affecting the theatre. Arriving unexpectedly at the Comédie one day he saw a performance of 'Le Cid' which was so bad that he left, furious, at the end of the second act. He immediately sent for Rémusat, the superintendent of plays, and gave him the following cast: Rodrigue - Talma, Don Diègue - Monvel, Gormas - Saint-Prix, Le roi - Lafon, Don Sanche - Damas, Chimène - Mlle Duchesnois: presumably he must have been satisfied with whoever played the ^{Infanta} ~~the~~. He would, he said, be at the theatre at 7 p.m. for the start of the play, but hidden at the back of his box, to see how the actors would perform for the general public.

It is surprising that no praise of 'Horace' as a play ever seems to have been uttered by Napoleon. His only known eulogoy seems to have been the comment, at St. Helena, in 1816, "Voilà des hommes comme il n'y en a plus,"³ praise of Corneille's conception of Roman virtue rather than of the play

1. 'Dictionnaire Napoléon', p. 137 ('Corneille').
2. Vol. 3, p. 220. (Quoted also by GUILLOIS, op. cit.).
3. MONTHOLON, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 352.

itself. On closer inspection, however, perhaps 'Horace' would have recommended itself less to Napoleon than 'Cinna' since, although great things are at stake it deals not with the wiles and difficulties of ~~the~~ heads of states, but with Roman patricians merely doing their duty as Corneille imagined they did it, a noble play, but lacking the wealth of fortuitous allusion which characterises 'Cinna': even so it is remarkable that Napoleon did not recommend 'Horace' for performance in all garrison towns.¹

'Polyeucte', as we have said, was useful to Napoleon, but there is only one account of his views on the play, and that, unfortunately, of doubtful value since the writer of it, AUDIBERT, implies that it ~~was~~ is his reconstruction of what he remembered Napoleon to have said, written many years after the event.² In addition to this lapse of time the account also contains one major anachronism in that AUDIBERT makes Napoleon refer to the Empire, although the performance ^{of} ~~the~~ which he was talking was, he says, the first since the Revolution, and that appears to have taken place on May 14th, 1803 (24 Floréal, Year XI)³. The criticisms themselves are not of any great originality or interest and some of them, as for example the appreciation of the character of Sévère, lack the usual incisive clarity of Napoleon's

1. This is especially surprising in view of his statement about the 'Hector' of LUCE de LANCIVAL: "On irait mieux ~~au feu~~ après l'avoir entendue". (LAS CASES, op.cit., v.1, ^{à l'ennemi} p.401).

2. AUDIBERT, 'Indiscrétions et Confidences', Paris, 1858, p.33.

3. See GARROS, op.cit., p.206.

comments, but there is no real reason to reject the basis of the remarks as a fabrication, even though Napoleon's critical style and manner are not difficult to imitate.

In this conversation Napoleon once again praised Corneille for his historical understanding in the character-drawing of Polyeucte, who could not have acted otherwise at that moment in the development of Christianity. Pauline and Félix are also true to life, he said, but Sévère is an idea rather than an historical character, an anachronism: "Corneille a pris Sévère dans sa pensée, qui dévancait son siècle, et dans ces caractères espagnols, héroïques et généreux, qu'il aimait à reproduire."¹ Sévère could not have been the favourite of a ruthless tyrant like Décie, "...de tels princes n'accordent leur faveur qu'à des hommes au coeur impitoyable." He quoted numerous examples from history to prove this point and then said that Sévère himself would not have served such a master. Furthermore, his mission to Armenia would have been repugnant to him. Napoleon affects to believe, with Félix, that Sévère was sent to spy upon the governor, seeing here again the political genius of Corneille at work, since he realised this and hinted at it, but gave Sévère the ostensible reason for his journey of going to make a sacrifice. At this point the ideas become a little confused, he being forced to finish off quickly with a generalisation about the play as a whole: "Mais n'importe; à part la cou-

1. AUDIBERT, op.cit., p.33 et seq. See Appendix 'J' for the whole of this criticism.

leur historique, c'est une belle et philosophique pensée d'avoir, au sein même du paganisme devenu sanguinaire, mis la tolérance en présence des bourreaux."¹

From what has been said about Corneille it will be seen that Napoleon's admiration for the poet was largely based on one play, 'Cinna'. His appreciation of that one play, as of the others, was entirely founded on a highly subjective approach; just as he saw all things in life as factors in political calculations, so could he only judge Corneille by his understanding of affairs of state, an outlook which led him to an over-subtle assessment of the writer's intentions and an inflated idea of his political acumen. This all-important idea of Corneille's great political perception seems to have completely occupied Napoleon's mind when considering the question of the writer's genius and prevented him from making any criticisms, favourable or otherwise, of the form or style of the plays.

Using the listed numbers of performances attended by Napoleon as our guide, it is evident that he also held certain of Racine's tragedies in high esteem. 'Iphigénie en Aulide' and 'Phèdre' head the list with ten performances each (two less than 'Cinna'), followed by 'Andromaque' (nine), 'Bajazet' (Seven), and 'Athalie' (five).² The total numbers of listed performances for plays by Racine and Corneille are roughly equal, fifty-one for the former, and forty-

1. Idem. 2. LECOMTE, op.cit., p.491.

seven for the latter,¹ the slight increase in favour of Racine probably being due to the fact that a greater ^{number} of his plays were on the repertoire of the Comédie. Judging by Napoleon's comments on Racine it would be wrong to imagine that he considered him the equal of Corneille. Here for once SAINTE-BEUVE would appear to be nearer the truth when he says "Les personnes qui ont le mieux connu napoléon ont remarqué que..... il commença par préférer hautement Corneille; il n'en vint que plus tard à goûter Racine, mais il y vint."²

It is well to beware of accepting SAINTE-BEUVE's statement as an indication of the natural development of Napoleon's taste without a certain amount of reserve since once more the preferences of DOMAIRON may be lurking in the background. Of all Racine's works Napoleon preferred the 'Iphigénie en Aulide', he saw it more often than all the others except 'Phèdre' and he told Mme de RÉMUSAT "Quant à Racine, il me plaît dans 'Iphigénie'; cette pièce, tant qu'elle dure, vous fait respirer l'air poétique de la Grèce."³ Not only did 'Iphigénie' evoke the spirit of ancient Greece but it contained an element which Napoleon himself saw as the real tragic force in the modern world, political necessity, which was mingled in this play with the Greek idea of fate: "Il y a de ces deux principes dans 'Iphigénie', c'est le chef d'oeuvre de l'art, le chef d'oeuvre de Racine,

1. Idem. 2. 'Lundis', vol.1, p.287. 3. Mme de RÉMUSAT, op.cit., vol.1, p.278.

qu'on ~~l'ait~~ accuse bien à tort de manquer de force."¹ At St. Helena he remarked that 'Iphigénie' was a fine work², small enough praise indeed, but more than he allowed to the rest of Racine's works, although it is curious that he should have said so little about 'Phèdre'. It was precisely 'Iphigénie' which DOMAIRON singled out for praise, it was, he said, "...une de nos meilleures Tragédies pour la grandeur de l'action, la vivacité de l'intérêt, le choc des passions, et généra^alement pour la conduite de l'ouvrage."³

Napoleon's reactions to the other plays of Racine are very varied and not always consistent. 'Britannicus' did not gain his complete admiration because Racine had followed Tacitus too closely⁴ and Napoleon had a deep-seated dislike for Tacitus, not perhaps unnaturally, and even considered that Nero was perhaps not so black as Tacitus had painted him.⁵ Not only did Napoleon have a certain solicitude for the maligned Nero, but he also wished to see him presented on the stage in a life-like manner. He criticised Talma's interpretation of the role ~~on the stage~~ and gave him this advice on how to play Nero like a king: "Je voudrais reconnaître davantage dans votre jeu, le combat d'une mauvaise nature, avec une bonne éducation; je désirerais aussi que

1. SÉGUR, op.cit., vol.1, p.250. 2. GOURGAUD, vol.1, p.133. Napoleon added that Murat was rather like Achilles in the play.

3. DOMAIRON, Op.cit., vol.2, p.314.

4. c.f. Preface to 'Britannicus': "J'avais copié mes personnages d'après le plus grand peintre de l'antiquité, je veux dire d'après Tacite." (Racine). / 5. Napoleon frequently attacked Tacitus, alleging that he must have blackened the character of Nero. (See GOURGAUD, vol.2, p.270) He raised the same question with Wieland at Weimar. (BUFFENOIR, p.164).

vous fissiez moins de gestes; ces natures-là ne se répandent pas en dehors."¹ Other criticisms of the play itself were that the character of Aggripina was colourless² and that the dénouement was too sudden since the poisoning of Britannicus was not foreshadowed in the action early enough.³ On the other hand Napoleon thought that the character of Narcissus was drawn to life, since the best way of influencing the decisions of princes was by wounding their self-esteem.⁴

In 'Mithridate' Napoleon found little which deserved comment except for the plan of campaign which Mithridates outlines in act 3, scene 1. On two occasions at St. Helena Napoleon condemned this well-known plan, criticising it the first time with a ~~surpris~~ severely professional eye: "Pourquoi passer par la Germanie pour aller en Italie? D'ailleurs les Romains auraient suivi Mithridate, auraient rappelé leurs légions de partout, et il n'aurait pas trouvé Rome défendue seulement par des femmes et des enfants; pour cela il aurait fallu arriver à l'improviste par la mer."⁵ On the second occasion⁶ he declared that this same project might make a fine passage in verse but was quite senseless as a plan of action. Although he appears to be criticising Mithridates rather than Racine, who in his preface invokes the authority of Florus, Dion Cassius, and above all Plutarch for the plan,

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| 1. TISSOT, op. cit., pp. 34-35. | 2. GOURGAUD, vol. 2, p. 119. |
| 3. LAS CASES, vol. 1, p. 454. | 4. Idem. |
| 5. GOURGAUD, vol. 1, p. 133. | 6. LAS CASES, vol. 2, p. 587. |

napoleon probably felt that the great Corneille, who understood both war and politics through sheer genius, would have found a more practical method of reaching Rome.

At St. Helena Napoleon became very fond of Racine's tragedy '~~A~~^anⁱromaque'¹, presumably because of the obvious analogy between Astynax^a and the King of Rome, then in Austrian hands. He was much moved when reading the lines,

"Je passais^{a i} jusqu'aux lieux où l'on garde mon fils,
Puisqu'une fois le jour vous souffrez que je voie
Le seul bien qui me reste et d'Hector⁷ et de Troie;
J'allais, Seigneur, pleurer un moment avec lui,
Je ne l'ai point encore embrassé aujourd'hui."²

Unable to continue reading he called the play "la pièce des pères malheureux."³

Racine's two religious plays, 'Esther' and 'Athalie' did not perhaps lend themselves quite so readily for use as pièces de circonstance as 'Polyeucte' had done, since they contained various possibly uncomfortable allusions. It has already been seen that Napoleon did not consider 'Athalie' suitable for performance at Erfurt. Mme de RÉMUSAT⁴ says that he first saw it performed at St. Cloud, during the celebrations after the baptism^t of the second son of Louis Bonaparte⁵ in 1805, and although he admitted that he had never been much moved by the play when reading it, he was very interested by the performance. 'Esther', in which Napoleon

1. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 646. 2. 'Vie de Napoléon par lui-même', (Paris, 1930), 14 Oct, 1818. 3. Idem.

4. This baptism was made a great occasion as this was the first time a Bonaparte had been born a royal prince.
5. Op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 131.

saw Talma in the ~~part~~ role of Assuérus, aroused reflexions on religion and the influence of women in government which he recounted to Talma a few days later, but which contained nothing relevant to the play itself.

Although Napoleon had quite a high opinion of Racine he never praised ^{him} in a clear unreserved manner as he did Corneille. What was lacking was a definite point of contact between these two minds. For Racine politics and war only brought about the situations in which his essentially human, personal crises could be worked out. However strong duty might be, even as for example in 'Bérénice', it is really no more than a motive, like any other, it is not itself the subject of the play, as it is in 'Horace', and although Racine sometimes deals with great affairs of state they are not so important as the personal relationships they affect. Napoleon gave his own version, of this as follows: "Bien que Racine ait accompli des chefs-d'oeuvre en eux-mêmes.... il y a répandu néanmoins une perpétuelle fadeur, un éternel amour, et son ton doux, son fastidieux entourage..."¹ With a certain eye for historical criticism however, Napoleon continued, excusing Racine, in these words "...mais ce n'était précisément sa faute, c'était le vice et les mœurs du temps. L'amour alors, et plus ~~late~~ tard encore, c'était toute l'affaire de la vie de chacun..... Pour nous, nous en avons été brutalement détournés par la révolution et ses grandes affaires."²

1. LAS CASES, Op.cit., vol.2, pp.586-587. 2. Idem.

Napoleon's admiration for Corneille knew no bounds, for Racine he had a certain liking with strong reservations, but for the only tragic poet of any stature of the 18th. century, Voltaire, his feelings were very mixed. His secretary MÉNEVAL states that Napoleon was always ready to give his opinions, in spare moments, on 'Zaïre', 'la Mort de César', or 'Brutus', even ~~repeatedly~~ declaiming frequently certain lines from 'la Mort de César', the subject of which play always interested him.¹ He often saw performances of Voltaire's tragedies² and probably discussed them more than those of either Corneille or Racine. At St. Helena he had periods of ¹enthusiasm for Voltaire which were not always appreciated by his entourage and even the courtier LAS CASES could not refrain from the remark one day, when Napoleon had again called for Voltaire, "Nous nous en dégoûtons ~~de~~ chaque jour davantage."³

Almost all the tragedies of Voltaire were both read and discussed at different times by Napoleon with varying degrees of approval, but the one for which he expressed the greatest admiration was 'Oedipe', the work with which Voltaire had first achieved fame in 1718. According to LECOMTE's table Napoleon saw the play nine times and he chose it for performance at Erfurt. This predilection for the piece may have been due to certain favourable allusions it contained, but it appears from the 'Mémoires de Sainte-Hélène' that

1. Op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 424-425. 2. See Appendix 'H'.

3. Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 537.

it was the only one of Voltaire's plays to receive generous praise from Napoleon. Twice in 1816 he praised it highly, even stating that it contained the finest scene in the whole of French drama,¹ meaning presumably the recognition scene in Act 1, to which he had already referred as the finest and most complete in the whole of the theatre², praise which surprised his companions.³ His only criticism of the play in an adverse sense was that he considered the love of Phœloctète for Jocaste to be absurd, a fault for which he did not blame the author, but once again the "mœurs du temps et les grandes actrices du jour, qui imposaient la loi."⁴ This intrusion of extraneous love interests into heroic themes was clearly one of the things Napoleon most disliked about French tragedy, a fault which he also found in Voltaire's 'Mahomet' and Raynouard's 'Templiers'. Whereas Voltaire had sought to diminish the importance of love as a tragic theme, Napoleon would apparently have wished to see it banished altogether from the tragic theatre. Without wishing to imply that all of Napoleon's ideas on tragedy were taken from his old teacher Domairon it is worthy of mention that the 'Principes Généraux des Belles-Lettres' contains the following observation, "Faut-il que l'amour règne dans toutes nos tragédies? Faut-il qu'il en soit entièrement banni? Voltaire me paraît tenir un juste milieu

1. LAS CASES, op.cit., vol.2, p.533. 2. Ibid., vol.2, p.194.
 3. Ibid., vol.2, p.533. 4. Idem.

entre ces deux sentiments..."¹ Although master and pupil disagree about Voltaire's achievement, the germ of Napoleon's criticism may lie in this sentence.

In spite of his appreciation of 'Oedipe' Napoleon found no other play of Voltaire completely to his taste. As an admirer of Corneille's conception of the Roman character he applied Corneille's standards to Voltaire's 'Brutus' and found it wanting. Voltaire did not understand that patriotism was to the Romans what honour was to the French², Brutus had not sacrificed^c his sons to the good of Rome, but to his own vanity, he was a monster of pride, his conduct was not sublime but horrible. In Napoleon's opinion it was the line "Si je n'étais pas Brutus, je t'aurais pardonné" which had caused many otherwise good people to condone the crimes of the Revolution.³

Just as he had failed to understand the Roman character as Corneille and Napoleon conceived of it, so had Voltaire failed to understand the greatness of Caesar in his 'Mort de César'. Napoleon was so interested in this subject that he said at St. Helena that he had, in his youth, tried to produce a tragedy on the theme himself, a Caesar who would have been quite different from Voltaire's.⁴ Since Corneille had not supplied a version of this theme Napoleon no doubt hoped to make good this gap when he suggested the subject to

1. Vol. 2, p. 358. 2. LAS CASES, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 640.
3. Idem., also MONTHOLON, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 288, and GOURGAUD, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 141. 4. MONTHOLON, vol. 2, p. 185.

Goethe, in the hope that he might improve upon Voltaire.

Of all Voltaire's plays none was discussed by Napoleon in greater detail than 'Mahomet' and the reason for this is not far to seek. TALLEYRAND, talking of Napoleon's interest in this play, said "d'un bout à l'autre il croyait remplir la scène,"¹ a statement which was close to the truth, although, as his criticisms show, it was not with the Mahomet of Voltaire that Napoleon identified himself, but with the idea of the man of destiny, the world-shaping genius, who was to him the real Mahomet.

Napoleon had a deep interest in the life and achievements of Mahomet, an interest which was almost certainly connected with his own adventures in the East as a conqueror. As early as 1789 Napoleon had begun to take an interest in the East, as his notes show², even going to the lengths of trying to write a story about Eastern fanaticism². When he reached Egypt he had taken a great interest in the religion of the Arabs and had learned much both of the Koran and of the Prophet himself. He had lost no opportunity of proclaiming his admiration for Mahomet and for the Islamic faith and had finally persuaded the theologians of Egypt to proclaim the adherence of himself and the French army to Islam, albeit in a modified form.³ Although this was obviously mainly a political stratagem Napoleon always maintained a sympathetic

1. TALLEYRAND, op.cit., vol.1, p.430. 2. See 'Manuscripts inédits,' pp.319-334 and his story 'Le Masque prophète' Ibid., p.335 et seq. 3. J.M.THOMPSON, op.cit., p.120.

attitude towards the faith of Islam, chiefly it seems, on account of the kinship which he felt for its founder, who was, he considered, a brother spirit, another great leader who had shaken the world and ~~shook~~ changed it by sheer force of will.

Voltaire was not concerned with demonstrating the greatness of Mahomet, but rather the power and danger of fanaticism and imposture, as well as exposing the credulity of man. The full title of the play is 'le Fanatisme, ou Mahomet le Prophète', a better description of its subject than 'Mahomet' by which it is usually known.~~and~~ In spite of the impudent letter to Pope Benedict XIV, which amounts to a dedication of the play to him, it is easy to see the play as an attack on the foundations of all religions, as a further blow in Voltaire's campaign against 'l'infâme'. Napoleon saw this clearly when he said "Voltaire voulait tout dénigrer, il a atteint Jésus-Christ dans Mahomet."¹

Napoleon made two different types of criticism of this play, firstly, critical remarks expressed in conversation both during his reign and at St. Helena, which are chiefly concerned with the lack of historical accuracy and the misrepresentation of the character of Mahomet, and secondly, the more systematic criticism of the play dictated at St. Helena and published at the end of the 'Correspondance' of Napoleon.² 'Mahomet' was the only play by any author to receive such detailed treatment from Napoleon, a favour which

1. GOURGAUD, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 107. 2. Op.cit., vol. XXXI, pp. 487-90.

it owed to his interest in its subject matter rather than to his appreciation of its literary qualities.

Although the bulk of Napoleon's ideas on 'Mahomet' was gathered up for the first time by the diarists at St. Helena, he had already expressed certain views on Voltaire's conception of the prophet in the long conversation on the theatre with Mme de RÉMUSAT¹, believed to have taken place in 1804. He criticised Voltaire in much the same way as he did later; Mahomet was not accurately portrayed, he was shown neither as an Arab nor as a prophet: "C'est un imposteur ~~qui~~ qui semble avoir été élevé à l'École polytechnique, car il démontre ses moyens de puissance comme, moi, je pourrais le faire dans un siècle tel que celui-ci."² Here also, recorded for the first time, is Napoleon's dislike for the murder of the sheik Zopire by his son Séïde at Mahomet's instigation. This, he considered, was a useless crime which was unworthy of a great man since great men are never cruel without a compelling reason. His insistence on this last point is easy to understand since he may have wished it to be well understood that ^{that there} was a compelling reason for the execution of the Duke of Enghien.

At St. Helena his criticisms were of the same type; once more he attacked the historical veracity of Mahomet's character as portrayed by Voltaire, but there began to appear also moments of more purely literary criticism and

1. Op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 278-279. 2. Idem.

even occasions when he admitted that the play contained some fine lines,¹ possibly the result of having more leisure to study it. However, the ~~same~~ general conclusions were usually similar to those he made on June 3rd, 1816: "Voltaire n'a connu ni les choses, ni les hommes, ni les grandes passions."² Voltaire, said Napoleon, had misunderstood Mahomet because he believed that all great men commit crimes, and crimes of a base nature, but he was wrong for they never attain their aims by such means.³ "Voltaire avait ici manqué à l'histoire et au ^{cœur} humain. Il prostituait le grand caractère de Mahomet par les intrigues les plus basses. Il faisait agir un grand homme qui avait changé la face du monde, comme le plus vil scélérat, digne au plus du gibet."⁴

Voltaire had not only misrepresented Mahomet's character, but his achievements also, according to Napoleon, "Les hommes qui ont changé l'univers...n'y sont jamais parvenus en gagnant les chefs; mais toujours en remuant des masses. Le premier moyen est du ~~ressort~~ ressort de l'intrigue, et n'amène que des résultats secondaires; le second est la marche du génie, et change la face du monde!"⁵ Soon after this, in a moment of candour, Napoleon weakened his own arguments by admitting that he knew nothing for certain of the true character or doings of Mahomet and casting doubt on all that the Koran said about him, showing in the process his own near-Voltairian outlook on religions: "Il en aura

1. GOURGAUD, vol. 2, p. 153 and p. 107. 2. LAS CASES, vol. 1, p. 677.

3. GOURGAUD, vol. 2, p. 153. 4. LAS CASES, vol. 1, p. 528.

5. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 529.

été sans doute de lui comme de tous les chefs de sectes. Le Coran, ayant été fait trente ans après lui, aura consacré bien des mensonges."¹ In reality both Napoleon and Voltaire seem to have held similar ^{views} /about the subject of the play, fanaticism, but Napoleon thought ~~it~~ ^{the play} should have been about something else, the undoubted greatness of Mahomet himself and his powers of leadership; "Néanmoins il reste encore à expliquer comment l'événement prodigieux dont nous sommes certains, la conquête du monde, a pu s'opérer en si peu de temps."² What is in fact a piece of Voltaire's ~~literary~~ 'combat' literature should have been, in Napoleon's view, a tragedy of character, or a political tragedy, or possibly not even a tragedy at all, in any true sense, but an analysis of greatness.

The character of Omar was, in Napoleon's eyes, quite unsuitable. Whereas Mahomet's lieutenant had also been a man of some greatness Voltaire had made of him "un coupe-jarrets de mélodrame, et un vrai ~~masque~~ masque"³, or, as he said on another occasion, he had been turned into a Figaro.⁴ Furthermore Voltaire had been wildly wrong to show Mahomet in love, "...allons donc, il aurait violé, et voilà tout."⁵

The majority of these criticisms are embodied in the long dictation to Marchand which also contains practical suggestions, in detail, for making 'Mahomet' the tragedy Napoleon would have liked it to be. The opening paragraph

1. LAS CASES, vol.1, p.529. 2. Idem. 3. Ibid., vol.1, p.528.
4. GOURGAUD, vol.1, p.115. 5. Ibid., vol.2, p.107.

is a mixture of praise and blame which gives the impression that Napoleon did not regard the play as unfavourably as some of the earlier remarks would suggest: "Malgré les taches qui obscurcissent la tragédie de Mahomet, de M. de Voltaire, les beautés dont ce chef-d'oeuvre est plein l'ont placé au premier rang et font encore les délices de notre scène; mais serait-il donc bien difficile de faire disparaître des taches qui ne tiennent point à la nature de l'ouvrage?"

With his usual precision Napoleon tabulated the faults, which are three in number, and followed them with detailed instructions for their removal. Anyone with enough practice in writing alexandrins, by following these instructions and carrying out the necessary complete revision of the fifth act, could produce for himself a version of 'Mahomet' as Napoleon ~~wished to see it~~ wished to see it.

The first fault is Mahomet's love for Palmire, especially in rivalry with Sélde, as it is not necessary to the action. Furthermore it leads ~~to~~ nowhere since the death of Palmire cannot be considered as a punishment for Mahomet's crimes. To find a cure for this fault Napoleon studied the text with much care and understanding, suggesting a series of ingenious deletions, chiefly in the second act, which would leave Mahomet untouched by an emotion of which Napoleon judged him to be incapable.

The second point to be criticised is the use of poison, which is ignoble and unnecessary in Napoleon's view.

Would a great figure like Mahomet, who had achieved such prodigies of arms, a preacher of a new law and a new morality, would he have used the weapon of the meanest type of murderer? With his completely practical approach Napoleon asks how Omar could possibly have served such a master lacking in scruples, for fear of losing his own life. Mahomet's disavowal of Séfde after he has killed Zopire is equally unrealistic, how could a ruler find people to serve him when he disavows and sacrifices his principal agents? It is to the poisoning of Séfde that Mahomet owes the capture of Mecca. Are we to believe, asks Napoleon, that the whole of the subsequent fortunes of Islam depended on one such unworthy deed? Mahomet was a much greater man than he appears to be in such a context: "Mahomet fut un grand homme, intrépide soldat; avec une poignée de monde il triompha au combat de Bender¹; grand capitaine, éloquent, grand homme d'État, il régénéra sa patrie, et créa au milieu des déserts de l'Arabie un nouveau ~~peuple~~ peuple et une nouvelle puissance."

To restore to Mahomet his true lustre Napoleon suggested further changes which again show a minute and thoughtful attention to the text of the play. He enumerated the changes necessary to eliminate the poisoning of ~~Séfde~~ Hercide, but the fate of Séfde could only be changed by more complicated ^{alterations} changes:- "Dans ce système, toute la scène 6e du 4e acte

1. The victory of Badr (or Bedr) a.d. 629, to which frequent reference is made in the Koran.

serait à retrancher; il y faudrait substituer une scène où Séfde serait tué par les partisans de Zopire, le surprenant couvert du sang de leur maître, ou dans laquelle il se tuerait lui-même de désespoir d'avoir tué son père. Omar arriverait alors et enlèverait Palmire."

Dans ce système¹ le 5e acte serait tout à changer: Séfde serait avoué par Mahomet: il aurait commis le combat sacré, ordonné par Dieu dans le Coran;² le parti de Zopire dans la Mecque, abattu par la mort de son chef, ne saurait faire aucune résistance contre le parti de Mahomet ~~sout~~ soutenu par l'armée déjà aux portes de la ville, et qui apparaîtrait sur les remparts: cela, avec la mort de Palmire, terminerait le 5e acte."

The third and last major fault was ^{that} the political situation was not sufficiently developed. Not enough information was given about the internal situation in Mecca, about the state of public morale and opinion, or the strength of the factions, while the policy of Mahomet was also not

1. Repetition, so characteristic of Napoleon's style, has already been remarked on, but this is quite a striking example.
2. This is an unconscious anachronism as the Koran did not exist as a body of doctrine during the life of Mahomet, but consists of his inspired utterances, ~~written~~ written down by his disciples but not collected together until after his death. The Koran was revealed between a.d. 611 and a.d. 632 approximately, and the first authorised edition issued under the authority of the caliph Othman in 660 a.d. (See E.H. PALMER's translation in the 'World's Classics' edition O.U.P. (London) 1928). The Holy War is presumably ordered by the Chapter of Mohamed (also called 'fight') ch. XLVII. "And when ye meet those who misbelieve - then striking off heads, until ye have massacred them, and bind fast the bands..." (Op. cit. p. 437).

made clear enough. Here Napoleon leaves the remedy to the imagination of the reader.

The total effect of these changes would have been to remove whatever dramatic interest the play has and reduce it to an historical chronicle in dramatic form, as accurate as it could be made in the circumstances. As a professional soldier Napoleon wished to see justice done to another great master of the art and as an accomplished statesman, politician, and organiser of coups d'état he wanted the entry into Mecca to be organised on professional lines, something for which more accurate information is needed than that given by Voltaire, hence the third point of criticism. Here for the ~~first~~ only time we see Napoleon trying to put into practice an idea which he had long held, the idea that in modern tragedy politics should provide the hidden sources of action, playing the ^{part} fate had played in the tragedies of the ancients.¹

Although Napoleon saw many other plays by 18th century writers² none of them seems to have been greatly to his liking. Even at St. Helena few of the other tragic authors of that century were read and Napoleon's remarks upon them were not enthusiastic. During the Empire he had sometimes seen performances of Crébillon's play 'Rhadamiste et Zénobie', and 'Atrée et Thyeste' was read one evening at St. Helena,³ but neither of them won any praise, in fact LAS CASES tells us

1. AUDIBERT, op.cit., pp. 208-209. 2. See Appendix H.

3. LAS CASES, vol. 2, p. 61.

that they found 'Atrée et Thyeste' "...horrible, très dégoûtant et nullement tragique."¹

Before closing our discussion of Napoleon's views on tragedy it is of interest to see his opinions on the tragedies of the ancient Greeks. There is not a great deal of information available on which to base our conclusions but fortunately Napoleon made a number of statements on this subject, at St. Helena, which help to give a reasonably clear idea of his views. It was towards the end of 1816 and early in 1817 that Napoleon took to reading the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides all of which he had in the translation of Brumoy.² After reading Longpierre's 'Médée' Napoleon wished to compare it to that of Euripides and a fortnight later he read the 'Agamemnon' of Aeschylus and the ~~tragedies~~ 'Oedipus' of Sophocles. Several months later, in March 1817, he also read the 'Andromache' of Euripides, which was, he said, better than that of Racine.³ This comparison with Racine was the only one of its kind to be recorded, if similar comparative assessments were made as between Longpierre and Euripides and Voltaire and Sophocles they were, unfortunately, not reported. The only critical remarks on the Greek plays themselves all concern the 'Agamemnon' of Aeschylus in which Napoleon admired the 'extreme force and the great simplicity'. The reactions of all the group at Longwood are expressed by LAS CASES as follows: "Nous étions

1. LAS CASES, vol. 2, p. 61.
2. 'Théâtre des Grecs', (Paris, 1785-89). See 'Memorial' (ed. of M. Dunan) vol. 2, p. 459, n. 1.
3. See LAS CASES, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 459 and 533, also MONTHOLON, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 433 and vol. 2, p. 100.

frappés surtout de la gradation de terreur qui caractérise les productions de ce père de la tragédie. Et s'est pourtant là, faisait-on observer, l'étincelle première à laquelle se rattache notre belle lumière moderne." ¹

When these Greek tragedies were first being discussed at Longwood Napoleon stated that he had once ordered one of them to be performed at the court theatre, using the best available translation of the text, and keeping as close as possible to the originals in presentation and costume. ² He could not remember what had prevented this production from taking place ² but he ~~said~~ said later that it was due to Talma, who had always been opposed to the plan. ³ Napoleon said that his aim would have been not to attempt to influence the development of French drama, but merely to see what effect the plays would produce, "...j'eusse aimé à juger des impressions de la facture antique sur nos dispositions modernes." He felt sure that they would have been favourably received, but he would have been interested to see the way in which modern taste would receive the Greek chorus. ⁴

For Napoleon the French 'classical' tragedy was neither a dying tradition nor an unrepeatable achievement of past centuries, it was something, as his ten-yearly prizes indicated, he hoped to see produced during his own reign, an idea which does not appear to have surprised his contemporaries in the least. As far as one can ascertain, in many quarters, at the beginning of the 19th century the opinion

1. LAS CASES, vol. 2, p. 533. 2. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 459.
3. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 533. 4. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 533.

was still firmly held that there was no reason why the tradition of Corneille, of Racine, and of Voltaire should not be continued by other playwrights, presumably for ever. Napoleon certainly adhered to this view, but, like Voltaire, he hoped to see developments in the subject matter of the tragedy, he wanted it to conform to his own idea of the modern world in which, as he saw it, political necessity replaced the blind fate of the Greek tragedy. This subject it was which he chose to discuss with his generals on the eve of Austerlitz, expressing himself in these words, according to his aide de camp SÉGUR¹: "Aujourd'hui que le prestige de la religion païenne n'existe plus, il faut à notre scène tragique un autre mobile. C'est la politique qui doit être le grand ressort de la tragédie moderne! C'est elle qui doit remplacer, sur notre théâtre, la fatalité antique; cette fatalité qui rend Oedipe criminel sans qu'il soit coupable; qui nous intéresse à Phèdre, en chargeant les dieux d'une partie de ses crimes et de ses faiblesses..... c'est une erreur de croire les sujets tragiques épuisés; il en existe une foule^{les} dans ~~les~~ nécessités de la politique; il faut savoir ~~toucher~~ sentir et toucher cette corde; dans ce principe, source abondante d'émotions fortes, germe féconde des situations les plus critiques, autre fatalité aussi impérieuse, aussi dominatrice que la fatalité des anciens, on en retrouvera les avantages; il ne s'agit que de placer ses personnages contradictoirement à d'autres passions ou à d'

1. Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 250.

autres penchants, sous l'influence absolue de cette nécessité puissante! Ainsi tout ce qu'on appelle coup d'État, crime politique, deviendra un sujet de tragédie, où, l'horreur étant tempérée par la nécessité, un intérêt nouveau et soutenu se développera."¹

It is not possible to know exactly when this idea first took shape in Napoleon's mind but it was already more or less apparent in 1791, when, in the 'Discours de Lyon' he severely criticises Zamore, in Voltaire's 'Alzire' for forgetting his duty to the nation because of his love for Alzire.² ARNAULT, who was in a good position to judge Napoleon's ideas on literary matters during the period of the Egyptian expedition, states that for Napoleon the stuff of tragedy was "les grands intérêts des nations", which he found in certain plays of Corneille³, so that, by 1798, he already had quite fixed views on the subject. It was not, however, until 1805 that the fully developed idea of the part to be played by politics in modern tragedy was first expressed and the theory seems to have been brought to its final form as a result of Napoleon's consideration and discussion of Raynouard's⁴ 'Templiers', a play which had caused

1. This is followed in SEGUR by a revealing sentence, "Alors vinrent quelques exemples, mais non pas celui de ses souvenirs qui peut-être l'inspirait le plus en ce moment." This allusion to the affair of the Duke of Enghien is one of many similar ones which suggest that Napoleon was never at peace with himself on this matter.
2. 'Manuscrits inédits', p. 558. 3. ARNAULT, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 99.
3. François-Juste-Marie RAYNOUARD (1761-1836) b. at Brignoles, (Var). He gained celebrity with his 'Templiers' (1805). HE entered the Academy in 1807. Was deputy of the Var to the Corps Législatif in 1813. His second tragedy, 'les États

a sensation in Paris in 1805.

'Les Templiers' is a play built around the discreditable story of the suppression of the Knights Templars in France by Philippe le Bel in 1312, after the trial of the Order and its disbandment by the Council of ~~the~~ Vienne¹. The main dramatic interest lies in the strength of character of the Grand Master, Jacques de Molai, who refuses to accept the order of disbandment from Pope or king and stoutly maintains the innocence of his Order, leading his knights at last to the burning pyre rather than accept even a pardon from the king, since this would amount to an admission of guilt. In the form in which Napoleon saw it the play was deficient in motive since the fate of the Templars was made to depend entirely on the result of the judgment of the court, the king being merely an impassive spectator watching to see that justice was done, but misled by his ministers. There is every reason to believe that, as stated by many

(from p.266). de Blois', was banned by Napoleon and failed when played during the Restoration. After this failure in the theatre Raynouard devoted himself to philological research, in particular to the study of the Provençal language, becoming ~~about~~ the founder of modern Provençal studies, work which gained for him a place in the Académie des Inscriptions.

1. The question of the innocence of the Templars on the charges of heresy, idolatry, pederasty etc. has been frequently discussed by French historians and even supplies the material for an article in VOLTAIRE's 'Dictionnaire Philosophique'. RAYNOUARD himself wrote a 'Notice historique sur les Templiers', much of which is reproduced as an appendix to the play in the 'Répertoire universel du théâtre français' (Paris, 1823) vol. 20; p. 156.

historians¹, the suppression of the Order was a deliberate political act engineered by Philippe le Bel as a means of humbling and dispossessing this very rich, strong and war-like corporation which had enjoyed great influence in France.

'Les Templiers' was first performed in Paris on May 14th, 1805, when it had a prodigious success², greater than that of any other tragedy during the earlier years of the Empire, according to SAINTE-BEUVE,³ and was one of the first plays since Voltaire's 'Adélaïde du Guesclin' to take its subject from French history. At the time of this first performance Napoleon was in Italy, where he had gone to be crowned King, in Milan. From the critics and the press the play received a mixed reception, having enthusiastic admirers and bitter detractors. The tumult it created was so great that Napoleon had it performed at the court theatre of Saint Cloud twice in quick succession, only a week after his return from Milan⁴. No play, except possibly Voltaire's 'Mahomet', produced so much or so detailed criticism from Napoleon for here was a tragedy which had attempted to deal with a great theme of state and in which love played no very great part either in forwarding the action or in sus-

1. VOLTAIRE, in his 'Essai sur les Moeurs' (ch. LXVI) defends the Templars, saying that their downfall was long premeditated by Philippe le Bel, their trial unjust and barbaric, dishonouring both king and Pope, both of whom profited from the confiscation of the Order's wealth.

2. SAINTE-BEUVE, 'Lundis', vol. 5, p. 7.

3. Ibid. p. 1.

4. BAUSSET, Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 44. GARROS, Op. cit., p. 243.

taining the dramatic interest. However, as the play first appeared, in the form in which Napoleon knew it, the political theme was not the real interest, this lay rather in the inflexible steadfastness of character shown by the Grand Master of the Templars. The play might indeed have been more dramatic if he had shown a little more human weakness since there is no conflict in his mind at any point, but only anguish.¹

After seeing the performances Napoleon discussed the play with Fontanes and although^h by no means satisfied with it he was quite obviously much impressed and it appears to have helped him to formulate his own ideas about the type of tragedy he wished to see produced during his reign. He declared his astonishment at the stir which the play had aroused, as much about the historical issue of the guilt or innocence of the Templars as about its literary merits. For Napoleon the action was not moving enough because the author was more interested in proving the innocence of the Templars than in bringing out the pathos of the situation, a grave fault since there was insufficient historical evidence to arrive at any sort of convincing conclusion one way or the other "...il est impossible d'y apporter aucune lumière.....l'entière innocence des Templiers ou leur entière

1. This is not even historically true, according to RAYNOUARD's own 'Notice historique sur les Templiers' since the Grand Master did on one occasion weaken under torture and make confessions which he afterwards withdrew. RAYNOUARD's real difficulty seems to have arisen from his attempts to cram the essentials of the action, which lasted for for several years, into 24 hours.

perversité sont également incroyables: serait-il donc si pénible de rester dans le doute, lorsqu'il est bien évident que toutes les recherches ne pourraient arranger un résultat satisfaisant? Si l'auteur, en tra^uçant ce sujet, avait bien voulu s'en tenir aux vérités historiques également convenues entre tous les partis, il aurait pu donner à sa tragédie une force et une couleur dramatiques qui lui manquaient entièrement."¹

Napoleon's detailed criticisms all aimed at ensuring greater historical accuracy in accordance with the known facts and greater dramatic interest, in both of which the play is lacking. Philippe le Bel could have been shown as he really was "violent, impétueux, emporté dans toutes ses passions, absolu"², instead of which RAYNOUARD had made him a disinterested upholder of justice with no reason to love or hate the Templars, merely seeming to require an act of submission for form's sake.³ Napoleon went to the heart of the problem when he tackled the character of the Grand

1. BAUSSET, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 44 et seq. These words are those of BAUSSET himself attempting to reconstruct Napoleon's criticism which was delivered to Fontanes. All of the opinions stated here in this conversation are taken from the 'Mémoires' of BAUSSET, who defends their authenticity as follows:—"...il (Napoléon) s'en exprima assez ouvertement le soir même avec M. de Fontanes, qui assista comme moi aux grandes entrées du coucher; j'écrivis en rentrant chez moi le résumé de l'opinion que j'entendis émettre: ce résumé, qui est une espèce de critique de l'ouvrage, fera connaître la justesse d'esprit, la finesse du tact et la sagesse des jugemens de Napoléon. M. de Rémusat se trouva, ainsi que moi, présent à cette discussion; je lui fis voir deux jours après l'extrait que je vais donner et il m'assura que j'avais rapporté avec fidélité l'opinion et même quelques expressions de Napoléon."

2. and 3. Idem.

Master, the author had, he said, forgotten the classical axiom that the hero of a tragedy should be neither completely innocent nor completely guilty if he is to be made interesting.¹ RAYNOUARD, said Napoleon, wanted to show the Grand Master as a model of ideal perfection whereas he could have ~~been~~ shown, with historical accuracy, that he had, in a moment of weakness, made confessions, whether out of fear or in the hope of saving the Order, confessions which he would afterwards retract "par un retour heureux de courage et de vertu.... à l'aspect même du bûcher qui l'attend."²

Furthermore, asked Napoleon, would it have spoiled the play if RAYNOUARD had shown the young Templars, still fervent believers and courageous, praising the hand of Providence, in their misfortunes, for punishing their lapses from the ancient virtues of the Order by the abuse of their power and wealth? All these things, he said, were admitted both by the friends and the enemies of the Templars. He accuses the author of having neglected to arouse the feelings of pity which great changes of fortune can produce, when men who are distinguished by high birth and great services

1. This is either based on ARISTOTLE, through DOMAIRON, or is an adaptation of BOILEAU :- "Des héros de roman fuyez les petitessees: Toutefois aux grandes coeurs donnez quelques faiblesses." ('Art Poétique, IIIe chant.) However, this is perhaps further in meaning from what Napoleon says than ARISTOTLE's view :- "There remains, then, the intermediate kind of person, a man not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought ~~about~~ upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgment, he being one of those who enjoy great reputation and prosperity...." 'The Art of Poetry' (Trans. by I. Bywater, ed. by W. Hamilton Fyfe, Oxford, 1940).
2. BAUSSET, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 44 et seq.

are suddenly overthrown, especially when such feelings arise naturally from the subject of the tragedy.¹

The lesser roles in the play did not escape Napoleon's attention either. The young Marigny, son of the minister Enguerrand de Marigny, chief enemy of the Templars, is himself a Templar, although the fact is not known in France, he having taken the oath in the Holy Land where he had gone when the king had refused to allow his marriage to a member of the House of Navarre. This love affair is brought into the play at a point where Marigny is about to declare his membership of the Order and share its fate. The king apparently changes his mind and is ready to allow the marriage, thus adding another to Marigny's torments, since his oath will not allow him to marry. This scene does have elements of dramatic tension and is more essential to the action than the Infanta episode, ^{is} in 'Le Cid' since it leaves Marigny with no alternative but to admit his membership of the Templars, unless he is to break his vows by marriage. Napoleon obviously did not hold this view, he felt that the love of Marigny and Adelaide was quite pointless since Adelaide never appears in the play and the episode has no effect on the action, a criticism which is true of the main plot but not of the subsidiary interest, the mental struggle of Marigny.

All the other minor roles except that of the Connétable come in for some criticism. The two ministers, Enguer-
 1. Idem.

rand and the Chancellor Nogaret could have been given distinctive personalities, history provided enough details about them for this to be done, while the Queen, Jeanne, who appears in the role of a hidden intermediary between the ~~king~~ king and the Grand Master, and as a counsellor of humanity to the impetuous king, was, in Napoleon's view a dangerous role since it might give rise to allusions.¹

In the more technical literary matter of form and style, where Napoleon's competence was less, he paid a tribute to the play which even contemporary opinion did not entirely endorse:² "Cette tragédie est naturellement écrite, il y a de beaux vers et des pensées heureusement exprimées." To conclude his remarks Napoleon said that he found the play neither so good nor so bad as it had been said to be,³ just as he felt that ^{the} Templars were neither so completely innocent nor so completely guilty as their partisans or enemies had claimed.

According to another account, by AUDIBERT, Napoleon, after having had the night to think about it, again took *up*

1. Allusions possibly to the part Josephine was supposed to play ~~in~~ in Napoleon's life, and to her alleged relations at this period with Royalist agents.
2. c.f. the following extract from the report of the jury for the Prix décennaux:— "Le style de la pièce est presque constamment pur, noble et élégant; mais on y dés-
in-~~fait~~ fait plus d'abandon et de variété; et surtout plus de mouvement et d'~~entraînement~~ entraînement dans le dialogue." (Reproduced in the 'Répertoire universel', vol. 20, p. 20).
3. BAUSSET, vol. 1, p. 49, gives the following impression of the furore caused by the play: "...cette pièce occasionna une espèce de guerre civile dans la république des lettres. Napoléon avait lu à Milan les articles des journaux pour et contre; il avait même dit un jour, qu'à juger la fureur des partis, il y avait à craindre qu'on n'en vint

~~after having had the night to think about it, again took~~
 the question with Fontanes at the lever.¹ This time he was much more concerned with the contemporary applications of the ideas in the play, describing it now as 'bad', and 'written in a bad spirit'. Royalty was shown in a discreditable light since the Templars were made innocent victims ~~and~~ and the Grand Master a miracle of virtue who dared to reject the royal pardon with the words "Une grâce n'est rien, il nous faut la justice." This, said Napoleon, was insolence on the part of a subject and quite incredible before such a king as Philippe le Bel.² "Mettre de telles paroles dans la bouche de personnages de l'histoire, en face du public, c'est vouloir ôter à la royauté sa main de justice pour lui substituer la torche des bûchers." Although it is not possible to check the accuracy of these statements, as AUDIBERT does not indicate his sources, they do agree with the way in which Napoleon's thoughts on the play developed.

not content to discuss the play only with Fontanes,

(from p.273.) à brûler ses adversaires comme on avait ~~fait~~ fait des Templiers."

1. AUDIBERT, 'Confidences', p.160 et seq.
2. PHILIPPE le BEL, (Philip IV) 1268-1314. Became King of France in 1285. His reign was marked by assertion of the royal power, in particular against the secular interests of the Church. As a result of his quarrel with Pope Boniface VIII he confiscated all Church property, for which he was excommunicated. In reply he had Boniface arrested and the Pope died soon after from the maltreatment he received. After the short pontificate of Benedict XI Philip caused the election of a French Pope who moved the Papal court to Avignon (Clement V).

Napoleon sent for Raynouard himself in order to discuss it with him, and to see what sort of views he held.¹ Here, for the first time, Napoleon forcibly stated the view that Philippe le Bel should have revealed the real reason for suppressing the Templars, political necessity, as his justification. The Grand Master's inflexibility should have been based on his vows rather than on his wish to defend the Order. Further, Napoleon objected to the king having made it a condition of mercy that the Templars should ask his pardon. Raynouard replied that ~~this~~ this was necessary because they had been tried by ^{an} ecclesiastical tribunal and by asking pardon they would admit the legality and justice of their trial. Napoleon's reply revealed ~~the way~~ ^{also} the way in which his ideas had developed on this subject; "C'est très bien, mais dans cette tragédie il fallait attacher un grand intérêt sur le Roi, car qu'est-ce que le Roi? C'est toute la nation, c'est la nation elle-même. Qu'étaient-ce que les Templiers?.... des oligarches, une petite partie de la nation, n'agissant que par intérêt personnel. Cette tragédie est la querelle de la monarchie et de l'oligarchie, le peuple doit donc bien plus s'intéresser au Roi qu'aux oligarches....Je le dirai toujours qu'il eût été beau et grand d'appeler l'intérêt sur Philippe-le-Bel frappant un grand coup d'État."

Napoleon also objected to the whole play taking place actually inside the Temple, since, he said, once the king had

1. AUDIBERT, op.cit., p.167, and LECOMTE, op.cit., p.417.

set foot inside he was committed and could not turn back, therefore the issue was clear from the start. After this acutely practical observation Napoleon then started his new theory quite clearly to Raynouard; "Mettez-vous bien dans la tête qu'il faut que la politique joue dans les pièces modernes le rôle que la fatalité jouait dans les pièces des anciens. Corneille l'a entrepris, essayé..."¹

Five months later, on the eve of Austerlitz, Dec. 1st, 1805, these theories were being repeated by Napoleon to his generals. The short, pithy remark to Raynouard had expanded into the long tirade already quoted², recorded by SÉGUR, while the essentials of the rest of the criticism/~~was~~^{were} also restated in rather more sweeping terms: "Mais 'les Templiers'; cette pièce manque de politique! Il eût fallu mettre Philippe-le-Bel dans la nécessité de les détruire; il fallait... faire sentir fortement que leur existence était incompatible

1. LECOMTE, op.cit., p.417 et seq. Quoted without indication of source, but LECOMTE is extremely unlikely to have fabricated this tirade since his scholarship and integrity elsewhere seem beyond reproach.

On this occasion Napoleon also gave Raynouard another piece of advice, which he followed. In the original version appeared the lines:-

Le Roi: "Acceptez ma clémence ou redoutez ma haine,
L'échafaud vous attend,

Le Grand Maître: Sire, qu'on nous y mène."

Napoleon objected: "Ce n'est pas cela...un roi ne parle pas de haine mais de justice, qu'il envoie à l'échafaud mais qu'il n'en prononce jamais le nom. Raynouard, struck by the truth of this remark, changed the lines as follows:-

Le Roi: Acceptez ma clémence, ou craignez ma justice,
C'est à vous de choisir,

Le Grand Maître: Qu'on nous mène au supplice!"

2. V. supra, p.265.

avec celle de la monarchie; ...ils étaient devenus dangereux par leur nombre, leurs richesses et leur puissance; ... la sûreté du Trône exigeait leur destruction!"¹ Raynouard's play seems to have presented Napoleon with an opportunity to work out a theory of tragedy which would provide, if successfully applied in practice, a means of answering those who reproached him with his most obvious and controversial political crime, the death of the Duke of Enghien.

Although as he became more firmly seated on the throne and more independent of public opinion Napoleon was less obsessed by the necessity for explaining his actions by an appeal to the raison d'État, he did not lose sight of Raynouard as a dramatist who might be useful to his reign. He hoped that Raynouard ^{or would} ~~might~~ produce further and better 'national' tragedies which would rank among the glories of the new France.² In 1806, about a year after Austerlitz, he wrote a letter to Fouché, from Pultusk, in which he suggested that he had high hopes of Raynouard if he would only follow his, Napoleon's, advice and the letter seems to carry the implication that a little guidance from Fouché might help in keeping the playwright to the required course:- "M. Raynouard est très capable de faire de bonnes choses, s'il se pénètre bien du véritable esprit de la tragédie chez les anciens. La fatalité poursuit la famille

1. SÉGUR, op.cit., vol.1, pp.249-250.

2. See GUILLOIS, op.cit., vol.2, p.424.

des Atrides et les héros étaient coupables sans être criminels; ils partageaient les crimes des dieux. Dans l'histoire moderne, ce moyen/^{ne} peut être employé, c'est la nature des choses, c'est la politique qui conduit à des catastrophes sans des crimes réels....."¹ The preoccupation with political crimes is still strong in this letter, but at the same time it is an instruction to Fouché to attempt to persuade Raynouard to write tragedies of the type Napoleon wished to see. The poet, however, was not an enthusiastic supporter of the régime, in spite of attempts to win him over, and failed to respond to such suggestions. He did not produce ~~another~~ another play until 1810, when his 'États de Blois' appeared.

Raynouard's second play dealt with the assassination of the Duke of Guise at Blois in 1588, an assassination organised by the king, Henry III, to protect his crown, for which Guise was a powerful rival. The choice of subject was not remarkable for its tact, nor was it cleverly chosen if allusions were intended and Napoleon had it performed in private at Saint Cloud to judge it for himself. As might have been expected his conclusions were completely unfavourable for a variety of reasons, none of which was truly literary.² With the banning of the 'États de Blois' Napoleon's hopes of finding in Raynouard the Corneille of his reign came to an end.

1. 'Corresp.', vol. XIV, p. 127, No. 11529. See Appendix 'K'.
 2. LAS CASES, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 402. See Appendix 'L'.

There was only one other playwright in whom Napoleon placed his hopes, a writer of less apparent promise than Raynouard, but of greater amenability, Luce de Lancival.¹ Lancival did not offer any great hope of a renewal of tragic themes since all his plays were based on subjects taken from antiquity, but as against this, his most notable achievement in the theatre, the tragedy 'Hector', which appeared in 1809 and was received with some acclamation, had a certain air of heroic grandeur vaguely akin to that of Corneille's Romans, while the piece from end to end was filled with warlike sentiments. Napoleon was much impressed by the play which he called "une pièce de quartier général", adding "on irait mieux à l'ennemi après l'avoir entendue", and he hoped for others in a similar vein.² He is said to have given the author advice about the writing of this play³, advice which was apparently well digested as the finished work contains numerous favourable allusions such as this:-

"Soudain, comme un colosse, à l'armée immobile

Apparaît un guerrier...c'est lui..." lines which were

1. LUCE de LANCIVAL's career was marked by a series of occasional poems which brought him to the notice of the monarch, whether under the ancien régime or the Empire. While still at school he published a latin poem on the death of the Empress Maria-Theresa which brought him a letter of encouragement and a present from Frederick of Prussia. He later celebrated the Peace of 1783 in another latin ode. He won the prize for an oration in latin on the marriage of Napoleon with Maria-Louise. ('Notice sur Luce de Lancival', pub. in 'Oeuvres' (Paris, 1826).
2. LAS CASES, vol. 1, p. 401.
3. LUCE DE LANCIVAL, 'Oeuvres', p. ix ('Notice sur L. de L.').

greeted with prolonged applause when the play was again performed during the Hundred Days.¹

In spite of its somewhat transparent attempts to please the Emperor, 'Hector' does have moments of dramatic tension but the dominant themes throughout are praise of war², high-stomached bravery, and honour, although to the modern reader some of the actions and sentiments of Hector and his companions in the play may appear grossly stupid. Whatever the faults of the play it gained for its author the cross of the Legion of Honour and a pension of 6,000 frs³ and might well have been followed by other tragedies in a similar style if Luce de Lancival had not died in 1810, at the moment of his triumph when the prize had just been conferred on him for a latin ode celebrating Napoleon's marriage.⁴

No other tragic poet enjoyed Napoleon's favour as Luce de Lancival had done, nor raised his hopes like Raynouard, but the death of the one and the intractability of the other prevented any possibility of the true Napoleonic tragedy being born. The idea still remained in Napoleon's

1. Idem.

2. Some of the allusions could have been double-edged, as for example:

"La guerre est un besoin et la paix un malheur," or

"Si vous craignez la paix; je ne la crains pas moins.

Un intérêt sacré me rattache à la guerre."

Napoleon however does not seem to have considered this and was well pleased with their obvious application.

3. LUCE de LANCIVAL, 'Oeuvres', ('Notice'), p.xi.

4. Ibid., pp.xi-xii.

mind however, and once more it provided the subject for conversation on ~~another~~ momentous occasion, in the Kremlin, four days before he left Moscow. He was talking to Narbonne on Oct. 15th, 1812, the morning after he had sent off the celebrated decrees, ^{which} ~~the~~ fixed the statutes of the Comédie Française and once more he declared his great love of tragedy: "haute, sublime, comme l'a faite Corneille." According to the account of the conversation his idea of the tragic hero has now changed from that of Aristotle, he sees only the great man who is shown in a truer light than he is by history, he is seen only in the great crises which develop his character, without all the mass of detailed explanation and conjectures by which history is encumbered, "...il y a bien des misères dans l'homme, des fluctuations, des doutes: tout cela doit disparaître dans le héros. C'est la statue monumentale où ne s'aperçoivent plus les infirmités et les frissons de la chair." Tragedy has thus elevated certain great men, said Napoleon, but he wished that modern writers had done the same for heroes^e of modern times; Caesar had not been the last great genius on Earth. He quoted Raynouard's 'Templiers' as an example, but it is obviously Philippe le Bel who should have been made the heroic character and not the Grand Master, "Ce n'est pas affaire politique..... c'est bon sens historique, et religion de la royauté. Il faut que les grands rois soient montrés grands sur la scène." He inveighed against the ineptitude of the poets of his

reign, and in particular against M-J.Chénier and his 'Cambyse'; why had they not shown the great kings of France, Charlemagne, Saint Louis, or Philippe-Auguste, on the tragic stage?¹

It would appear from all this that there was a fairly clear and progressive development of Napoleon's ideas on tragedy and more especially on the tragic hero. Starting with a feeling for the political themes in tragedy and a dislike for the love element he reaches a stage, about 1805, when he feels that the purpose of tragedy in the modern world should be to present great ~~tragic~~ political acts and decisions in which the guiding force is political necessity. At the same time he appeared to think that the main figures should be neither too good nor too bad, an idea which must necessarily retire into the background in his later views because now only great kings, and kings of France, above all others, are to be the heroes of the new tragedies and they are to be made sublime, stripped of all their faults. The ultimate masterpiece, the one he, Napoleon would never see, would certainly have been some great episode from his own life, possibly the very affair of the Duke of Enghien, in which Napoleon would be but the agent of the raison d'État, a sublime hero forced to do a distasteful act for the good of the Grande Nation. Here no doubt is the real meaning of his remark to his brother Joseph ~~that~~

1. The whole of this account is taken from VILLEMAIN, op.cit., vol.1,p.226.

"Je voudrais être ma postérité, et assister à ce qu'un poète tel que le grand Corneille me ferait sentir, penser et dire."

+ + +

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that to Napoleon the theatre meant only tragedy, high tragedy in the 'grand manner', unalloyed by any ~~low~~ baser metab. The so-called mixed genres of the 18th century did not meet with his approval, Diderot's 'Père de Famille' was 'false and absurd'¹ while the 'Mélanie' of Laharpe was even more severely censured, it was, in Napoleon's own words "déclamation boursofflée, pièce de circonstance"², bâtie sur des calomnies et d'absurdes mensonges."³ One of the few plays of this type to which he allowed any praise was Saurin's 'Beverley', and that presumably only because it had a strong social message.⁴ It is surprising, in view of all this, that of all the works of Beaumarchais it was the last, and undoubtedly the weakest, 'la Mère coupable', to which Napoleon gave most thought at St. Helena. The 'Barbier de Séville' hardly

1. LAS CASES, vol. 2, p. 87.

2. In LAS CASES' account of this conversation Napoleon continued as follows:- "Quand Laharpe écrivit cette pièce, un père n'aurait certainement pas eu le pouvoir de forcer sa fille à être religieuse; jamais l'autorité n'y eût donné les mains. Cette pièce jouée au moment de la révolution, n'a dû son succès qu'au travers d'esprit du moment." (Op.cit., vol. 2, p. 80.) 'Mélanie' was written in 1770 but not acted until 1793.

3. MONTHOLON, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 341.

4. GOURGAUD, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 170 and 284.

ever appeared among Napoleon's reading and the 'Mariage de Figaro', although found more amusing and entertaining than he had expected, was dismissed with the well-known comment "C'était la révolution déjà en action."¹ 'La Mère coupable', which had already interested the exiles on previous occasions², became the object of a more or less detailed criticism by Napoleon who found that it was well written but had a foolish title since a mother could never be reproached by her children, whatever she might have done, a truly Corsican opinion, it would seem, if Napoleon's regard for his own mother is any guide.

In spite of his statement that 'la Mère coupable' was well written Napoleon criticised several of its important components including the scenes in which Bégearss³ confides his secrets to Suzanne, and the important scene (act V, sc. VII) in which Alnaviva regains his three millions in gold from Bégearss. The end of the play, he said, with truth, is but a poor copy of the dénouement of Molière's 'Tartufe: "Celui-ci effraye réellement Orgon en lui parlant de ses correspondances avec les calvinistes, ce qui alors était réellement un crime, au lieu que Péjane (Bégearss) ne peut effrayer Alnaviva en le menaçant de le dénoncer à Madrid. Il aurait

1. LAS CASES, vol. 2, p. 80. On another occasion (MONTHOLON, vol. 2, p. 57), Napoleon described the 'Mariage de Figaro' as "une pièce de circonstance pour avilir les grands seigneurs en les amusant."

2. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 80.

3. Incorrectly ~~was~~ called Péjane throughout GOURGAUD's account of this conversation.

mieux soutenu son caractère d'homme d'esprit et d'hypocrite en sortant et en criant qu'il était homme de bien, que le comte reconnaissait bientôt son erreur."¹ This criticism was justified and might, [✓]extended to cover almost the whole play, which not only bore the secondary title 'l'Autre Tartufe', but is throughout a pale adaptation, not to say imitation, of Molière's powerful work.

It is difficult to understand why Napoleon expended so much time and thought on this comparatively feeble play when the great works of Molière himself excited surprisingly little comment from him. ~~REMY~~, During ² ~~the~~ long conversation with Mme de RÉMUSAT on the theatre Napoleon declared that he had little interest in Molière although he accepted the fact that others might admire him. Comedy was, for Napoleon, on the same level as the small-talk of the salons and Molière forfeited his interest by placing his characters in milieux which were, Napoleon implied, beneath his notice.²

Although he was not a fervent admirer of Molière there is no truth in the Marquis de SAYVE's remark that Napoleon never read his plays³ since any of the accounts of the exile on St. Helena provides numerous examples to the contrary; it appears even, from the pages of MONTHOLON's 'Récits',⁴ that in the latter part of 1816 Napoleon had re-

1. GOURGAUD, vol. 1, pp. 288-289.

2. Mme de RÉMUSAT, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 279.

3. SAYVE, op. cit., p. 13 ("..jamais Molière n'a figuré dans ses lectures").

4. Vol. 1, p. 435.

course to Molière for light relief after each of the stormy interviews with Sir Hudson Lowe. As for seeing plays performed, he quite plainly did not show much interest in Molière, except for 'Tartufe', which he saw ten times, as against four times for 'l'Avare' and 'les Femmes savantes', and three for 'le Misanthrope', whereas other less worthy comedies were honoured by more frequent attendances.¹ Once however, on April 24th, 1806, after seeing 'le Misanthrope' at Saint Cloud, Napoleon admitted that he had not realised before what an impression a good comedy could make, it had, he said, given him great pleasure.² His liking for 'le Misanthrope' on this occasion was certainly an exception to his usual reactions and the praise was the ~~best~~ highest he ever seems to have given to a comedy. Seven years later, in 1813, while discussing with BAUSSET the plays to be performed at Dresden, before the Saxon court, Napoleon compared the characters in Molière's play with those of his imitator Fabre d'Églantine, who had written a 'Philinte de Molière'.³ In his assessment of the character of Philinte in Molière's play he showed quite clearly that his knowledge of the play was sure and his view of it by no means unfavourable, to the detriment of the piece by Fabre.⁴

'Tartufe' was the only one of Molière's plays to

1. LECOMTE, p. 492.

2. Ibid, p. 273.

3. Produced in 1790.

4. BAUSSET, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 144-146.

call forth any noteworthy comment from Napoleon and that was as much, if not more, concerned with its political significance as with its literary qualities. One evening in August 1816 the exiles at Longwood had been listening to 'Tartufe' as read by Napoleon and when, after a time, he put down the book, too tired to continue, his companions were surprised, according to LAS CASES¹, to hear him express the following ideas: "Certainement l'ensemble de 'Tartufe' ~~est~~ est de main de maître; c'est un des chefs-d'oeuvre d'un homme inimitable; toutefois cette pièce porte un tel caractère, que je ne suis nullement étonné que son apparition ait été l'objet de fortes négociations à Versailles, et de beaucoup d'hésitation dans Louis XIV. Si j'ai le droit de m'étonner de quelque chose, c'est qu'il l'ait laissé jouer; elle présente....la dévotion sous des couleurs si odieuses; une certaine scène offre ^{une} situation si décisive, si complètement indécente, que, pour mon propre compte, je n'hésite pas à dire que, si la pièce eût été faite de mon temps, je n'en aurais pas permis la ~~repré-~~ représentation." Such a statement was certainly rather surprising from a ^{man} ~~man~~ who had described as "bien bête" a proposal from the censors to remove 'Tartufe' from the repertoire of the theatre.² If the prudish attitude taken up by Napoleon here seems unbecoming to one who was given, on occasion, to

1. Op.cit., vol. 2, p. 212.

2. THIBAudeau, 'Mémoires sur le Consulat' (Paris, 1913) p. 150, also quoted by M. Marcel Dunan in his edition of the 'Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène', vol. 2, p. 212 (note 2).

discussing his own love affairs, and those of others, with a complete lack of reserve, this was no doubt due to his preoccupation with public morals (even when no longer able to influence them), rather than to personal conviction. Similar considerations were presumably also behind his shocked attitude on finding the words cornard and cocu in the 'Ecole des Femmes'.¹

Among the documents relating to Napoleon there are so few references to comedy, and those for the most part so lacking in enthusiasm, that there is no room at all to doubt that his preferences were all for tragedy. Humour, except that of a rather brutal and coarse type, devoid of good taste, was not a characteristic of the man, and as a professional politician he was well aware of the dangers of satire with its many-sided allusions. As SAINTE-BEUVE said, talking of the exclusion of Molière and other comic authors from those whose work was chosen for performance at Erfurt, "Quand on joue soi-même un rôle et qu'on monte une pièce sérieuse et solennelle, il n'est pas sûr d'admettre en tiers ces témoins-là."² Even though BAUSSET would have us believe that later in life Napoleon's tastes changed and he began to prefer comedy to tragedy³, there is no supporting evidence for this assumption and later still, at St. Helena, he openly demonstrated once more his liking for

1. GOURGAUD, vol. 1, p. 290.

2. 'Lundis', 1, p. 151.

3. Op.cit., vol. 2, p. 184.

Corneille and Racine above all others.

For Napoleon only tragedy was worthy of the attention of great men and the subjects of tragedy, as he conceived of them, should be those which interest the great, affairs of state and the interests of nations. Love and such trivial private matters were outside the scope and beneath the dignity of the tragic muse whose aim was to inspire men to greatness and selfless acts.¹ The basis of this attitude is stated in its most succinct form by Mme de RÉMUSAT in the following words: "...Bonaparte n'aimait à considérer la nature humaine que lorsqu'elle est aux prises avec les grandes chances de la vie, et il se souciait peu de l'homme égaré de toute application."²

1. These opinions are those expressed by ARNAULT (vol.IV. p.99), and they sum up very concisely Napoleon's views.
2. Mme de RÉMUSAT, op.cit.,vol,1,pp.278-279.

CONCLUSION.

In the preceding pages we have seen that literature played no inconsiderable part in the life of Napoleon and some of the topics that have been touched upon could, in themselves, furnish the matter for whole books. Books have been written , and in large numbers, about Napoleon's interest or participation in almost every type of human activity and it is in this very comprehensiveness of outlook that no small part of his greatness resides. In two of these activities, war and politics, he was one of the undisputed masters of all time and his mastery was in no small degree due to his realisation that in a highly organised society war and politics both depend upon and react upon every kind of human thought and act and feeling. Although, in Napoleon's view, politics were primarily concerned with the material world he realised that their ultimate sanction lay in the mind, which both found its means of expression in, and was influenced by literature. This is the assumption which is at the base of Napoleon's attitude to a large body of literature, to almost all that writing which was published during his lifetime, and to much of the literature of the previous century. The work of earlier ages, if often devoid of any obvious political application, was at least capable of a political

use in a more roundabout way, it was a model to be imitated or surpassed, not for the good of literature, but to swell national pride and to embellish the reign of the new Charlemagne.

Even Napoleon, despite his efforts to do so, could not entirely subordinate his individuality to the all-embracing public personality which he set out to create by the identification of his own desires and ambitions with the future of France herself. Under the vast and almost impenetrable cloak of mystic nationalism which came to represent his personality in the eyes of the world there was nevertheless a man, a man with individual tastes and feelings which can be discerned, although with some difficulty. Many of Napoleon's expressed views on literature belong to the political, or public personality of the man, although in some of them the purely personal preference is visible as well. Insofar as it is possible to dissociate the personal from the political in Napoleon it has been the aim of this work to determine his personal views and tastes in literary matters and to indicate how, under the mass of pronouncements dictated by calculation, a more balanced and mellow judgment could sometimes be perceived. Where no such judgment can be discerned we can only try to deduce the inner workings of his mind.

In trying to work out Napoleon's ideas on literature we have certain basic information on which to proceed. We

know a great deal about his early studies, both formal and private, we know something of the calibre of his teachers and of their intellectual background, but these alone do not account for the whole of his outlook. The views and ideas gathered from his studies were added to others arising from within himself, the product of his Italian ancestry and of his Corsican background, while ^{super-}~~sur~~imposed upon all of these were the ideas, the tastes, the fears and the necessities of the age in which he grew to manhood and the full realisation of his extraordinary powers. All of these factors helped to mould the mature Napoleon and to form his mind. Once the idea has been accepted that the various Napoleons who were, according to some, a lover of the French classical theatre, an admirer of Ossian, or a disciple of 18th century rationalism, were all the same man and all equally real, it is but a small step to the realisation that such an outlook was not uncommon, indeed was ~~even~~ almost typical, at the turn of the 18th century. Although important in itself as it shows him to have shared the views of his age, this conclusion is neither surprising nor particularly revealing, it merely states what was reasonably obvious. We must then look further for any new element which Napoleon imported into ways of thinking about literature and here we are helped by the width of his interest in the subject and by the large body of his recorded comment.

In common with certain of the Enlightened Despots,

his political forebears, Napoleon was in his own way a literary critic. Unsatisfied, as in all things, with the role of passive spectator, he had in youth wished to be an author and in his riper years became a trenchant critic, although not perhaps, as SAINTE-BEUVE says, "un grand critique à ses heures perdues." It is difficult to assess a body of literary criticism which starts from assumptions that are not primarily literary and since Napoleon's day the problem has become ever more difficult. It was not according to the principles of aesthetics that he usually judged a literary work, but by quite a different standard which has apparently gained greatly in popularity since, the standard of social or political usefulness.

Arising from the basic notion that literature must have a ~~pure~~ political aim, even if that aim is external to the work itself, there was also the concomitant assumption that the writer must be committed, committed to Napoleon's point of view, both in politics and literature. A similar idea was not lacking in previous ages, as for example in the time of Louis XIV, but it had not been put forward openly by the monarch, rather had it been tacitly understood and accepted by literary men who depended ultimately on the monarch for their means of existence. Its influence had rarely more than a superficial effect on the content of literary works and although the king might express disapproval of what had been written, he did not attempt to

lay down principles for works which were yet to be produced.

Although Napoleon's literary criticisms were not based primarily upon literary principles, certain aesthetic opinions do emerge quite clearly and the most striking is the preoccupation with realism, a form of realism which combines the demand for classical vraisemblance in ~~psychology~~ ^{psychology} ~~together~~ with an objective reporting of events and material details, an attitude which seems to make an uneasy alliance with a taste for Ossian. Such a combination, however, is not uncommon and ^{has its} ~~its~~ parallel in the underlying streak ~~of~~ ⁱⁿ Romanticism in such a minute chronicler of the squalidly material as Emile Zola.

Whether the ultra-realism which Napoleon demanded from novelists and even poets was likely or not to be for the good of literature is largely beside the point since it apparently produced little effect in literary circles. However, for those critics who wish to judge literature by its exactness of portrayal there can be few better models than Napoleon's criticisms of the episode of the taking of Troy from the 'Aeneid'. Not only was he applying to the text that great factual knowledge of warlike operations which he had, but also that same sharpness of observation which Goethe had noticed when he said that Napoleon studied books like a judge studying the evidence in a ~~the~~ lawsuit. This same gift for penetrating factual

criticism was applied to other works of all kinds, to Rousseau's 'Nouvelle Héloïse', and to 'Paul et Virginie', just as it was to 'Tartufe', 'Mahomet' or 'les Templiers', but with regard to these last two plays a new element enters into the picture, the idea of the great man, of Mahomet or of Philippe le Bel, and once again the romantic individualism of Napoleon reasserts itself in a mystique of greatness. Here was the element which alone transcended realism: for great men, and especially for great kings, be they Philippe le Bel or Nero, special treatment was needed. Napoleon invested them all with his own attitude of mind and political necessity was to be invoked as the only spur which drove them on, excusing their crimes and calling forth all their powers and greatness, duty to the state deprived them of free choice. A psychologist might be inclined to conclude, perhaps with reason, that behind the actions of every tyrant on the stage Napoleon saw the death of the Duke of Enghien.

Not all of Napoleon's literary thoughts were prompted by the need for justification, nor even for glorification, he was interested also in that most vital of literary matters, style. Here once, ^{more} his own background and personality produced a view which was not altogether unexpected, and which was often justifiable. In stylistic matters he could truly be called classical; his constant demands were for clarity and brevity, demands which he

illustrated in practice by his ruthless pruning of Rousseau and his strictures on the verbosity of French historians. No small ~~part~~ part of his admiration for Corneille and ~~Racine~~ Racine was probably due to the economy of their style, but the real origin of this demand for brevity and lucidity was to be found not in the library or the theatre but in the general's tent, for they are the first essentials of good military orders.

However we assess Napoleon's qualities as a literary critic there is one major factor in literature which he never understood, and that is the most vital of them all, the very essence of literary creation. It has become almost a commonplace, when writing about Napoleon, to say that he stifled freedom of expression; he did; none would deny it, but so did Louis XIV to a great extent, although his reign nevertheless produced the greatest glories of French literature. Was Napoleon's despotism more efficient in its control of expression of opinion? Almost certainly it was, and yet these are not the main reasons for the lack of great literature except for that produced by his opponents Chateaubriand^d and Mme de Staël. Napoleon did not so much stifle literature by oppression as smother it by official encouragement, coupled with attempted regimentation. Of all the great rulers of nations Napoleon was probably the first to have an official literary policy. Literature, as he once said, came under the aegis of the Minister of the Interior. The government, which effectively was Napoleon,

decreed that it should produce works in accepted genres, on subjects chosen by Napoleon, for the greater glory of Imperial France. There was the true meaning of the Prix décennaux and the letter to Champagny from Finkenstein.

Napoleon failed to realise, or tried to ignore and alter the root fact of all literary creation, that the artist must select his own materials and treat them in his own way, wherein lies the whole of literary genius. To impose the subject on a writer and to detail the method of treatment is a system which at best can only produce imitative 'academic' art, slavishly tied to the forms of the past, and yet ~~for~~ such is the irony of history that Napoleon was to be idolised in the future by certain writers of the new Romantic movement whose ideas, both literary and political, would frequently have been anathema to him.

Finally, however much we may criticise Napoleon's attempts to regulate literature, we must indeed wonder that such a man could have found the time to acquire a wide literary culture in a way that may have been at times unliterary, but was never uninformed, ~~throughout his whole life~~. It would appear that the young cadet at the École Militaire in Paris had taken to heart the words of Domairon, words which may serve as a fitting epilogue to this work:

"L'homme qui dans le sein de l'opulence et des honneurs,

cultive les Belles-Lettres, n'en est que plus heureux et plus grand à nos yeux: ses dignités en reçoivent un nouveau lustre."¹

1. 'Principes généraux des Belles-Lettres', vol.1,p.3.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.Observations sur les rapports du ministre de l'intérieur
relativement à l'encouragement des lettres.

(From 'Correspondance de Napoléon', vol. 15, pp. 97-102.
No. 12415).

Finkenstein, 19 avril, 1807.

L'Empereur a reçu les trois rapports ~~de ministres~~
qui ont pour objet l'encouragement des lettres.

Dans le premier rapport est un projet de décret divisé en six titres. Le premier titre est relatif à l'établissement de deux ou de plusieurs historiographes.

Il y a eu des historiographes de France; mais il est vrai de dire qu'ils n'ont rien fait pour la France et pour l'histoire. Racine a été historiographe sous Louis XIV, et il n'est rien resté de son travail. Nous avons peu de bons historiens, et ce n'est pas parmi eux qu'on trouve les hommes qui ont été décorés du titre qu'il s'agit de rétablir. Cependant une institution de ce genre pourrait avoir quelque utilité; mais ce ne serait pas de faire des historiens. Mais il faudrait surtout éviter le mot d'historiographe. Il est reçu qu'un historien est un juge qui doit être l'organe de la postérité, et qu'on exige de lui tant de qualités, tant de perfections qu'il est difficile de croire qu'une bonne histoire puisse se commander. Ce que l'on peut commander à des

hommes d'un esprit sage et d'un certain talent, ce sont des mémoires historiques, produit de recherches studieuses, contenant des matériaux authentiques, des observations critiques qui tendent à éclairer sur les événements. Si ces recherches, si ces documents, si ces matériaux sont encadrés dans une bonne narration des faits, ce travail aura beaucoup de rapports avec une histoire; mais son auteur ne sera cependant pas un historien, dans le sens que nous attachons à ce mot.

Le second titre a pour objet d'instituer des poètes lauréats ou césaréens.

On voit très-bien le but de cette institution. L'objet qu'on se propose est de créer des places pour les poètes. Mais il faudrait que cette création s'accordât davantage avec nos mœurs, et que surtout on détournât d'elle le ridicule que le Français saisit avec tant de malignité. On concevrait plutôt l'établissement des historiographes, puisque, enfin, en les créant historiens, on leur impose l'obligation de dire la vérité, et dès lors on leur laisse le droit de dire le bien et le mal. Accordera-t-on à des poètes celui de faire la satire de la cour à laquelle ils sont attachés, ou leur devoir sera-t-il de louer? Dans l'un et l'autre cas, on ne voit rien d'utile dans l'emploi de leurs talents. La poésie est l'enfant de la société. La société seule, en se réformant au moyen de la tranquillité publique et du bonheur intérieur, peut, et cela commence déjà à arriver,

ramener les poètes au bon goût, à cette aménité et à cette fleur de grâce qui embellit les lettres et les arts. Les productions poétiques portent d'ailleurs avec elles tant de récompenses qu'il n'est pas nécessaire que l'autorité publique intervienne. Qu'un poète fasse une tragédie ou une comédie, un vaudeville ou un opéra, une romance ou une élégie, il en est récompensé par les éloges de la société dans laquelle il vit, par les suffrages du public qu'il amuse ou qu'il intéresse. Les places de l'Institut sont un véritable moyen d'émulation, puisqu'elles donnent au poète un caractère dans l'État. Corneille a-t-il jamais reçu de grandes faveurs de la cour? Celles qui ont été accordées à Racine ont-elles inspirés ses chefs-d'oeuvre? Celles qui lui ont été refusées n'ont-elles pas ralenti l'essor de son génie? En général, toute création qui n'exige que du goût, et qui est à la portée de tout le monde, n'a pas besoin d'être encouragée par l'autorité publique.

Cependant, s'il était quelque moyen de donner à quelque poète du temps quelques distinctions flatteuses, en évitant avec soin le ridicule, on ne s'y opposerait pas. Pourquoi, par exemple, ne pas attacher, sous un titre honorable, quelques poètes au Théâtre Français; leur donner à ce titre des pensions, leur accorder le droit d'être consultés sur les pièces à représenter? Il y aurait à cela peu d'inconvénients. Cette institution

existe ~~à~~ à l'Opéra; mais elle aura besoin d'être consacrée d'une manière plus spéciale, plus flat^tteuse, plus solennelle. On aurait donc ainsi le moyen d'accorder des distinctions à quelques auteurs. Mais on se tromperait si l'on croyait que c'est cela qui nous donnerait des poètes. Quel doit être l'art de l'administration, celui du souverain comme du ministre? C'est donner de l'éclat aux bons ouvrages. Il faut ~~faire~~^a autre chose que des décrets, il faut agir. Ainsi il a paru quelques belles odes: pourquoi ne recommanderait-on pas leurs auteurs à l'attention du public? pourquoi ne donnerait-on pas à ces poètes cette confiance en eux-mêmes, qui les encouragerait, qui exciterait leurs efforts et qui les conduirait à produire de meilleurs ouvrages? Si l'Italie a eu tant de bons poètes, cela vient de ce qu'elle renfermait nombre de petites cours et de sociétés oisives et rivales. D'ailleurs, dans ce genre de conceptions, un homme qui devient illustre produit souvent un autre homme qui le devient à son tour. Racine et Boileau se sont peut-être illustrés parce que Corneille était célèbre avant eux. Peut-être Laharpe, Marmontel, et tant d'autres hommes recommandables dans notre littérature, ont-ils dû leurs efforts et même leurs talents à l'exemple des succès de Voltaire. Une bonne opération du cardinal de Richelieu fut sans doute la critique du Cid, critique que nous approuvons encore aujourd'hui. On a voulu voir

dans la conduite de ce ministre, dans cette circonstance, l'effet des passions les plus méprisables: cela peut être, mais aussi il est très-possible que cela ne soit pas!

Pourquoi ne penserait-on pas que ce ministre a voulu, par cette discussion publique, donner aux esprits un mouvement propre à épurer la langue et le goût?

Les critiques de nos journaux pourraient tendre au même but, ~~ma~~ si elles n'étaient dirigées quelquefois par la haine, plus souvent par l'esprit de satire, et toujours par le désir d'amuser les oisifs, et jamais dans l'intention d'éclairer le public. Veut-on apprendre aux Français à bien parler leur langue et leur donner le goût des discussions qui peuvent tendre à perfectionner le langage et le goût? Que le ministre fasse faire par la seconde classe de l'Institut la critique d'un des meilleurs ouvrages qui ont paru depuis ~~vingt~~ vingt ans. Le public prendra intérêt à ce travail; peut-être même prendra-t-il parti pour ou contre la critique; n'importe: son intention se fixera sur ces intéressants débats; il parlera de grammaire, il parlera de poésie; le goût s'éclairera, se perfectionnera, et le but sera rempli. De là naîtront des poètes et des grammairiens. Si l'on établit bien d'abord que le choix d'un ouvrage destiné à une critique éclairée, bien intentionnée, est une preuve que cet ouvrage a mérité les regards des hommes de goût; si c'est sur la demande de l'Empereur que l'Institut

fait la critique ou des Géorgiques de l'abbé Delille, non comme traduction, ^{mais} ~~ainsi~~ comme chef-d'oeuvre de langage, de poésie et de goût, ou du ~~plus~~ plus beau chant du poème de la Navigation par Esménard, ou des plus belles odes de Lebrun, ou même, pour mieux marquer ses intentions impartiales, du plus ^{beau} ~~beau~~ morceau de poésie sorti de la plume de Fontanes, peut-être l'auteur critiqué aura-t-il d'abord un peu d'humeur, mais bientôt il sentira que le choix que l'on fait de son ouvrage en est l'éloge, tandis que le public, spectateur dans cette utile arène, s'intéressera, s'éclairera, se formera. Ce travail entre dans les plus importants devoirs de l'Institut. En commençant cette critique solennelle de la manière dont il vient d'être dit, elle ne tardera pas à être désirée par les auteurs qui s'en trouvent honorés. Quand il paraîtra une tragédie nouvelle, si elle a réussi au théâtre, il ne lui manquera plus qu'un genre de gloire: c'est que le ministre demande, de la part de l'Empereur, à l'Institut, d'en faire l'examen sous le rapport des règles de l'art dramatique, de la langue et du goût. Voilà la véritable critique, la critique honorable et bien différente de celle qui s'exerce sur ces tréteaux où l'on prononce sur les auteurs de nos jours, non par des jugements mais par des sarcasmes, sans intérêt pour l'art ni pour le goût, et dans des intentions malignes ou perfides. Si l'on tolère ces critiques plus nuisibles qu'

utiles, si l'on ne porte remède à ces abus, c'est que l'on craint de produire un plus grand mal par l'intervention de l'autorité; c'est que, pour le bien de la littérature, les excès qui blessent les amours-propres valent peut-être mieux qu'une stupide admiration. Mais, une fois l'institution d'une sage critique régulièrement établie, on pourra ne plus permettre le genre de critique actuel, ou du moins en corriger les excès. L'Institut est un grand moyen dans les mains du ministre; qu'il en tire un bon parti, et il fera tout ce que le Gouvernement peut faire.

L'objet principal du titre III (Proposition d'établir un compte rendu des oeuvres littéraires et des découvertes scientifiques les plus remarquables à signaler, chaque année, dans toute l'étendue de l'Empire)¹ est une des obligations qui ont été prescrites à l'Institut; mais on ne tient pas la main à leur exécution.

Il en est de même du titre IV. (Proposition de décerner, chaque année, des encouragements aux académies et sociétés savantes des départements, dont les travaux paraîtraient les plus dignes d'attention.)¹ Il faut publier de nouveau les dispositions qui ont été prescrites il y a plusieurs années.

L'objet du titre V (Proposition d'imposer, à la 3e classe de l'Institut l'obligation de reprendre et de

1. Information between brackets is contained in footnotes in the original.

continuer l'Histoire littéraire de France , et même de revoir le travail antérieur des Bénédictins de Saint-Maur.) peut être rempli en écrivant, au nom de Sa Majesté, à la seconde classe de l'Institut pour l'engager à s'occuper de ces travaux. Un décret n'est pas nécessaire.

Quant au titre VI (Proposition d'instituer au Collège de France une école spéciale de littérature et d'histoire par la création de quatre chaires nouvelles, d'Histoire de France, d'Éloquence française, de Poésie française, d'Histoire littéraire, et d'Archéologie.), il donne lieu à une note détaillée qui est envoyée au ministre. (Extracts from this note - those parts dealing with literature - follow this letter, at Appendix A₂).

Le second rapport du ministre a pour objet l'établissement d'un journal littéraire. Cet établissement paraît inutile quand on considère qu'il y a déjà trop de journaux; qu'on ne les lit que pour y trouver de l'amusement, et que plus un article de critique est rempli de sarcasmes, plus il amuse. Mais dans un État comme la France, il est un journal nécessaire, c'est un Moniteur. C'est une charge qu'il faut supporter. Rien n'empêche de consacrer la dernière de ses pages à des articles de critique littéraire, faits par des hommes que le ministre désigne. Cet ouvrage périodique est cher; mais aussi beaucoup de personnes le lisent sans s'abonner, ou se réunissent pour en partager les frais; il est traduit dans

les papiers étrangers; il est copié par les journaux des départements. La partie du Moniteur qui se trouverait exclusivement destinée à la littérature devrait être distincte des autres, à raison des matières graves dont celles-ci sont remplies. On réunirait dans ce journal les deux idées, celle du ministre et celle de l'Empereur, puisqu'on y ferait insérer et les articles de critiques susceptibles de paraître ^{dans} ~~dans~~ un journal de littérature, et les critiques plus graves, plus approfondies, qui auraient été demandées par le ministre à l'Institut, de la part de l'Empereur.

On ne peut s'empêcher de considérer encore les avantages de cette seconde idée. Il y a à présent ~~une~~ une grande division dans les opinions littéraires. Pour sortir de cette anarchie il faut épurer et rétablir dans leurs droits l'usage et le bon goût. Rien ne peut mieux conduire à ce but qu'une critique sérieuse d'un bon ouvrage faite ~~par~~ par un corps qui réunit tout ce qui reste des talents distingués, et qui ne ferait qu'obéir à un ordre supérieur, qui serait déjà pour l'ouvrage critique une preuve de succès et un témoignage d'estime. Cette critique ne dût-elle s'exercer que sur quatre ou cinq productions littéraires dans une année, serait toujours d'un très-grand effet, d'un effet sûr. Rien n'apprend mieux à parler la langue que la lecture de la critique du Cid et des commentaires de Voltaire sur Corneille. La

vue que l'on se propose n'est donc pas nouvelle; mais on s'est tellement éloigné de la bonne route, qu'une institution qui parviendrait à y ~~re~~ ramener aurait l'attrait de la nouveauté, l'intérêt d'une bonne discussion, et l'avantage de faire sortir un bon ouvrage de la classe commune.

L'Institut n'aura rien à opposer à ce qu'on exigera de lui. Il est obligé, par son institution, à répondre aux demandes que lui fait le ministre de l'intérieur; et le ministre, par une lettre qu'il écrira au nom de l'Empereur, et qui sera rédigée dans le sens de ces observations, lui fera connaître que, tel ouvrage ayant mérité l'attention du public, il est utile d'examiner quelles sont les fautes que l'auteur a commises contre l'art et contre le génie de la langue, et d'empêcher qu'à la faveur d'un grand nombre de beautés, des conceptions et des locutions vicieuses ne corrompent le langage et le goût.

Sa Majesté désire que le ministre s'entretienne à ce sujet avec les membres les plus marquants de la seconde classe de l'Institut, et les fasse entrer dans ces vues.

NAPOLÉON.

Appendix A₂

'Correspondance de Napoléon 1er', vol.XV,p.102 et seq.
No.121416.

Observations sur un projet d'établissement d'une école spéciale de littérature et d'histoire au Collège de France.

(The following extracts from the above 'Observations' are those which deal ~~with~~ specifically with literature)

Les écoles primaires, les écoles secondaires et les lycées, sont trois degrés d'instruction qui ont été d'abord organisés. Les écoles spéciales, savoir: l'école spéciale de mathématiques ou l'école polytechnique, et les écoles de droit et de médecine, l'ont été également. Les écoles spéciales de littérature et d'éloquence sont une institution nouvelle, qui n'a point encore été traitée.

L'éducation proprement dite a plusieurs objets: on a besoin d'apprendre à parler et à écrire correctement, c'est ce qu'on nomme communément la grammaire et les belles-lettres; chaque lycée a pourvu à cet objet, et il n'est point d'homme bien élevé qui n'ait fait sa rhétorique.

.....

.....au moyen de l'institution des trois degrés d'instruction, tout citoyen aisé doit avoir fait sa rhétorique, son cours de mathématiques, et avoir des notions de géographie, de chronologie et d'histoire. Un jeune homme qui, à seize ans, sort du lycée, connaît donc non-seulement la rhétorique, les mathématiques, la géographie, la chronologie et l'histoire, mais encore la littérature et l'éloquence.

ment le mécanisme de sa langue et les auteurs classiques, les divisions du discours, les différentes figures de l'éloquence, les moyens à employer soit pour calmer, soit pour exciter les passions, enfin tout ce qu'on apprend dans un cours de belles-lettres; il connaît les principales époques de l'histoire, les principales divisions géographiques; il sait encore calculer, mesurer; il a des notions générales sur les phénomènes ^{plus} frappants de la nature et sur les principes de l'équilibre.....

~~.....Il a reçu l'éducation commune et nécessaire pour devenir propre à recevoir le complément d'instruction~~

Qu'il veuille suivre la carrière du barreau, celle de l'épée, de l'Église ou des lettres..... il a reçu l'éducation commune et nécessaire pour devenir propre à recevoir le complément d'instruction **que** ces états exigent; et c'est dans le ^moment où il s'est décidé ~~pour~~ pour le choix d'une profession, que les études spéciales viennent s'offrir à lui.

.....Ce n'est pas cette instruction donnée dans les lycées pour mettre les jeunes gens en mesure d'adopter telle ou telle profession lorsque l'âge du discernement est venu, qui entre dans les attributions des écoles spéciales: c'est ^{au} contraire et spécialement la science dans toute sa profondeur, la science qu'il faut connaître pour faire d'un jeune homme bien élevé un homme utile à la société dans une profession spéciale.

Il en résulte que l'on entend par une école spéciale, non point un établissement d'éducation, mais un établissement destiné à l'instruction des hommes qui se dévouent à telle profession savante, à telle ou telle science.

Il en résulte encore que tout ce qui n'est qu'élémentaire, tout ce qui n'est pas science, ne peut former les attributions d'une école spéciale.

Les mathématiques, les connaissances physiques et naturelles, la médecine, la jurisprudence, sont des sciences, parce qu'elles se composent de faits, d'observations, de comparaisons; parce que les découvertes qu'elles amènent successivement s'accumulent, se suivent de siècle en siècle, et viennent augmenter de jour en jour le domaine de la science; parce que les faits, leurs rapports, l'art de les classer, la manière d'observer, de comparer, sont des choses qui peuvent s'enseigner et dès lors s'apprendre.

Le ministre désire des écoles spéciales de littérature, et, si ces notions sont justes, il est difficile de comprendre ce qu'on entend par une école spéciale de littérature. On veut enseigner la poésie... Mais qu'y a-t-il de plus à montrer en éloquence et en poésie que ce que tout jeune homme a appris dans sa rhétorique? Il faut peu de mois pour connaître le mécanisme de la poésie, pour savoir décomposer un discours. Bien écrire

en vers et en prose, voilà l'éloquence; mais il n'y a rien dans cet art qui puisse se montrer au delà de ce qu'on apprend dans les lycées. On y enseigne à écrire correctement, on y donne la connaissance et le goût des bons modèles; on y fait connaître ce que le bon goût a consacré; on y développe les règles de la composition, soit d'une tragédie, soit d'une comédie, soit d'un poème épique ou d'une chanson; mais on n'y enseigne pas à faire des tragédies, des comédies, des poèmes ou des chansons. Le talent de créer est dans la littérature, comme dans la musique, comme dans la peinture, un don individuel; il tient à des facultés particulières, dont le développement peut être favorisé par des circonstances particulières, par les mœurs, par une époque. Dans ces créations de l'esprit et du génie, l'esprit ou le génie arrivent tout de suite, et par eux-mêmes, à leur plus grand résultat. Nous n'avons surpassé, les Grecs, ni dans la tragédie, ni dans la comédie, ni dans la poésie épique, puisqu'ils sont encore nos modèles, tandis que chaque siècle de lumières a fait faire ~~quelques~~ quelques pas aux sciences exactes, qui sont des sciences de faits, d'observations et de comparaisons. Tout cela est si bien senti, qu'un professeur d'éloquence ne s'amusera pas à développer les principes des divers genres dans lesquels l'esprit peut s'exercer; autant vaudrait ~~montrer~~ montrer la grammaire et la rhétorique, et ces deux connaissances ont été acquises dans les lycées. Mais on

fait un cours, on disserte, on cite des exemples, on juge les modèles. Que cela se fasse dans un athénée, que cela se fasse dans un salon où se réunissent des femmes, des beaux esprits, c'en sont là que de grands cafés littéraires. Y fera-t-on des critiques sur les ouvrages? Mais que dira-t-on que l'on n'ait pas dit? En fera-t-on sur les ouvrages modernes? On s'en gardera bien! On ne conçoit donc pas ce que c'est qu'une école spéciale de littérature; mais on comprend un cercle, un salon, même une académie où quelqu'un professe ou disserte. Tout cela s'applique, non à l'instruction proprement dite et à l'exercice d'un état spécial, mais à l'agrément de la société. Pour donner au talent et au génie ce qui est nécessaire pour qu'il ne soit pas arrêté dans ses développements, que faut-il donc? De bonne^s classes, une bonne rhétorique, et les lycées y ont pourvu. Placez un professeur de littérature à côté d'un professeur de mathématiques: celui-ci enseignera les règles de l'astronomie, de l'optique, de la mécanique; il montrera la coupe des pierres, et enfin tout ce qu'on n'apprend point dans les lycées, parce que l'élève est trop jeune, et que cette instruction, utile à l'état qu'il peut choisir, mais il n'a pas encore choisi, exige qu'on attende plus de maturité. Le professeur de belles-lettres amuse, s'il a de l'esprit, intéresse s'il a de l'art, mais ne développe pas un nouveau principe, pas une nou-

velle idée; il n'établit rien de positif en fait de règles; il ne vous apprend que ce que l'on apprend au collège; et, lui-même, professât-il pendant quarante ans, n'en saurait pas davantage le dernier jour que la première année. Il connaîtra mieux les auteurs, saura mieux les apprécier; mais on ne verra là que l'opinion d'un individu, rien qui prouve ou qui prépare les progrès de l'art.

La grammaire serait plus susceptible que la littérature de devenir l'objet d'une école spéciale; il y a là un fonds plus abondant d'observations, de comparaisons; elle tient à l'origine des sensations, car la manière de parler vient de la manière de sentir; mais cette science, qui se confond avec l'idéologie, est encore dans une si grande obscurité, que la seule application utile qui en ait été faite est relatif^{ve} aux sourds-muets; dans cet établissement, consiste la véritable école de grammaire.

Ainsi l'éloquence et la poésie ne sont pas dans les attributions des écoles spéciales, parce qu'elles n'ont rien qui soit réellement positif, et que, quant à ce qui est susceptible d'être enseigné, Corneille et Racine n'en savaient pas plus qu'un bon écolier de rhétorique; le goût et le génie ne peuvent pas s'apprendre.

Les écoles spéciales des langues de l'Orient, anciennes et modernes, ne sont pas autre chose que des

lycées spéciaux appliqués à d'autres langues, jugées
 nécessaires pour/^{lier}notre siècle aux siècles passés, notre
 pays aux pays étrangers; ce sont des établissements par-
 ticuliers dont le nombre doit être proportionné au pe-
 tit nombre d'hommes dans le cas de rechercher l'instrue-
 tion qu'on y donne.

Mais il est dans la littérature d'autres branches
 qui peuvent, jusqu'à un certain point, donner lieu à
 l'établissement d'écoles spéciales, c'est la géographie
 et l'histoire.

(In the following pages of the 'Correspondance' -
 vol.XV, pp.108-109 - Napoleon develops this idea further).

Appendix B.

Imperial Decree instituting Ten-yearly Prizes for works of literature and of erudition, and for works of merit in the plastic arts.

Au palais d'Aix-la Chapelle, 24 fructidor,
an XII.

Napoléon, Empereur des Français, à tous ceux qui les présentes verront , salut:

Étant dans l'intention d'encourager les sciences, les lettres et les arts, qui contribuent éminemment à l'illustration et à la gloire des nations;

Désirant non-seulement que la France conserve la supériorité qu'elle a acquise dans les sciences et les arts, mais encore que le siècle qui commence l'emporte sur ceux qui l'ont précédé;

Voulant aussi connaître les hommes qui auront le plus participé à l'éclat des sciences, des lettres et des arts; Nous avons décrété et décrétons ce qui suit:

ARTICLE PREMIER. - Il y aura, de dix ans en dix ans, le jour de l'anniversaire du 18 brumaire, une distribution de grands prix donnés de notre propre main dans le lieu et avec la solennité qui seront ultérieurement réglés.

Article II. - Tous les ouvrages de sciences, de littérature et d'arts, toutes les inventions utiles, tous les établissements consacrés aux progrès de l'agriculture et de l'industrie nationale, publiés, connus ou formés

dans un intervalle de dix années, dont le terme précédera d'un an l'époque de la distribution, concourront pour les grands prix.

Article III. - La première distribution des grands prix se fera le 18 brumaire an XVIII; et conformément aux dispositions de l'article précédent, le concours comprendra tous les ouvrages, inventions ou établissements publiés ou connus depuis l'intervalle du 18 brumaire de l'an VII au 18 brumaire de l'an XVII.

Article IV. - Les grands prix seront, les uns de la valeur de dix milles francs, les autres de la valeur de cinq mille francs.

Article V. - Les grands prix de la valeur de dix mille francs seront au nombre de neuf, et décernés:

1. Aux auteurs des meilleurs ouvrages de sciences; l'un pour les sciences physiques, l'autre pour les sciences mathématiques;
2. A l'auteur de la meilleure histoire ou du meilleur morceau d'histoire, soit ancienne, soit moderne;
3. A l'inventeur de la machine la plus utile aux arts et aux manufactures;
4. Au fondateur de l'établissement le plus avantageux à l'agriculture ou à l'industrie nationale;
5. A l'auteur du meilleur ouvrage dramatique, soit comédie, soit tragédie, représenté sur le Théâtre Français;
6. Aux auteurs des deux meilleurs ouvrages, l'un

de peinture, l'autre de sculpture, représentant des actions d'éclat ou des événements mémorables puisés dans notre histoire;

7. Au compositeur du meilleur opéra représenté sur le théâtre de l'Académie Impériale de musique.

Article VI. - Les grands prix de la valeur de cinq mille francs seront au nombre de treize, et décernés:

1. Aux traducteurs de dix manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale, ou des autres bibliothèques de Paris, écrits en langues anciennes ou en langues orientales, les plus utiles, soit aux sciences, soit à l'histoire, soit aux belles-lettres, soit aux arts,

2. Aux auteurs des trois meilleurs poèmes ayant pour sujet des événements mémorables de notre histoire, ou des actions honorables pour le caractère français;

Article VII. - Ces prix seront décernés sur le rapport et la proposition d'un jury composé des secrétaires perpétuels des quatre classes de l'Institut, et des quatre présidents en fonction dans l'année qui précédera celle de la distribution.

Signé: NAPOLEON.

Appendix B₂

Extract from the Imperial Decree of November 28, 1809, by which the number of grands prix stated in the Decree of 24 Fructidor, Year XII, was increased as follows:-
in the First Class (10,000 frs) to 19, and in the Second Class (5,000 frs) to 16.

The prizes were now to be allocated as below:-

1st Class.

1. Aux auteurs des deux meilleurs ouvrages de sciences mathématiques, l'un pour la géométrie et l'analyse pure, l'autre pour les sciences soumises aux calculs rigoureux, comme l'^astronomie, la mécanique, etc.;
2. Aux auteurs des deux meilleurs ouvrages de sciences physiques, l'un pour la physique proprement dite, la chimie, la minéralogie, etc.; l'autre pour la médecine, l'anatomie, etc.;
3. A l'inventeur de la machine la plus importante pour les arts et les manufactures;
4. Au fondateur de l'établissement le plus avantageux à l'agriculture;
5. Au fondateur de l'établissement le plus ~~avantageux~~ utile à l'industrie;
6. A l'auteur de la meilleure histoire ou du meilleur morceau d'histoire générale, soit ancienne soit moderne;
7. A l'auteur du meilleur poème épique;
8. A l'auteur de la meilleure tragédie représentée sur nos grands théâtres;
9. A l'auteur de la meilleure comédie en 5 actes, représentée sur nos grands théâtres;
10. A l'auteur de l'ouvrage de littérature qui réunira au plus haut degré la nouveauté des idées, le talent de la composition et l'élégance du style;
11. A l'auteur du meilleur ouvrage de philosophie en

général, soit de morale, soit d'éducation;

12. Au compositeur du meilleur opéra représenté sur le théâtre de l'Académie impériale de musique;
13. A l'auteur du meilleur tableau d'histoire;
14. A l'auteur du meilleur ^{Tableau} représentant un sujet honorable pour le caractère national;
15. A l'auteur du meilleur ouvrage de sculpture, sujet héroïque;
16. A l'auteur du meilleur ouvrage de sculpture dont le sujet sera puisé dans les faits mémorables de l'histoire de France;
17. A l'auteur du plus beau monument d'architecture.

2nd Class.

1. A l'auteur de l'ouvrage qui fera l'application la plus heureuse des principes des mathématiques ou physiques à la pratique;
2. A l'auteur du meilleur ouvrage de biographie;
3. A l'auteur du meilleur poème en plusieurs chants, didactique, descriptif ou, en général, d'un style élevé;
4. Aux auteurs des deux meilleurs petits ^{poèmes}, dont les sujets seront puisés dans l'histoire de France;
5. A l'auteur de la meilleure traduction en vers de poèmes grecs ou latins;
6. A l'auteur du meilleur poème lyrique mis en musique, et exécuté sur un de nos grands théâtres;
7. Au compositeur du meilleur opéra comique représenté sur un de nos grands théâtres;
8. Aux traducteurs des quatre ouvrages, soit manuscrits, soit imprimés en langue orientale ou en langue ancienne, les plus utiles, soit aux sciences, soit à l'histoire, soit aux arts;
9. Aux ~~traducteurs~~ ^{auteurs} des trois meilleurs ouvrages de gravures en taille-douce, en médailles et sur pierres fines;
10. A l'auteur de l'ouvrage topographique le plus exact

et le mieux exécuté.

Outre le prix qui lui sera décerné, chaque auteur recevra une médaille qui aura été frappée pour cet objet.

Titre II. Du Jugement des ouvrages.

Art.V.- Conformément à l'article VII du décret du 24 fructidor an XII, les ouvrages seront examinés par un jury composé des présidents et secrétaires perpétuels de chacune des quatre classes de l'Institut. Le rapport du jury, ainsi que le procès-verbal des séances et des discussions, seront remis à notre ministre de l'Intérieur dans les six mois qui suivront la clôture du concours.

Art.V.- Le concours de la seconde époque sera fermé le 9 novembre 1818.

Art.VI.- Le jury du présent concours pourra revoir son travail jusqu'au 15 février prochain, afin d'y ajouter tout ce qui peut être relatif aux nouveaux prix que nous venons d'instituer.

Art.VII.- Le ministre de l'Intérieur, dans les quinze jours qui suivront la remise qui lui aura été faite du rapport du jury, adressera à chacune des quatre classes de l'Institut la portion de ce rapport et du procès-verbal relatif^{ve} au genre des travaux de la classe.

Art.VIII.- Chaque classe fera une critique raisonnée des ouvrages qui ont balancé les suffrages, de ceux qui ont été jugés, par le jury, dignes d'approcher des prix, et qui ont reçu une mention spécialement honorable.

Cette critique sera plus développée pour les ouvrages jugés dignes du prix: elle entrera dans l'examen de leurs beautés et de leurs défauts; discutera des fautes contre les règles de la langue ou de l'art, ou les innovations heureuses; elle ne négligera aucun des détails propres à faire connaître les exemples à suivre et les fautes à éviter.

Art.IX.- Les critiques seront rendues publiques par la voie de l'impression.

Les travaux de chaque classe seront remis par son président au ministre de l'Intérieur, dans les quatre mois qui suivront la communication faite à l'Institut.

Art.X.- Notre ministre de l'Intérieur nous soumettra, dans le cours du mois d'août suivant, un rapport qui nous fera connaître le résultat des discussions.

Art.XI.- Un décret impérial~~le~~ décerne les prix.

The text of this decree was published in the 'Moniteur Universel' of Sunday, 3rd Dec. 1809 (pp.1335-6).

It is reproduced also by VÉRON, op.cit., p.85 et seq., but in this copy all mention of the 9th grand prix in the first class is missed out. Although this seems to have been realised when the work was re-edited no attempt was made to correct it.

Appendix C.

'Correspondance' de Napoléon 1er, vol. XX, p. 98, No. 16105.

Au Comte de Montalivet,

Ministre de l'intérieur, à Paris.

Paris, 3 janvier, 1810.

Je vous envoie la note des savants ou gens de lettres auxquels je fais des pensions sur les journaux. Faites moi connaître ~~connaître~~ ceux qui se seraient le plus distingués depuis deux ans dans la littérature et les sciences.

État des Gens de Lettres et Savants

Qui ont des pensions sur les journaux.

MM Hatty, 6,000 francs; Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, 2,000 francs; Dutheil, 2,000 francs; Gosselin, 2,000 francs; Coraf, 2,000 francs. (Décret du 21 février, 1806).

MM Monge, 6,000 francs; Gianni, 3,000 francs; Lebrun, 1,200 francs; Legendre, 3,000 francs. (Décret du 10 mars, 1806).

MM Barré, 4,000 francs; Radet, 4,000 francs; Desfontaines, 4,000 francs. (Décret du 4 avril, 1806).

M Monsigny, 2,000 francs. (Décret du 4 mai, 1806).

M Palissot, 3,000 francs. (Décret du 31 mai, 1806).

M Villeville, 2,000 francs. (Décret du 9 septembre, 1806).

M Chénier, 6,000 francs. (Décret du 4 septembre, 1807).

M Ducray-Duminil, 3,000 francs. (Décret du 17 septembre, 1807)

M Baour-Lormian, 6,000 francs. (Décret du 30 septembre, 1807).

M Picard, 6,000 francs. (Décret du 28 octobre, 1807).

M Delrieu, 2,000 francs. (Décret du 20 août, 1808).

M Luce de Lancival, 6,000 francs. (Décret du 6 février, 1809).

Appendix D.

A list of the works of geography and history and books of travels from which Napoleon made notes in the years from 1786 to 1794. (Taken from 'Napoléon - Manuscrits inédits 1786-1791').

ROLLIN, 'Histoire ancienne'.

RAYNAL, 'Histoire philosophique des deux Indes'.

BARROW, 'Histoire nouvelle et impartiale d'Angleterre' (trans. of J.P. Costard, 1771-1773).

TERRAY, (l'abbé), 'Mémoires' (1776). Napoleon also made notes from the 'Lettres d'un actionnaire à un autre actionnaire contenant la relation de ce qui s'est passé dans les dernières Assemblées de la Compagnie des Indes', which, according to MASSON (who edited, with Biagi, the 'Manuscrits inédits' q.v., p. 239) follow the 'Mémoires' of the abbé TERRAY in certain editions.

TOTT, (baron de), 'Mémoires' sur les Turcs et les Tartares'. (1784).

MIRABEAU 'Sur les lettres de cachet'.

'L'Espion Anglais' (London, 1784).

MARIGNY, (l'abbé), 'Histoire des Arabes'.

AMELOT de la HOUSSAIE, 'Gouvernement de Venise'.

MABLY, (l'abbé). 'Observations sur l'histoire de France'.

LACROIX, (l'abbé), 'Géographie moderne'.

DUVERNET, (l'abbé), 'Histoire de la Sorbonne'.

COXE, 'Voyage en Suisse'.

DUCLOS, 'Mémoires secrets sur le règne de Louis XIV
et Louis XV.'

DULAURE, 'Histoire critique de la noblesse' (1790).

Le NOBLE, 'L'Esprit de Gerson'.

MACHIAVELLI, 'Histoire de Florence', (trans. by
M de Barrett, Paris, 1789).

VOLTAIRE, 'Essai sur les Moeurs'.

Appendix E.

Napoleon's criticisms of the 2nd Book of the 'Aeneid'.
(Contained in 'Correspondance', vol. XXXI, pp. 491-493.)

Le deuxième livre de 'l'Enéide' est considéré comme le chef-d'oeuvre de ce poème épique; il mérite cette réputation sous le point de vue du style, mais il ^{est} bien loin de la mériter sur le fond des choses.

Le cheval de bois pouvait être une tradition populaire, mais cette tradition est ridicule et tout à fait indigne d'un poème épique. On ne voit rien de pareil dans 'l'Iliade', où tout est conforme à la vérité et aux pratiques de la guerre. Comment supposer les Troyens assez imbéciles pour ne pas envoyer un bateau pêcheur à l'île de Ténédos, pour s'assurer si les 1,000 vaisseaux des Grecs s'y étaient arrêtés ou étaient réellement partis? Mais du haut des tours d'Ilion on découvrait la rade de Ténédos. Comment croire qu'Ulysse et l'élite des Grecs étaient assez ineptes pour s'enfermer dans un cheval de bois, c'est-à-dire se livrer pieds et mains ~~liés~~ liés à leurs implacables ennemis? En supposant que ce cheval

contînt seulement cent guerriers, il devait être d'un poids énorme, et il n'est pas probable qu'il ait pu être mené du bord de la mer sous les murs d'Ilion en un jour, ayant surtout deux rivières à traverser.

Tout l'épisode de Sinon est invraisemblable et absurde; les ressources du poète, l'éloquence du discours qu'il met dans la bouche de Sinon, n'en diminuent en rien l'absurdité. Cependant il faut que le cheval soit, le jour même du départ des Grecs, introduit dans Troie, sans quoi cela rendrait encore plus incroyable que les mille vaisseaux des Grecs pussent, si près de Troie, rester cachés.

Le bel et charmant épisode de Laocoon se recommande de lui-même, mais ne peut en rien diminuer l'absurdité de la conduite des Troyens, puisque enfin on pouvait laisser plusieurs jours le cheval au camp dans sa position, et s'assurer que la flotte ennemie s'était éloignée, ~~avant~~ avant d'abattre les murailles pour l'introduire dans la ville.

Les guerriers enfermés dans le cheval de bois, auquel Sinon ouvre la barrière, ne sortent que lorsque la flotte des Grecs, qui est partie de Ténédos lorsque tout dort et que la nuit est obscure, a déjà débarqué l'armée; ce ne peut donc pas être avant une heure du matin; aussi bien ce n'est guère qu'à cette heure que les corps de ~~garde~~ garde s'endorment et que Sinon a pu ouvrir la barrière. Tout le deuxième livre de la destruction de Troie s'opère donc d'une heure du matin au lever du soleil, c'est-à-dire en trois ou quatre heures; tout cela est absurde. Troie n'a pu être prise, brûlée et détruite en moins de quinze jours. Troie renfermait une armée; cette armée n'est pas sauvée, elle a dû donc se défendre dans tous les palais. Enée, logé au palais de son père, dans un bois à une demi-lieue de Troie, n'est instruit que par l'apparition d'Hector de la prise et de l'incendie de la ville. La maison d'Anchise fut-elle à deux

lieues de la ville, que le bruit du tumulte de la prise de la ville, la chaleur de l'incendie des premières maisons, auraient réveillé les hommes et les animaux. Ilion n'est pas tombée dans une seule nuit, surtout dans une nuit si courte; et l'armée qui y était pour la défendre l'eût-elle évacuée, que, matériellement, l'armée grecque ne pouvait prendre possession et détruire la ville sans plusieurs jours. Enée n'était pas le seul guerrier qui se trouvait dans Ilion; cependant il ne parle que de lui. Tant de héros qui jouent un rôle si brillant dans l'Iliade ont dû aussi, de leur côté, défendre chacun leur quartier.

Une tour dont le sommet s'élevait jusqu'aux cieux et dont le comble y semblait suspendu était sans doute de pierre; on ne voit pas comment Enée, en peu d'instants, et avec le secours de quelques leviers de fer, a pu la faire crouler sur la tête des Grecs.

Si Homère eût traité la prise de Troie, il ne l'eût pas traitée comme la prise d'un fort, mais il y eût employé le temps nécessaire, au moins huit jours et huit nuits. Lorsqu'on lit l'Iliade, on sent à chaque instant qu'Homère a fait la guerre, et n'a pas, comme le disent les commentateurs, passé sa vie dans les

écoles de Chio; quand on lit l'Enéide, on sent que cet ouvrage est fait par un régent de collège qui n'a jamais rien fait. On ne voit pas en effet ce qui a pu décider Virgile à commencer et à finir la prise, l'incendie et le pillage de Troie en peu d'heures; dans ce court espace il fait même ramasser toutes les richesses dans des magasins centraux. La maison d'Anchise devait être très-près de Troie, puisque, dans ce peu d'heures et malgré les combats, Enée y fait plusieurs voyages. Il fallut à Scipion dix-sept jours pour brûler Carthage, abandonnée de ses habitants; il a fallu onze jours pour brûler Moscou, quoique en grande partie bâtie en bois; et, pour une ville de cette étendue, il faut plusieurs jours à l'armée conquérante pour en prendre possession. Troie était une grande ville, car les Grecs, qui avaient cent mille hommes, n'essayèrent jamais de la cerner. Lorsque Enée retourne cette nuit même dans Ilion, il retrouve

Ulysse des vainqueurs gardant la riche proie.
Là sont accumulés tous les trésors de Troie.

Pour cette seule opération il faut plus de quinze jours, et ce n'est pas dans le moment du désordre d'une ville prise d'assaut qu'on va s'amuser à entasser les

richesses dans les magasins centraux.

Le jour naît; je retourne à ma troupe fidèle.
Ainsi, d'une heure du matin à quatre heures, c'est-à-dire en trois heures, Enée a été à Troie, a livré tous les combats dont il rend compte, a défendu le palais de Priam, est revenu chercher Créuse à Troie et a trouvé la ville toute soumise, ne soutenant plus de combat, entièrement occupée par l'ennemi, toute brûlée, et les magasins déjà formés. Ce n'est pas ainsi que doit marcher l'épopée, et ce n'est pas ainsi que marche Homère dans l'Iliade. Le journal d'Agamemnon ne serait pas plus exact pour les distances et le temps et pour la vraisemblance des opérations militaires que ne l'est ce chef-d'oeuvre.

Le troisième chant n'est absolument qu'une copie de l'Odyssée; et, dans le quatrième chant, le récit n'est pas dans le genre de celui d'Homère, où tous les jours sont marqués, où toutes les actions ont leur commencement, leur milieu et leur fin, et ne sont pas agglomérées dans un récit général.

Appendix F.

Napoleon's criticism of the motives for the suicide of Werther (see p.182 of text above).

The motive for Werther's suicide was discussed at the meeting between Napoleon and Goethe on Oct.2nd, 1808. J HOLLAND ROSE ('The Personality of Napoleon', p.211) says of this discussion "He (Napoleon) pointed out an artistic blemish in the work, namely that Werther's suicidal ~~mania~~ proceeded not solely from disappointed love but also from frustrated ambition. Always enamoured of clearness and precision, he found the mixture of motives untrue to nature, and Goethe agreed with him. The criticism of the Emperor and the acquiescence of the author are equally curious; for as Lewes has pointed out, the original of Werther (i.e: Jerusalem) committed suicide owing to the double cause - a fact which Goethe must have forgotten when he agreed with Napoleon, not to mention the fact that, when revising the work, he had simplified the cause of suicide in deference to a somewhat similar criticism from Herder....."

This point is taken up and amplified by the later writers FLORANGE and WUNSCH ('l'Entrevue de Napoléon et de Goethe', Paris, 1932, pp.13-16). ^{Using} ~~Quoting from~~ the French translation of Goethe's own account of the meeting they give the text of Napoleon's criticism as follows:

"Après différentes remarques, il blâma le poète d'avoir représenté Werther poussé au suicide, autant par les chagrins de l'ambition froissée, que par ~~la~~ sa passion pour Charlotte. 'Cela n'est pas naturel, disait Napoléon; vous avez affaibli chez le lecteur l'idée qu'il s'était faite de l'immense amour que Werther éprouvait pour Charlotte'."

Such a criticism, say the writers, does not appear

very well founded if one consults editions of 'Werther' from 1800 to the present day. In these editions, ambition and self-esteem lead to inaction, but not to suicide, which is caused by his passion alone. However, a careful examination of the editions of ~~1774~~ 1774 and 1787, of which Napoleon had a translation (that of Yverdun, in 1 vol. in 18) in his bibliothèque de campagne (see 'Mémoires' of BOURRIENNE, vol.2,p.49 et seq.), reveals that the criticism was just since the passage in 'Werther' runs as follows:

"Le chagrin qu'il avait essuyé étant secrétaire d' Ambassade ne s'effaçait jamais de sa mémoire; lorsqu'il lui arrivait d'en parler, ce qui était rare, on sentait aisément qu'il regardait son honneur comme blessé sans ressource par cette aventure, et qu'il avait pris du dégoût pour toutes les affaires et occupations politiques. Il se livra donc tout ~~entièrement~~ entier aux idées singulières et aux sentiments répandus dans ses lettres, et à une passion sans bornes qui dut à la fin consumer tout ce qui put lui rester de vigueur. L'éternelle monotonie d'un triste commerce avec la femme la plus aimable et la plus aimée, dont il troublait le repos, ses chocs, ses combats, ses travaux sans but, sans dessein, le poussaient enfin à terminer ses jours."

APPENDIX G.

From Le Fèbvre, "Le Génie du Christianisme de
Chateaubriand" pp.152-153.

Opinion of the Classe de Langue et de Littérature
of the Institut on the Génie du Christianisme of
Chateaubriand.

1° Le Génie du Christianisme considéré comme
ouvrage de littérature a paru à la Classe défectueux
quant au fond et quant au plan.

2° Quand le fond et le plan n'auraient pas les
défauts que la Classe y a reconnus, l'exécution
serait encore imparfaite.

3° Malgré les défauts remarqués dans le fond de
l'ouvrage dans son plan et dans son exécution, la
Classe a reconnu un talent très distingué dans le style.

4° Elle a trouvé de nombreux morceaux de détail
remarquables par leur mérite et dans quelques parties
des beautés de premier ordre.

5° Elle a trouvé, toutefois, que l'éclat du
style et la beauté des détails n'auraient pas suffi
pour assurer à l'ouvrage le succès qu'il a obtenu et

que ce succès est dû aussi à l'esprit de parti et à des passions du moment qui s'en sont emparés soit pour l'exalter à l'excès, soit pour le déprimer avec injustice.

6° Enfin, la Classe pense que l'ouvrage, tel qu'il est, pourrait mériter une distinction.

Appendix H.Lists of the tragedies and comedies seen in performance by Napoleon.

(Taken from H. LEBOMTE, 'Napoléon et le monde dramatique', pp. 491-492).

(Numbers following the titles represent the number of times Napoleon saw the particular play - only those seen more than once are included.)

Agamemnon 2	Mérope 2
Andromaque 9	Mithridate 2
Athalie 5	Mort de César 5
Bajazet 7	Mort de Pompée 5
Bénénice 2	Nicomède 5
Britannicus 4	Oedipe 9
Le Cid 8	Omasis, ou Joseph en Egypte 2
Cinna 12	Phèdre 10
Électre 2	Polyeucte 6
Esther 2	Rhadamiste et Zénobie 4
Hector 6	Rodogune 4
Héraclius 2	Sémiramis 3
Horace 5	Les Templiers 3
Iphigénie en Aulide 10	Venceslas 2
Macbeth 2	les Vénitiens 2
Mahomet 3	Zaire 4
Manlius Capitolinus 3	

Comedies.

L'Avare 4	le Barbier de Séville 4
le Bourru bienfaisant 4	le Cercle 5
l'École des bourgeois 4	l'Épreuve nouvelle 7
les Fausses confidences 6	les Fausses infidélités 4
les Femmes savantes 4	la Gageure imprévue 8
les Héritiers 6 et	l'Intrigue épistolaire 4
Jeu de l'amour/du Hazard 6	Jeunesse d'Henri V 4
le Legs 7	Mariage de Figaro 3

le Menteur 3

le Misanthrope 3

le Philinte de Molière 3

le Philosophe sans le sa-
voir 3

Tartufe 10.

APPENDIX I.Napoleon's views on Tragedy

From Sainte-Beuve: "Causeries du Lundi". Vol.7. p.504.

"Arnault... avait beaucoup causé avec le général en chef pendant la traversée de Toulon à Malte. Il avait été question d'Homère, de l'Odyssée, de la tragédie, de toutes sortes de choses littéraires. D'après ce qui nous est transmis de ces conversations, on sent combien l'instinct de Napoléon excédait et débordait le cadre de la littérature de son temps: soit qu'il causât avec Arnault, soit que plus tard il causât avec Fontanes, il demandait évidemment autre chose que ce qu'on lui offrait. Il provoquait des idées, un genre et un ordre de créations dont il cherchait vainement le poète autour de lui. Ossian, qu'il invoquait souvent, n'était qu'un thème vague et comme musical qui lui permettait de rêver ce que nul ne réalisait à son gré; ce n'était qu'un nom dont il saluait un genre et un génie inconnu. En ce qui est de la tragédie, par exemple, il aspirait à quelque chose qu'on peut se figurer entre Shakespeare et Corneille: "Les intérêts des nations, les passions appliquées à un but politique, le développement des

projets de l'homme d'État, les révolutions qui changent la face des empires, voilà, disait-il, la matière tragique. Les autres intérêts qui s'y trouvent mêlés, les intérêts d'amour surtout, qui dominant dans les tragédies françaises, ne sont que de la comédie dans la tragédie. - Ce n'est qu'une comédie non plus, qu'un drame, si sérieux, si pathétique qu'il soit, tout y étant fondé sur les intérêts privés."

'Zaire', d'après son opinion, n'était qu'une comédie. -

APPENDIX J.Napoleon's views on 'Polyeucte' of P. Corneille.

From Audibert, "Indiscrétions et Confidences" p.33 et seq.

"Le caractère de Polyeucte, dit-il, est d'une vérité parfaite; ce n'est plus là du théâtre, c'est de l'histoire. Polyeucte ne dut penser ni parler autrement. A cette époque, le martyre était devenu une espèce de contagion. On marchait à la mort pour aller à la gloire, comme le dit Polyeucte lui-même. Et pouvait-il n'en pas être ainsi? On échappait à la corruption des hommes pour se réfugier parmi les élus de Dieu, et, même dans les idées chrétiennes, ce n'était pas un crime de le faire, car le martyre, quoiqu'on le recherchât, n'était pas le suicide. On l'obtenait bien facilement. Le paganisme ne le refusait jamais. Il suffisait de renverser une idole, de cracher sur un édit de l'empereur, ou de dire 2 mots: Je suis chrétien. Pour arrêter cette contagion, devenue inutile quand la religion chrétienne eut triomphé, l'Eglise eut besoin d'apprendre et de prêcher que les douleurs de la terre ouvraient le chemin du ciel à qui les supporte. La vie est aussi parfois un martyre.

Pauline est encore un personnage naturel, ainsi que le poltron Félix, esclave de la peur, toujours tremblant pour sa charge. Quant à Sévère, il est en dehors de l'histoire. Sévère n'a jamais existé que sur la scène, et *Talma* en le jouant tel qu'il a été conçu, *Talma* à force d'être vrai, en est plus idéal. C'est une création qu'il a faite d'après Corneille; ce n'est pas, comme dans plusieurs de ses rôles, une imitation de l'antique, une statue de Brutus ou de César animée par un nouveau Pygmalion appliquant son génie aux arts et non à l'amour. Corneille a pris Sévère dans sa pensée, qui devançait son siècle, et dans ces caractères espagnols, héroïques et généreux, qu'il aimait à reproduire. Sévère, tel qu'il le représente, Sévère dont la douce tolérance va jusqu'à approuver que chacun serve ses dieux à sa mode, ne saurait être le favori de Dèce, ardent à continuer contre les chrétiens l'oeuvre sanguinaire de l'empereur Philippe, auquel il succédait, après lui avoir arraché l'empire et la vie dans une bataille. De tels princes n'accordent leur faveur qu'à des hommes au coeur impitoyable. ... Et si on passait sur toutes ces impossibilités du côté de

Dèce, n'arrêteraient-elles pas du côté de Sévère? Cette belle nature pouvait-elle se plier au rôle de courtisan d'un tel prince? La mission dont on le charge ne devait-elle pas l'indigner? Car je ne pense pas qu'il fut envoyé auprès de Félix pour le rendre humain. La cruauté de Félix est d'autant plus forte qu'elle a sa source dans la flatterie. Corneille l'a compris. Pour dissimuler le véritable motif de la présence de Sévère à Mitylène, il lui donne le prétexte d'un sacrifice à célébrer par suite d'une victoire. Est-ce que pour faire chanter un Te Deum dans un des départements de mon empire, j'aurais besoin d'en charger le dignitaire le plus haut placé près de moi? Un courrier suffirait, même le télégraphe. En admettant qu'un sacrifice aux dieux soit la cause réelle de l'arrivée de Sévère, oserait-il, surtout en pareille occurrence, protéger ouvertement les chrétiens, lorsqu'il sait que son empereur les regarde comme des ennemis personnels? Au lieu d'aider Félix à les exterminer, travaillerait-il à en augmenter le nombre? Mais n'importe; à part la couleur historique, c'est une belle et philosophique pensée d'avoir, au sein même du paganisme devenu sanguinaire, mis la tolérance en présence des bourreaux."

Appendix K.

Text of Napoleon's letter of December 31, 1806, from Pultusk, to Fouché, concerning Raynouard and 'les Templiers'.

(From 'Correspondance de Napoléon 1er', vol. XIV, p. 127.)

Pultusk, 31 décembre 1806.

Je vois avec plaisir ce que vous avez fait pour le manuscrit de M. Rulhière; j'attends avec impatience d'en avoir un exemplaire.

M. Raynouard est très-capable de faire de bonnes choses, s'il se pénètre bien du véritable esprit de la tragédie chez les anciens: la fatalité ~~manuvrière~~ poursuivait la famille des Atrides, et les héros étaient coupables sans être criminels; ils partageaient les crimes des dieux. Dans l'histoire moderne, ce moyen ne peut être employé; celui qu'il faut employer, c'est la nature des choses: c'est la politique qui conduit à des catastrophes sans des crimes réels. M. Raynouard a manqué cela dans les Templiers. S'il eût suivi ce principe, Philippe le Bel aurait joué un beau rôle; on l'eût plaint, et on eût compris qu'il ne pouvait faire autrement. Tant que le canevas d'une tragédie ne sera pas établi sur ce principe, elle ne sera pas digne de nos grands maîtres. Rien ne montre davantage le peu de connaissance que beaucoup d'auteurs font^{voir} des ressorts et des moyens de la tragédie, que les procès criminels qu'ils établissent sur la scène. Il faudrait du temps pour développer cette idée, et vous sentez que j'ai autre chose à penser. Toutefois je crois l'auteur des Templiers capable de faire de bonnes choses.

NAPOLÉON.

Appendix L.

Napoleon's criticisms of Raynouard's 'États de Blois',
from Las Cases - 'Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène', vol. 1,
pp. 402-403.

Une autre fois, pareillement à son coucher, il analysait les États de Blois, qu'on venait de jouer sur le théâtre de la cour pour la première fois; et apercevant parmi nous l'Archi-trésorier Lebrun, littérateur fort distingué, il lui demanda son opinion: celui-ci, sans doute dans l'intérêt de l'auteur, se contenta de répondre que le sujet était mauvais. "Mais ce serait la première faute de M. Raynouard, répliqua l'Empereur, il l'a choisi lui-même, personne ne le lui a imposé; et puis, il n'est pas de sujet si mauvais dont le grand talent ne sache ~~tirer~~ tirer quelque parti; et Corneille serait encore sans doute Corneille, même dans celui-ci. Quant à M. Raynouard, il a manqué tout à fait son affaire; il ne montre ici d'autre talent que celui de la versification, tout le reste est mauvais, très mauvais: sa conception, ses détails, son résultat, sont manqués; il viole la vérité de l'histoire; ses caractères sont faux, sa politique est dangereux et peut-être nuisible. Cette circonstance me confirme, ce que du reste chacun sait très bien, qu'il est une énorme différence entre la lecture et la représentation d'une pièce. J'avais cru d'abord que celle-ci pouvait passer: ce n'est que ce soir que j'en ai vu les inconvénients: les éloges prodigués aux Bourbons sont les moindres; les diatribes contre les révolutionnaires sont bien pires encore. M. Raynouard a été faire, du chef des Seize, le capucin Chabot de la Convention. Il y a dans sa pièce pour tous les partis, pour toutes les passions; si je/laissais

donner dans Paris, on pourrait venir m'apprendre que cinquante personnes se sont égorgées dans le parterre. De plus, l'auteur a fait de Henri IV un vrai Philinte, et du duc de Guise un Figaro, ce qui est trop choquant en histoire. Le duc de Guise était un des plus grands personnages de son temps, avec des qualités et des talents supérieurs, et auquel il ne manqua que d'oser, pour commencer, dès lors, la quatrième dynastie; de plus, c'est un parent de l'impératrice, un prince de la maison d'Autriche avec qui nous sommes en amitié, dont l'ambassadeur était présent ce soir à la représentation. L'auteur a plus d'une fois étrangement méconnu toutes les convenances."

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