

recognise the grandeur of Napoleon's character,—although the threatening power of the Empire was so great, and the risks and burdens of a Continental war so heavy, that the sturdy English character resented the mere idea of the approach of alarm by hastening to belittle and to vilify the Emperor,—yet there were honourable exceptions to this rule. It is with pleasure that the candid Englishman reads such a work as Napier's *Peninsular War*, and shares the warm indignation with which that gallant soldier repels the carping criticisms and the dishonouring suggestions of men who had sought to exalt their country and to justify their party by dragging down to their own base level the antagonist who leagued all Europe against us.

Still, the life is yet unwritten; and when it is undertaken these memoirs of Mde. de Rémusat, so late in their birth, will be of importance. She lifts the veil from the domestic life of the Palace, hidden from us until now. She shows us the family intrigues, the disputes, the reconciliations, Josephine in tears, in fits of jealousy, Bonaparte dictating a tragedy while his perspiring amanuensis 'toils after him in vain,' and all the petty details of real life and of a suddenly renovated ceremony and etiquette. It is in this capacity that Mde. de Rémusat is, and will be, of most use to the future historian, for she is here recounting facts as to which her memory could hardly betray her. We do not think that her authority will carry as much weight when she aspires to discover the secret springs of the Emperor's character.

It is indeed hardly to be expected that she could prove an impartial judge. A singular apologetic tone is noticeable throughout the book, as though it were necessary to seek condonation for the fault of the Rémusats in attaching themselves to the person of the Corsican upstart as the Royalists would call him. This alone appears strange to us, but it is natural if we look at all the circumstances. The Rémusats were of good family, and to be of good family, as those words were understood in France in the pre-Revolution days, means to be bound by a thousand ties to the system of privilege and prescription which that great movement overthrew. Yet the Rémusats were the first of the noblesse that listened to the

promises of the First Consul and accepted office in his Court. The excuse they give is a significant one. It seemed to us then, they say, as if the past were vanished and a new future marked out for France, so that those who would fain serve their country *must* plight allegiance to the new system. Years rolled on, the new system, once so stable, was levelled to the ground, and the rule of the Bourbons returned. The Rémusats, already alienated from the Emperor, felt all the stress of old associations and of old connections. The same frame of mind which had induced them to believe that the Consulate would endure for many years, no doubt led them to credit the Restoration with an unlimited future. The Empire was like a bad dream coming between two common working days, a dream which had begun, it is true, with fair visions and lofty skies, but which had darkened and narrowed down to the troubled tossing slumber of a man sick unto death. It was inevitable that such a state of things as this should colour the authoress' views of Napoleon's actions and motives.

It cannot be too much regretted that Madame de Rémusat destroyed the original manuscript of her work upon Napoleon's return from Elba. Her doing this would lead us to suppose that even then she had recorded views that would have proved distasteful to the Emperor. But there can be little doubt that the present memoirs, commenced in 1818, are more strongly adverse to the Emperor than the first copy. And we cannot altogether rely upon it that all her statements are the expressions of her own unbiassed opinion. She appears to have been much influenced by, and to have listened much to, Talleyrand—one of the most dubious characters of the era. She frequently quotes his anecdotes, endorses his views of Napoleon, and admits (p. 20), that he 'revealed to her the chief traits in the Emperor's character.' If she accepted this arch-plotter's views as a true revelation, there can be little wonder that she failed sometimes in understanding Bonaparte's motives.

Take, for example, this passage, 'I ought now to speak of Bonaparte's heart, but, if it were possible, . . . I should say that in his creation the heart was left out' (p. 9). It would be easy to quote facts from Madame de Rémusat's