

perhaps is the succeeding generation fully able to estimate his vices or virtues. This is more particularly the case with illustrious public characters; and will no doubt be so with Bonaparte. But although it requires the lapse of time to soften down excited prejudices, and obliterate personal partialities, so that the historian may give an unbiased detail, and future generations take a dispassionate view of the character he portrays, yet the narrative of cotemporary writers who have been eye witnesses to the events they describe, are not without their usefulness. It is such narratives that furnish the materials for the future historian to select and combine. He can at a future period view the character without prejudice, collect the various opinions of it which have been circulated when the hero was performing his part, and by a careful comparison of the various disjointed statements, and an attentive consideration of their consequences and effects, he will be enabled to reject the spurious and preserve the authentic details. In this respect, cotemporary relators of events sow as it were the seeds of history, while the future writer trains up the plant and brings it to perfection: and in proportion as the living witness adheres to fidelity in his narrative, so will his value be to the writer who borrows from him. It is taking it in this view that we consider Count Segur's Book will be useful to the future historian; and we may venture to predict that it will be quoted as a work of authenticity when the great horde of publications on the same subject have been consigned to their merited oblivion.

The over fastidious critic who peruses this work for the sole purpose of detecting faults in it; (and there are such characters,) will be apt to think Mr. Segur has drawn too flattering a picture of the late Emperor of France; and will perhaps accuse him of partiality in covering his defects or excusing his errors. If the most rigid scrutiny can detect an error of consequence in the publication it is perhaps in this particular; but we cannot perceive that Mr. S. has ever sacrificed truth to his partiality for his Sovereign, and before such critics impute blame to this writer in this particular, they would do well to consider the situation in which Bonaparte then stood; a situation such as perhaps no man was ever before placed in. He had by his talents aided with a course of fortunate coincidences, raised himself from a station comparatively obscure to the head of one of the first nations in Europe. His restless mind and towering ambition would not allow him to stop here. Through a long course of warfare carried on with almost uninterrupted success, he had vindicated his claim to be considered one of the first Generals of the age. But it was not in the field alone he gathered his laurels, he not only acquired territory by his sword, but evinced himself highly gifted as a statesman and politician, having had the dexterity to render a great majority of the oldest Courts on Continental Europe subservient to his views. Surrounded with a halo of splendour which his fortunate career had thrown about him, he was calculated to deceive an observer who did not possess a great depth of penetration. It was when he was at this, the highest pinnacle of his proud course, that the incidents here related of him took place. It was in the midst of his splendid and heretofore fortunate career that he planned and determined to carry into execution an expedition