

and lively passions form a tremendous force. This force was Napoleon's selfishness: not the inactivity of the many, but active, aggressive selfishness, developed to the point of creating an infinite Ego, so that in the vast domain in which it acts it cannot suffer another existence, unless it be an appendage or an instrument of its own. As a child this characteristic existed in him in embryo. He was rebellious at every reproof: without scruples, without conscience; intolerant to rivals, ready to fight any one who would not give way to him, while he accused others of attacking him. He considered the world as a magnificent banquet open to all, where to be well-filled it is necessary to have long arms and help one's self first, letting others have only what is left. Man, according to him, is dominated with his same selfish passions of fear, cupidity, self-love and emulation. Napoleon never departed from these ideas, nor could he: they being a part of his character, he saw the man as he chose to see him.

His selfishness, reflected in ambition, took such possession of him as to kill his conscience, and ambition finally caused his downfall. It was not enough that his functionaries were active and zealous: after having killed every critical sense in the man, he must belong to him body and soul; and in the slightest observance he suspected a conspiracy or an attempt upon his majesty. He demanded every agreement of service from his functionaries even though criminal from the falsification of the Austrian and Russian notes in 1809 and 1812 to the projection of an infernal machine against the Bourbons, in 1814. Gratitude was unknown to him: when a human instrument no longer served him he cast it away. Peace for him was an armistice during which he prepared for a new campaign. It was for this reason that all Europe, taught by experience, united after 1809 in turning against him. Napoleon instead of considering his own personality secondary to the State, considered the State secondary to his personality. He had no regard for the future and sacrificed it to the present. "If my successor is an imbecile, so much the worse for him." He made the press a slave to Censorship, and even pro-

hibited works of statistics and economy, if they appeared to cast doubt upon his infallibility. It was the same with the schools. He wrote to his councillors of State: "In establishing a corps of instruction my aim is to have a means of directing public opinion in politics and morals." As Renan said, school was for him the vestibule of the academy. G. Gorion was sent to prison for having called his coronation with the iron crown an absurdity, and Lattanzio was committed to the insane asylum for saying Napoleon would make himself king of Italy. His brother Joseph said Bonaparte would have had no peace if he could have supposed that after his death everything would go on quietly and smoothly. He forced France into an abyss, conscious that he was deceiving her: by misdeeds and an abuse of confidence there grew by degrees the divorce between his own interests, such as he understood them, and the public interest.

Napoleon ended by becoming the slave of his monstrous conceptions and his limitless ambitions. Even though the expedition into Russia had not ended disastrously, some other misfortune would have overtaken him. In order to carry out such an enormous campaign it would have been necessary to have a tremendous combination of forces. The fate of Napoleon's subjects was reduced to a military career or obligatory administration. In 1810 there were 160,000 men who refused to serve, and in 1811 and 1812 60,000 were arrested. Meantime he had made 4,000,000 victims: France was reduced by two foreign invasions, made a suspect of Europe, surrounded by menaces of odium and envy. This was the political work of Napoleon: the outcome of selfishness supported by genius. With his false image of glory he promoted what may be called the military and bureaucratic degeneration of France: the worst calamity that can overtake a civilized nation. In all this he showed an impulsiveness and above all a brutality common to epilepsies. As Bonfardini says, he mistook brusqueness for dignity, his own caprice for moral law, anger for justice and insolence for truth. It is told that he kicked Volney when he said that France wanted the Bourbons, and gave Bertin a cuff when